The Racial Issues In Gary Soto's Looking For Work

Have you ever thought or the nostalgia to lead a perfect family life without problems and to be accepted in society, as portrayed in TV shows or series? They think of being in white families leads to a relaxed life and getting better chances. In Gary Soto's 'Looking for Work' story, a young boy wants to be part of the ideal family in the 1950s, or are do you disagree with the ideal family in the 1950s, like Stephanie Coontz, who believes that the reality is different than described or told. She believed there were many problems such as racism and discrimination. Gary Soto's 'Looking for Work' narrative describes a day as a nine-year-old Mexican American boy who wants his family to be like these portrayed on television at that time. He was influenced so much that he wanted to change and adapt his life that “white people would like us.” Important for him was money and to get wealthy to create a perfect family. That’s why he decided to work in his neighborhood. Soto was so much influenced by TV shows like “Father Knows Best” that he criticized his family behavior and appearance so that white people accept them. The lifestyle captivated him how to dress and speak that shown on Leave it to Beaver, where “there were no beatings, no rifts in the family.' His family can't understand his statements about changing the way they live to “get along better in life.” Even at the age of nine, he recognizes how his lifestyle differs from the lifestyle of a white kid. He always compares his family to white families on television, and this why he wants to work for achieving this lifestyle. I find it very sad and depressing to hear stories like this from the perspective of children. Not only today, even in the

1950s, but the media also influence the opinions of many people especially children. At that time discrimination against minorities was big even some people denied the facts. They portray with these shows that the minority groups must adjust them or change the way they think to be accepted or be part of society. Not only is there a racial issue but also social classes. At that time or even right now is the mindset that if you have the money you live a more enjoyable life. The narrative 'Looking for Work' shows on the one hand that the family was incredibly important in the 1950s as they dress and eat together, on the other hand, it is stated that you have to adapt as not as white.

“I spent the mornings in front of the television that showed the comfortable lives of white kids.” This shows that the view of Soto as a nine-year-old who was influenced so much by the media that he changed his values and standards and was constantly comparing his family and the “perfect family.” Therefore, he did not regard his Mexican family as an admirable one. The family in the 1950s is dependent on race and social class. Through the media, people in society, especially children, get a misleading picture of family and other social matters. Naturally, this affects the thinking and actions of many people then and now because they think they don’t fit in the ideal image. He didn’t realize that words like “if we improved the way we looked we might get along better in life” are hurtful as a minority because they must give up their own identity as a family even they enjoy their family life or race to be part of a nonrealistic ideal white family. This also what Stephanie Coontz criticized in her essay “What we really miss about the 1950s” that the nostalgia in the 1950s mostly only white people found good because they weren't affected by racism and discrimination in contrast to the minorities “but all age groups of blacks agreed that that later decades were definitely preferable to the 1950s.” Moreover, she says that the family back then does not have the equality between man and

woman as it is today so

That’s why a lot of today’s parents disagree with their parent's conservative beliefs. They were a lot of sexism against women at that time but were tolerated. In addition, she spoke about the huge influence of media in the 1950s came as the one in “Looking for Work.” Coontz says, ‘People didn’t follow these shows to see their own lives reflected back them, but they watched them see how families were supposed to live.’ They show how to act and dress to manipulate their behavior for their own beliefs in society and family what is good and not. A lot of families cannot adapt because they did not have enough money, or they do not belong to a certain race. There was not only the beautiful picture of an ideal family described by a lot of white Grandparents today but also terrible things that were kept secret. In conclusion, the 1950s represent not a good example of a happy family. Through the media, an unrealistic image was engraved in the heads of the people. But there is no mention of the significant issues that existed at that time, such as racism and discrimination against minorities. They have been forced to adapt and make their own race and identity poor.