The Current Myth on Western Expansion

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**Introduction**

The world surely develops at a fast rate. One can never explain the exact time a development will occur. It all depends with time, resources and other factors that are of human benefit. Majority view technology as the source factor that led to world development till todate. Many nations view technology as the key step to living in a satisfactory environment. Therefore, our notion of development focuses on the advancing technology. However, the main factor that leads to development is extension of living space. This means that the more free lands are acquired, the more a region becomes development. Expansion of territories all together is the main factor that led and still leads to development. For example, various nations such as Germany, Britain, France and others expanded their territories through colonization in order to develop. It never mattered whether they acquired land peacefully of forcefully. No matter the domino effect of gaining new and foreign lands, expansion had more benefits that contributed to a better future. It is therefore acceptable to suggest that technology may not be the real key development but expansion of territory drives the world to the next level. However, for expansion to succeed, space must be available and people to occupy the space should be present.

**Background information**

An example of occurrence of expansion is the Western Expansion that started decades ago. History has it that America is where it is today because of the Western Expansion. The United States expanded their territory through all their borders that is Eastern , Western, Northern and Southern borders but the expansion route that appeared to matter the most was the Western route. Initially, the United States did not seem to bother with what occurs on the Western side but after Thomas Jefferson purchased the Louisiana territory from the French government; all eyes were pointed towards that direction. Jefferson believed that a healthy expansion depended on the real mean that worked hard to sustain themselves. Jefferson believed in hardship as the best way to develop at a fast and beneficial rate. The fact that the people on that territory owned lands, they were positive towards making them become better places. When an individual acquires a land through struggle, he will be determined to renovate it and after satisfaction, the individual will have an urge to acquire other portions of land. This continuous acquirement of and renovation of land is what is termed as expansion. The United States is believed to have developed through renovation of the Westward side.

**Significance**

The importance of this essay is to have a clear mind on what the American myth on Western expansion should be. The past events of a nation are important parts of the current development. In order for a nation to successfully achieve future goals, it must understand its origin and how the past events affect the current situation and the future. The past events of a nation are explained through myths. Myths are the facts that we believe about certain previous events despite not being present at the time that the events happened. This essay therefore clarifies on the events that happened during Western Expansion. There are questions being raised about the frontier myth that explains the American Western expansion. These questions cause total confusion among the American people about what really got them to the place they exist currently. Just like a personal past is important to an individual, the Western Expansion is a past that is important to the American nation as it describes their originality. Moreover, the American nation needs to feel comfortable knowing that the forefathers organized the current future through the right customs.

**Thesis**

The Western Expansion was achieved though the hard work of the frontiersmen who acquired free unsettled lands outside the law and worked together to improve the lands.

**Argument**

According to Cormac McCarthy, Western Expansion was not achieved through civilized ways. The frontiersmen did not worth together in peace and harmony to develop the unsettled free lands. Cormac views America as a nation of primitive violence ways. McCarthy does not believe that men can live peacefully outside the law. America thinks of the frontiersmen as free individuals who lived peacefully after discovering and acquiring free lands. In other words, the people of America see that the frontiersmen owned land without having to fight each other. This is what makes them positive about their belief if the Frontiers myth of Western Expansion. The American nation therefore believes that people can live peacefully outside the law as free beings.

McCarthy on the other hand is not afraid to say that United States is violence nation. In fact, McCarthy says that the future will not be good as the American citizens expect. According to him, America will come to pay for the cruel ways that it used achieve the so called Western Expansion. The fact that the frontiersmen lived on harsh environments could not allow peace association among individuals. In fact, the frontiersmen did not really care about living together in peace but they cared about individual benefits. Western expansion just occurred as a result of individuals trying to sustain their lives but was not geared towards developing the nation as a whole.

**McCarthy’s View on Free Americans**

McCarthy describes human instincts as animalistic in reality. In the real world, people live in peace because they are forced to do so. The laws that govern a nation are only reason why human beings are considerate of each other’s lives. Laws are meant to prevent actions that are unjust to the human population. This means that for these laws to be created in the first place there must have been an idea that without them, the world would be chaotic. In reality, human beings mostly care about themselves or the things and people that matter most to them. If people were to live by this perception, a man could do anything whether good or bad provided the action benefits him and his family at large. McCarthy disagrees with the belief that the frontiersman lived in peace and shared their resources in order to expand their territories.

**Violence**

Human animalistic instincts lead to violence during the Western Expansion among the frontiersmen. People living outside the law have the power to do anything they want provided it is to their benefit. The frontiersmen progressed by travelling long distances using horses to discover and monopolize free unsettled lands. They tolerated hardships such as harsh environmental conditions during the expansion. For example, some frontiersmen were miners who worked all day on new lands to satisfy their needs. There obviously were some lands which were better than others based on fertility and other factors that were of benefit. Since these lands were limited, the frontiersmen had to fight in order to acquire the best. Violent acts including forcefully driving out people of fewer abilities that had previously acquired these lands or even killing them. The frontiersmen live according to the law of survival for the fittest. The strongest frontiersmen acquired the best resources. These acts which may seem awkward were normal at that particular time and were never viewed as unfair to the weaker individuals.

**Alienation**

Some frontiersmen gained advantages through association in groups. The cowboys were known for this behavior. Since it proved difficult to acquire lands individually, they travelled in larger groups discovering and acquiring new lands of larger portions and later sharing among themselves. Alienation was a great advantage to weaker frontiersmen existing in the groups of capable ones because they were sure of benefitting despite their little effort. The only thing they had to do is help discover new lands and be loyal to their mates. When frontiersmen existed in a specific group, all his needs including that of his family were catered for automatically. This co independence was a safe zone for most men. These groups however consisted of a small number of individuals in order to minimize mischievous acts such as betrayal. It was easier this way as secret information concerning new discovered of beneficial lands could be kept unknown to the public. Alienations however did not work out every time. There were cases where certain members of a group could discover very rich lands and decide to keep it secret from the other mates in order to satisfy their own wants (Murphet 2012). The result was violence when the mates discovered that they were betrayed and their needs were put out of consideration.

**Solidarity**

Since alienation according to groups did not always display to better results, some individuals preferred operating alone if not with a family alone. The strongest frontiersmen operated individually when looking for rich free lands. The weaker frontiersmen were disadvantaged when it came to solidarity. Most of them ended up acquiring the less rich lands after losing fights to their stronger counterparts. The only way they could discover and own free lands peacefully was killing any other individuals that were a threat to them. For example, in one of McCarthy’s novel, a stranger captured a father’s son and threatened to kill him if the father did not agree to join the stranger in his trip. The stranger must have needed help to acquire certain resources but since it is not easy to get help from people that prefer existing in solidarity, his resorted to forceful engagement of strangers. The only way that the father could prevent the stranger from killing his son was using his gun to kill the stranger from quite a distance (McCarthy 2010). Solidarity was the best way the frontiersmen acquired resources because they developed faster without any distractions when they were alone.

**Refutation**

There is some logic in McCarthy’s argument. The frontiersmen believed in personal strength and did not care about developing the society as a whole. During the beginning Western Expansion, there was unlimited free land with rich resources in many regions. Once these regions were discovered, papers were published containing information of the benefits of these lands. There was no first come first serve law that existed hence the frontiersman that owned more resources won the competition easily. Others did not accept defeat easily as well therefore violence was increasing as new rich lands were discovered. It is therefore acceptable to suggest that McCarthy might have been correct when he said that the American nation is built on a violated land. In fact, Western Expansion progressed more through forceful engagement of minority races in hard work. Slavery was part of what made the expansion successful but it does not mean that it was right to engage in slavery and slave trade. However, we cannot conclude that there was total violation and primitive ways because some of the slaves willingly accepted to work in these regions because they benefited in some way (Carter, 2014). Some slaves preferred living that way provided they were being fed instead of living miserable lives on their own.

**Conclusion**

The American nation should feel proud of their forefathers for working had which led to the current situation. Despite resorting to primitive ways like violence, they struggled to keep things in check individually. They believed that in individual strength than machines. Slavery however was the bad part of it but at least some regions such as the purchased territory of Louisiana were strongly against it. It does not really matter what the plans of the frontiersmen were during the Western Expansion period. The true fact is they made the United States a better place to exist in currently. The American people should therefore view the Western Expansion myth as a period of strong independent individuals.

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