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Research Paper Outline

History 1120-01

T00546626

First Nations Art has been a primary source to pass on the cultural knowledge from elder to children, through performing Arts, Literature (both oral and written), and visual art. Art is the most significant and influential practice that First Nations people have inherited through each generation. With that being said, if the culture is then harmed, the growth could potentially be disrupted. First Nations tribes have sustained their culture through these methods, which ultimately kept their tradition alive during the scarce conditions after European contact. Through stories, songs, and traditional ceremonies, the First Nations were able to maintain their culture even through the violent depletion of the population fur to epidemics such as smallpox.

This topic was a very easy decision for me because I identify as a First Nations person. Growing up in Prince Rupert, which is along the Coast of British Columbia, there was always a theme of great cultural significance. Many life lessons have been passed down through stories and performances. Being able to interpret this culture with a higher level of understanding made me choose this topic without hesitation and also made me very intrigued to learn more about my culture and the significance it may hold.

Belanger’s academic document “The Arts” *Ways of Knowing* will be my main source for this topic. I have read most of the chapters in this document for a previous class so I already have a great understanding of the topics. Also, Belanger does a great job of interpreting the significance these cultural practices hold for First Nations people. My secondary source with be John D. Belshaw’s “Pre-Confederation” because he does an excellent job of illustrating art within First Nations communities. Also, he does a great job of helping the reader visualize how First Nations art was before European contact, which is what my research paper’s main focus is.

For the most part, I was very familiar with the topic of First Nations Art but some notions that I had about the topic previous to my research were soon answered by my academic sources. The sources were very clear in the sense that culture was the primary factor in the survival of First Nations. Culture is primarily expressed through art, which is why it holds such a great significance for the First Nations people, and is expressed in both my primary and secondary sources. One thing that I wasn’t aware of was how much the European contact not only hurt the population of First Nations people, but also disrupted the culture of those tribes too. Many of these First Nations communities were forced to conform to the European ways, and were seen as evil if they hadn’t followed the European example of what was “normal”. This opened many doors and outlets that will benefit my document analysis, and will also give me a better insight of the depletion of First Nations culture along with the population.

I have always thought that First Nations were strong as a race, but previous to my studies on this topic, I was unaware of how rich the First Nations people were as a race, culturally, economically, and how abundant they as a population. The cultural heritage of the First Nations people is demonstrated greatly in both of my sources, which gives me a better perspective of how much was lost upon the contact of Europeans. Some questions that have been stuck in my mind throughout my research is why the First Nations people continued to trust the word of the European people. Upon first contact, First Nations outnumbered the Europeans greatly. Maybe it is because fighting would’ve been against their morals, ethics, and views.

So far I felt very comfortable with the topic decisions along with the sources I have chosen. It is very beneficial that I have chosen a topic that I am very interested in and desire to learn more about. Also, being a First Nations, Art holds a great significance in my views which makes research easier because I am familiar with the terms and most of the Art forms. Because I have experienced the cultural practices first hand, it makes the research more intriguing.

Bibliography

Belanger, Yale Deron. “The Arts” *Ways of Knowing: an introduction to Native studies in Canada,* 53-75. Toronto: Nelson Education, c2014.

Belshaw, John Douglas. Canadian history. [electronic resource] : Pre confederation, 2015. *Thompson Rivers University* Catalog, Pages 30-59 (accessed October 30, 2016)