

Thoughts: native americans and social protests essay

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Native Americans: Stereotypes and Realizations Native Americans are most often depicted by mass media as cartoon characters drawn in a stereotypic manner. Specifically, Native Americans are often shown as garbed in brown clothing with feathers firmly placed on their heads; of course, a reddish skin tone is added, complementary to the aforesaid details. Interestingly, I do remember that during my earliest years in school the same image has been put into my mind; probably, this was due to the fact that such imagery of Native Americans seemed harmless and free of repercussions as even Disney depicts them as such. From the jokes and stories of my peers, as well as family members at times, I have come to think of Native Americans as superb businessmen. Of course, it is quite common to see Tobacco brands depicting Native Americans as a symbol of quality; at times, casinos are even associated with the culture of Native Americans making it seem that they are all experts in such unproductive spending activities.

Eventually though, I realized that such thoughts about Native Americans are mostly inaccurate. It is undeniable that the most glaring misconception about Native Americans is they are a single culture with encompassing uniformity. Reliable sources generally point out that Native Americans, despite often being regarded as a single culture, are indeed considerably diverse having differences in aspects such as beliefs and religion (Pritzker, 2000). In addition, it is also important to point out how certain aspects of representation actually have deeper cultural meaning. Native Americans are often associated with tobacco, making it seem that they are entirely enthralled with smoking as a vice. In reality, tobacco serves both a religious

rites and healing practices, and was originally not meant for economic endeavors (Pritzker, 2000).

Even with such a few examples and points, it becomes evident that the Native American stereotype is misleading and is an obstacle to proper cultural understanding. Social Protests: Art as a Tool for Awareness While some may consider art merely in terms of aesthetics, it is irrefutable that art has the capability to evoke emotions as well as thoughts. In this sense, it would only be appropriate for art to be used as a means of questioning the status quo; as such a pursuit requires an effective means of appealing to the masses. Some people though may question as to whether art aids the cause of the oppressed, pointing out the possibility that such individuals would only be further aggravated. These concerns may actually be true as the manner in which the oppressed are depicted in a certain work would affect how the entire message would be understood by society. Hence, it is definitely vital for artists with such a noble cause to ensure that the art which they have created clearly depicts the notion that they would want to express; if a given work of art, despite being made with the most noteworthy aims, would mistakenly be understood then all the effort exerted in its creation would be wasted let alone the possibility of undesirable repercussions. In relation to the abovementioned purpose, art in galleries and museums may only have a limited degree of effectiveness. If the target audience of the work would be the masses or the majority which does not regularly go to such places to appreciate works of art for a price, then the message imbued within the work may be lose its worth.

Ideally though there are a myriad of art pieces which may be regarded as highly effective. A prime example would be Lewis Hine's photograph in 1910 about child labor, focusing upon an eight year old boy in a factory setting; it is without doubt a thought provoking image. The photograph may be considered as highly effective for it highlights how inappropriate it is for a child to be shown against such a backdrop; it makes one think that despite being present in society, such a reality is still wrong in its simplest sense and should be reconsidered and banned. There are numerous other similar examples, but nonetheless the main point that art may be used as an effective means of raising public awareness and questioning conventions has been proven.

ReferencesPritzker, B. M. (2000). A Native American Encyclopedia: History, Culture, and Peoples. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Hine, L. (1910).

Leo 48" high, 8 years old, Picks up Bobbins at 15c a day. Course Material.;