

AQCI #1

Lecture: Multiculturalism in Western Europe and North America

Lecturer: Dr. Laura Laubeova/Antonin Mikes

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Date: March 6, 2007

AQCI: Cornell, Stephen, Hartmann, Douglas (1998) "The Definition of Race", pp 21-43, 68-69

1. Central Quotation

"Ethnicity and race are not the same, but they are not mutually exclusive categories either. They sometimes overlap. In short, races may be but are not necessarily ethnic groups." *It is a good quotation, but I think that the main point is to show that race is a social construct and that you can not justify the fact that e.g. human beings and government put a label on people. I see the overlapping as the secondary point.*

2. Argument

Cornell and Hartmann argue throughout this essay that the terms race and ethnicity, although used interchangeably throughout historical texts, are markedly different categories, where race is primarily based on similar physical classifications and ethnicity primarily classifies groups from a common origin, ancestry, or descent. While race is assigned by those outside the group being classified, ethnicity is assigned by those individuals within the ethnic group, and these assertions create an identity commonly shared. While ethnicity forms feelings of self-assertion and self-concept within the group, race is socially constructed by those outside of the group that is being defined, by the group in power (historically "White"). This forms a stigma that attaches race to being *inherently* inferior, different, and of a lower status, and places them in the lowest categories of hierarchy and other social organizations. Furthermore, race almost always pertains to skin color or other physical appearances rather than origination. However, Cornell and Hartmann are quick to note that both ethnicity and race overlap in a number of ways, which is why the terms are so difficult to define. The most appropriate example of overlapping is how a group of people can be classified as originating from the same territory, while simultaneously sharing common physical characteristics; thus, they can't be classified as a race or an ethnicity, because they are both at the same time.

3. Question

The question raised in this essay is literally, "What is Race?" which cannot easily be interpreted, as both authors show through examples of how definitions of race and ethnicity have changed over time. The question is put at its best when insight is offered through studying the lists of racial and ethnic categories that various countries use to define their populations. Are there in fact only five races in the United States, according to its census bureau? *This is a good point, but the text doesn't concentrate on the U.S., but on the fact that there is no scientific prove of people being different races, that is just a way for people to categorise and to differentiate people from one another.* Or are there only four, according to the South African government? Furthermore, these categories have been changed and renamed over time, and the ethnic groups classified under them have been shifted as well, making the argument of "what is race?" all the more complex and unanswerable.

4. Experiential Connection

Growing up my whole life as a second generation United States citizen, it has always been easy to fill out forms in school and check off the box "White" or "Caucasian". It would realistically be impossible to classify all the ethnic groups within the United States without running out of room on the page. However, I often wonder how it must feel to have to classify oneself in such a narrow categorization as "White, Black, Latino, or Other". The sense of identity is lost within these classifications. In addition, it is very easy to overlap these identities, where one person can be simultaneously White and Hispanic, from South Africa by origin, and living on a Native American reservation. Although this may not seem plausible, it is quite possible for Americans to have a multi-ethnic heritage, and be genuinely confused as to how they are defined by others around them, in contrast to how they define themselves and their relationship to others within their ethnic identity. *This is a really good point, it fits well with the argument made in the reading.*

5. Textual Connection

This text closely resembles the attempt by T.H. Eriksen's essay "Ethnicity, Race, Class, and Nation" *(maybe use a footnote to fully reference this essay?)* to define the terms of ethnicity and race specifically. Eriksen's observations confirm Cornell and Hartmann's argument that while race and ethnicity tend to be defined in similar terms, and grouped together more often than not when being studied, there still remains an important and "distinguishable" difference between ethnicity and race. The texts do have variations though. Whereas Cornell and Hartmann speak of overlapping through politically and socially organized terms, Eriksen also sees overlapping, but his example is more direct, through the physical interbreeding of the human population over time. Both essays clearly define, however, that there *is* a difference between race and ethnicity, and it lies within one similar comparison; that race is socially constructed by outside groups as a way of classifying "them" or "other", while ethnicity is defined within the group itself as "us". Although Eriksen agrees there are differences in the ideologies of race and ethnicity, he chooses not to separate the terms when speaking of interethnic relations, classes, and nationalism, because he doesn't see the distinction as being particularly "useful" in that specific discussion. *Good observation*

6. Implications

This text reevaluates the classifications we take for granted when defining populations within different countries. It poses the question of what exactly race is, and deduces (**reduces?**) it to a social construct that really has no application for the betterment of a nation as a whole. Ethnicity and ethnic grouping, on the other hand, have very relevant implications when studying populations and deciding on policies for various groups. “Ethnic” in all its forms is much more appropriate when considering correct terminology, as it can be defined by both those within the ethnic group and those outside of it. While it may include people of similar physical commonalities, this particular part of the term has no discriminating consequence directed towards the group it is defining. **It might be good to be a little more specific in relating this to practical policy making. I am unsure how though.**

Sample Self assessment form

Department of Western European Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

AQCI ASSESSMENT FORM

Student's name:	Leeann Davulis	Name of assessor:	Julie Buhl Joergensen	Date:	March 6, 2007
Essay title:					

	Excel lent	Go od	Avera ge	Poo r	Not accepta ble	Comments
1) Is the chosen quotation central to the author's argument?		++				I think that your quotation is very relevant for the understanding of the text, another good quotation would have been about people categorizing each other and that race is a social construct
2) Has the main argument been fully understood (including its 'for' and 'against' sides, if applicable)?	+	+				Yes I think so
3a) Is the question raised important/relevant/interesting?	++					It is relevant because the main theme is to show that we can not justify the fact that human being defined each other to belong to some certain race, there is no prove of that.
3b) Has this question not been fully answered in the text?		++				
4) Is the experiential connection relevant/interesting?	+	+				I think it is relevant that you talk about the United States and how you deal with such issues. Maybe you can be a bit more critical towards the system and the way the make people put a label on themselves
5a) Is the textual connection relevant/interesting?	+	+				
5b) Has it been cited properly?		+	+			I need to go back and properly cite both texts.
5c) Has it been adequately explained how the present text's argument contrasts with, contradicts, confirms, clarifies, or elaborates the other text's argument or point?		++				I think you have a good understanding of the similarities and the differences between these two opinions
6) Have the implications been well understood, can they have a practical impact for policy making?	+	+				
7) Expression/Presentation	+					
a) Are the style, grammar and general use of English adequate?	++					
b) Is the AQCI professionally presented?	++					

Sample Self assessment form

AQCI ASSESSMENT FORM

Student's name:	Leeann Davulis	Name of assessor:	Nic Hyland	Date:	March 6, 2007
Essay title:					

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Not acceptable	Comments
1) Is the chosen quotation central to the author's argument?		+				
2) Has the main argument been fully understood (including its 'for' and 'against' sides, if applicable)?	+					
3a) Is the question raised important/relevant/interesting?	+					
3b) Has this question not been fully answered in the text?		+				
4) Is the experiential connection relevant/interesting?		+				A very relevant experiential connection was used
5a) Is the textual connection relevant/interesting?		+				
5b) Has it been cited properly?		+				
5c) Has it been adequately explained how the present text's argument contrasts with, contradicts, confirms, clarifies, or elaborates the other text's argument or point?	+					
6) Have the implications been well understood, can they have a practical impact for policy making?			+			Perhaps a little more specific would be good?
7) Expression/Presentation						Really well presented and easy to read. Arguments made sense.
a) Are the style, grammar and general use of English adequate?	+					
b) Is the AQCI professionally presented?	+					

Essay grade:

Further comments: