

Frontier

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The Importance of Frontier The American frontier, according to Turner is an elastic term. Turner defines the frontier as the edge of a settlement, which comprises a density of two or more people per square mile. Central to the Turner thesis is the critical influence that the frontier had in defining the character of the United States. Turner argues that the frontier, which at first was the Atlantic Coast before moving westward, is very different from the European frontier (Turner 1). I think the advance of the frontier with its military conquests is similar to the advancement of European imperialism. Turner paints the slavery struggle as just an incident that has a lot of meaning to the American history during the expansion of the westward. Slavery was more rampant just before the end of civil war, but did not become of exclusive importance. This effectively portrays the slavery struggle as an insignificant factor in American history.

The most significant impact of the frontier on American history, which Turner unconvincingly contends is the promotion of democracy. A complex society is precipitated by the wilderness, into a kind of primitive organization based on the family. The tendency is anti-social. This produces hostility to control. The tax-gatherer for instance is viewed as a representative of oppression. The same conditions, according to Turner help in explaining the difficulty of forming a strong government in the period of the union. The frontier individualism has from the beginning, therefore promoted democracy. For example, “ the frontier States that came into the Union in the first quarter of a century of its existence came in with democratic suffrage provisions, and had reactive effects of the highest importance upon the older States whose peoples were being attracted there” (Turner 5).

Turner concludes that the non-geographical elements of the frontier

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nevertheless evidently continue with the current phase of globalization that is essentially Americanization. Indeed, Turner reckons that the frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization. According to Turner, another example of how the frontier promoted democracy is given of western New York that forced an extension of suffrage in the constitutional convention of that State in 1821 (Turner 5).

In that regard the Turner's thesis is not convincing because the impetus appears a new wave in the American imperialism's history. Despite being perceived as an encouragement to the overseas expansion of the United States and promotion of democracy, it does not explain how groups such as the republicans and others evolved. Therefore, a number of controversies are evident and hence I am not convinced about Turner's thesis. There is need to give more evidence to show how the described processes have come about in order to make it convincing.

Works Cited

Turner, Frederick Jackson. The Significance of the Frontier in American History. Web. 12 Feb.

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