

“REAL INDIANS”? “RACE” AND THE POLITICS OF CONTEMPORARY INDIGENITY

Harmon, Amy. 2006, April 12. “The DNA Age: Seeking Ancestry in DNA Ties Uncovered by Tests.” *The New York Times*.

1. What appears to be the journalist’s main interpretive angle as to why some persons undertake genetic testing? How would anthropologists characterize the journalist’s perspective?
2. Having characterized the journalist’s perspective, does this mean that the journalist is “wrong,” or “right”?
3. If tests for “race” fail, then what are the alternatives? The article itself fleetingly provides us a glimpse of one possible answer.

Sturm, Circe. 1998. “Blood Politics, Racial Classification, and Cherokee National Identity: *The Trials and Tribulations of the Cherokee Freedmen*”. *American Indian Quarterly*, 22 (1–2) Win/Spr: 230–258.

1. Sturm begins her article by stating, with the aid of an informant, what together they see as the real crux of the problem affecting admission of the Freedmen back into the Cherokee fold. In your own words, what is the crux of this problem?
2. What appears to be the fundamental contradiction affecting Cherokee identification and from what/where does this contradiction seem to emerge?
3. When reading the article, what struck you as the fundamental problem underlying the question of whether or not the Freedmen should be accepted as members of the Cherokee Nation?
4. Are there ways of viewing “blood” that are not racial?
5. What is/are the source(s) of racial discrimination against the Freedmen? Please support your answer using precise materials from the reading.
6. What are some of the reasons that you read concerning why the Freedmen *ought* to be re-incorporated into the Cherokee Nation?
7. By the end of the article, were you in agreement with what you originally answered for question #2 above?

Churchill, Ward. 2004. “A Question of Identity.” In Stephen Greymorning, ed., *A Will to Survive: Indigenous Essays on the Politics of Culture, Language and Identity*. Boston: McGraw-Hill. 59-94.

1. In line with one writer who said that America is always finding more “Blacks” and always losing more Indians, Churchill notes that there was a definite political economic basis for this type of racial determination. Please explain what that was.
 2. Churchill repeatedly argues that Native nations in the US have become self-colonizing and self-subjugating. Please explain his argument.
 3. Churchill notes the transformation from indigenous inclusiveness to exclusiveness, both defended by diverse indigenous representatives as the traditional way. Please explain this apparent contradiction.
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