Questions on Cole and Guy-Sheftall, McIntosh, Williams, TIME, Lei, Forbes, P. Brown

- 1. "Is our attainment of patriarchal power through the oppression of women any less insidious than white people's perpetuation of a system of racial oppression to dehumanize us?" (Cole and Guy-Sheftall: 71). Defend this position. Oppose it.
- 2. Describe the debate between Frederick Douglass and white suffragists in 1869.
- 3. What arguments were made by those who opposed equality between black men and women, according to Cole and Guy-Sheftall?
- 4. Compare Cole and Guy-Sheftall's essay to the chapters we ready by Nagel on the intersections between ethnicity, sexuality, and gender.
- 5. What are the similarities between racism and sexism? The differences?
- 6. Define the concept of social control. Then describe Davis's argument regarding street harassment and social control.
- 7. Davis speaks of "embodiment." What does she mean?
- 8. Davis says that street harassment "can be understood as an element of a larger system of sexual terrorism" (p. 498). Discuss.
- 9. Compare Davis's discussion of "actual and implied [gender] violence" to what Pascoe discovered in River High.
- 10. Imagine some of the arguments men might make opposing the idea that street harassment is harmful. Discuss.
- 11. Why, according to Davis, is African American street harassment not only a form of gender subordination but also a form of racialization?
- 12. Describe the "Jezebel image" (p. 502).
- 13. Davis argues that black men are denied what we might call "patriarchal privilege." Discuss.
- 14. Davis refers to African American women's "multiple consciousness" (p. 504). Compare to Du Bois' notion of "double consciousness".
- 15. What does Patricia Williams mean by "spirit-murder"?
- 16. Compare McIntosh's discussion of white privilege to Jensen's.

- 17. McIntosh: "I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will." (p. 97). Is this the way you were taught?
- 18. McIntosh says that "privilege" carries the connotation "of being something everyone must want. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work to systemically overempower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance." (p. 101). Discuss.
- 19. How is white privilege damaging to whites? How is male privilege damaging to males? Compare both to heterosexual privilege.
- 20. Analyze Williams' experience buying her house in terms of racism. Then analyze it in terms of "social class considerations."
- 21. Lei mentions "discursive and representational acts in producing students as academic and social beings" (p. 158). What does she mean? Give an example.
- 22. Give an example of Southeast Asian males and black females responding "with strategic acts, resistance, conformity, and disruption to the regulatory systems" (p. 159) in the school (Hope High) Lei studied.
- 23. Compare Lei's findings to Cosgrove's analysis of the zoot suit war.
- 24. What were the various explanations offered by faculty and students as to why "loud black girls" behave the way they do?
- 25. How do the people Lei talks to contrast black females with "white womanhood" (p. 2003)? How are the "loud black girls" constructed as Other?
- 26. Describe one kind of "disciplinary technology" present in the high school you attended.
- 27. Why, according to Lei, did the (mostly Hmong) "quiet Asian boys" act the way they did?
- 28. "It is not unusual that there are two opposing representations of a subordinated group, with one 'good' image and one 'bad' image." (p. 175). Give two examples, using any minority.
- 29. Lei says that a risk of the kind of research she conducts is "furthering the harmful reiterations [of stereotyping] simply by writing about and discussing them" (p. 178). Discuss.
- 30. Summarize Forbes's argument about the ways in which the categories "Indian" and "Black" are radically different.
- 31. Contrast the notion of "real Indians" with the notion of "real Blacks." "The last Indians" with "the last Blacks."

- 32. Discuss the obsession with "blackness" as a genetic evil, comparing it to the view of Indians as "a social or cultural evil." (p. 165). Then substitute another word for "evil" that maintains the basic idea of inferiority.
- 33. Compare P. Brown's analysis to Forbes's. Then, if you can, bring the film "Black Indians" into the discussion.
- 34. What historical facts concerning European/African/Native American interactions mentioned by Brown were new to you?

MIT OpenCourseWare http://ocw.mit.edu

21A.218J / WGS.170J Identity and Difference Spring 2010

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: http://ocw.mit.edu/terms.