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Our America

The United States is one of the countries with the greatest diversity of people, which is why it is one of the best-known countries in the world. This diversity has helped this country grow a lot economically and culturally. The cultures that can be found in the U.S. are Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, and African American. In this class, it was possible to learn about important topics and how American society is accepting of these different cultures. One of the topics that was discussed the most in this class was discrimination and racism. Especially to the people who lived in the earlier times. A clear example was the year 1619 when people from Africa were brought on a ship to be slaves for the Europeans. These African people were put into very hard jobs such as agriculture. Africans were mistreated and discriminated against because they did not have the right to be free like most people. This was one of the most heard topics in this class and how African people fought for their rights. Another topic that was discussed in this class was Hispanics and what are the main reasons why they come to this country that is the United States. Hispanics are also people who have received a lot of discrimination, especially because their native language is not English. From my visits to the museum, I could see that Hispanics have suffered a lot over the years. But also other cultures had to experience the same, such as the Chinese and the American Indians.

In this class, you can learn about American Indians who are native people of the United States. They were the first people that the Europeans found when they arrived in America, they were divided into several clans or tribes; the Lakotas, and the Dakotas, who spoke different languages among themselves. Unlike other indigenous peoples, the Sioux were nomadic and adept at hunting bison. For this reason, they moved following the herds of buffalo and carried the mythical tipis, conical dwellings covered in bison skin. The American Indians were also known for their ability to create clothing from animal skins. All the parts of an animal were used for clothing, accessories, or weapons. They were also very good at agriculture especially since they connected to nature. When the Europeans arrived in America there was a radical change for the indigenous people. Christopher Columbus is the person who discovered America but he did not know that there were people in this territory, which would not be called a discovery if it would not be called theft of land from the indigenous people. The book talks about "The Doctrine of Discovery is a set of legal principles that governed the European colonizing powers, particularly regarding the administration of indigenous land." This Doctrine of discovery was decreed by the Pope and implied that all people who were not Christians or believers in God would be perpetual slaves. It also gave Europeans the right to own property and land so that they benefited from the Christians. This was one of the events that Africans and Native Americans had to go through. They were not believers of God which made them slaves of the Europeans.

Another of the cultures that we learned about in class was African Americans and how they were in the past years. One of the main events in history is how Africans came to America. "The year 1502 is often cited as the year that African slaves were brought to the American continent, and by 1525, the direct passage of slave ships began from Africa to the Americas."

This was the beginning of the enslavement of the African people and how they had to fight for their lives. In the book of 1619, the project can be found "...the 1924 Racial Integrity Act originated as "an incident to slavery" and its racial classifications served as nothing more than "measures designed to maintain White Supremacy."..." This means that people White people had more power than black people. One of the big reasons this law was created was because of people's race. Race identifies a person by their skin color, hair color, and tone of voice. That is why there was this social problem that white people were more respected than blacks. The Racial Integrity Act explains that no person who is white cannot marry a black person, which would be a great crime.

The classes had to visit a museum that was a memorial to slave people in New York City. In this museum, it was possible to observe many of the slave cabins and how they had fractures in their bones or bent bones. That was one of the things that struck me the most because this kind of thing has not been seen in another person. In one of the readings found near these images of the bones, he explains that many of these people were beaten by their owners and at times died from these blows or had to continue working injured. The slaves had no choice but to work in these conditions because they were not free to make decisions. In another part of the museum it was observed how the slaves had to work in very bad conditions and one of the examples that this museum gave us was that the slave men had to lower 30 or more barrels from the ships all day without rest. The enslaved women had to work as domestic employees in bad conditions and were mistreated. The children that these slaves had were their helpers and these little ones knew that when they grow up they have to follow the same path. But over the years, black people began to fight for rights and for society to change because they are also people who deserve

rights. Martin Luther King was one of the first people who fought for the rights of the people and especially of the people denied. Luther called this speech "I Have a Dream" which was made to change the history of these people who were suffering for years. Two more museums were also visited: "El Barrio" for Hispanics and "Chimós Americanos".

The visit to these two museums left me with great lessons, such as the museum of the Chinese who suffered a lot when they arrived in the United States due to discrimination. The museum tells us the story of 260 Chinese people who managed their lives traveling on a ship from China to New York City. Many of these people died but the few people who made it here were 100 to jail and 100 deported to their country. The people who were able to stay were as few as 60 and they made many sculptures for the museum in memory of their trip. Another museum that was visited was "El Barrio". This museum explains about Hispanics, especially people from Puerto Rico. As a Hispanic, I felt very identified with this museum because it represents one of the main problems that Hispanics have when they arrive in America. One of the first problems that Hispanics have in America is discrimination, especially because Hispanics are people of different cultures. Discrimination is one of the problems that Hispanics have suffered for years for the reason that many Hispanics migrate to the United States in search of a better life that cannot be found in their native countries. American citizens are not happy with this because they think that Hispanics are thieves or drug addicts and that they only cause harm to society. But on the contrary, Hispanics and other cultures help the country have diversity, which makes it unique due to the different traditions they have.

One of the parts that I liked the most about this class was that we had guests who talked about the experience they had with racism and discrimination. One of these people was a married couple who told us a little about the history of their lives, especially that when they were little they had to live with people who were from different cultures. They also talked about their experience when living in France and what was the most difficult for them. One of the problems they had in particular was that they didn't know much French and that the French got angry because they didn't understand them. Another problem they had was that the husband was mistaken for a person who sold drugs but which was not the case. This man is a pastor and the police only judged him by his physical appearance, not knowing that he was one of the people who follow the word of God. They say that it was very difficult to adapt to this place because it was like being in another world of traditions and language. In this class, you can also hear about the history of many more people, but the one that I identify with the most was the story of these spouses for reason that I also felt that way when I arrived in the United States. The experience I had was very hard because I did not know English and it was very hard for me to adapt to another country. In the beginning, it was hard but later I learned about what it is like to live in the United States, especially the language, which is important. Entering secondary school it was difficult because I received a lot of discrimination from my classmates, especially since I am Ecuadorian. All my colleagues said that Ecuadorians are only employees and that we will never have a future, but I did not think so. I had the dream of moving forward and nothing stops me.

In conclusion, this class was the one that has left me with the most teachings and things that I did not know about what was suspended in America in past years. The ones I liked learning the most were about the American Indians and the Africans, which were hard stories to hear and

read because they suffered a lot to be free in this country. All this knowledge that this class left me helped inspire me to investigate more on the subject. Discrimination and racism are imposed issues that cannot be ignored and that our ancestors had to survive in those times. But now the world is changing and I hope that in the future there will no longer be problems being Black, Hispanic, or Asian because we are all the same. Checking in a box what type of race we are is one of the things that bothers me the most because God made us all the same and there doesn't have to be a difference between us. It was a part of reading the book from 1619 that made me think that in the United States, we are all divided by race and there is no equality.

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