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Subject

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The America dream

The role of the American West has profound impacts on constructing American identity. West holds a significant place on nations self-image and remains a distinctive part of American history. The change experienced by American institutes and democracy are the products of westward movements. Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis defines the concept of exceptionalism that attracted immigrants from all over the world. according to his philosophy, the new western history emerged in the 1980s when many people moved to America in search of a job and better lifestyles. American West is considered to be of great significance in different instances. West has been responsible for creating new people of mixed race who were not English in nationality or characteristics. American West remains one of the dominant factors that destroyed the inherited culture by creating a new American identity. Experiences of the frontier have redefined cultures, American nationality, society and even identity. The characteristics that defined American identity after the westward extension include individualism, enthusiasm and optimism. American identity is rooted in the white dream that has been the reason of racial subjugation and segregation.

Coates and Richter claim that the entire concept of American identity is based on the idea of race. Ta-Nehisi Coates in his book “Between the World and Me” provides a real meaning of what it means to be black in America. The kids of black continue to struggles in search of their identities. The fear traumatizes young man who faces discriminating behaviors from the police. Racial subjugation remains one of the common social issues encountered by the people belonging to African descent in the country. Daniel K Richter in his book “Facing East From Indian Country” portrays miseries of the Native Americans who are repositioned in American land. The social, political and military powers have a significant role in changing the identities of Native Americans. They have been struggling for getting recognition as Americans. Expeditions of English on the native land causes miserable changes by forcing native people to reject their original identities.

Immigrants have failed to achieve American exceptionalism. People of different races moved to America with the dream of attaining success and living a magnificent life. However, the reality has been harsh for backs because they were treated as secondary citizens in a foreign land. Coates mentions blacks “have forgotten the scale of theft that enriched them in slavery; the terror that allowed them, for a century, to pilfer the vote; the segregationist policy that gave them their suburbs” (Coates). It is difficult to identify a common status for minority populations including African-Americans. Richter has accepted the negative impacts of colonization on the native people such as they had to leave their belongings and lands. They were forced to learn a new language and disconnect with their native culture. The arrival of immigrants in America brought them to a conflicting situation where they had to choose their identities. Richter defines American as a person who belongs to European ancestry. This definition has excluded native Indians as for long history presented them as merciless savage Indians. Native adapted to new ways such as by learning a foreign language. Richter mentions they wanted “to articulate a distinctive vision of cultural coexistence on Indian terms” (Richter). They knew that survival was not possible without accepting new ways.

Coates has provided a solution for attaining true American identity that is through hard work and perseverance. He claims that the brutal history of slavery has influenced the spirits of black youth that restricts them from attaining something exceptional. The only way of changing their miserable fates is by following their desires and improving their lives. Coates further states, “plunder has become an heirloom, an intelligence, a sentence, a default setting to which, likely to the end of our days, we must invariably return” (Coates). Today reality has changed and blacks have managed to reach the highest positions such as a black president. Black women are more empowered today that also reflects the role of struggles and determination. Richter has identified the role of trade in providing better opportunities for growth to the native people. Although expeditions caused native people to leave their native identities it allowed them to progress economically and socially. He mentions, “they preserve something of what Indian people said at important personal and political moments in their lives, and they originated as largely self-contained oral texts, whose structure was largely under the Native speaker’s, not the European scribe’s control” (Richter). Without expeditions and arrival of whites, economic progress was not possible for the native people.

My sense of America has changed over the course by exploring the role of the American West and exceptionalism. American identity is not about whiteness or race but it is linked to the broader concepts of individualism and freedom. The role of blacks has changed today as Coates mentioned Barack Obama. American exceptionalism claims that America is superior to all other countries because it provides better opportunities for growth to the people irrespective of their race and color. Today people from different cultures are living in America that leads to the creation of a diverse country. Today attainment of dreams depends more on one’s efforts irrespective of one’s race. Minority populations including blacks are still facing complexities due to their socio-economic status but their determination towards their betterment can lead to a successful life.

Work Cited

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. Between the World and Me. Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

Richter, Daniel K. Facing East from Indian Country. Harvard University Press, 2003.