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CH 203

Response Week 4

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**Group 1, Question C**

Henry David Thoreau’s “On Civil Disobedience” can be looked at from both liberal and conservative angles because it does not take a binary stance. It is a defining Transcendentalist work, and transcendentalism was not a binary philosophy. In the very first sentence Thoreau states “That government is best which governs least” (Thoreau 1). This can be easily mistaken as a pro-conservative idea because conservatives idealize small unintrusive government, but he is not advocating for this necessarily. He believes, “The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to- for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well- is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed” (Thoreau 7). He advocates for a better government, not a weaker one. He wants a government that speaks for the people.

**Group 2, Question B**

Maria W. Stewart talks about non-white female identity mostly focusing on the failures to make black women equal to even white women in terms of education and work opportunity. At one point, she compares the available work to be “as unprofitable to us as the spider's web or the floating bubbles that vanish into air” (Stewart 2). Meanwhile, Sojourner Truth talks about the direct way that men suppress black women and explain away their failings to treat black women as equals. She said, “If woman have a pint and man a quart—why can’t she have her little pint full” (Truth 2). Where these two women union together is their concern for future black women. They feel that the only reason black people, specifically women, are seen as less intelligent and taboo to have work for you is solely because people haven’t given them a chance.

**Group 3, Question B**

John L. O’Sullivan was the writer of “Annexation.” and popularizer of the term “manifest destiny”. He pushes this idea of manifest destiny as an already accelerating force we Americans should embrace. He notes that “England, our old rival and enemy; and by France, strangely coupled with her against us…” (O’Sullivan 1) tried flying in the face of the brute manifest destiny had created. This is where the authority of this idea is born. The moment we fought back as a country, our manifest destiny had been set on its tracks and started speeding up. He then goes on to use this influence he talks about in condemning Mexico for attempting to take not only Texas but possibly California. He states “… Mexico never can exert any real governmental authority over such a country.” (O’Sullivan 5).

**Group 4, Question B**

George Inness’s *The Lackawanna Valley* draws upon many feelings of general American progress. The man laying on his side in an uncomfortable position shows that he is making an effort to prop himself up on his elbow to gaze upon the beauty that is the land they settled on. The train passing by is a perfect symbol capturing the continuous movement toward production and overall progress they were headed. The other smokestacks in the painting are other examples of people hard at work, consistently. This painting gives the feeling that there is almost nothing you can do wrong to this country and its land to taint it, it’s innocent and inspiring. This painting signifies the frontier because the town is obviously still relatively new, while touching on feelings of manifest destiny and general American progress.

Works Cited

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Inness, George | Image supplied