

The achievement of desire



01 November 2008 The Achievement of Desire In the article " The Achievement of Desire" Richard Rodriguez describes his personal experience and life problems caused by cultural differences and ethnic diversity issues. The author pays a special attention to difficulties experienced by Mexican Americans during assimilation and adaptation in the USA. The uniqueness and value of this essay is that it describes real life experience of the writer and his personal problems and vision of cultural diversity in America. Thesis Diversity and gap in ethnic relations between his parents and Rodriguez, becomes a driven force for educational achievements and desire to develop his own identity and personality.

The main problem for Rodriguez was that complete cultural assimilation did not take place. However, the predominance of American values, in all institutions but particularly in the workplace and the schools, often placed great pressures on immigrant families, created conflict between family members and sometimes threatened positive identification with their own cultures. In terms of one-way assimilation, Rodriguez was the only member of the family able to assimilate and accept new cultural values and principles (Hollinger 82). However, it is important not to generative too much from these associations. Individuals and families from most countries have arrived over extended periods of time; the experience of early arrivals is often quite different from that of later arrivals, who come to an established community.

" There is no trace of his parents' accent in his speech. Instead he approximates the accents of teachers and classmates" (Rodriguez n. d.).

In terms of ethnic hierarchy theory, American culture was a dominant one as it reflected values and traditions of the state. In contrast, Mexican culture was seen as a minor one representing immigrants and asylum seekers. In

order to success in life, Rodriguez had to choose a dominant culture and its principles value by the majority of society. Cultural diversity, including the resurgence of a strong Mexican presence and identity, presents challenging issues for Rodriguez: what it means to be an American; the relationship between national and personal identities; identifying and working in both the cohesive and divisive forces in a multicultural society; and the form and flavor of a future republic (Hollinger 83).

A gap between Rodriguez and his parents was caused by group separatism and inability of his mother and father to change. It is evident that the theory of cultural pluralism did not work for cultural Rodriguez who tried to overcome racial and ethnic differences and acquire new knowledge and skills at school. Thus, his parents create maintain their unique ethnic identities but isolated from the mainstream culture. None of these issues is new, yet all are of immediate concern, and the symbolic importance of the approach of the twenty-first century invests them with particular meaning. Families and family life are therefore important arenas for the expression of cultural diversity. " My father and mother did not pass their time thinking about the cultural meanings of their experience. It was I who described their daily lives with airy ideas"(Rodriguez n. d.). The purpose of this book is to give a picture of the diversity of families and family values. The overall emphasis is on continuity and change and on present and future (Taylor 83).

In sum, the essay of Rodriguez shows that inability of a person to assimilate and integrate into a mainstream culture creates great difficulties for him and his relatives. Cultural identity problems faced by many children and adolescents are exacerbated by language difficulties in their few years of settlement. Many have experienced racial discrimination and in some cases

marginalization in schools. Each of cultural groups has its own considerable cultural diversity as a result of history, regional differences and internal and external population movements. Thus, the life difficulties and troubles became a driven force for Rodriguez to work hard all his life and integrate into a mainstream culture. .

Works Cited

Hollinger, D. A. Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism. Basic Books; 10

Anv Rev

edition, 2006.

Rodriguez, R. The Achievement of Desire. 2008. www-

scf. usc. edu/clarkjen/Richard%20Rodriguez. doc

Taylor, Ch. Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition. Princeton

University

Press, 1994.