

Questions on Merry, Brown, Johnson, Mark Twain, Wright,  
Anderson, Dyson, Zinn, Pollock, Rotimi

1. What argument does Merry use in support of Affirmative Action?
2. “The proponents of critical race theory” argue “that racial divisions in the United States are profound and fundamental to the social order, rather than expressions of class inequalities...” (Merry p. 121). Discuss.
3. “Naturalized citizenship was granted to ‘white’ immigrants only, a restriction in force until 1952.” (Merry p. 122). Did you know this? Describe the evolution of U.S. immigration legislation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
4. Also on p. 122, Merry discusses one of the fundamental premises of the political philosophy of liberalism. Describe.
5. What were “domestic dependent nations” (Merry pp. 125-127)?
6. Compare the experience of mainland Native Americans with Native Hawaiians.
7. The excerpts by Du Bois (last week), Johnson, Brown, and Wright provide examples of symbolic violence experienced by non-whites. Discuss.
8. Compare Anderson’s “Police and the black male” to Bourgois.
9. Discuss the interaction between race and gender in the Anderson essay, and in the Dyson essay.
10. Describe three or more socio-economic factors that influence what happens to young black men who catch the attention of the police.
11. Discuss “‘blame the victim’ social logics and policies” (Dyson, p. 150).
12. Discuss Dyson’s analysis of how rap music influences young black males.
13. The end of Dyson’s essay contains an anecdote showing how race can trump class. Discuss.
14. Zinn discusses unjust treatment of white indentured servants in the colonies. Describe two examples that particularly caught your attention.
15. “One fact disturbed: whites would run off to join Indian tribes, or would be captured in battle and brought up among the Indians, and when this happened, the whites, given a chance to leave, chose to stay in the Indian culture. Indians, having the choice, almost never decided to join the whites.” (Zinn, p. 313). Why, do you suppose?

16. Discuss colonial authorities' policies that were intended to "create an aversion in them [Indians] to Negroes" (Zinn p. 314).
17. What does Pollock mean by "strategic racialization"?
18. Would you argue that using any race labels is "inherently racist" (Pollock p. 30)? What do Omi and Winant say about this?
19. "We don't belong to simple race groups, but when it comes to inequality, we do." (Pollock p. 32). Describe two examples from the Pollock essay.
20. Why did young people work daily in school "to squash their diversity into six groups they called 'racial'" (Pollock p. 35)—what was in it for them? To what degree were these six groups in fact "racial," in your opinion?
21. Compare "what are you mixed with?" to "race-bending."
22. Describe some of the structural supports of the "race-bending"/simple race categories system in Columbus High School.
23. "Still, talk *about* 'multicultural' events and classroom curriculum continually referenced simple racial groups *as if* these groups had clear-cut borders..." Discuss.
24. Should African Americans use genetics to trace their lineage back to Africa? What is Rotimi's position?
25. What was the origin of the Yoruba tribe? Did you know this?

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