

Questions on Malamud, Takaki, Biolsi, Zia, Article XIX,
Gould, Ferber, Cosgrove, Ortiz Cofer, Moraga

1. Malamud's "The Jewbird" is fiction. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using fiction to explore and discuss race and ethnicity, as opposed to social science non-fiction?
2. Takaki states that "American" has been defined as "white" (p. 53). Discuss.
3. Takaki also says that there is an intensifying racial crisis in America. What do you think?
4. During the conquest of Ireland by England, the English called the Irish "savages" before they applied that label to people elsewhere in the world. If you can, discuss some of the consequences of the colonization of Ireland (Takaki p. 57).
5. Discuss why some parents refuse to teach their children their native language, believing this to be the way their children will be able to speak perfect English. (Zia)
6. Biolsi distinguishes between Native Americans seen as a minority in the U.S. and Native Americans seen as belonging to nations colonized by Europeans. How is the struggle of Native American activists "not the same fight" as the struggles of other victims of oppression in America?
7. What is a "nation"? Describe some of the legal and social consequences of seeing Indian tribes as sovereign nations.
8. "The Original Crazy Horse Malt Liquor." Describe this case (Biolsi p. 180). Who do you side with?
9. Why would some Native Americans argue that civil rights are "anathema" to Indian people (Biolsi, p. 182)?
10. What's your opinion regarding the use of Native American symbols in sports? With respect to Native Americans' use of illegal ("controlled") substances as part of religious rituals?
11. Why were the Binet intelligence tests developed? Why were the subsequent Stanford-Binet "IQ" tests developed (Gould, p. 317)?
12. How does the work by Goddard discussed in Gould resemble the current debate about immigration, in particular policies concerned with undocumented immigrants?
13. Compare Goddard's research with Pearson's (Gould, p. 316-320).
14. What were the lessons that Abby Ferber learned from white supremacist literature?

15. “While it has become an academic commonplace to assert that race is socially constructed, the revelation is profoundly unsettling to many...” (Ferber p. 118). What does “socially constructed” mean?
16. What do white supremacists and some strict Orthodox Jewish leaders have in common, according to Ferber?
17. “The zoot suit was a refusal: a subcultural gesture that refused to concede to the manners of subservience.” (Cosgrove p. 347). Discuss.
18. Cosgrove says the zoot suit is more than an exaggerated costume. What else is it?
19. If you can, describe two similar cases of what we might call “protest fashion.” Compare the role played by the zoot suit and that played by hip-hop clothing, as you understand it.
20. List the reasons why young men wore zoot suits.
21. Discuss two of the “culture clashes” Ortiz Cofer describes.
22. Have you ever found yourself over- or under-dressed? Was it linked to an identity component in some way? Describe.
23. Why were *pachucos* “ambivalent”? The *pachuco* subculture was defined not only by ostentatious fashion, but by petty crime, delinquency and drug-taking. They “flaunted” their difference. How do other ethnic groups in the U.S. “flaunt” or otherwise show their difference?
24. Moraga discusses the intersection of racialization and ethnicity. Discuss what she has to say, adding examples from the other readings for today, or experiences you’ve had or know about.
25. We have discussed how social class is gendered, sexual orientation is raced, etc. (and vice versa). Discuss how oppression of different kinds is in some ways the same, but also varies, depending on the nature of the link between the specific kind of oppression and other identity components. Discuss what Moraga has to say about this.
26. “What the oppressor often succeeds in doing is simply externalizing his fears, projecting them into the bodies of women, Asians, gays, disabled folks, whoever seems most ‘other’.” (Moraga, p. 32). Do you agree? Discuss.
27. What, in your opinion, do people fear that prevents empathy towards an “other”? Moraga says “it is not really difference the oppressor fears so much as similarity. He fears he will discover in himself the same aches, the same longings as those of the people he has shitted on.” Do you agree? Discuss.
28. “Self-hating Jew.” “Ignoring my own homophobia” (Moraga). Give other examples of this process.

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