

Coontz Reflection

In Coontz's work, I found that the amount of topics covered made it difficult as a whole to read coherently. Although it is understood that the work is assessing many facets of the topic of how family was and is currently perceived through history, the changes of sub topics were made drastically, without warning and suddenly. One second the reader is being shown statistics on family size over time, then suddenly the author would jump into sexuality over time, or the success of women in different cultures. While very informative, it was certainly difficult to keep up with a running point as direction changed so many times.

Something I found very interesting was the discussion of nuclear families. The work discusses how nuclear families have become increasingly popular with extended or elders becoming less involved. Logically I know this to be true in many ways, however, for my entire life I have been taught the opposite way. Care of elders and keeping close with relatives is a very important aspect in my life. My grandparents have always been watched over and if they would agree to it, putting aside pride, they would live with, or certainly near to, one of their children who would absolutely take on the role of their care if need be. The same has always been true of my parents and I in the way that when my parents are no longer able to care for themselves properly in old age, I would take them in well before they would be sent to another for care. Despite that this may have become a less common practice in recent years; I know that many other people would do the same without hesitation.

Quoted from Coontz's work, character is "willingness to stand against 'social sins', such as slavery in opposition to ones family if necessary" (Coontz, 2002). While I believe that this is certainly an important aspect of character; I think it is but a small and possibly misleading example. I agree that people ought to stand up for what is right, even in the face of all opposition. However, I don't believe that this fully represents the idea of character as in a way it seems to be saying that family is less important than I believe it to be. I think it is important that the idea of character be fully represented to mean many different things, as it is a quality unique in everyone based on many different aspects.

Something I was surprised by was the idea of people earning "whiteness". I think its very interesting, and also kind of horrifying, that people have always believed that they could choose to put another ethnic group or race down by denying it a certain unattainable vision of themselves. And simply the fact that being denied this racial collectivity could so strongly alter society and the way the group perceived themselves is awing. I think it is amazing how strongly people rely on the thoughts and feelings of others to give credit and respect to themselves, as if it truly does matter more than anything you personally believe, what others believe of you because the impact is so severe.

In Coontz's work I was surprised by how differently the success of women in particular is seen in different cultures. Because women can be seen so differently in many cultures I think it was interesting to know how in some cultures women are more successful, make more money, raise children better, and thrive more, when they are single. The concept that simply raising wages for women would cause more productivity and success in childrearing and thriving personally than would a push for increased marriage rates for these women is wonderful. We live in a world occupied by the idea that men hold the power for both sexes and therefore we as women must be linked to

them for fear of our own failure. It is very fascinating to see evidence that the chances of thriving are actually more improved by simply allowing more chance for women to support themselves and their offspring by offering them the fair advantage of proper wages.

I think this piece brings up the important topic involving studies and their focus. Of course we all want our ideas to be shown proven, but I think it's necessary that we understand that studies may seem to show one thing because of the way they are set up. No one wants to see that the study they worked so hard on is not as cut and dry as they had hoped, so they can be casted in such a light as to hide any negative facts or results which do not show what the researcher had hoped from the start. When certain important results are left out, or the study is guided in such a way as to lead the reader down a path in a certain way which shapes their opinion for them, it becomes a risk of integrity in science. Undertaking research in any field, on any topic, is a hugely important task which accepts a certain amount of responsibility with it. To do anything which may compromise the trust of the reader is wrong.