

National Conference on Racism
in a
Global Context, Murdoch
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Presenter

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Topic

Experience of Racism by Youth of African Migrant Descent

- High School Teacher (Education Department)
- Cultural Educator/Researcher
- African Inspirational Singers
- Kilimanjaro Tribal Arts
- Research Project entitled “African Cultural Education a Dialogue with African Migrant Youth”

Purpose of Presentation

- Explore the notion of racism
- Provide some examples of racist experiences by young people I interviewed in my study.
- Propose an approach

Racism

A working definition

- Racism may be taken as any practise which, intentionally or not, excludes a 'racial' or 'ethnic' minority from enjoying the full rights, opportunities and responsibilities available to the majority population. (Goldberg in Richards, 1997, p.xi). There is now wide agreement that Psychology's earlier tendency to view racism as an individual-level quasi psychopathology was , however well meant , inadequate. (Richards, 1997)

Racism

(Historical Origins)

- The concept of race as a distinguishing feature between human groups has a long history. In the 17th Century Bernier proposed that “mankind consists of four groups: Europeans, people of the Far East, Blacks and Lapps” (Quoted in Dubinin, in 1975).

Racism

(Historical origins)

- Linnaeus, on the other hand, was concerned with “species” although he regarded Homo Sapiens as a single species, he recognised four subspecies that were associated with specific regions
- Homo Sapiens Europeans, Homo Sapiens Asiaticus, Homo Sapiens Afer, Homo Sapiens Americanus.

Racism

(Historical Origins)

- Blumenbach presented a similar classification linked to skin colour: Caucasian (white), Mongolian (yellow), Ethiopian (black), American (red), Malayan (brown). (Dubinin, in 1975, p.70)(Okai, 1995, p.34)

Racism

(Historical Origins)

- In the nineteenth century a number of theorists drew together the strands of phenotypical regional variation and their cultural and economic expressions into a theory of racial hierarchy, thus interrelating the biological notion of race with the social construction of culture.

Racist Scholarship

- Between 1853 and 1855 Comte de Gobineau adopted this position in his four volume work The Inequality of Human Races. Gobineau distinguished three types of the human species based on “physiological grounds alone” Gobineau stated that this would provide a typology from which we could proceed.

Gobineau's (Race theory)

- He placed the negroid variety at the bottom of the ladder in his typology. For Gobineau the black man's intellect will always move in a very narrow circle...if his mental faculties are dull or even non-existent, he often has an intensity of desire, and so of will, which may be called terrible...to these qualities may be added an instability and capriciousness of feeling, that cannot be tied down to any single object, and which, so far as he is concerned, do away with all distinctions of good and evil (in Gibb 1973:16) (Okia, 1995,p.35).

Gobineau's (Race theory)

- On the middle rung was the “yellow race”
- Gobineau's white race occupied the top position in the hierarchy. He described this white race thus: “These are gifted with reflective energy, or rather with an energetic intelligence...an extraordinary instinct for order...a remarkable and even extreme, love of liberty, and are openly hostile to the formalism under which the Chinese are glad to vegetate as well as to the strict despotism which is the only way of governing the negro (in Gibb, 1973: 16).

Gobineau's (Race theory)

- Gobineau's ideas opened new ways for abstraction. It was now possible to recognise phenotypic variation and to ascribe social and cultural attributes for these variations. (Okia, 1996).

Recent Racist Scholarship

- Andrew Fraser in a recent publication entitled “Rethinking the white Australian policy” notes as follows: “Race exists and it matters across a wide range of public policy issues. It is of particular relevance to any analysis of immigration law and policy.” ...At the low end of the market for Third World immigrants, tensions are already appearing between white Australians and the growing numbers of black, sub-Saharan Africans settled here by the transnational refugee industry.

Recent Racist Scholarship

- One can safely predict that, no matter how large this Third World colony becomes, black Africans will never become a “market-dominant minority” in Australia. On the contrary, experience “practically everywhere in the world tells us that an expanding black population is a sure-fire recipe for increases in crime, violence and a wide range of other social problems”

Racist Scholarship

- After all, it is hardly news that violent criminals of any race are likely to be people with low IQs who display poor impulse control. Nor is it difficult to establish that , on average, black sub Saharan Africans score around 70-75 on IQ tests while white Europeans have a mean score of 100 and East Asians about 105.(Fraser, 2007, p.12)

What is the Problem?

Racism

Specific Examples

- Yes there is a problem of racism in Australia but it is more concealed. I have experienced racism most recently when I was applying for a job at a pharmacy. I put in my resume, which was full of experience. And when I reported for the interview; you know how you walk up to people and you immediately feel that there is something wrong? That is how I felt.

Racism Specific Examples

- Each time I said something this woman interviewing me was on top of me giving me no chance to market myself. I left the place frustrated and did not get the job. A classmate of mine who works at the same place told me later that the proprietors of this pharmacy were racist, that each time someone of, for example, Asian background reported for a job interview they would simply not employ them.

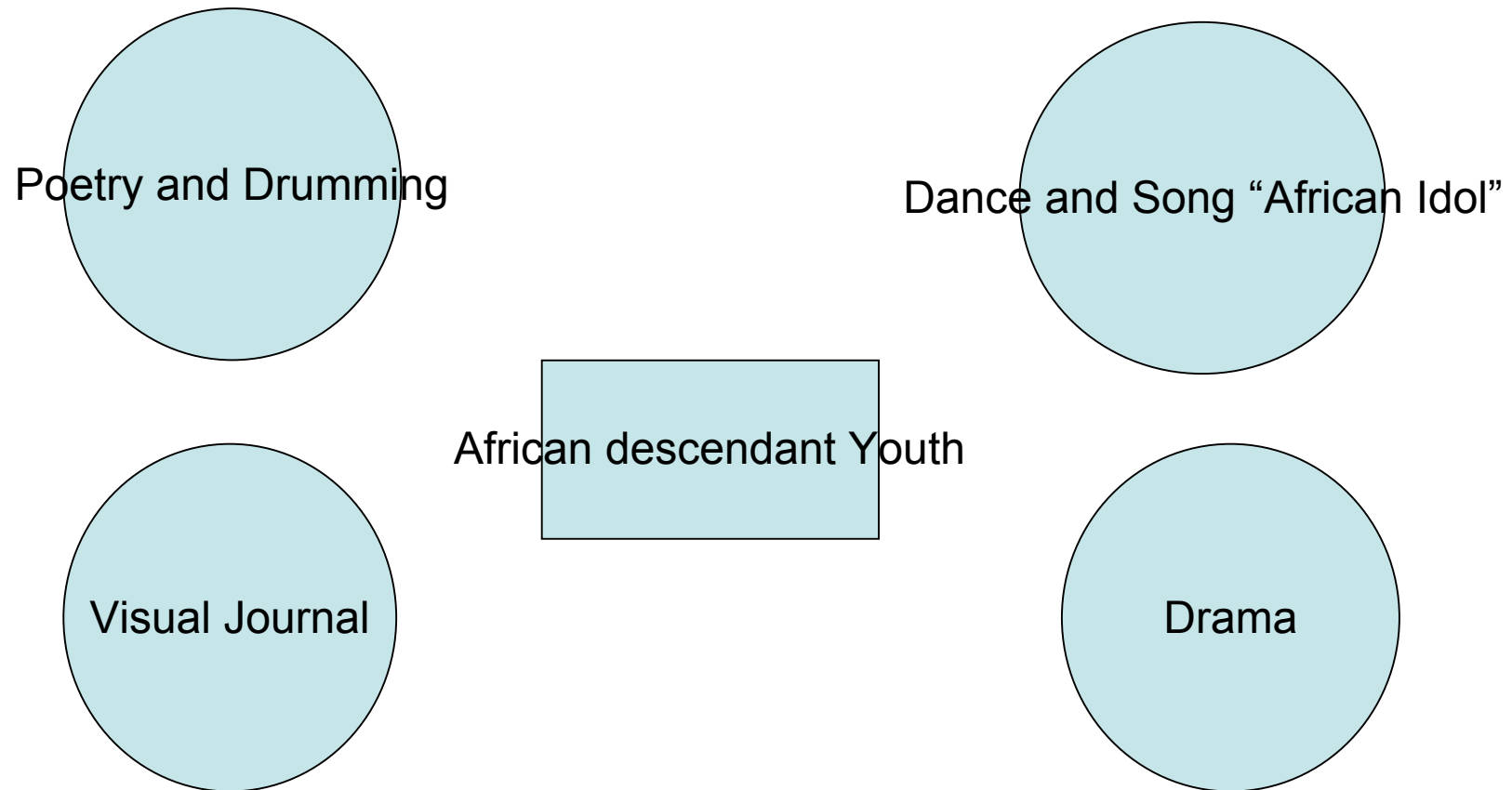
Racism Specific Examples

- After the interviews with such people , they would talk among themselves how they can only employ 'Australians'. I was really shocked because I had never had this sort of experience before. It has now made me conscious about racism.

(Muchere/F/19/19)

What next? The 200 Year problem!

Art forms based on resettlement experience and cultural identity (ACMYAF)



Aims of the project

- Working with a focus group of thirty young people ranging between the ages of thirteen and to twenty five years of age the research intends to explore issues relating to the cultural identity of the young people and the use of the arts in negotiating cultural identity.

What are some of the things you wish to learn/share through ACMYAF project?

- “I wish to learn more about African culture and people's experiences growing up in two or more cultures like myself- and to explore and make sense of how those differences, challenges and achievements affect us and how we can make the most of them. I'd like to learn to be more confident in a leadership role as I think my position as secretary involves a lot of communication and getting people to interact with one another”. (Ekisi/F/24/24)

African Cultural Literacy

- A critical and dialogical approach to understanding of African culture.

Soukous Contemporary Dance



Patrons Committee

- Networking and Fundraising for the festival.
- To be role models for the youths.
- Providing moral, social and cultural guidance to the youth.
- Supporting the production process towards the festival.

Artists

- Visual Artist and a theatre Artist are part of the project . They are involved in imparting appropriate skills to the young people as they explore various aspects of themselves through the arts.

Youth Committee

UYHC

- To assist with fundraising
- To be involved in the production process of the art forms.
- To assist in mobilisation and involvement of other youths in the project.

Relevance Truth in African Values

- In search for peace, justice, and international unity, Africa has an international role. Africa constitutes a treasure house of so many authentic human values . She is called to share these values with other nations and by so doing enrich the whole human family and all other cultures. But to do this, Africa must remain profoundly faithful to herself ; day-by-day, she must ever be more faithful to her own heritage; not out of any spirit of opposition or antagonism to the others but through the belief in the truth.
- (Pope John-Paul II, 1980 in Nairobi).

Funding

- The project has been funded by
- Healthway
- Office of Crime Prevention
- The City of Stirling.
- Murdoch University

Useful References

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