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What is America?

Back in America - www.BackInAmericaThePodcast.com



BACK IN AMERICA THE PODCAST

 @Back_in_America

A Timely Question...

Stan Berteloot - Podcast Host

What is America to you?

At the end of my interviews, I ask my guests what is America for them.

I now have 30 answers. Thirty takes on what this country is.

Although, what is America varies greatly depending on the background and the life experience of my guests, everyone agrees on the fact that America's complex history makes it difficult to pinpoint a simple definition.

Back in America is a podcast of interviews from a multicultural perspective that questions the way we understand America. In the podcast, I endeavor to explore American identity, culture, and values.

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We are a forgetful nation

Gil Lopez, founder of smiling hogshead Ranch, an urban garden in Queens, New York

I grew up in America and my understanding of what America is has shifted over time. I was always told as a child, I was so lucky to be in an American and I agree, I am very lucky to be in an American. America to me starts as a colonial settler state that has occupied indigenous land and benefited greatly from the slavery of black people that were brought in from mostly West Africa. And those are the foundations and the roots of this country. Our democracy was based on the Iroquois Confederacy's democracy and it's a strong one. But we've forgotten the lineage.

We are a forgetful nation, and we're one that has not respected where we come from. We think that we're great because of some imaginary idea of greatness inherent in the white person in the white society and white culture, the Manifest Destiny, the Doctrine of Discovery, these are ideas that to me, inform America. And as much as I am an American and I am here. I'm not trying to leave America. I'm not trying to make it great again. But I want America to be better. I want America to continue to strive for the ideals that it was founded under. And to do that, it has to remember history. We're going to, we're going to continue to repeat this terrible, oppressive history if we don't remember it, and bring it to the fore and deal with it in a real way. If we deny the roots of oppression that founded and laid the groundwork for this country, and we continue to do that. We're going to destroy ourselves.



 @Gil_Lopez



 @wirelesshogan

Stolen lands, broken treaties, enslavement, racism, sexism, ethnic cleansing, and genocide

Mark Charles, Native American, Independent Candidate 2020 Elections

America is a colonial nation founded on stolen lands, broken treaties, enslavement, racism, sexism, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. It desperately wants to be something else. But it doesn't know if it's willing to put in the work to become that. And that's what I'm trying to ask. And that's what I'm working towards as a candidate for president. That's the vision I'm holding out. That's the very, very basic question. I'm trying to get my country to answer.

Foreigners can be on equal footing to people who grew up in the culture

Elan Leibner, Waldorf School Leibner, Chair of the Pedagogy

I think that there are very few places in the world where a young foreigner can come and be established on a completely equal footing to people who grew up in the culture.

I worked in England for a year, as you mentioned in the introduction, and my impression was, I will never be English.



 @NJWaldorf



A champion of a democratic process

Thomas Parker, custodian at Princeton University before joining the mail services of the university

I think I would have to fall back on principles and values that this was formed to be champion of freedom, to be champion of a democratic process. Everybody matters, everybody counts, everybody has as some say.

That is what America is: the land of opportunity. All those principles axiomatic for centuries have motivated the world. That's why folks wanna want to come here. If we disagree with something about those that are ruling or those that are in charge, we can speak up. We don't have anything to worry about, or we shouldn't have anything important to worry about.

The fact that you can go from poverty to fortune, given the opportunity, this is what America is >

An ideal of freedom, but it's also a perpetrator of genocide and slavery

Richard Heinberg, Senior Fellow at the Post-Carbon Institute

America is many things. It's a geographic place. It's a set of interconnected ecosystems. It's a lot of people who have different histories and have come from different places and try to adopt some kind of collective cultural and political agreements so that there's some kind of cohesion.

America is an economic system. It's a political-economic system that has found ways of dominating much of the rest of the world over the last century or so. It's a colonial system.

America is an ideal of freedom, but it's also a perpetrator of genocide and slavery. It's many things. It's complicated. And I don't always feel comfortable being here, but for better or worse, this is where we are.



 @richardheinberg



 @johndilam

America makes your dreams truly come true

John Lam, Principal dancer at the Boston Ballet

To be American to me is to make your dreams truly come true. I dreamt of being a principal dancer, and being gay and married to a man and having children. And that was my dream when I was little.

I came from nothing. I came from a family that had nothing that had no education, nothing.

But I was able to still somehow sustain that dream. I think that is what America is to me.

America is a very ironic country

Imani Mulrain, Prospective Molecular Biology Major at Princeton University

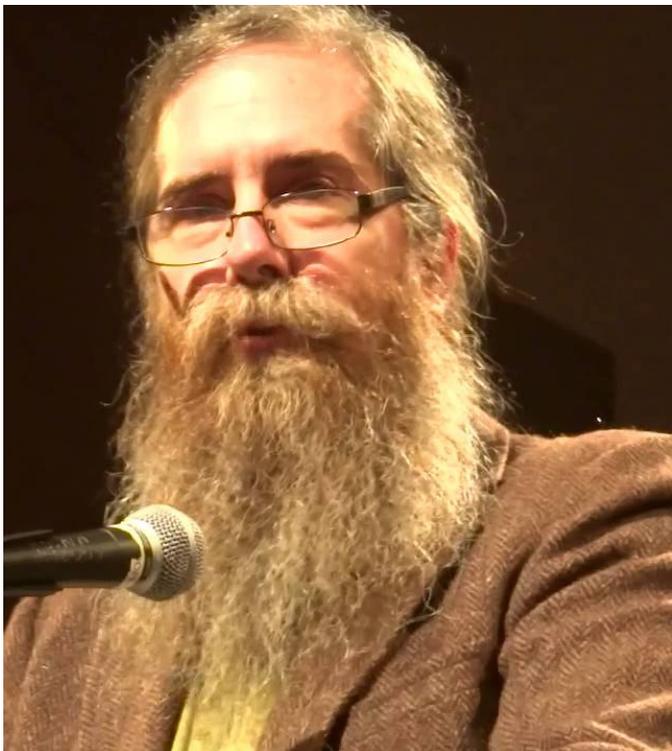
America to me it is a country with a lot of opportunities, a lot of places for people to be successful at the same time.

It's also a place we have a lot of obstacles holding people back from reaching those opportunities and from being successful.

So it's a very ironic country, a very hippocratic country that says that it's the land of the free, but yet not everybody is free here.



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America is a story

John Michael Greer (JMG) author and blogger in the fields of nature spirituality, and the future of industrial society

It's not actually a place. There's a place that more or less, corresponds to it. But America is a story, it's almost a myth. It's, certainly a legend. It's a story that people tell themselves.

It's a way of looking at the world that may not actually have that much to do with, life on the ground, but it inspired a lot of people.

And for good and for ill, America is a story. And it's a story that can always be retold in different ways and that's one of the things that makes it interesting to me.