

Vivian Hovsepian

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Dr. Galvan

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The Effect of Multiculturalism in the United States

The existence of our country is based on the ideas and writings of our historical past and the words of those who lived before us. Our so called “history” is documented in our literature and is taught in our schools throughout our country. However, there are many people that question the actual legitimacy of Americas past and how this country actually came to be. The America we know today has been enriched by the cultural influences of those before the time of Columbus. Understanding these multicultural approaches are important because we give light to those voices we have not seen in our textbooks, we understand now that life was able to be sustained because of the different multicultural findings here in America, and finally minorities in our country might feel less inferior to “Americans”. The illustration of this country has come into question by many scholars and historians. The analysis of these ideas might open the gates to a new world that many had not ever heard of before.

Many Americans throughout their lifetime have been educated on the original basis of this country. The discovery of this country is said to be done by Christopher Columbus himself. He, according to some scholars, discovered the land we now call home. To the astonishment of many, Restall explains to us that it was not just Columbus who influenced the world around him. These “great men” might not have been so great. Restall argues that “the most exceptional thing about Columbus’s geographical vision was that it was wrong. His achievements were the result

of historical accident and his role in an historical process that that was far larger than he was.”¹. Since his historical relevance was not as great as described, it made Americans skeptical about the actual founders of the new world. Columbus is called into question about how much he actually influenced this country culturally. To many other beliefs it is that of the Native Americans and Africans that played a more ideal role in land in which we call America today. How we live as Americans today can be referred back to many different cultures, not just of one or two speck ones. So many new voices have now been heard because of the different multi cultures that influenced the land we live in today.

The idea that people lived here before the assumed time, has many effects on our society. Culturally, we can now see how these people lived and these fragments of tools discovered shows us how the original culture differs then the one we had thought to believe existed. Life was able to be sustained unlike what was originally described to us. The proof is in the archeological findings. There were many different cultures that lived here during extreme conditions. Through our geological teachings, it was taught to us that America at one point was inhabitable because of the extremities that this land gave to the human population after the Ice Age. The conclusion to this idea is America at that day and age was not livable whatsoever. Through the findings of many archeologists it has since been proven that the world, during that time, was actually not the way we may have perceived it to be. Fraser argues that “even while battling the extremeness, the team has gathered evidence contradicting the conventional wisdom that the mountains were to high, cold and inhospitable for early human habitation.”² This has shown us that these

¹ Restall, *The Myth of Exceptional Men: A Handful of Adventures*, pg 4

² Fraser, *The First South Americans: Extreme Living*, pg 6

extreme environments were able to sustain human life which changes so much of our history. Multiculturalism has defined this nation back to when staying alive was at its hardest.

In today's day and age, the color of your skin and the origin of your birth can single-handedly determine how you are treated in this country. Our culture as a whole has shifted to the idea that the location of your birth is the basis of whether or not you are considered inferior in the now white America. Takaki argues that "being white is the only way you were considered to be American. If you're not white, then you are considered to be in a category of "other"— to be different and inferior."³ Our new president Donald Trump is putting forth certain policies that attempt to make our country less diverse. This can be proven with the recent muslim ban and the idea that a wall should be built in order to stop the immigration of Mexicans. However, this country originated with diversity. The founding fathers themselves were not American born. It seems contradicting for this society to judge those that have a cultural background not similar to theirs. Many people seem to forget that we have cultural influences from African Americans. We also have many cultural influences through the jewish community, which came here on the bases of finding a life better then the one they were living during the Holocaust. To assume we are a one culture nation is a very naive notion. America was built from the multi cultures of many minorities.

The history of our country has always been depicted in our textbooks through the works of many scholars. As we have come to realize the world we live has come into controversy. We cannot look at America through one looking glass. Our culture is diverse and has been since the origin of America. Understanding these multicultural approaches are important because we give light to those voices we have not seen in our textbooks, we understand now that life was able to

³ Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*, pg 4

be sustained because of the different multicultural findings here in America, and finally minorities in our country might feel less inferior to “Americans”. We must continue to question the America we live in today no matter the consequences.