Why Can’t We All Just Get Along?

Throughout the semester, we have explored the human condition in which the extent of our actions has reflected internationally as a whole. The realization that every individual is unique in their own way has caused this schism between wanting to achieve globalization and further unity amongst our existence. Using the Cultural Landscape textbook offered in this Human Geography class, as preamble, I will address the extent of humans not being able to get along with the context offered in this textbook, as well as examples from the film we recently watched, “Amistad.” Due to our multi-facedness, we cannot achieve the utopian globalization goal we are so willing to strive for, which is why we ultimately cannot get along.

As discussed in the class, migration is a vital tool we use in order to determine specific population change. However, because this action has many contributors, including motifs that determine their reasoning to join, such as economic, political, and/or environmental, this broad term has to be evaluation much more in depth. There are pull and push factors that go behind why we migrate place to place. Reasons vary, since in all we are a species that are not socially homologous. However, because we cannot accept people for who we truly are, as I am going to deliberately devout in this essay, there are reasons why. Actions such as hostility, abuse, and just a lack of acceptance from the “natives” of the desired area, migrants face obstacles that halt them from “feeling at home.” Consider the film: when the slaves were caught by an American military vessel, the Africans were viewed in a way that they were not human, meaning in this time of history, Africans (or slaves rather), were considered property. There was this separation between “blacks” and the whites because of the fact of the effect of the slave trade. Because this lack of acceptance migrants get, it contributes to the overall reason why we cannot get along; there is no way our species can ever reach globalization if miniscule things like this is building a wall in between.

Furthermore, the separation between folk and modern culture supports the reasoning why we cannot get along. Due to the origin and the effect of diffusion the nuance between folk and modern culture prevails. We can even see that in the United States. One can support the notion that the United States is obviously a modern society; however, there are “minorities” per se that set them apart from this overall diffusion. Communities such as Indian reservations, and even the Amish, have developed a way to stick to their roots and not accept the modern culture trend. Furthermore, because of this schism between folk and modern culture, we have established a taboo on those we believe is not “normal,” meaning any outside traditions that we perceive is out of the ordinary. Humans unconsciously develop this sense of disapproval because they are not the same. This is evident in Amistad. The viewer obviously can tell the Africans are a folk community, by what they wear compared to the Americans. However, with the interpreter, James Covey’s contribution to establish a relationship between African slave Cinque and lawyer Roger Baldwin, there is this miniscule blending of folk and modern culture in the film. However, the separation grows at the end of the film when the slaves decide to go back to Africa, although historically, they did not go back to Africa; instead stayed the United States (but that little side note can be ignored.)

Throughout this essay, I have given reasons why humans cannot get along; however, in this paragraph, there has been ways humans have found a universal: language. We have to accept that languages vary depending where one lives, the society, their religious practices, and other contributors. However, language is not only communication via speaking. Humans have found ways to communication to others by writing, dancing, and even body movement. Body movement was very essential in the Amistad film. Because the abolitionists, more specifically, Lawyer Roger Baldwin, could not understand the Mende language, their body movements provided a step forward into winning the case. Because of this universal of communication, it is an example on how humans can find loop holes into this intangible goal of globalization. If it was not for their body movement, Cinque would not have trusted Baldwin, and ultimately providing their “independence” by winning both the federal and supreme case.

When we discussed this upcoming topic in class, it was a touchy one. I can conjecture that were very uncomfortable discussing religion because fear of “offending” someone else. However, religion has played a mammoth role towards the reason why we cannot get along. We have learned that religious has been the primary contributor into causing war amongst societies. Because we do not necessarily know what that religion practices, or that we just do not accept it, we have diverged. This is evident in Amistad as well. When the African slaves first enter the United States, Cinque and a fellow slave do not understand why the abolitionists were singing “Amazing Grace,” a Christian song. Furthermore, while James Covey reads the Bible to Cinque, Cinque cannot accept it because he believes it is just a “story.” Cinque also states that whenever he is in doubt, he calls his ancestors as a way to answer his “prayers.” But, once the movie comes to a close, the viewer can tell—in a way—that Cinque has accepted Christianity: when he realizes Lawyer Roger Baldwin won the case (on the federal level), Cinque is laudable while holding the Bible in his hand. Since this film does not fully support why we cannot get along, what it does provide is the misunderstanding of our practices.

Where we see a major separation due to religion, ethnicity as also contributed towards the reason why we cannot get along. Our society has been socially driven by stereotyping, and to the extent of racism. In this textbook, we have learned that because of the Triangular Trade, Africans were forced to migrate to the areas such as the West Indies, and United States. This forced migration has contributed towards why we cannot get along because of the slave holders considered them as property rather people. Well, in Amistad, this notion is still evident. During the supreme case, former President John Quincy Adams rhetorically questioned the jury and also the judges, “…attempt to figure out ‘who’ they are, rather ‘what’ they are.” This was very important because at this time in American history, it was the Antibellum Period, meaning the time before the Civil War. Adams knew that if this case would not have won, the abolitionists would have done something in protest; however, because they did win the case, a paradox is evident; because the African slaves are free from captivity, the South would ultimately secede from the United States, which will start the Civil War. Because of this whole “black versus white” dichotomy, we cannot get along, once again due to our lack of accepting others.

The final contributing factor into why we cannot get along is definitely political geography. This is a subject that is not really understood fully. Although the textbook reflects political geography during the Cold War, the factors have been homologous in the past as well. There are boundaries in which we cannot really establish which is who’s. This difficulty has caused problems, especially in the Middle East as the nations try to divide up the Caspian Sea, and even Antarctica. These undetermined areas have this universal that we fight in order to establish who really controls the imaginary border. This has resulted into terrorism, disminishment of nation-states, and cooperation amongst states in general. In Amistad, Cinque made a valuable point. While he was talking to John Quincy Adams, he questioned the African’s captivity since neither Spain nor the United States own the ocean, which is where the Americans found the La Amistad vessel. Political geography, in my opinion, was the central idea in this film because no one necessarily knew who controlled these Africans. Because the constant bickering between the Americans, Queen Isabella, and the Spaniard ship captains, it shows how we do not get along.

Through Amistad, and basic knowledge, humans are capable of making decisions that he or she feel is most suitable for him or her. However, because all humans do this spontaneously, it has caused a multitude of problems socially. How can our population reach globalization if we cannot understand, accept, and just get along with others? To me, globalization is an impossible goal to achieve. There is no possible way our human species will all get along; there will be that one person who will break that bond in some shape or fashion. This course has taught me how humans are so selfish and so self-absorbed to recognizing “different” people. This utopian society will never come to existence.