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Opportunity in the midst of disadvantage

In America more than any other country in the world, we have afforded to us rights that are the breeding grounds for opportunity despite of one's starting point or disadvantages. It is the structure of our capitalist society that drives free creativity and bolsters in the next generation to be more passionate about their craft, and therefore authentically generating wealth, economy and the advancement of society. In America, we have an educational system that empowers youth to be able to develop themselves in a world of information, we have an economic structure in which social mobility is more volatile compared to other countries, and regardless of the social class, the American economy affects all of its parties.

In America, people have freedom of thought. The driving force of this opportunity is the ability to read and write. Francis Bacon has been commonly attributed to the phrase "scientia potentia est" (Knowledge is power), which captures this idea. To be able to read and write is to be able to assess, address and progress. In order to advance as a society, those with the charge to progress need to be able to understand and critically assess the world around them and to be able to be free in their thought. America affords everyone with this opportunity, regardless of their social class or their ethnicity. Shikha Dalmia notes that it is this feature of American Education that is responsible for the superior quality of engineers and thinkers in America (Dalmia 68). The way that society is advanced is by critically assessing its own status quo, and questioning the

norm. That doesn't mean that the norm has to change, but an engagement of thought needs to be active in order for society to progress. Dalmia posits that Americans are superior in that they are more self-critical than any other country, namely India and China (Dalmia 68). This is also reverberated in the sentiment that America is more self-driven than others and encourages its citizens to develop and grow (Dalmia 68). Education is key to providing free opportunity to grow and be the worker you want to be and sets the foundation for the pursuit of one's passions and dreams.

In America, the ability to move up the social class and income ladder is provided more than any other country. One major component of the American Dream is the ability to leave from where you started. That is, to become greater than where you started. While there is an apparent problem in the current state of social mobility and income inequality, we Americans are still afforded an opportunity that surpasses that of other countries. According to Cox and Alm, despite the current state of affairs income inequality does not necessarily determine one's equal opportunity (Cox & Alm 65). It is rather the ability to generate income in a free manner, by one's own merits, and not the results that indicate opportunity. In other countries, specifically communist countries such as China and North Korea, citizens generate the economy inasmuch as they conform to the system. However, as Cox and Alm state, the American dream isn't about equal distribution of income, or about the actual manifestation of profit, it is about the ability to freely be responsible for your economic growth and status (Cox & Alm 65). Despite the apparent stagnancy, the progress of the economy has a correlation with benefiting the other classes (Cox & Alm 66).

In America, we have many opportunities afforded to us, and while yes the system may be flawed, yes there may be a disparity between advantages amongst different social groups, it is still the most free society and provides the necessary resources to develop, grow and progress in the modern world.

#### Works Cited

Cox, W. Michael, and Richard Alm. "By Our Own Bootstraps." *Readings for Writers*. 15th ed., edited by Jo Ray McCuen-Metherell and Anthony C. Winkler, Cengage, 2016, pp. 64-66.

Dalmia, Shikha. "Long Live the American Dream." *Readings for Writers*. 15th ed., edited by Jo Ray McCuen-Metherell and Anthony C. Winkler, Cengage, 2016, pp. 66-69.