Do Australians Need A New National Identity?

Posted on October 16, 2019

National Identity, Racial Stereotype, and the Australian Debate

Statement: As national identity promotes racial stereotypes, so Australia does not need the national identity.

The argument states that Australia does not need a new national identity because it will cause more harm than good. As the emphasis of the Australian parliament is more on human rights, the idea of maintaining a new national identity becomes less significant. According to the Aboriginal perspective, maintaining identity will cause disputes as it threatens the status of minorities in Australia. The adoption of a new identity will also undermine the target of Australia in attaining equality and providing human rights to the Aboriginals. The notion will influence the indulgence of Indigenous culture in Australian land. Changing identities will threaten the status of minorities, including Aboriginals. The argument also states that Australian identity will influence the Aboriginals more.

Mary Gilmore and the Argument for an Inclusive National Tradition

Jennifer Strauss (1954) rejects the idea of changing nationality by quoting verses from Mary Gilmore's poem, "All men at God's roundtable sit, And all men must be fed; But this loaf in my hand, This loaf is my son's bread" (Strauss, 1954). Mary Gilmore presented the poem in the twentieth century to focus on the concept of human rights. She tried to promote the belief that all Australians are equal and do not need the identity as is the line between native people and Aboriginals. She conveyed the message in her poems that the most important thing is equality and justice.

The analysis of the poem reveals that the need for identity is less important for the survival of the country. The tone of Gilmore provides the solution to social and political issues. Her focus was on protecting the indigenous people living in Australia. The claims presented by Gilmore in the poem depict how a new identity will ruin the lives and statuses of Aboriginals. Mary Gilmore's poem has close relevance to the current argument as it portrays the theme of human rights. New identity acts against the idea of freedom. She also explains the bitterness that prevails in Australian history due to the deprivations of the Aboriginals. Classifying people according to identities will make it an unjust land.

A.D Hope in poem “Australia” highlights the significance of traditions and glory of humanitarianism. The text reveals the significance of culture, “the learned to doubt the chatter of cultured apes. Which is called civilization over there” (Hope, 1970)? The text explains the uselessness of titles and power. The more important thing is patriotism for keeping the nation united. Hope identifies that people in Australia come from different cultures and regions. He presented the poem to highlight the negative role of nationality as the government in the past treated migrants differently from locals. The poem supports the argument that Australia does not need a new identity because it has a more important duty of providing equal rights to Aboriginals. The poem identifies that Australian people were homogeneous while strict laws for migrants challenged national peace due to prevailing threats of rebellion. The poem shows close relevance with the topic under discussion as it presents the logical reasoning of why Australia don’t need a new identity. Hope in the poem criticizes the role of government that discriminates the society according to their identities.

Migration, Indigenous Experience, and the Meaning of the Great Southern Land

Ania Walwicz’s song “Great Southern Land” uncovers the theme of migrants and Aboriginals settling in Australia. The song reveals the difficulties encountered by the people after leaving their homelands. The author of the song was an impressionist, finding the issues faced by the minority populations in Australia. Through prose, the lyric tries to represent the harsh realities faced by foreigners and their struggles during settlements in the country. Walwicz conveys her emotions about how crucial it is for the country to treat minorities equally.

The theme of migrant suffering is apparent in, “I hear the sound of the stranger’s voices. I see their hungry eyes, their hungry eyes. Great Southern Land, great southern land. They burned you black” (Walwicz, 1981). The poem supports the argument that identifying will create more disputes and cause more harm to minorities. The purpose of Walwicz in the poem was to convey the dark realities of Australia as the land treated migrants and Aboriginals unfairly. It explains the miseries of minorities by quoting the events of hunger and deprivation. Walwicz explains the sufferings of the migrants and provides reasoning for rejecting the idea of new Australian identities.

The concept of identity will influence the lives of minority populations negatively. The idea of forming new identities is unreasonable because Australia is a land where people from different cultures and regions migrated in the past. The land preserves the stories of Aboriginals who lived in the land throughout history. It is not possible to form new identities as it will create more adversities for the people. Aboriginals make up only 2 per cent of the population, so the notion threatens their status and individuality. New identities will also create chaos for the Australians as they would struggle to find their true identities. The concept of new identity is also inapplicable as it threatens the ideology of human rights and undermines the role of parliament in marinating justice for minorities. Racial discrimination remains another adverse impact of forming new identities. The overall assessment of

the three poems provides support to the main argument and rejects the idea of new identities. The poems uncover the miserable realities of migrants who struggled to survive in the brutal land. The poets state that human rights and equality are more important for survival in Australia.

References

Walwicz, A. (1981). *Great Southern Land*. Retrieved 04 22, 2018, from https://alldownunder.com/australian-music-songs/great-southern-land.htm

Strauss, J. (1954). “The Collected Verse of Mary Gilmore. *The Chronicle, 2*