

Marginalization of native americans from the economic and social centers of the n...

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The Marginalization of Native Americans From the Economic and Social Centers of the Nation and Its Consequences Word Count: 536 (2 pages)

I. Introduction

Native American writers definitely share an interest in common themes and social issues which they see as important to their people, their culture, and to their cultural understanding. The marginalization of Native Americans from economic and social centers is detrimental to First Nation peoples, as well as having major social consequences due to both of these issues—which is discussed in Louise Erdrich’s “Tracks” and Sherman Alexie’s “The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven.”

II. Marginalization of Native Americans from Economic Centers

Many times, native peoples such as First Nations people have been subject to the throes of poverty. Like Victor in *The Lone Ranger*, “Victor didn’t have any money. Who does have money on a reservation, except the cigarette and fireworks salespeople.”¹ This demonstrates that much of the power of the native peoples lies within the hands of those who sell goods to the Native Americans that destroys their culture—such as those selling alcohol, for example. Here the example of cigarettes and fireworks is given, but—no matter the substance being sold—the story is still the same. The economic power lies within the hands of the oppressors. There are no grocery stores that are nearby; people can’t afford to buy healthy or good food, as evidenced in *Tracks* by Louise Erdrich: “Eli now busied himself with the cold stew. He gulped it all down as if it held tender beef, which we had not seen since the government issue.”² Like Victor—who had just lost his job and his

father—he lived on government-issued beer and food, similar to what had happened to the main character in Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*. Native Americans have been kept away from economic centers in the hopes that they would not gain prosperity.

III. Marginalization of Native Americans from Social Centers

One of the most social elements about being a human being is where one lives.

That is why that, when one reads about the HUD housing situation that was inherent in *The Lone Ranger*, it makes one sad to hear about people being placed in such paltry living conditions. For, as is per usual, HUD housing is usually low-quality housing reserved for the poor and subsidized by the government. This is one way First Nations peoples were marginalized from the social center of the home.

IV. Major Consequences of Marginalization From Economic and Social Centers

The marginalization from economic and social centers that Native Americans face are going to (and already do have) major consequences. This not only affects the First Nations peoples with regard to their financial power and societal status—but it also affects Native Americans who are trying to lead normal lives. The dream of financial independence is a dream, but it is not one that is far away, if people try hard enough, work hard, and save for better times ahead in the future. As evidenced by the way the Dawes Act of 1887 kept the characters in *Tracks* quarantined from the white population and the way it caused the First Nations people to lose their land—these were

major consequences of marginalization.

V. Conclusion

Certainly, it seems that First Nation peoples have struggled and fought many battles in order to get to where they are today. Not only are Native Americans marginalized by being around a lack of economic and social centers, but these deficits have major social consequences.

WORKS CITED

Alexie, Sherman. *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. US: HarperPerennial, 2000. Pp. 59.

Erdich, Louise. *Tracks: A Novel*. US: HarperCollins, 1988. Pp. 99.