

I now pronounce you  
chuck and larry



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Class, Power, Race and Ethnicity Issues in the Movie I Now Pronounce You  
Chuck and Larry directed by Dennis Dugan

### Introduction

Although the movie I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry directed by Dennis Dugan has received negative feedbacks from various critics, claiming that the movie contained excessive “ gay propaganda and nudity”. The critics of various leading magazines criticized it mercilessly, alleging that it “ ridicules the homosexuals, the firefighters, the court of law judges, the doctors and the clerical workers”. In accordance with the recommendations issued by the number of cultural authorities, the kids are strongly advised to see this movie only provided that the parental supervision is present.

Overall, while the critics vigorously assaulted the movie, some of them even were fervently pleading that the best way to remedy the situation is to prohibit the circulation of the movie; the film is an Eldorado from the standpoint of the contemporary psychology. While crude and silly humor is claimed by the critics to have exercised a negative impact on the target audience of the movie, the practicing psychologists can identify a significant number of issues, which shall be scrupulously and meticulously analyzed and studied. The most significant psychological issues, which have been skillfully reflected by the unprecedented actor play of Adam Sandler and the rest of the team, are race, ethnicity, class and power. Irrespective the fact that the movie is comical in its nature, the deepness of those concepts is depicted in detail, and each concept is duly accentuated and spotlighted by the director of the movie. In other words, the places where an ordinary human being

shall chortle, a practicing psychologist shall fall into deep reveries, pondering over those highly complicated psychological substances.

Overall, the aim of this paper is to outline the evaluation method and to provide a connection between the below outlined psychological concepts and the movie in question.

## Part I. Class and Power, Social Authority and Prestige

The aim of this chapter is to connect class and power, social authority and prestige issues with the course of event depicted in the movie.

### The Definition of Class

The first concept to analyze is the concept of class. This concept has been elaborated by various scholarly and political authorities of both global and national recognition. Overall, the concept of class is defined as a group of individuals united by common interests of various natures. To ensure that the specific group of individuals is in fact a class, specific requirements must be met. First and foremost, people of the class must have identical monetary values. In other words, the level of income and the available financial resources are to be on the same level for all members of a specific social class. Therefore, the monetary criterion lies in the core of the class classification. This concept is the most conventional one in the field of the contemporary psychological studies.

Leading authorities indicate that the observance of the monetary interests of the community in general and of the specific class in particular is the pledge of the state existence, because if the monetary interests of the members of

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the community are somehow endangered, it can be taken for granted that the statesmen will not receive the support of the prospective voters on the next elections and general power dissatisfaction is likely to take place.

Typically, three types of the most frequently encountered social classes exist. Namely they are the higher class, i. e. those who are excessively rich. In practice this social class is represented by big business people, by the most prominent lawyers and by the highest political elite of the community. The second layer of the classes is the most popular, the so-called middle class. The main peculiarity of the middle class is the fact that namely this social layer of the society compose the overwhelming majority of the potential voters and namely this people have to decide the destiny of the country in accordance with the popular democratic standards of the United States of America. As far as the indicators of these social classes is concerned, they can be described that the affiliation to higher or to middle social class is determined by the lifestyle the person keeps and by time he/she can spend without going to his/her work. The rich people can usually do it longer than their middle class counterparts and the rich people always wear considerably more expensive clothes etc.

#### Method of Evaluation in the Present Situation

In order to analyze the evaluation of the monetary constituent (i. e. the class factor) of this movie, various audiovisual methods are applied. In other words, to define and to draw inferences from this very movie the practicing psychologist has to accentuate his/her attention on visual and audio tracks of the movie. The director of the movie might have done it inadvertently, in

other words he did not have any intent to highlight the affiliation of the individual protagonists to the specific social class. In order to assess the affiliation of a certain personality, his or her appearance and behavior shall be critically analyzed by different criteria. Namely they are profession, lifestyle and clothes he or she wears.

### The Connection between the Concepts and the Movie

Critically, both protagonists of the story, Chuck and Larry, do belong to the middle class. They work as firemen. Although they do not accept this squarely, it is evident that for both of them monetary interests are not the least concerned ones. To illustrate, the crazy and ill-conceived decision to enter into the false gay marriage was dictated purely by the desire to secure the well-being of their children and to leave a heritage for them in accordance with the legally determined procedure. This situation clearly demonstrates what the person is ready to do, when he or she has the monetary concerns. Two men even agreed to enter into matrimonial relations, fully realizing the negative repercussion which may hypothetically and really ensue from this decision.

Another episode worth attention is the court trial, when the judge is trying to find out whether their relation is genuine or they got married without a true intent to create a gay family. The judge and the prosecutors themselves are trying to maintain the monetary balance of the society, speculating that if it is proven that the person tries to circumvent the law to pursue the monetary interests and therefore an attempt to cheat the state is undertaken, the balance must be restored immediately. In other words, every possible avert

was taken by the judge to dissolve the marriage and to sequester the prospective heritage. Even the friends of the main characters support this opinion.

### The Issues of Power, Social Authority and Prestige

Psychologists define power as an unlimited ability of an individual or an organization to control another individual or organization by all possible means he or she considers necessary to employ. Power is among the most widely advocated driving forces of the community, which generates the development and prosperity of the community. The power is always vested to the most talented, to the most skilled and qualified members of the community. Integrally, this concept is connected with the concepts of social authority and prestige. These terms purport that when a person or an organization is socially authoritative he/she or it automatically becomes prestigious (Williams, 2008). Social authority means that a person or an organization can easily directly or indirectly define the demeanor of other people or organizations. Prestige is considered as a concept, which allows a person or an organization in question to be admired and worshipped by the rest of the community. Their actions and demeanor, their clothing and lifestyle, their hair-dos and appearance are ubiquitously imitated by those, who like them. And usually they are liked by all members of the community.

### The Evaluation and the Movie Reflection of Power, Social Authority and Prestige

In order to estimate the concepts of power and social authorities, scholarly opinion must always be highly considered by the person who is conducting

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the analysis of the case study. Generally, there are no unified criteria for the evaluation of the concepts of power, social authority and prestige. Whilst the issue of power can be measured by the number of people amenable to the source of power, the issues of prestige and social authority have never been associated with a unanimous opinion of the scientific authorities.

In the film the most authoritative and powerful people are the judge and the District Attorney, who is trying to convince the judge that Larry and Chuck are not gay people by their natures and that they entered into the matrimonial relations, having one goal only - to circumvent the mandatory legal procedures. The authority and the prestige of these professions are well-reflected in the movie. In particular, the judge and the attorney are both authoritative and prestigious due to the fact that many people are trying to convince them that the behavior of the couple is genuine and in any case is not imitated by the parties.

## Part II. Race and Ethnicity and Discrimination Issues of the Movie

Both the scholarly and the political international communities define race as the combination of the specific physical traits and individual peculiarities of people, which have been developed in the course of evolution and which distinguish them from the rest of the population. The races that are in the world are Negroes, Mongolians and Europeans. As far as the definition of ethnicity is concerned it must be mentioned, that this concept is narrower than the concept of race. While the race encompasses purely the aspects connected with the geographical origin and the physical peculiarities of a person in question, ethnicity is more rooted to the cultural development and

traditional evolution of the geographically isolated part of the race.

Currently, there is a convergent scholarly opinion that the number of ethnicities is not subject to the scholarly calculation and sequestering, because the ethnic units are rapidly developing and increasing both in the number and substantive issues (Williams, 2008).

Inherently the issues of ethnicity, race and discrimination are deeply interconnected. To be more exact, the discrimination of the racial and ethnic minorities of the United States of America is majorly based on the ethnical or racial criterion. To illustrate, the majority of the court claims submitted to the United States Courts of all instances have been submitted by the members of Mongolian and African racial groups, who report to be routinely discriminated by their European counterparts. Although the United States of America has been proclaimed to be an independent, lawful and completely democratic state, the discriminatory processes on the grounds of ethnical and racial affiliation is rampant nowadays.

### The Concept of Discrimination

The concept of discrimination has a long tradition of psychological evolution. The most unified scholarly and political opinion is that the discrimination shall be defined as the set of procedures taken by one social group to restrict and to limit the legally and naturally guaranteed rights and social privileges of the second social group on the basis of a certain criterion (Williams, 2003).

### The Assessment of the Concept in the Movie



Specific procedure is to be followed to conduct a proper and critical evaluation of these issues in the discussed movie. To be more exact, the racial and ethical issues are not paramount in the movie. The background of the movie is the gay people discrimination. Neither Sandler, nor Giaraputto, are African or Mongolian people and all major characters of the movie are of European origin. As far as the evaluation procedures of the alleged impact of these issues on the perception of the movie are concerned, the shortest way to analyze the importance of their effect is to follow the following criteria:

- It shall be answered whether at least one of the main characters of the movie was discriminated on the basis of his/her racial or ethnical identity. The answer is no. Although some characters from the movie are indeed black-skinned or they are of Asian origin, the discrimination on this ground does not take place.

Besides, it shall be additionally analyzed whether racial or ethnical issues do play a significant role to the comprehension of the movie by the target audience of the movie in question.

- It shall be answered whether the personalities of the movie were directly or indirectly discriminated on other grounds.

The Reflections of the Racial, Ethnical and Discrimination Issues in the Movie

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry

Having seen this marvelous and exceptionally unique movie, it can be recapitulated that the discrimination on the basis of the racial or ethnical factor didn't take place here. In fact, the film satirizes the discrimination

against the people of non-traditional sexual orientation in the United States of America in a comical and derisive way. In humorous manner the film depicts the work and social isolation the “partners” started to experience when they involuntarily disclosed that they were gays. Their workmates refused to work together with them, whilst the fact that Larry punched one of the most intrusive anti-gay protesters initiated an extensive and vigorous media campaign that has split the society in two parts, the one supporting the gay marriages and the second fervently oppressing this emerging trend.

Overall, the reflection of the aforementioned issues in the movie is ambiguous. The issues of race and ethnicity are not raised in the movie at all, while discrimination is fully depicted.