Elizabeth Keckley’s Behind the Scenes and Black Life After Slavery

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Introduction

The particular book, “Behind the Scenes: Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House” by Elizabeth Keckley is known as one of the greatest autobiographies, which provides the necessary insights about the historical era of Lincoln in the country. Undoubtedly, it can be identified as a story of the Civil War. This book comprises different adventurous life events of Keckley’s life that help readers to understand the specific political scenario of the country through the lens of a lady who was a former slave and also performed her duties as a worker of the White House. It is notable to mention that she spent thirty years of her life as a slave, and after much struggle, she became able to maintain sustainability in her life. All the experiences shared by Keckley through this particular book help to understand the lives of the slaves and how they became different after the phenomenal political development in the country. The specific aim of this research paper is to critically overview the opinions delivered by Keckley in her book and establish the necessary insights about the Lincoln White House and this particular period of U.S. history in general from the life of Elizabeth Keckley.

Discussion

The opinions delivered by Keckley effectively indicate the immense level of struggle which she had to face during slavery. She never gave up on her miserable life situation and strived to maintain a better position in American society. After many years of struggle, she established herself as a seamstress. That particular profession can be considered a milestone in her life as she met with Mrs. Lincoln, who was the first lady of the country (Keckley, 83). The good interpersonal relationship between Keckley and Mrs Lincoln ultimately led her to become Mrs Lincoln’s personal seamstress. The close bond between her and Mrs Lincoln made it easy for Keckley to observe the different paradigms of government and the overall political scenario in the country during that particular time period.

The significant feature related to the information provided by Keckley is that she mostly uses letters to different people at different events. The documentation of information in the form of letters helps to understand the actual prevailing situation at that time period. The author successfully indicates the

life patterns in the case of Mrs. Lincoln before and after the death of Mr. President. The number of letters provided by Keckley is helpful in critically understanding and making inferences about the confusing time period of the Civil War in the country. The segregation of particular time periods in the years of slavery and Keckley's stay in the White House helps to differentiate the circumstances of the country before and after the Civil War. It helps to formulate opinions about what was exactly going on in that specific time zone. The information provided by Keckley in her autobiography is also immensely crucial because it clearly indicates the life struggle of Mrs. Lincoln after the death of her husband. She is going through different sorts of problems, which can be identified as political and social issues.

The changing paradigm of the country's history after the death of the president is effectively observed and interpreted by Keckley as she was the primary dressmaker and "modiste" of Mary Lincoln. Keckley also closely witnessed the different political discussions between Mr. President and Mrs. Lincoln about the changing political facets of the country. It also makes it convenient for the former slave to understand what is going on in the country politically and the specific challenges which are associated with that particular time of the Civil War. Keckley had enough knowledge about the political scenario of the country as she knew President Lincoln's different opinions about his cabinet members and the level of their performance. It can be rightly said that Keckley had immense knowledge of the country's political affairs. That was the crucial political phase for President Lincoln as it led the country to the paradigm of the Civil War. The role of Keckley was also immense as she was invited by the Lincoln family to join the presidential party actively.

It is crucial to mention that the prospect of a Civil War in the country is mostly discussed by the consideration of the different opinions delivered by the Northern and Southern states of the country. The viewpoint of various historians helps to understand the true perspective related to the Civil War. Different forms of insight ultimately help to understand the features of the human experience of African Americans, which are closely related to the features of the Civil War. The particular opinion about the Civil War indicated by Elizabeth Keckley is immensely crucial as it provides a unique point of view about the changing features of the country's political scenario. The contribution of Keckley in the documentation of the history of the country is also crucial because it provides the point of view of the individual who suffered from the problem of slavery in her life. She witnesses the critical form of agony and grief in the case of slavery. She successfully provides her particular slave narrative in American history with the consideration of the prospect of the Civil War. She effectively provides a strong approach or comparison of the crucial events of the Civil War in that particular time period and how they changed the lives of African Americans.

The significant role of Keckley as an active observer of that political time phase started due to the strong bond between her and Mary Todd Lincoln. Mrs. Lincoln used to share all her problems with Keckley, which made her effectively aware of the country's actual circumstances. This particular association gives the author of this particular book a unique perspective on the domestic life of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln in the White House and the overall life in the capital city of the United States of America. Elizabeth closely observed the country's problem, which appeared in the case of recently

freed slaves during the Civil War. She had a complete understanding of the whole scenario, and she also took some steps to provide necessary assistance to people who were in need of food, shelter, or other basic needs. It is notable that she had the complete support of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln in the provision of different facilities to needy individuals.

Undoubtedly, the description of the specific time frame of the country presented by Keckley can be identified as an effective feature of the historical literary insight, which provides an indication of the specific aspects of pop culture's recent occurrence in the case of Lincoln fever. Keckley's role was significant, which provided an effective approach regarding the different complex forms of intersections of race and authority in America during the time period of the 1860s. The direct interaction of Keckley with the president of the country also makes it possible for her to describe the particular viewpoint of Black Americans about freedom and how it impacts the features of slavery. The role of the author in the White House paradigm was compelling as it can indicate the influential representation of Black Americans in the overall national scenario with the consideration of the Civil War. The two different phases of Keckley's life as a slave and the personal modiste of the first lady clearly indicate the difference between two different paradigms, both of which are the realities of the nation. Living in the White House immensely changed her perception of the political facet of the country and the particular aspects related to the impact of the Civil War on the country.

The role of Keckley is also crucial in American history because she closely witnessed the circumstances after the assassination of Mr. Lincoln. She effectively explains the experiences of Mrs. Lincoln, which she bore after the death of the President of the country. The situation drastically changed for Mrs. Lincoln as she had to deal with many difficult circumstances to maintain the sustainability of herself and her family. She was pushed out from the White House, and Keckley was the witness of the whole scenario in the case of life difficulties for Mrs. Lincoln. Keckley's significant role is influential in American history because she effectively documents the occurrence of real change in the country, which can be observed in the political and social functioning of the nation. Different life events experienced by Keckley were closely related to the changing paradigm of the political scenario of the country after the death of Mr. Lincoln. Her personal objectives about the freedom of slaves related to the feature of American identity can be observed in the specific form of the Fourteenth Amendment in the country. The particular opinion raised by Keckley through her book is also characterised as the viewpoint of the colored historian, which comes up with the consideration of her own historical discourse referring to the paradigm of slavery. It is notable to mention that her particular opinions about the whole social scenario of the country were raised with the consideration of her specific position as a middle-class black woman before the Civil War, who was going through different difficulties. Her insights are also an indication of her effective involvement in the influential prospect of black politics in the country. This particular form of political optimism ultimately leads the nation to the facet of the approach of Reconstruction. Another crucial phase of the social status of Black Americans with the establishment of the necessary power in political and social settings was also closely monitored and described by Keckley.

Conclusion

To conclude this, it is essential to mention that the role of Keckley in understanding the Civil War era is immensely crucial. Her particular approach provides the necessary indications about the life of the slave who goes through different forms of problems and establishes her social position with the changing paradigm of the social facet in the case of Black Americans. She closely assesses the different political developments that happened in the country as she had close interaction with the first lady of the country. She keenly observes different features which appear in the form of developments after the significant approach of the Civil War. The political and social opinion raised by Elizabeth Keckley is also influential because it effectively points out the scenario for Black Americans during slavery and after the Civil War, which enormously changed the overall paradigm of the country. The facet of change in the country can be monitored in the form of different political and social settings. The prospect of information embedded by Keckley through her writing provides a clear picture of the particular events related to the Civil War in the country.

Work Cited

Keckley, E. *Behind the Scenes; or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House*. G.W. Carleton & Company, Publishers, 1868, https://books.google.com.pk/books?id=0UsIAAAAQAAJ.