Unit Two

Stratification and Inequality

Anchor Texts for Unit Two:

Davis, Kingsley, and Wilbert E. Moore. "Some Principles of Stratification." *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 2011. 16-19. Print.

Mills, C. Wright. "The Power Elite." *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 2011. 100-11. Print.

Suggested Literary Texts and Films for this Unit:

James Agee and Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*
Maggie Anderson, "Among Elms and Maples, Morgantown, WV, August 1935" and "Mining Camp Residents, West Virginia, July 1935"
Matthew Arnold, selections from *Culture and Anarchy*
Sholem Asch, "The Triangle Fire" (paired with Rose Schneiderman's "Memorial Speech," and Robert Pinsky's "Shirt")
Rebecca Harding Davis, *Life in the Iron Mills*
Stuart Dybek, "Blight"
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
Philip Roth, "Goodbye, Columbus"
Tillie Olsen, "I Stand Here Ironing"
Eugene O'Neill, *The Iceman Cometh*
Matewan (1987, director: John Sayles)
John Steinbeck "Chrysanthemums"
Jonathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal"

Major Writing Assignment:

Bibliography: The focus of this project is to gather, summarize, evaluate and synthesize materials that can be used for later projects. The texts will be chosen and organized around a guiding research question that is developed by the student and the student will write a list of at least five claims that can be made based on the evidence found in the texts explored. The materials gathered for this project may be any kind of text (images, film, video, music, etc), but at least one text must be theoretical in nature (though this text can come from in-class materials). In compiling and analyzing these texts, this assignment will take the form of an extensive annotated bibliography of at least 1500 words. Beyond the text of the bibliography, there must be a short reflection on how the student intends to proceed with developing the ideas into future work.

Sample Daily Response Prompts:

Davis and Moore (and *Of Mice and Men*)

Assignment: Read Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification" and finish reading Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and respond to the following (**THIS RESPONSE IS REQUIRED OF ALL STUDENTS**): Davis and Moore claim (on pg. 15) that

> One may ask what kind of rewards a society has at its disposal in distributing its personnel and securing essential services. It has, first of all, the things that contribute to sustenance and comfort. It has, second, the things that contribute to humor and diversion. And it has, finally, the things that contribute to self-respect and ego expansion. The last, because of the peculiarly social character of the self, is largely a function of the opinion of others, but it nonetheless ranks in importance with the first two. In any social system all three kinds of rewards must be dispensed differentially according to positions.

Using this idea as a starting point, pick a character from *Of Mice and Men* and analyze the rewards that come from their position on the ranch, and then place them in the "social order" of the ranch and of society as a whole (within what Moore and Davis call "The Two Determinates of Positional rank"). **Bring laptops to class**.

Mills

Assignment: Read "The Power Elite," and **find an article through a library database that discusses C. Wright Mills "The Power Elite**." Please paste an MLA-style bibliographic entry and the abstract from the article (which should be available in the database) as a standard response on Blackboard as well as onto the class Google Doc (so everyone will have access to the bibliography). Continue reading *Of Mice and Men*. **Bring laptops to class**.

In-Class Lesson Plan Ideas

Davis and Moore (and *Of Mice and Men*)

Lecture: Interpretive context and the "Seems to be about X, but is really (or could be) about Y" interpretive move.

In class (10 minutes): With a partner (using a different characters than that which you analyzed for today), use the "Seems to be about X, but could also be about Y" move to determine, within the context of Davis and Moore's "Principles of Stratification," how a particular character believes themselves to be of one strata, but is actually of another. In other words, the character says or does something that seems like X, but is really about Y.

Discussion: Stratification and inequality in *Of Mice and Men*. Robert Burns poem where steinbeck got the title.

Mills

Writing concern: Seems to be about X, but is really (or could also be) about Y.

Lecture: The big three of economics, politics and military (see Mills pg. 89) and what they look like today in terms of corporations, parties and the military-industrial complex: map of corporations, the two party system, and Eisenhower's outgoing speech/ Robert Reich's graph of the current budget proposal.) What this may mean for "seems to be about X, but is really (or could also be) about Y" in the popular imagination. Conspiracies and the difficulty of pointing to the power elite.

In-Class: Discuss the article you found with a partner and then select a poem/photo combination that you both believed to be the most powerful and respond to the following question: how does the poem change the way you see the photo (and vice versa)? Write up a brief "seems to be about X, but is really about Y" critique of the photo. What ethical questions does Anderson bring up that are not immediately obvious to the reader? How does she (and/or Evans) seem to be addressing the "power elite." Post response to the class Google Doc.

Discussion: The ethics of capturing an image and the poetry of photography. *Ekphrasis*.

Sample Major Writing Assignments:

Emergent Bibliography on Race, Class and Gender
(2000+ words)

For this project, students will effectively create an annotated bibliography that summarizes, evaluates and synthesizes a range of conceptual texts with each other and a chosen poem or story. The purpose is to prepare to write paper four and to practice close reading of both theoretical and poetic/fictional texts.

Students will gather a collection of five articles and/or book chapters that will be read with a poem or story in order to develop a coherent thesis for how a concept dealing with race or gender intersects with a concept of social class, particularly how we can see this intersection represented in the chosen poem or short story. Therefore, the focus of these texts will be *either* "race and class" *or* "gender and class," but not all three. After choosing a poem or short story to work with, students will gather five articles to help provide a conceptual frame through which to read the poem or story. One of the five articles *must be* "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?" by Joan Acker, three of the texts *must be* theoretical texts from class (see complete list of available theoretical texts for this project below). The other text will be gotten through independent library research. Again, all of these texts should focus on either race and class *or* gender and class. Once these articles have been summarized, evaluated and synthesized with each other (where appropriate) as well the chosen poem or story, students will draft an arguable, narrow thesis statement that the evidence in these documents can prove. Thus, two parts to the assignment:

3.1. Emergent Bibliography: In this part of the assignment, each of the five theoretical texts will be given an MLA style citation and then individually summarized, evaluated and synthesized with the other texts. The objective is to understand the argument of each text on its own terms, find its strengths and weaknesses, and compare and contrast how the ideas of this text compare to the others.

Thus, each entry will have three clearly-labeled sections:

> **Summary**. In this section, the whole argument of the article or chapter is written briefly in the student's own words. There is no opinion in this section, just a concise account of what the author says. This must be done clearly in less than 200 words and in a single paragraph. (Look at Rosenwasser and Stephen's technique for summary writing on pgs. 75-77).
>
> **Evaluation**. Here, students will analyze and place evidence-based value judgments on the strengths and weaknesses of the various threads of the argument presented in the article. In these evaluations, the student may have an opinion, but it is always grounded in evidence from the text. (Writing evaluations is most closely tied to the "five analytical moves.")
>
> **Synthesis**. This section has two parts:
>
> *First*, through an ongoing process of considering the summarized argument and looking to the various strengths and weaknesses discovered through evaluation, the student will then compare and contrast the concepts (and language used to describe those concepts) of the given text with the other four theoretical texts.
>
> *Second*, the student will look at places in the theory that relate and converse with the short story or poem they've chosen to write about. The whole synthesis section is expected to be rigorous and evidence-based, as well, though students can feel free to ask questions that remain unanswered in this section. Through this part of the process, the student is tracing out possible ways of bringing the various conceptual texts together in order to make a clear, coherent, and provable thesis that takes a position on how either race and class *or* gender and class are represented in the chosen short story or poem. (Students may turn to some of the techniques and ideas discussed by Rosenwasser and Stephen's chapter on "Interpretation" (pgs. 119-145).

3.2. Thesis Statement: In conversation with these texts, the student will draft a narrow and arguable thesis based on the evidence you've compiled in the summary, evaluation and synthesis sections. On top of including a clear statement of this thesis, you will include a short reflection on how you arrived at this thesis.

Possible Theoretical Texts for Paper Three:

> Paul Fussell. "A Touchy Subject" and "An Anatomy of the Classes."
> Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*
> Max Weber. "Class, Status and Party"
> Andrew Carnegie "The Gospel of Wealth"
> Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Solitude of Self"
> Eugene Debs, "Socialists Who Would Emasculate Socialism"
> C. Wright Mills, "The Power Elite"
> Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification"
> W.E.B Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk*
> Annette Lareau, "Unequal Childhoods"
> Andersen & Collins, "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter"
> bell hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, "Feminism and Class Power"
> bell hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, "Class Claims"
> Adorno & Rabinbach, "Culture Industry Reconsidered."
> Samuel Mockbee's "The Rural Studio"

Notably absent: Chafets, which is non-fiction, but not theoretical in nature.

Writing process suggestions for Assignment Three: It is important to note how relevant the fifth analytical move is to this assignment. The bibliography "emerges" because you are constantly looping back, reconsidering earlier ideas, reading and bringing in new ideas and texts, and comparing the materials in new ways, looking for the most relevant, strongest and most compelling arguments you can make. As with Paper Two, there is both a theoretical and literary aspect to the synthesis you are performing here, so you can practice similar techniques you used for that assignment. And, of course, you should be getting fairly familiar with the "five moves" by this point.

A key to the process is making sure that your understanding of the theories discussed is clear and text-focused. Do not over-generalize the ideas in the theory (one of the counterproductive habits of mind to watch for), and make sure that you stay focused on the clear points of intersection between either race and class *or* gender and class. This document can be a bit messy, but the assignment, because it is looking closely at these theoretical intersections, will already tend (by its nature) toward more and more complexity. Allow yourself to explore a range of ideas, but rein in ideas when they get too obtuse or too complex to cover in the time and space allotted. Remember, you are looking closely at just a few ideas in a few texts. In the words of Maud, "The earth is my body, my head is in the stars." Stay grounded in the text and in the lived experience that tells you when something is getting too abstract.

It is important to remember that the assignment is designed to help you discover your argument for Paper Four, so the pressure is off; just make sure you are getting to a deep level of textual analysis and that your ideas are always grounded in textual evidence as you brainstorm and shape your ideas around this collection of texts.

Sample Student Work

ETS 181 Emergent Bibliography Project
Student A

Gender Theory Synthesis

3.1 Emergent Bibliography:

1. "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?"- Joan Acker

Acker, Joan. "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?" *Class Questions: Feminist Answers* Rowman and Littlefield, 2006. 111-18. Print.

Summary

Joan Acker argues that the development of Capitalism led to divisions between domestic and undomesticated work that incorporated gendered and radicalized divisions between the town modes of work. An elite group of white men drove the development of capitalism, organizing it around masculine behaviors and characteristics, such as aggression and competition, until they were accepted as normal and okay. The development of capitalism also led to racial and gender subordination and exploitation. The United States historically as relied on unpaid slave labor and later low-wage labor based on discrimination and exploitation, in order to maximize profits. Part of this is justified by corporate claims of non-responsibility for household survival, severing the connection between paid market work and unpaid domestic work, thus devaluing the work women from poor and minority groups have the responsibility of doing. These patterns of inequality and ideas of segregation are embedded in capitalism and continue today. Business is conducted through a masculine ideology and employers continue to promote workers based on race and gender, where white men on most valued.

Evaluation

The key to Acker's argument is that white privileged men held power historically, and held the power to shape the rules of a capitalist economy that favored them and worked to assist them. They were fueled by greed, " The earnings advantage that white men have had throughout the history of modern capitalism was created partly by their organization to increase their wages and improve their work conditions, (127). Acker paints men as diabolical, greedy individuals that capitalized on gender and racial subordination. The practices and ideas men supported and engaged in were in part developed by their ignorant privilege that made it difficult for them to see the implications of their actions, not simply selfish desire. However, because capitalism was shaped with this idea justifying low pay for women because they should be at home and not in the work place, and for minorities because race has caused a silent acceptance of inequality and devaluation in the work place. Acker says that divisions between labor, and inequality between gender and races are necessary conditions of capitalism and doesn't offer any way to relive the harm that has been done. Acker identifies a problem but doesn't offer any solutions. Can the capitalist market tear down these unsaid rules and become more inclusive?

2. "Feminism and Class Power"- Bell Hooks

Hooks, Bell. "Feminism and Class Power." *Where We Stand: Class Matters*. New York: Routledge, 2000. 101-10. Print.

Summary

Bell Hooks analyzes how the contemporary feminist movement that gained media attention demanded equality for women within the existing economic structure which limited the chance for equality for low-class and minority women. The privileged class white women were fighting against their confinement to work inside the domestic household, where minority women and lesbians were already working outside the home in a discriminatory work place. While white women gained class status and power, poor and working-class women remained in the same position and all women remained as the main caretakers of the household. Hooks points out that white men accepted this because it didn't diminish their power or wealth. Revolutionary feminists began to challenge classism, arguing that these conditions reveal that the current system is unequal because it allows white women to gain power in conjunction with the subordination of working-class women. In order for all women to receive equal rights and opportunity, feminism must recognize and address the influence class has on a women's position in society. Part of this includes rejecting male ideas of success, such as supporting the idea of becoming economic self-sufficient rather than wealthy, and also providing for poor women so that they gain access to more opportunities.

Evaluation

The feminist movement was limited in impact and expansion because only upper class white women were heard and represented in the media because of their privileged class position. This changed feminism from empowering women of all classes and races to empowering the privileged few, while subordinated and exploiting low-class and minority women. This is evident because black women are the least economically powerful than any other group. The ideas in the feminist movement that gained momentum reveals how class further affects the opportunities an individual has to succeed in society. White, upper-class women, was in a position of power that allowed them to be heard and responded to, which other women didn't possess. Hooks argues that in order for feminism to be for everyone, women must support raising the status of all women. Hooks offers a variety of solutions, none of which seemed strong in impact. Hooks suggests offering housing and services to provide women with equal opportunity, but also suggests that women cannot act in the same ways as men in the market, " one way that we achieved this end was by living simply, sharing our resources, and refusing to engage in hedonistic consumerism and the politics of greed,"(d). Hook's is suggesting that wanting to be wealthy is a masculine tendency, however consumerism and wealth is a characteristic of class privilege not necessarily male privilege. This way of life is sustained by the exploitation and subordination of other groups. Living simply won't eliminate class privilege, because it provides not just wealth but also status and power, which must be used appropriately to advance equality of all women.

3. "The Solitude of Self"- Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Stanton, Elizabeth C. "The Solitude of Self." Address before the U. S. Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage. 20 Feb. 1892. Speech.

Summary

Stanton argues for women's rights not simply because of its legality, but because every individual has a unique soul and are the foremost initiators of their safety and happiness. Every individual is born with equal self-sovereignty, and their safety and success depends on their own skill and judgment, which should be developed equally for men and women. Every individual feels and carries the weight of their life's responsibilities; men cannot carry a woman's burden no matter how much society says he can. Therefore, every individual should have the resources and knowledge to handle their individual responsibilities. Also, in order for a woman to manage a household they must have common sense, diplomacy and knowledge to handle the responsibilities, otherwise she will fail. Stanton argues for equal education and representation not simply so an individual can pursue their happiness, but so that a nation can fully and effectively use every individual's diverse talents. If women are denied the right to learn, they will not be able care for and develop their soul, and if they cannot develop their soul, their talents will not be able to fully contribute to the development of society.

Evaluation

Stanton's "Solitude of Self" presents a broader view of feminism, arguing for equality not economic gains and individual wealth, but simply because every human is born equal. Women not only need economic freedom, but also intellectual independence; because of "the self-dependence of every human soul" every human needs "courage, judgment and the exercise of every faculty of mind and body, strengthened and developed by use," (d). If every human has equal rights from birth, than these rights should not be infringed upon. Stanton presents a moral argument for gender equality that most likely is widely supported and agreed upon because equal rights and freedoms are an essential element and value in democracy. Stanton's argument falls short by simply fighting for equality within the law, instead of challenging the system itself for limiting opportunities in other ways. If women receive the same legal rights and freedoms and men, doesn't necessarily guarantee that they will have equality of opportunity in the free market where individual's can still make discriminatory decisions. Even if women have the right to vote, low class and minority women might not have the knowledge or ability to utilize their legal freedoms, and so they may need extra attention to ensure equality of opportunity to develop their minds and be productive in the market.

4. "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter"- Anderson & Collins

Patricia, Collins H. "Part 1: Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter." Introduction. *Race, Class, & Gender: An Anthology*. By Andersen L. Margaret. 7th ed. Cengage Learning, 2009. 1-15. Print.

Summary

Anderson and Collins analyze the complexity of race, class and gender in the United States through the matrix of domination. This approach recognizes that the historical structure of society affects the interconnections of race, class and gender, which individually and collectively influence the value of an individual, the opportunities they get, and thus their overall position in society. . The matrix of domination is a unique analytics system because it doesn't compare differences of groups, which fosters stigmatizing differences, but looks at how the differences simultaneously shape different experiences. The matrix of domination goes beyond trying to understand diverse groups, by focusing on the difference in structural opportunities not differences in culture. It's important to develop an understanding of how race, class and gender influence an individual's experience in different but connected ways because having limited knowledge creates a limited perspective, which

causes one to act in exclusionary ways or to wrongly rationalize racist, sexist, or oppressive behaviors. Finally, developing an inclusive perspective also involves understanding one's own story, and seeing how privilege has affected it and how it is linked to the experiences of others.

Evaluation

Providing equal rights through law hasn't provided equality for all, "despite removing the formal barriers to opportunity, the United States is still highly stratified along lines of race, class and gender," Collins argues that inequality still exists because of the limited perspectives privilege creates and looking at race, class and gender as separate characteristics. Having a limited understanding or knowledge of other groups or individual's lives prevents a person from understanding how their actions can subordinate and discriminate. Race, gender and class can create different obstacles for different individuals affecting their lives in varying ways from neighborhood to socioeconomic status. This all seems fairly obvious but understanding why is the hard part. Obstacles are created for these groups due to privileged individuals looking at them as different, and therefore treating them differently. ." The problem is that it fits into the hierarchy of opportunity, where the privileged receive more than those at the bottom. Collins calls for individuals to understand different cultures, to see how their culture has been treated and the consequences those actions have had on the opportunities available to them. From there, society can began to address these inequalities and forming well-researched and analyzed solutions.

5. Women's Work: Incorporating Gender into Theories of Urban- Social Change- Linda Peake

Peake, Linda. "Women's Work: Incorporating Gender into Theories of Urban-Social Change." Women and Environments Fall 1989: 18-20. ProQuest. PROQUESTMS. 10 Apr. 2015 <http://search.proquest.com/docview/211593308?accountid=14214>

Summary

Peake analyzes the impact of dismantling welfare systems on the opportunities women have and the overall implications gender discrimination and subordination that causes women to be major dependent of the state. As women began to enter the paid work force, men did not take on equal responsibility for work at home. Instead of equality, women must balance paid work and domestic responsibilities. If women remain the main caregivers at home, their ability to rise economically is limited, often to part-time employment in unskilled jobs that are considered "feminine". When state services and jobs are cut, unemployment for women rises and increases the demands of women to cover the loss in resources. The idea that providing state services and goods would equate with reproduction of labor power is limited. Social mobility is also affected by gender discrimination in the private sector and domestic responsibilities. In order to understand the changes in people's activities over time and space, one must include women and understand the interconnecting effects of all three spheres of work on their lives.

Evaluation

This article analyzes how gender division in labor, in the private sector, domestic household, and public sector, affects the organization of a woman's life. Peake's addresses the importance of taking into consideration gender restrictions in society with resource allocations, because women are most likely to be dependent on the state to provide services for every day life. By taking into consideration who uses state services, the resources should cater to their needs so that individual's can become self- sufficient and productive. Simply providing a service without a specific audience and goal, is inefficient and won't show positive results. Peake's argument fails to consider the state's

responsibility to issue legislation that would alter the structure of the private capitalist system. Legislation that would force equal economic mobility and opportunities for all in the private sector. Focusing on the construction of state services is more or a reactive than proactive approach. Women are dependent upon the state because of gender divisions in types of labor and wages in the private sector, which limit their economic gains and ability to provide for their family.

Synthesis

1. Acker v. Hooks

Just as white men developed capitalism to cater to their desire and needs, white women used feminism to bolster their status and power while subordinating low-class and minority women. Acker analyzes how men built an economic system that operated in a masculine nature, subordinating "emotion and human responsibility" and embedding a masculine ideology of how business should be done, subordinating practices, domestic and un-domestic, considered feminine. Similarly, Hooks points out that as feminism developed, privileged white women continued to accept the subordination of women that were different from them. Privileged woman gained greater access to economic power with privileged men, but these gains weren't seen for working- class women. Acker suggest that because masculine ideology is embedded in the work place, the few women (who are more often privileged) who gain high positions of power still think and act within the structured system that relies on subordination of a group. Hooks illustrates this idea in feminism. As white women gained power, feminism ideology was overpowered, " Western women have gained class power and greater gender inequality because a global white supremacists patriarchy enslaves and/or subordinates masses of third world women," (p 109). Economic benefits from feminism became exclusive to those with class power. These women, accepted the "capitalist patriarchal fear" that their power would "diminish if nonwhite people" gained equal access to opportunities, which Acker pointed to. In this way, capitalism not only subordinate women on the basis of their gender, but also their class, where low-class minority women continued to be exploited and oppressed.

2. Acker v. Stanton

Stanton argues that women are considered dependent on men because they are seen as weak and fragile and unable to protect themselves. She believes that this is wrong because every individual is born with self-sovereignty and individual thoughts and talents that no one else can properly commit to developing or offering. Unlike Stanton, Acker addresses the underlying reasons why women have historically been considered as weak and dependent. According to Acker, men oppressed women as individuals by devaluing domestic practices, keeping women in low educated and paid jobs and protecting themselves. These patterns are embedded in society, so providing women with the same legal rights as men, or legal protection doesn't address the gender division in labor that has cause class inequality on the basis of gender, "the gendered division of labor in domestic tasks was reconfigured and incorporated in a gendered division between paid market labor and unpaid domestic labor," (Acker p.2). While fighting for equal rights in civic participation and education is a step forward in providing gender equality, it isn't the ultimate solution because it doesn't address the embedded subordination of women in the work force. Stanton argues that in order gain influence on society, women must have common sense and knowledge of herself and others. However, simply providing education doesn't provide equality of opportunity, because the economic system keep women are kept in low-paid and routine positions, while men got higher positions and higher pay. Stanton is right to say that every individual has a birthright to self-sufficiency, but the social structures in society prevent equality in more ways than differences in education and legal rights.

3. Acker v. Andersen & Collins

Both of these theories focused on how the historical structure and patterns of capitalism have caused and contribute, individually and collectively, to gender and racial inequalities. In order to create lasting social change, Andersen and Collins stress developing an inclusive perspective where you understand how gender, race and class, cause privilege and restrict or offer more opportunities for you or for others. Acker specifically addresses the consequence of race, and gender on someone's access to power and privileges stating, "unequal pay patterns went along with sex and race segregation, stratification, and exclusion," (Acker p.3) Historically, these patterns are justified by patriarchal beliefs of virtue and privilege. Andersen & Collins might say, these patterns and beliefs in capitalism are widely accepted, because it's all people understand and know. Noticing and understanding how these beliefs cause individuals to act in exclusionary ways, is the first step towards addressing and challenging the oppression of race, class and gender in society, according to Andersen & Collins. They argue this because they believe that a partial knowledge causes individuals to act in exclusionary ways, not because they are racist or sexist but because they don't know any better. Acker counters this by saying white men and capitalist organizations benefit from divisions because they are able to earn more money and keep their power. Historically, men have held power and this has caused them to feel superior and entitled to high positions. In this way their knowledge is distorted and limited, but Acker is also suggesting that they act in that way because they are greedy and selfish, not because they don't realize that it is unequal.

4. Andersen & Collins v. Stanton

Theses two theories do not complement each other in a relevant way.

5. Andersen and Collins v. Hooks

Bell Hooks *Feminism and Class Power* illustrates how race, class, and gender interact to provide or limit opportunities for women. Feminism did not help to raise the status and power of all women because race and class affected which women could take part in and benefit from the movement. Andersen & Collins says that distorted, privileged knowledge, gives individuals a distorted view of how the nation developed. Hooks addresses how privileged white women viewed discrimination in the work force differently than it actually was. White women believed they were kept from working outside the home because of gender discrimination and oppression, when in reality they didn't work because the only jobs available to them were low-paid unskilled jobs that, low-classed women were already holding (Hooks p.2). This caused the rising feminist movement to be limited in impact and message because it didn't address the struggles of lower-class women. Andersen & Collins say it's vital for individuals to recognize how diverse groups have been silenced in the construction of society, because ignoring them further establishes exclusive and oppressive actions as acceptable and normal. The impact of not having an inclusive perspective was evident in the feminist movement, because while privilege women began to gain economic power, low-class minority women remained powerless and ignored.

6. Hooks v. Stanton

Hooks and Stanton both address the importance of independence survival and having the rights and opportunity to care for oneself, but they take different approaches. Stanton vaguely addresses that in order for a women to bear her own responsibilities and contribute to society, she needs to have the opportunity to learn and participate in the community. Stanton's argues that because each person has their own mind and thoughts, each individual must be able to process and handle them because no one else can or is even willing to. Stanton states that each could must depend wholly on itself, and because of that they need equality. If every soul depends on itself, then

Hooks argues that women need economic equality so that they have the resources to care for themselves, and develop their knowledge and personal standing in society. Hooks calls for addressing the issue of class in limiting opportunity, because women in lower classes such as minorities and lesbians were "objects of patriarchal abuse and scorn" (Hooks p. 3) These women are economically independent and they need economic equality to care for themselves, but their class, race and gender were working to oppress them. If every soul must depend "wholly on themselves" than women who are economically independent need economic equality to gain status and wealth, but the current capitalist system doesn't provide this opportunity because it continues to discriminate and oppress on the basis of gender and class.

7. Peake v. Acker

Acker and Peake both address the problematic nature of separating paid labor from the domestic work that are a part of a woman's life. Acker states that domestic activities are devalued and seen out the responsibility of corporations. However for women, the two activities are an intricate part of their life and ignoring their interactions creates restrictions on their daily life. Subordinating the value of domestic work, subordinates women in the work force. Peake states that in the work force, women are primarily kept in unskilled part time positions that are considered feminine. Both Acker and Peake believe that a women's position in the work force is restricted because they must balance the responsibilities of both parts of their lives. The consequence is that women are able to provide for themselves. Peake states that nine out of 10 single parents are women, and the majority of them are living in poverty and relying on state services. The gender divisions created by capitalism restrict women from being self sufficient, causing them to be a burden on the state, according to Peake.

8. Peake v. Andersen & Collins

Andersen and Collins argue that in order to fully understand and properly address inequality, we must analyze how race, class and gender influence a person's position in the structural system of the country. They say that having a limited a perspective causes a person to act in exclusionary ways without even realizing it, and Peak explains the impact exclusionary policies have on women. In order to understand current social-economic conditions, where women are major beneficiaries and employees of the sate, we must have a gender-aware perspective. This involves understanding the interconnections between domestic work, state services and private sector opportunities in a women's life. Peake criticized Castell's theory because it only focused on the impact state services have urban structure, without taking into consideration the implications state services have on other aspects of a women's life, such as completing her domestic responsibilities and providing jobs that aren't available to her in the private sector.

Andersen and Collins might say that "reproduction of labor" or productivity of the work force, cannot be sustained or improved just by looking at how state services aid it, because productivity is also affected by the systematic subordination of women. With an inclusive perspective, Castell might realize that just providing state services isn't enough to improve economic productivity because gender divisions in the private sector and domestic responsibility limits the production a women can create. Creating lasting social change involves not only providing beneficial services but also taking on the responsibility of making the work force equal for all.

9. Peake v. Stanton

Stanton suggests that women should be able to attain individual development for the general good, because developing skills and knowledge will lead to greater development in the overall society. Stanton says restricting a women's right to education, and position prevents women from being able to care for themselves. Peake points out how gender restrictions in the private work force limits the opportunities of women to earn more, ultimately causing many women and her family to fall into poverty. Stanton states that uneducated women cannot succeed in position in life, including positions of paid labor and domestic labor. Peake, however points out that even when women enter the work force they're opportunities are limited, not because they are uneducated, but because a woman must balance her paid work time with her home work life. This causes employers to question a women's commitment to a position or organization, thus justifying the subordination of women. Stanton focuses on how women cannot catch 'the prizes of life" without education, but Peak understands that social divisions in labor limit a women's life opportunities.

10. Peake v. Hooks

Peake structured her argument to suggest that all women are subordinated in the paid work force, but hooks addresses how privilege can affect a women's position. The feminist movement gained momentum when the white privileged women at the forefront of it fought for gaining social equality with privileged men, and not providing social equality for all women. Privileged women initially didn't work outside the home, because only low skilled, part-time jobs that Peake mentions would have been offered to them. They used feminism to earn better paid positions for them, while minority women and lesbians were still stuck in lower paid positions. Peake's analysis is limited because she doesn't address the affect privilege and class has on the organization and opportunities in a woman's life. Peake argues that it's the state's responsibility to have a gender-aware perspective when constructing policies for urban social change, but doesn't mention the responsibility of other women to care for each other. Not only should government policy work to mitigate the challenges presented by the structural system on women, people with privilege need to understand how the system creates different challenges for everyone. Privileged woman have the benefit of their class to gain economic power, but other women don't. Hooks believes that it is also the responsibility of privileged women to support effective and inclusive social change by supporting the development and independence of women in all classes.

Short Story and Theory Synthesis

I Stand Here Ironing by Tillie Olsen Citation:

Olsen, Tillie. "I Stand Here Ironing." *Tell Me a Riddle.* 1961. 292-98. Print

1. Andersen & Collins v. Tillie Olsen

Andersen and Collins emphasize the use of the matrix of domination to analyze how race, class and gender manifest different life experiences in separate and interconnecting ways. Race, class and gender are all socially interpreted and understood by society, which ultimately affects the group interactions and group access to power and privileges based on their race, class and gender. By looking at the social structure of race, class and gender in *"I stand here Ironing*" we can see how being a poor women affects the life opportunities of the narrator's child Emily. In school, Emily struggled to keep up with the work and understand what she's learning because of her class situation. The mother speaks about how Emily had to care for her siblings and there was barely time for Emily to study. The family moved a lot, maybe because they didn't have the consistent income to pay rent, and her mother didn't have time to give her the consistent attention to help develop her daughter's knowledge. Finally, Emily has a knack for comedy and performing but without the money and resources to develop the talent, Emily never reaches her full potential. These restrictions on her opportunities and development were all influenced by Emily's mother's inability to earn more in the work place due to gender divisions in labor that keep her in low-paying jobs. In this way the social subordination of women in the work force, gender and class, influences Emily's class status and future opportunities.

2. Acker v. Tillie Olsen

According to Acker the development of modern capitalism was partly organized to improve the conditions and provide benefits to white men. This created an earning and position advantage in the work force for men, subordinating women into unskilled and low paid jobs. In "I stand Here Ironing" Tillie Olsen illustrates the damage gender divisions in the work force causes when women don't have the opportunity to fill larger positions, earn more and provide for themselves. The narrator is a teen mother whose husband left her to care for their new daughter. She was able to find a night job, however because it wasn't full time, and didn't pay well, she eventually could no longer care for herself and Emily. Even though, both the mother and the father were in poverty, as a male the father had an earnings advantage that made it possible for him to raise a child while the mother could not.

3. Stanton v. Tillie Olsen

According to Stanton if a women doesn't have access to education or to be independently efficient, she won't be successful in any position in society. To properly raise children, a mother needs to have wisdom and knowledge to educate them. The narrator in Olsen's short story constantly recollects on her shortfalls as a mother. She let Emily be absent from school, because she didn't understand the future impediments it would cause on Emily's educational development. She expected Emily to be good and helpful all the time, not realizing the importance of developing deeper relationships for an individual's happiness. The narrator states, she was working and had four other children so she didn't have time to spend on her or to allow her to focus on her education and

be prepared for school. The narrator didn't have the knowledge to "train her children" well or to maintain the affectionate relationships that Stanton speaks of. Olsen's narrator is never given a name, which suggests that mother represents all single poor mothers. Her story illustrates for all women, that if they don't have equality in the work place or education and common knowledge, they cannot handle the responsibility of raising a family without some consequences.

4. Hooks and Peake v. Olsen

Hooks points out that even when privileged class woman began to gain equality in the work force with other privileged class men, they remained the sole caretakers of the family and household, especially for poor and working-class women. It's evident in *I Stand Here Ironing,* the narrator has no class power or status to help her raise her family properly. Peake discusses how the subordination of poor and working class women in the private sector, causes them to be dependent on the state for jobs and services. Hooks discusses the importance of the feminist movement to respond to this consequence, "ending welfare will create new underclass of women and children to be abused and exploited by the existing structures of domination," (d). Peake argues in support of state services in cities that cater to the every day lives of poor women who depend upon them for survival. Women rely on state services and employment because of their subordination in the private sector, and because they provide them with stable employment that still allows them to properly address the demands of the household. In *I Stand Here Ironing*, the narrator discusses how the public nursery failed to meet the necessary needs of Emily's development that she wasn't able to provide due to her limited knowledge and class situation. The mother says it was the only affordable option and the only option that allowed her to have a job. This public service did understand the construction of a woman's life by providing day care during work hours, allowing her to have a job, but they weren't effective in advancing the educational development of Emily. Therefore, the class and gender restrictions that the narrator encounters are passed down to Emily, whose knowledge and talents remain under developed. Peake argues that the "reproduction of labor power" is influenced by the construction of a family's daily life. If a mother is unable to properly raise a child, that child's life opportunities will be limited because their skills and talents remain undeveloped or ignored**.** Lasting social change requires not only responding to the needs of women with services, such as day care, but also making sure those services don't create dependence and prevent the reproduction of social challenges.

3.2 Draft Thesis

In the short story *I Stand Here ironing*, Tillie Olsen exemplifies how the rooted patterns and practices of subordinating women in society inhibits the ability of a poor working mother to care for her daughter, constrains the life chances of the daughter to develop her skills and be successful, and ultimately establishes a cycle of poverty and dependence, which hinders the productivity and advancement of a society as a whole.

Reflection

When analyzing the different theories I began to notice how they showed the causes of gender subordination in the work place, how it progressed, and the lasting impacts it has had on society. When reading *I Stand Here Ironing*, I paid attention to how the narrator has been subordinated in society, and focused in on the challenges this caused for her and eventually for Emily. This involved paying attention not only to her gender but also her class. The mother's gender and class placed double responsibility on her to care for her daughter and provide an income, limited the mother's knowledge and time to educated Emily, and prevented her from helping Emily develop her talents and skills. Acker and Hooks pointed out that there's an embedded expectation of women to

be responsible for domestic tasks, and this is used as an excuse to keep women in part time and low paying conditions. The challenges of balancing both responsibilities are exhibited in this short story. Stanton made a fair point that mother's must have wisdom and knowledge to support the development of their child's knowledge and skills. In *I Stand Here Ironing*, we see how the mother's limited knowledge and lower class prevents here from helping Emily's development. Finally taking the advice from Andersen and Collins and developing an inclusive perspective, I examined how subordination of women has created a long lasting dependence that hurts individuals from advancing society. I used Peake's article to see how the structure of society has caused poverty specifically for single mothers because that is who the narrator of the story is. I noticed that because of the limitations the narrator's gender and class caused, Emily's talents will never fully be utilized and has caused Emily to be dependent on others to help her.

Professor Sean Conrey

ETS 181

March 7th, 2016

Assignment Two: *Dope (2015)*

2.1. Contextualization of Literary Text

The movie *Dope*, written and directed by Rick Famuyiwa, produced by Forest Whitaker, executive produced by Pharrell Williams, and co-executive produced by Sean Combs, is the story of Malcolm Adekanbi (Shameik Moore), a self proclaimed "geek". The movie deals with the issue of breaking stereotypes. For brilliant and black teen Malcolm, this means going to Harvard University and getting out of his crime ridden Los Angeles suburb. He just wants the chance to make something of himself outside of what the world expects of him. On the one hand he is a straight A student obsessed with 90s culture and who gets beat up by the school bully on the regular. On the other hand, he sells dope to make ends meet for himself, lives with a single mother, and only has one memory of his father. His college essay asks the administration to guess which life he is living. The trick is that it is both and that people cannot be generalized and put into boxes, which is something he used to think was bad but is now realizing is what makes him so well rounded and the perfect candidate for the next class at Harvard University. The film had mostly positive reviews by many different critics and, by the end of its run in theatres, grossed almost 20 million dollars just behind *Jurassic World, Inside Out, Spy,* and *San Andreas*.

2.2. Annotated Bibliography

Fussell, Paul. *Class: A Guide Through The American Status System.*

New York: Summit, 1983. Print.

Summary: In Paul Fussell's book *Class: A Guide Through the American Status System*, he discusses at length the differences between the classes of people. He immediately mentions how preferable it would be if Americans used the word "caste" as they do in India because he really does mean that it is exceedingly complicated to move from one class to another. He goes on to say that while there are only two classes – rich and poor – it is within those classes that there are sub classes; top out-of-sight, upper, upper middle, middle, high proletarian, mid-proletarian, low proletarian, destitute, and bottom out-of-sight.

Evaluation: When it comes to *Dope*, it is exceedingly obvious where the two coincide. Malcolm is "a mid-proletarian". He lives in a crime ridden area and exists in a way Fussell would describe as "offensive". "These are the people who feel bitter about their work, often because they are closely supervised and regulated and generally treated like wayward children…There's a prole tendency to express class disappointment by self-implications, and when examining proles it's well mindful of the observation of British critic Richard Hoggart: 'There are no simple people. The 'ordinary' is complex too.'"

Debs, Eugene V. "Socialists Who Would Emasculate Socialism." *Social Democratic Herald* 147th ser. 3.45 (1901): 1-2. Web. 7 Mar. 2016.

Summary: Eugene Debs writes at length throughout *Socialists Who Would Emasculate Socialism.* what he truly believes the problem with socialism is. He believes the issue lies in "socialists" who were never called to action nor did they cause any kind of stir in the name of a cause they claimed to believe in so heavily. "These people, mostly honest, imagine themselves Socialists – that is, in a mild, not a malignant form. They have decided that there is no class struggle, and now they propose to determine whether or not to organize a new party – that is to say, whether or not capitalism will abolish itself. If a new party should be decided upon, it must not be partisan."

Evaluation: Malcolm goes through life feeling as if he does not quite fit. On one end of the spectrum he completely deserves the high life at Harvard. He gets straight A's, had an almost perfect SAT score and mainly stays out of trouble besides his occasional goofing around with his friends and their punk band. He likes things that are considered predominantly "white culture". On the other end of the spectrum, Malcolm sells molly to make money for a drug dealer and cheated his way basically into his dream school. He is a black teen who grew up on the wrong side of the tracks and lives with a single mother. Is he a stereotype or does he break the mold? Much like Debs' socialists who would emasculate the concept of socialism, Malcolm does not fit either. Not quite one thing but not entirely another either.

"The Socialist Party of America." *SOCIALIST PARTY OF AMERICA (1895-1905) Document Downloads*. N.p., n.d. Web. 07 Mar. 2016.

Summary: This whole document discusses thoroughly most of the points that Eugene Debs made fairly often. It begins by elaborating on his address at the Opening of the Special Convention of the American Railway Union in Chicago during June of 1897. This was the first official meeting of the Socialist Party and truthfully where Debs' role as an important contributor to the party began. Further throughout the piece, the very article of *Socialists Who Would Emasculate Socialism* is brought up. The author agrees heavily with the idea that if a wage worker is not with the socialist party than they are against them.

Evaluation: The difference between this article and Debs' original article is the room for interpretation. It does not seem so concrete in his original piece where in these excerpts everything becomes black and white. When it comes to *Dope*, Malcolm's whole point would disagree heavily. Where he can find room to breathe throughout Eugene Debs' original statements, he cannot in these pieces due to their lacking willingness to budge. Malcolm could be both the "geek" and the drug dealer making money on the other side of the tracks but if he were to live in this world, he could only be one.

2.3. Interpretive Dialogue

Fussell: It was interesting to see this kid from the mid proletarian make his way up the ladder of status the way he did.

Debs: What do you mean?

Fussell: It is so exceedingly difficult for one to climb their way up from the lower classes to the higher classes – God I really wish the word caste were popular in America – but Malcolm really drew from the cards he was dealt to make a situation for himself and possibly for his mother as well.

Debs: I guess on some level I agree with that.

Fussell: What would be the difference?

Debs: The way I see it, the most important part of this film wasn't Malcolm's climb up the social and class ladder, it was his college essay. He flat out asks the administration of Harvard University to classify him like he can only be one thing. The whole point of socialism is that we destroy the class system.

Fussell: I mean…yeah, but this movie wasn't about socialism. It was about the class system and stereotypes that we apply to people because of superficial factors like their skin and where they come from. He was a poor black kid who was literally called "arrogant" for thinking his SAT scores and grades would allow him into one of the most prestigious schools in the world.

Debs: But look at what he said! He wants to be judged because he just wants to be considered the same. The point is that he wants the same opportunity.

SPA: But honestly the other point of his essay is that he is both Student A and Student B…he can only be one those.

Debs: That's unreasonable.

SPA: You end up as one or the other. He's either going to be the drug dealer who never leaves Inglewood or he's going to be a Harvard grad who moves and makes a better life for himself…he can't be both forever.

Debs: Well AJ was both. He was a businessman who graduated from Harvard but still dealt drugs on the side. He's the one who forces Malcolm into this situation to begin with – I mean, besides Dom.

SPA: **Sits down and shuts up**

Fussell: So elaborate on why it isn't necessarily "important" that Malcolm goes from basically being a poor thug to a student with the most opportunities of anyone.

Debs: While, yeah, this movie isn't about socialism, it's very important to note that there're socialistic tendencies throughout the entire film. Malcolm deserves the same opportunities as everyone else because he works hard for them. He gets the SAT scores, he gets the grades, he even makes the best of a bad circumstance that he didn't necessarily ask for. It's not really his fault Dom put the drugs in his bag and Dom did have police guidance. I mean, sure, probably not the best idea for him to blackmail his way into Harvard. But you have to hand it to the kid, he finds a way out of the ghetto in a creative and important way. He destroys the class system in this way. He literally obliterates what it means to be a black teen in Inglewood, California (you know, Inglewood up to no good), and becomes someone who now has the same opportunities as a rich white kid from Beverly Hills or New York City.

Fussell: Well, that was kind of my point…He destroys the social structures that are put in place by hopping out of his social class.

SPA: Did he really though?

Fussell and Debs glare at SPA.

SPA: Just hear me out!

Pause

SPA: My point was really just that, despite the fact that, yeah, AJ is both, Malcolm doesn't necessarily want to be both as well. He wants to get out of Inglewood. He wants to be AJ, sure, in the sense that he can provide a life for himself and his family above the poverty line in this ghetto of Los Angeles, but he doesn't want to be involved with the drug dealing. That was the whole point of the fail safe to begin with. Malcolm wanted a way to make sure he not only got into Harvard, but also a definite way to make sure he could pretty much never be brought back into the situation at all.

Debs: I kind of see your argument, but at the end of the movie Malcolm just accepts that that's how he makes money now. He created this elaborate and thriving online business that he clearly doesn't regret taking part in because, as the movie shows, he keeps dealing.

Fussell: I feel like I may need to reassess how set in my definitions I was. Maybe it isn't so difficult to move from one group to another. Sure…if you're in the bottom out of sight group you're probably not going to get to the top out of sight group anytime soon but apparently, if you work hard enough you can in fact get to a better state of living. Despite the fact that I stand by how wrong it is of him to be selling drugs even if it is smart and benefits him.

Debs: I can agree with that. Maybe we've all been too set in our ways.

The three part as friends and get Chipotle

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Part 1: Contextualization of Literary Text:

In the article, Socialism and Middle Class: The Role of the League for Independent Political Action and the Future of Socialism in the United States, was an article written in 1932 and published in the magazine *The New Leader. The New Leader* was a magazine created by a group of individuals associated with the Socialist party of America; two of which being Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas. It began in 1924 and was published in New York City. Its rhetoric tended to be liberal and anti-communist ideals, it was found that in its second decade of publishing its circulation increased and overall politics began to change from a capitalist society to a more socialistic society. The author of this specific article Reinhold Niebuhr, was an American intellect who commented on politics and public affairs. He was also a theologian, ethicist, minister and professor. Niebuhr was the son of German immigrants and his father was a pastor. Given Niebuhr's family background, religion and theology seem to be engrained within him considering his brother was also a prominent theological ethicist. Revolutionary thinkers like these seemed to be the spokespeople for the lower and middle classes, and pushed for the adoption of a new system that was more inclusive for everyone.

Part 2: Annotated Bibliography:

Summary of "Socialists who emasculate socialism" – Eugene Debs

The author begins the article with a statement in which he describes the battle for socialism increasing with vigor. Debs has a strong focus on the type of men socialism needs and glosses over the female population possibly excluding them from the new idea he is presenting. Moving forward he begins to address the "New Party" and its need to not be partisan, a party of "all of the people (Debs 6.)" The author believes the working class needs to be free of its capitalist exploiters by reforming the way modern work is done and that this can only be done by the total annihilation of the capitalist system. Debs questions the people who define themselves as socialist as he believes many think of themselves as reformers but in reality they dare not offend the capitalist exploiters. This is where the idea of socialists emasculating socialism is brought to the reader's attention, which is the main idea of the article. The author brings up a personal experience in which these fake "Socialists" petition for him not to run for a certain position and this ended up working in their favor. Debs ends on a note in which he states there is no denying that wage-slaves to capitalists still exist and the working class is being robbed without pity by the exploiters.

Evaluation of "Socialist who emasculate socialism" - Eugene Debs

It seems as though Eugene Debs constructs this article in a way where he presents his idea of a true Socialist and the values he believes a true Socialist party should have. He then juxtaposes these personal ideals to the socialist "reformers" he encounters in the time of the article. I believe this article is set up in way where he is targeting people whom describe themselves as socialist and stating they are actually not helping the socialist cause at all. Debs states, "In their new role as reformers they dare not offend the capitalist exploiters, for their revenue depends on their treason to the exploited slaves (Debs 8)". Essentially here is where this evaluation was formulated because this quote has quite the negative connotation about the socialists he is describing and how they keep the working class down. This also brings up an interesting point that Eugene Debs may see socialism as a male driven ideal by using terms like "emasculate" and devoting an entire paragraph on the first page to describing what type of "men" socialism needs and does not give much attention to women accept for one line. I would argue this article is about Eugene Debs' frustration with the current population that describes themselves as socialist as he believes they are not true to what they believe themselves to be.

Summary of "Socialism and Middle Class Revolt"- Reinhold Niebuhr

The author of the article speaks about the rise of a new political party, and some of the main characteristics of this party like the increase in opportunities for the middle class. While the economic society will remain mostly unchanged, the goal of this class revolt will be to spread the wealth and weed out the social injustices many workers face regularly. "The League" includes the industrial workers in this new foundation, though they are more "politically inert and docile than the disaffected middle classes (Niebuhr 2)," because they are a large portion of society not currently involved in politics. Where it is the norm of Western civilizations to define its industrial economy in collectivist terms, the worker groups are less able to do so. Since the workers can more fully understand what its like to be limited in a capitalist society, it is them that should be pushing for a "more thorough reorganization (Niebuhr 4)." In order for American society to reach a "middle class paradise (which would be ideal)," the lower classes must be able to break away from the politics behind the commercial and industrial groups. The socialist party must not be so concerned with what is happening now, but what they can make happen in the future. The development of this socialist class will surely provide differences in opinions regarding its effects on society, but when it comes down to it the middle class will not have the power to make any significant change or develop their own party. In France too, they are making advances toward a more socialist economy; placing socialism in a "stronger position in France than in any other large country (Kobbe 18)," and almost entirely eliminating communism.

Evaluation of "Socialism and Middle Class Revolt"- Reinhold Niebuhr

It seems as though the article is stressing the importance of including the lower and working classes in a specific party, because at the time their best interests were not being accounted for like the middle and upper classes were. The author makes note of the need for the middle classes to take part in and guide this revolt, even more so that the working class, which is ironic to me. He states, "Since the workers are bound to understand the limitations of a capitalist society much better than any middle class group it is inevitable that they should not only demand a more thorough-going reorganization of it but they should be more urgent in pressing toward their goal (Niebuhr 4)." This is particularly interesting though because the working class needs reform more so than the middle class does. Niebuhr proposes this "reorganization" while holding the opinion that the industrial workers are "politically inert" compared to the middle classes. This makes me believe that the author doesn't truly believe the workers should be at the forefront of this reform and that even with guidance the parties may not be so easily altered. Niebuhr spends most of the article proposing ideas and steps necessary to take in order to make way for a new socialist party, but then later suggests that this new party will lack validity if it is in fact created. He states, "A new political party which is based upon the disaffection of the middle classes can not fashion a new society because these classes (lower and middle) lack the cohesion to develop a strong political power and they do not understand the crisis in our civilization well enough to demand sufficiently thoroughgoing changes in the social structure (Niebuhr 8)." Once again, the author seems to be contradicting himself by telling the reader how to change a party, but then later downplaying the relevance and ability for this new party to alter society in any way. If society is to remain the same and the lower and middle classes don't possess enough knowledge to be grouped by themselves, then it seems stupid for the author to be pushing for the development of this party. It seems that he is knowingly creating an uninformed political party that has no ability to make an impact on society.

Summary of Max Webers, "Class, Status, and Party"

In Max Weber's famous document, "Class, Status, and Party", Weber gives his interpretation on how social subdivisions within a culture are formed. Max tells us that social class, social status, and social party all exist based on the power distributed to a person. Weber describes economically determined power and the social order in the first section of his article; this section illustrates why people strive for power, how they do it, and how this power creates the different classes within a culture. Weber says, "Man does not strive for power only in order to enrich himself economically... the striving for power is also conditioned by the social honor it entails (Weber 56)." Weber proceeds to argue that classes are largely made up of owners and non-owners. This distinction has to do with the fact that owners have resources they use in order to further themselves, while workers are limited to the services they provide. This creates a class struggle for workers, as they are more limited with respect to their life chances. Weber argues that another way classes are

formed is by common interests. When large amounts of people feel similarly toward something, their power greatly increases. Weber continues to describe the differences between classes and struggles in his "Status Honor" section. Weber makes the distinction that status groups are communities, which are different from classes in that they mostly associate with each other. This further distinguishes the community as a whole. Weber also explains how the community stays segregated because social groups do not tend to intertwine with each other.

Evaluation of Max Weber's, "Class, Status, and Party"

It is interesting how Weber associates power with not only wealth but also how much one is respected within a community, a social power of sorts. Weber's construction of an owner non-owner class system is also enlightening and holds weight in that it highlights the different ways one can be viewed and judged in a society. It is this owner/non owner environment that creates the class struggle working people face. It seems that Weber is insinuating the notion that the rich get richer while the poor get poorer. This is seen when he speaks about the owners; they have all these resources to build wealth off of, compared to the non-owners who are stuck without resources or the ability to move up in the food chain. These non-owners are then left to provide their service, knowing that they will forever be stuck in this endless cycle. Weber states that while classes are important, the common class situation does not necessarily, or even usually, form the basis for social action." This is interesting because based on politics, one would assume otherwise. For example, two of the main classes would be the proletariat and the Bourgeoisie; the working class and the ones in charge of the working class (means of production). It seems that being a part of the Bourgeoisie would be the most important factor and determination of life chances since they are given the ability to make societal change. Because Weber places priority with parties (associated with power), rather than classes (associated with economic order), he could be suggesting that one can have power without being in a specific class. This could potentially be because having power not only deals with ones economic status, but socially as well in that being honorable in a society gives one a sense of power as well. Furthermore, by placing priority in this way, he could be saying that being looked at as honorable in a society is far more important than being in a particular class and having access to certain markets.

Part 3: Dialogue

Introduction:

Eugene Debs, Max Weber, and Reinhold Niebuhr walk into a bar to discuss the latest edition of The New Leader, one of their favorite Chicago newspapers. An argument ensues illustrating the opinions of these three theorists with respect to a need for a new political party, the socialist party.

Weber:

I'll tell you what boys; I've been noticing a huge lack of life chances for the middle classes these days. The economic order is screwed, what should we do?

Debs:

I couldn't agree more. It's all about money and power, always has been. The 'capitalist exploiters' don't want reform, so it's going to be left to the working class to step up and start a new party. I really hope they can do it, too. I'm all for the betterment of social conditions for all people, its just kind of unfortunate that politicians these days are really only in it for themselves.

Niebuhr:

I see what you're saying, Debs. But do you really think that'll make any sort of difference? The working class isn't educated in politics, nor are they making any sort of collective effort to work towards a goal. They just aren't working together. I don't think it's necessarily realistic to expect such a thing, although I will support it.

Weber:

I don't think that's fair at all. You can't sit here and blame the 'non-owners' for their lack of knowledge or experience in politics. When we were at school learning, they were most likely working in a factory, stuck in their endless cycle of life. While I feel for them, in the end social order is determined by power, and unfortunately the workers don't have it and probably never will.

Debs:

But they will, Max! How can you expect to make any sort of change if you don't start somewhere? Any sort of reform takes time and effort. Back me up on this Niebuhr, I can't believe this man.

Niebuhr:

That's a good point, Weber. I can't seem to make up my mind; I think the people could potentially be ready for social ownership because I know that socialism is currently working in Europe and some of the Western civilizations, but at the same time America is such an "immature nation" in comparison that it's possible we are just too naïve and inexperienced. But you are right Debs, we cannot expect it to happen immediately, we must be patient and have hope for the future.

Weber:

All I was trying to say is that when you've got a system in place that gives one group an advantage and another group a disadvantage, the group with the advantage is obviously going to do their best to keep conditions in their favor. You can tell me that the working class is ready and that Europe has got it figured out, but that's not going to help Americans overcome the systems set in place in the current industrial

economy. The capitalist enterprise revolves around the "existence of a legal order to work" and requires the working class to do what they do, because nobody else will. Who will keep the economy going if no one is working? Or trade relations? Are you going to work instead, Debs?

Debs:

No, Weber, I can't say that I will. I think the bigger issue is that the current system we have in place is not working for everyone, and it therefore should be altered. The current system doesn't 'spread the wealth' – there are too many people who continue to get richer and richer while the working class struggle to make ends meet. It comes down to the fact that this whole thing is a based around a class struggle.

Niebuhr:

I think we can all agree with that.

Debs:

The current industrial society doesn't even compensate if a man gets hurt on the job! Do you guys recall reading my article, *Socialists who Emasculate Socialism*? Probably not. But anyway, I told a story of a man named Charles Penny, who was run over by a train while working his job and later had to have his leg amputated. Stuff like this happens daily, leaving workers permanently injured and therefore unable to work the rest of their lives- but no, yeah, everything is fine right?

Niebuhr:

Look guys. I feel like we're all trying to say the same thing. It's clear we need change. It's pathetic to think that we live in a society where inhumane labor practices run the entire economy, and we are completely aware of it. It's not like we aren't all witnesses to it, we see it happening every day. I'm not telling you I'm willing to take the place of these people, but I think it would do us all some good to imagine being in their place. We can't all agree that socialism is the clear next step, but it is clear that we need reform and socialism is potentially the best way to do this. The working and lower classes must be fit into a political party if we want them to gain a more equal place in this society.

Weber:

The only way we're going to be able to do this is if we can find a way to give the working class more power. Maybe we can do this by finding a way to give them social honor since they lack economic power.

Niebuhr:

Yeah you're right. As I said the other day, "economic power is the significant power of modern society, and as long as it remains intact it will bend political agencies to its own uses (Niebuhr 11)."

Debs:
So we agree then? Are we all on board for socialism? I think re-adjusting the wealth could be the biggest thing this economy has seen since sliced bread.

Niebuhr:
Yeah I mean I do have my doubts, as you all do, but in the end I think that's the best option we have.

Credits

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Project 2

ETS 181

Robert Pinsky's poem Shirt was first published in 1989. At the time, Robert was 49 and had witnessed social revolution in America happening since the age of five. Growing up as a teenager he witnessed brown vs board of education struck down separate but equal, the cold war, sputnik launch into space, and the creation of the atom bomb. By the time he was studying for a Ph.D. at Stanford University, Pinsky was a student of Paul Fussell and began his career as a poet during the Vietnam conflict, integration movement, JFK assassination, and the first man landing on the moon. At the time the poem was written, George Bush was just elected president a year ago, U.S Invasion of Panama was recent news. Later that year Tiananmen Square protests erupted in China, and the Berlin Wall was broken down.

The poem starts off referencing sweatshops run by Koreans or Malaysians.The narrator then begins describing the infamous Triangle Factory fire in 1911 which claimed the lives of 146 immigrant women and children (mostly Italian and Jewish Europeans) that were exploited by the industry. Witnesses report the victim leaping from the windows of the 9th floor, a scene that Pinsky takes advantage of and introduces a new theme by paralleling the motion of a suicide victim's shirt to a deranged man jumping from the bridge in Hart Crane's poem "To Brooklyn Bridge". The theme of interconnectedness of oppressed group takes the reader through time and space and shows us people oppressed by industrialization.

Pinky shows us how practical knowledge and skill has been replaced by a system that devalues the relationship between an object and its history through the shirt making process and those

involved in it. He notes that "It's important to recognize that there's a boring cult of competence in American life and literature especially competence in basic even primitive skills" (Gilbert 1) which in context of his poem serves as a critique of industrialization, commodification, and class exploitation that he bears witnesses to at the time the poem was written.

Weber, Max, Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, New York, Bedminster Press, 1968.HM57 W342

Weber defines power as the ability of a being to realise his will, especially when faced opposition. Power is complicated by social honor and prestige alongside economic position of the individual. It is reliant on the way social honor is distributed in a community alongside wealth distribution and access to goods and services, therefore, creating status groups based on the imbalance of power. Social strata of, class, status, and party, define the economic and social order forming a relationship that is codependent through their intersectionality. However the dual nature of stratification allows the unique constituents, class, status, and party, to have their own niche independent from each other that are reinforced by social action flowing from class interest and shared experience among shared collective.

By establishing that there is more to power than an economic advantage, Weber creates intersectional categories of honor, status, and party, which reinforce the idea of social order. However, this point of view overlooks the power that resides in social discord that supersedes the traditional ideas of honor, status, and party. He addresses law as a social order that is upheld by a

governing body that uses physical compulsion and uniform subjugation to establish a structure that "fairly" distributes power to those who "deserve" it. However, by ignoring the power of anarchy, lawlessness, and disorder, we overlook the role of the anti-hero in our society and their contribution to the social strata. Weber suggests that the inequalities of the system perpetuates class antagonism but fails to address power and class reversion in times of revolution and extreme social discord and how a lack of power becomes the people's greatest strength in unity.

Debs, Eugene V. "Socialists Who Would Emasculate Socialism." Social Democratic Herald 3.45 (1901): 1-2. Print.

Eugene Deb's essay on Socialist Who Would Emasculate Socialism focuses on those who claim to represent the middle-class interest in order to take advantage of the influence for revenue. She points out that there is a group of people who "in the name of brotherhood betray their trusting victims to the class that robs them without pity" and capitalizes on the class antagonisms through a socialist lense. By commodifying and exploiting the working class desire to free themselves from capitalist oppression, Debs' shows us how capitalism taking advantage of the most basic human desire to be free of class control and undermines socialism at its core by pretending to be the tool that ends class conflict. By commercialising on the socialist movement Eugene explains that those in power aim to keep their power by capitalizing on a movement that is the complete antithesis to the capitalists purpose.

The essay acknowledges two important parties, socialism and capitalism, that are ideologically opposing one another. Debs interest in the conflict is rooted in capitalist efforts to undermine the socialist influence through covert commodity socialism that feeds off class struggle. However, by repeatedly addressing the call for socialism to be exclusive to men and founding her argument on the emasculation of socialism, Debs does not address the topic of what socialism means to women and the role of feminism and what it means to be a woman in either social structure. The conflict for mastery over the tools that incite class conflict ignores the conflict created by gender, and by glossing over this key fact, Debs equates the idea of the strength of male identity to the strength of ideology.

Schumpeter, Joseph A. "THE SOCIAL ATMOSPHERE OF CAPITALISM."Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy. N.p.: Routledge, 2013. 143-45. Print.

Schumpeter provides us with an explanation of the capitalist process by which it decreases the value of class lives through universal hostility to its own social order. He states that "capitalism creates a frame of mind which, after destroying the moral authority of other institution, targets its own self" and the lack of defence for its evils is a reflection on our morality. Breaking away from capitalism would require an impossible moral feat affirms that our morality aligns with the interest of the bourgeois society that superimposes itself onto our own class interest. Finally, Schumpeter makes a point that the daily struggles of our social system are attributed to social order, an oxymoronic concept that manifests on to the people despite its antithesis to the capitalist tenants that feed the traditional American ideal of a classless society.

By addressing the social atmosphere of capitalism in terms of our own mortality, Schumpeter equates the social stratification to a natural human construct rather than the by-products of capitalist ideology. He addresses the fact that for socialism to work our society needs to be free from moral inhibitions such as selfishness, greed, distrust, and difference in values. However when addressing the superimposition of high-class interest onto social order he fails to address what that means in terms of our morality. This implies that though we understand the class system and our political ideology is strongly against the segregation of people based on wealth, any move that threatens the realisation of the inherent conflict of our capitalist ideologies is labeled as socialism without the necessary justification of the presence of such ideology. Though he does not directly address this dichotomy he implies that this is a defence mechanism used to strengthen the right wing extreme and by being "defenceless" an illusion of transparency is created that is responsible for class control in the capitalist regime.

Fade In:

Mead Hall of Valhalla - Asgard

We see Eugene Debs, Max Weber, Joseph Schumpeter discussing Robert Pinsky's poem Shirt over an abundance of mead and mutton. Bellies filled to the brim, bursting from beneath their button down shirts - stretching them to their limits, and intoxicated to the point where all philosophic discussion begins, Eugene Debs, slams down his drinking horn.

Debs - This poem is inherently an exploitation of socialism. Pinsky is writing as though he was there though the fire happened long before he was even born. Its an appropriation of a tragedy used to serve his needs.

Weber - Slow down on the mead buddy, it's clouding your judgement. Clearly his purpose was to show us how the exploitation of a class has stayed constant through time.

Schumpeter - By Odin's beard how could you both be so blind.

Odin - What? someone call for me? Is Ragnarok upon us?

Schumpeter - Yes, exactly. This work is an example of how capitalist class antagonism manifests itself through the exploitation of the "slaves in calico headrags weated in fields" and proletariat responsible for making the shirts.

Debs - If I may interrupt, your point rests on our societies core moral values being aligned with that of the bourgeois.

Schumpeter - My point exactly, we can see this moral dichotomy happening inside of the young man helping the children out of the window. On one hand he is killing them, on the other he is saving them.

Odin - Tragic, we should drink in their honor!

Weber - So what you are saying is that the fire is a metaphor for capitalism and his actions, though fuiled with intent to spare the children's suffering, it serves as a scapegoat for the upper-class ideology. That is why the shirt is "clean" and satisfies those who are unaware or things beyond "the label, the labor, the color, the shade" even though the industry is tainted by the death of hundreds of people.

Schumpeter - By that you are implying that the fire was started by the rich and they will use this man as an example to further subjugate the proletariat by attributing his actions to that of a killer instead of a saviour. A "Bedlamite" jumping to his death, driven insane by the heat.

Debs - What about his shirt? Why focus the class struggle onto the product of their labour? It seems as if the values of the bourgeois are present covertly, and dissipate once Irma inspects the color and fit of the shirt. The tragedy fades away inside this object.

Schumpeter - I think it's a symbol of industrialism, something devoid of morals that Pinsky can latch onto and use as a medium to bring his point of moral values transcending time and space yet simultaneously show how they are being ignored. This addresses your first point of exploitation of socialism, the poem is not about the fire, but about the shirt and the stories and struggles of the people lost in the objectification of their work. Pinsky talks about "the code" referencing the fire codes that were ignored in the fire, therefore we can assign the responsibility

of the fire onto the bourgeois. For heaven's sake, they locked the people in while the fire was blazing, all for what - a few extra shirts that burned to a crisp anyway.

Weber - So, at first, the poem seems to be about the man helping the children out the window but looking at its progression we can make a statement about how the system decreases the value of class lives. The man essentially frees those children of class oppression with last bit of power available to him by chooses his own death. It is interesting how when faced with death, trivial ideas that give us power fade away and we act on primal instinct.

Schumpeter - True, in that death he discards the social strata of class, status, and party, and draws power from denying the flames of industry the lives of the children and himself. Even in that moment of triumph, the patterns on his shirt tie in the clan tartans.

Debs - Another reference to the tradition shirt-making heritage of the Scottish. By looking at the tools of the trade that were claimed by the industry we can see the tools of class conflict and the enslavement of the people. The tools themselves betray the class of origin and become the symbols of oppression, taking advantage of culture and commercializing on the histories of the shirt. It seems innocent at first, but that is because the motives are hidden in the object produced. Through this objectification, we as a consumer are unaware of the exploitation of the industry and the struggles that capitalism instills on the common worker.

Scene end - all parties walk away with their heads aching, and the valkyries are left to clean the hall and reset the silverware and refill the mead horns.

Roll Credits.

Gilbert, Robert. "On Shirt" University of Illinois, n.d. Web. 06 Mar. 2016. <http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/pinsky/shirt.htm>.

ETS 181 Emergent Bibliography Project
Student B

Emergent Bibliography on Race, Class and Gender

3.1 Emergent Bibliography

Acker, Joan. "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?" *Class Questions, Feminist Answers*. Ed. Joan Acker and Lanham. N.p.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006. 125-31. Print.

Summary

Capitalism is racialized and gendered and it began when industrial capitalism emerged in the United States dominated by white males. Racialized and gendered capitalism is also embedded in the substructures of capitalism, such as in the organizing of paid production activities and unpaid domestic and caring activities. Sex and race segregation, stratification, and exclusion further explain the unequal division in the labor force. Industrial capitalism is described as a white male project because white men were and continue to be the "innovators, owners, and holders of power" in our capitalist society. Acker further explains the historical context of industrial capitalism and the nature of the labor force and inequalities at different times in our nations history. Hegemonic masculinities and the national histories, cultures and changed processes associated with them are discussed as components of the white male project. Acker concluded that the racialized and gendered system of industrial capitalism is organized in ways that are necessary to the organization of reproduction.

Evaluation

Acker does a good job of expanding on the social construction of capitalism. Industrial capitalism is very much a white male project; it is the type of society we live in and it informs so many important institutions and practices in place that carry a lot of weight in people's everyday lives. Although industrial capitalism is a large powerful system, for it to be considered a white male project means that it is socially constructed. Social constructions are ideas that are fabricated in particular historical circumstances and reflective of particular power relationships. Industrial capitalism is a perfect example of because identifiable characteristic of social constructions is that they persist over time. The historical practices of the substructures capitalism and stratification of sex and race are what gave rise to today's society. Although our world has come a long way, white men still hold the positions of innovators, owners and holders of power. The fact that so many institutions that affect the lives of everyday people have socially constructed practices in place that are racialized and gendered makes it very difficult for change to occur. Not only is it difficult to change our industrial capitalist system, Acker finds it necessary for operation. This is a very valid point, seeing as capitalism was built partly on profits from the very racialized industry of slavery. Wage differences and the division of labor have greatly contributed to maintaining the segregated labor force. Throughout history it becomes very clear that the white male project has justified unequal pay patterns by their beliefs of virtue and entitlement over women and minorities. The historical beginnings of industrial capitalism's unequal labor divisions still exist today, but are also responsible for the success of our nations industrial capitalist system. The notion of violence as a component of power used to reach capitalist goals does not speak as strongly as other arguments in Acker's text. Violence is a characteristic of hegemonic masculinity but does not serve as strong a purpose in today's capitalist society as it did in historical contexts. Clearly, violence is a mechanism in control and domination, but does not seem to be as present in industrial capitalism. In the context of the military, violence definitely plays a role in control and domination but is not as clear in other aspects of industry. In comparison to hegemonic masculinity, Acker's notion that the subordinate masculinity of the white

working class is revealing in that it is more heroic, even if it is not at the top of the capitalist hierarchy.

Synthesis

In both "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?" and "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter", Acker and Andersen and Collins talk about the concept that stratification by race, gender and class is rooted in historical events that have shaped the society we live in today. There are so many institutions shaped by race, class and gender that affect the lives of everyday people and industrial capitalism is the biggest one because it influences many other institutions. Acker also expands on the role that different kinds of masculinities play in the system of industrial capitalism. The principles of hegemonic masculinity, in particular, have caused white men to use their beliefs of virtue and entitlement to limit value of the creative works and production of minority groups. This is the same concept can be used to explain Elizabeth Cady Stanton's expression for the need of solitude of self. The limitation on the value of other people's lives due to social structural factors, such as race, class and gender, in the system of industrial capitalism is a way of taking away or limiting individuals' natural rights. Thus, people are gipped of their right to exercise personal responsibility to reach their potential as a person in our society. In Stanton's argument, she especially talks about the ways in which women are reduced in society due to their gender. When discussing the rights of a woman, Stanton states, "if we consider her as a citizen, as a member of a great nation, she must have the same rights as all other members, according to the fundamental principles of our government" (Stanton 1). The masculine nature of our society has devalued the work of women and favored men in the capitalist system, creating unequal pay patterns and other injustices. As a result, women do not make as much money as men and the labor market is segregated between what is socially acceptable as a woman's job and a man's job. This is applicable to other groups that are stratified along lines of race and class. For those in minority groups (women, people of color, working or poor class), the wage gap creates segregation and minimizes the potential of some people because the limited access to unaffordable resources. The system of industrial capitalism greatly affects the real estate market by systematically selecting who can and cannot afford to live in certain areas. Capitalism is not directly responsible for the real estate racism that operates, but it is very much responsible for gentrification. Gentrification is the process of urban renewal by which the occupying demographic of a particular area is displaced. In "Class Claims: Real Estate Racism", hooks describes that a predominantly black community is becoming increasingly all white as "more white people with money came to the area raising both property taxes and the cost of housing". Capitalism, as a white male project, preferences white men for the jobs that are higher paying and have more influence on important societal decisions. Therefore, capitalism gives the white population more power and money to come in and change black neighborhoods, raise taxes and the cost of living, which forces the black people to move out.

Capitalism is extremely relevant in the conversation of gentrification and real estate racism in Invincible's "Locusts". As mentioned previously, the stratification along lines of race, class and gender imbedded in the system of capitalism is a great contributor to the reason why many black people cannot afford to live in Detroit. Detroit used to be a predominantly black community, but much of it has been changed as a result of gentrification. Invincible's line, "They claim to cure us of poverty, BUT it's serving removal of residents with urban renewal," shows that the capitalist system is very unbalanced in its greater service to the middle class. The white people of higher class that bring urban renewal seem to convince themselves that they are helping the city and the poor majority. However, they are helping themselves to urban renewal that will not benefit the poor people of color.

Collins, Patricia Hill. "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter." *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 2000. 1-15. Print.

Summary

"Race, class and gender still matter because they continue to structure society in ways that value some lives more than others." The authors ask the reader to think of race, class and gender as systems of power to understand how to reconstruct his/her knowledge about groups, realize the partiality of his/her perspective, understand the intersections and interrelationships among race, class and gender. The matrix of domination challenges the idea that race, class, and gender are important only at the level of culture, which is an implication of multiculturalism. By analyzing the intersections of race, class and gender in our society, it becomes apparent that the matrix of domination is so significant because it influences and informs many other categories of institutions. An important factor in the structure of a society is an inclusive perspective, which means to see interconnections between the experiences of different people without reducing a person's or a group of people's life to a single factor. This perspective will allow us to view the race, class and gender patterns that are the framework of society, while also recognizing other factors that shape systems of privilege and inequality (i.e. sexual orientation, nationality, physical ability, religion).

Evaluation

Andersen and Collins makes it very clear that race, class, and gender still matter because they still structure society to value some lives more than others, but the ways in which society is affected does not make it seem likely that issues of race, class and gender will ever permanently leave our society. One thing to note about the changes in our society is that our world has been stratified since it began and this stratification is part of the framework of our society. Andersen and Collins' discussion about the stratification of the United States by race, class and gender, despite removal of formal barriers is the reason it will be so difficult to reach a point in time when race, class, and gender do not matter. The fact that there are no formal regulations or laws in place reinforcing stratification and discrimination is concerning because that means that there is nothing to formally take away to bring peace and equality. The matrix of domination is implicated in so many institutions that affect the lives of people everyday and thus will be extremely difficult to eradicate. Andersen and Collins emphasize that a person's understanding of the interrelationships of race, class and gender will allow him to realize other ways people are stratified and how the systems of privilege and inequality are shaped. I find it very important to recognize the other factors that stratify people in our world. Being part of multiple minority groups works sort of like a point system; the more minority groups a person is a part of, the more inequalities he/she will face. Other social factors, such as sexual orientation, physical ability and religion, have become more prominent in issues today that also contribute to the inequality or privilege certain people face, on top of their stratification due to race, class and gender. To say that we support anti-discrimination seems very hypocritical when taking a look at the way race, class and gender still structure society to value some lives over others. The idea of reconstructing knowledge about different groups is very important because it can provide people with a new way of thinking about the world. Minimizing the work and creations of people based on their membership to particular minority groups causes the dominant group, white men, to think ethnocentrically and justify their unfair domination.

Synthesis

Andersen and Collins consider the notion of reconstructing knowledge about excluded groups to shed light on how we can change how we think about the world. By learning about other groups, we can "realize the partiality of your own perspective", which allows us to become stakeholders in the framework of society and the way other people's lives are shaped. Elizabeth Cady Stanton stresses that in our society, people who hold beliefs of virtue and entitlement, specifically white men, do not realize the individuality of the human soul and the implications of domination. Masculine principles are the foundation of many social structures in our institutions affecting the lives of everyday people; women must have all the same rights as all other members of our nation if

they are being considered citizens. The limitation on the natural rights of marginalized groups, such as women in the past, has set back the potential of the people in the group to complete their development for his or her own "benefit and happiness". Reconstructing and educating ourselves on the knowledge of different groups will help us to help the other people in our society to realize their solitude of self to recognize and build their individual soul. The discriminatory housing practices discussed in hook's "Class Claims: Real Estate Racism" are issues that began after the end of the Civil and the abolition of slavery. However, they continue to operate more subtly in today's real estate market. Since formal regulations have been removed, such as the Jim Crow Laws, the discrimination in the real estate market is much more subtle. Race, class and gender still matter in the real estate and housing market because it continues to shape people and the communities they live in.

Invincible's "Locusts" clearly exemplifies why race and class still matter in the city of Detroit, Michigan. There is great stratification that needs to be addressed below the surface of what appears to be a growing, prospering city. Invincible states that it's "shocking to see us go from Peoplemover to people movers", this is regarding the forcing of the lower class and people of color out of their neighborhoods. The Peoplemover was a method of transportation that would serve the public in a metropolitan area. Now, it is no longer in use and instead of benefitting from this public service, people are being moved from their homes. More affluent white people are coming in and drastically changing the predominantly and historically black community. In Invincible's video, buildings and homes are shown being demolished and abandoned. What are left of the area are poor living conditions and very little opportunity for the community of blacks and the lower class to develop from. The power of the white people with money to move the marginalized groups out of their own area shows that their lives are valued less than others. This is clear because the process of gentrification is oblivious to the culture and history that was born in Detroit and it is being covered up by urban renewal. The black people who live in the city are facing oppression by the white people who hold most of the economic power and this is expressed in "Locusts" when Invincible says, "They been redlining the dark-skinned owners of homes where they loan with a sharks fin." To deny sale or charge more for homes or services is to devalue the lives of people based on their group membership.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Solitude of Self" *The Woman's Column*, January 1882, 2–3. Reprinted in Ellen Carol DuBois, ed., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Correspondence, Writings, and Speeches* (New York, 1981).

Summary

Stanton strongly emphasizes the individuality of each human soul and the importance of solitude of self. A woman has the rights to her own destiny, the same rights as all other members of society, and the right to achieve individual happiness. Solitude and personal responsibility is vital to individual growth and development, the strengthening of a woman's judgment, the quickening of her conscience, and the addition of dignity to her character. Although men possess a protecting power, and everyone has friends, love and kindness to smooth out everyday life, each person is ultimately alone in the human experience and deserves all the rights that will guarantee protection and the potential for achievement. "We ask for the complete development of every individual, first, for his own benefit and happiness" (1). We cannot expect a person to fall back on his/herself if his/her natural rights are limited, or he/she is handicapped by law and custom at every turn (2). In the past, women were more limited than they are today, but society is changing and we must change with it. We cannot adopt the "false theories of the past".

Evaluation

Elizabeth Cady Stanton stresses the importance of solitude of self and the right for human individuality. An individual's right to his or her own destiny and to achieve individual happiness is such a basic right that gender, or race, should not be questioned as complicating factors to possessing these rights. One's natural right to human individuality is a very concrete notion, thus it seems absurd that there is such a discontinuity between natural right and the reality of the limitations that some

people have based off of group membership. This is a very strong argument, but one that should not be necessary because of the legitimacy of every human's natural rights. Stanton makes the comparison that "to throw obstacles in the way of a complete education is like putting out the eyes; to deny the rights of poverty is like cutting off the hands. To refuse political equality is to rob the ostracized of all self-respect; of credit in the market place; of recompense in the world of work, a voice in choosing those who make and administer the law, a choice in the jury before whom they are tried, and in the judge who decides their punishment" (3). By giving these examples, Stanton provides the reader with another way to look at the unjust limitations that our legitimate institutions put on certain people's natural rights. This argument is very strong because we really can't expect a person to fall back on his/herself if his/her rights are limited. The validity of this notion could back those in power into a corner. From personal experience, I find the idea that individual development and responsibility opens doors to human duties and pleasures to be extremely crucial in the analysis of solitude of self. According to Stanton, "nothing strengthens the judgment and quickens the conscience like individual responsibility. Nothing adds such dignity to character as the recognition of one's self-sovereignty; the right to an equal place, everywhere conceded ~ a place earned by personal merit, not an artificial attainment by inheritance, wealth, family and position." These are all elements that contribute to happiness and self-sufficiency of individuals and it is everyone's basic right to afford such things.

Synthesis

Elizabeth Cady Stanton's belief that "nothing strengthens the judgment and quickens the conscience like individual responsibility. Nothing adds such dignity to character as the recognition of one's self sovereignty; the right to an equal place, everywhere conceded ~ a place earned by personal merit, not an artificial attainment by inheritance, wealth, family and position" is visible when using stratifying factors, such as race, class and gender, as a lens to analyze life situations. There is so much to gain from recognition of the individual soul, but in order for one to reach his or her potential, he or she needs equal preparation for success. This argument supports Margaret Andersen and Patricia Collins, in that social structural factors, such as race, class, and gender, still matter because our society still uses these factors to value some lives more than others. By doing so, the work of some people is devalued due to their membership in a particular group. This creates an unfair advantage for the dominant group, or the white men, to gain money and power. These people with money and power have access to resources that will continue to build and maintain their power and affluence, thus better life chances and the opportunity to enrich their individual souls. In bell hook's "Class Claims: Real Estate Racism", it becomes clear that the issue of discriminatory housing practices is rooted in racism, although many white people attempt to attribute the issues to class. Either way the limitations that people of color face in the housing market is just another set back that pushes them into more marginalization. In cases of gentrification, when white people with money come into black communities and raise the cost of living, the black people are forced to move. The places they moved to often have very poor living conditions and gave the people very little opportunity for growth and development. The cycle of poverty, or at least working class conditions was very hard to escape. The reason many black people could not afford to live in the increasingly white neighborhood is the racialized capitalist system and unequal division of labor in our society. This is one of the many ways people are robbed of their natural right to completely develop as equal participants in society, but also as individuals for their own benefit and self-sufficiency.

Invincible describes the events that moved the poorer, people of color out of their own neighborhoods and the downfall of the city of Detroit. For the people of power to come in and demolish the homes of the poorer majority and leave them with little resources and opportunities is to limit the access they have to develop as individuals and a community. Invincible insists to "let the people choose a better way," which I interpreted as the desire to give people a say in what happens in their own area. The people who originally in habit certain areas are not consulted on their relocating and other changes to Detroit. The "locusts" in the text refers to the affluent white people who come into the city, bringing change and forcing the original habitants out, similar to actual locusts which

are insects that strip fields and damage vegetation in the area. Invincible uses the metaphor of, "surrounding suffocating the city and trying to choke us, ravaging the crops making the situation hopeless," to depict the displacement of and the removal of and limitation on services to the poorer, black demographic. This oppression and lack of access and resources limits the potential for development and growth for individuals and the community.

Hooks, Bell. "Class Claims: Real Estate Racism." *Where We Stand: Class Matters*. New York: Routledge, 2000. 131-41. Print.

Summary

When it comes to discriminatory housing practices, many white citizens tend to deflect attention away from race and attribute the issues to class. White supremacist thinking has led white residents to refuse to accept applications by black people. The real estate market also accomplished segregated housing by selectively advertising properties, rather than making listings or ads available to all of the public. For the same reason white people attempt to blame housing inequalities on class, is the same reason they accept racial integration "if it means one black person or family lives in their area" (133). Hooks emphasizes that white supremacy leads all people of color to be seen as "undesirable elements" but especially black people. Not only are people of color refused housing, but also the cost is inflated. Many historically or predominantly black neighborhoods are becoming increasingly all white since property taxes and the cost of housing are being raised as more white people with money move in. The biggest issue in our nation, pertaining to real estate, is that many people are forced to face the reality of class by buying houses they cannot and will not ever be able to afford.

Evaluation

Hooks emphasizes that white people tend to attribute real estate and housing discrimination to class, when it is really more about race. The reason white people shift the blame onto issues of class is so that they may not appear to be racist. I believe this is important because it reveals a fear of white people who try so hard to be the flawless, model group. For the same reason, many white residents will accept integration, so as long as only one black family moves into the neighborhood. This concept of considering a group to be diverse with only one individual or family from a marginalized group is the easy way out. It is just as hypocritical as not having one at all because the acceptance is for the wrong reasons. Hooks makes a note that "no matter how many times white people are told they are more likely to be robbed or assaulted by someone of their race, many white people still evoke fear of crime to explain their class-based racism when it comes to the issue of housing" (134). Intra-racial crime, or crime committed within the same racial group, is far more common than interracial crime. However, interracial crime evokes significantly more white people's fear of crime committed by black people. When a white person commits a crime on another white person, it is explained by calling out the criminal as the one crazy white person out of a large group. On the other hand, when a black person commits a crime on a white person, the crime is attributed to the entire black race. This is a strong argument because it speaks about the unjust way people generalize about marginalized minority groups. Hooks uses Mary Barfoot's *Bootom Fish Blues: The Coming of Black Genocide* emphasize the changes being made in real estate in New York City; Harlem is "slowly becoming a nonblack world". This is an example of gentrification, a process of urban renewal that leads to the displacement of the original occupying demographic. In "Class Claims: Real Estate Racism", hooks is specifically talking about the event of white people with money coming to certain areas and raising property taxes and the cost of living, resulting in the improving black neighborhoods becoming increasingly all white. This concept is revealing because not only are the black people being moved out of a historically black area, but the culture is also being taken away.

Synthesis

The discriminatory practices of the real estate and housing market are a perfect example of why race, class, and gender still matter. Andersen and Collins state that these factors still matter because "they continue to structure society in ways that value some lives more than others" (1).

Although the discrimination is not as severe as it used to be, it still affects the lives of every day people. One idea that stuck out to me was the strategy of selective advertising. It is a method that racializes the real estate market in an informal way, which, unfortunately, means there are no legitimate laws or regulations in place to remove. There is nothing illegal about informal discrimination or segregation. However, this makes it much harder to lift the issues since there is nothing concrete keeping them in place. As mentioned previously, the gendered and racialized system of capitalism is responsible for the stratification into classes. This stratification affects real estate and housing because it filters its market using selective advertising to cater to the more "desirable" people. The black population is less valued in our society's system of capitalism and thus is forced into the lower or poor classes. As a result, they face oppression and life struggles due to their limited access to resources and opportunities.

Bell hook's "Class Claims: Real Estate Racism" has everything to do with Invincible's "Locusts" in that it addresses discriminatory housing practices and gentrification in the city of Detroit. In her rap, Invincible mentions that the white people with economic power have been "redlining the dark-skinned home owners". This discriminatory practice is clearly unjust and limits the life chances and opportunities for development of the black people. More informal practices keep the city and suburb segregated and this type of division is harder to remove. The poverty that the larger city faces creates a disadvantage for people of color and people of the lower class to grow and change their own lives.

McGraw, Bill. "Life in the Ruins of Detroit." *History Workshop Journal* 63 (2007): 288-302. Print.

Summary

Bill McGraw provides some background and history about Detroit. He highlights the culture and art that has come from Detroit, along with much industrial growth that started there as well. He further explains that a major contributor to the pathology of Detroit. Detroit has hosted large-scale athletic events such as the NFL Super Bowl and the MLB World series has brought praise for the city's attractions and management of a big event. However, the larger city is hurting from a decade-long downward spiral. The city has ben through devastating financial crises that resulted in massive layoffs and closures of Detroit's biggest employers. Homes and businesses have been broken down and abandoned, people have moved away, and the deindustrialization of the city has been underway for more than fifty years. There is a great racial divide and antagonism between city and suburbs, which is cause for many problems due to lack of cooperation. A power struggle also exists because although whites have political power in the suburbs, they have almost all of the economic power everywhere else. "It is dangerous to let our optimism about urban revitalization obscure the grim realities that still face most urban residents, particularly people of color" (301).

Evaluation

McGraw makes a good point in realizing that we cannot let "urban revitalization obscure the grim realities that still face most of the urban residents". Although it appears to outsiders that Detroit is a growing, populated city, people need to realize the problems that lie in the larger city. We cannot just gloss over the realities of the issues affecting Detroit, rather than addressing them. The divide between blacks and whites and city and suburb caused for uprisings and violence if these barriers were crossed. In the 1950s, as blacks attempted to move out of the ghetto and into the white suburban neighborhoods, mob violence was sparked. The increasingly black city and financial crises of the area struck the black population into lower-paying jobs and poorer working conditions. To only recognize the city for its big events and attractions, such as the Super Bowl and the World Series, is a disservice to those who do not benefit from this urban renewal. It is important to realize the stratification that still exists in Detroit because it is still affecting the lives of the people who live in the city, especially people of color and the poor. There is so much history and culture in Detroit that is lost due to deindustrialization and abandonment. Something that I found shocking was the knocking down of the Motown Records corporate headquarters because of its proximity to the site

of the Super Bowl. This is disrespectful to the music culture that has its roots in the city of Detroit. The abandonment of the city leaves it just as the remains of history and culture that used to be. It is important to recognize what makes the city of Detroit unique and all the different parts our nations culture that were born there.

Synthesis

The racial divide in the city of Detroit is a clear example of real estate racism as explained by bell hooks in her text, "Class Claims: Real Estate Racism". When blacks attempted to move out of the ghetto and into the white suburban neighborhoods, it sparked mob violence. This resulted in the deeper maintaining of informal housing segregation between the city and suburb. In the past there have been formal measures that allowed for segregated living in Detroit. McGraw answers Joan Acker's question, "is capitalism gendered and racialized" through the notion that the whites held almost all of the economic power in the city and suburbs. Industrial capitalism, as a white male project, has greatly affected the people of color in the ghettos of Detroit. McGraw mentions that white people have political power in the suburbs where they reside, but the also have economic power everywhere in Detroit. These people will continue to struggle with unemployment, poor living conditions, and limited access to resources and public services as long as our capitalist system is white male project. Andersen and Collins stated that race, class, and gender still mater as long as they continue to structure society in ways that value some lives over others. Detroit has transitioned from being "the symbol of American productive might to the symbol of urban despair" and this despair is heavily felt by the lower or poor class and people of color.

Much of the history and culture that is being lost to gentrification and urban renewal in McGraw's text is also mentioned in Invincible's "Locusts". I believe it is important to recognize the parts of the city that are historical and unique because these types of elements should not be abandoned and forgotten. "Life in the Ruins of Detroit" is very helpful as a lens to read or listen to Invincible's "Locusts" because it provides history and background of Detroit and the issues it faced due to stratification along the lines of race and class. Reading McGraw's piece gave a frame of reference for all of the places and things mentioned in "Locusts" that draw on the history and culture of Detroit. It also gave a more in-depth explanation about the process of urban renewal and the problems experienced by the larger part of the city that have not been addressed.

3.2 Thesis

Invincible's "Locusts" strongly depicts the discrimination and patterns of disadvantage and their repercussions experienced by those who are stratified along lines of race and class, particularly the poorer people of color, all whom make up the larger city of Detroit.

The theoretical texts analyzed in this assignment addressed the problem of stratification and why race and class still matter, as explained by Andersen and Collins because they still structure society to value some lives over others. Invincible's "Locusts" specifically talk about the gentrification and stratification of race and class in Detroit, Michigan. The discrimination and disadvantage experienced by the lower class and poorer people of color has taken a toll on the history and culture that was born in the city. Bill McGraw's text provides a historical and factual framework to understand the events mentioned in Invincible's rap. "Class Claims: Real Estate Racism" analyzes a great problem facing the poorer people of color in Detroit and gives the reader some history and theory behind the strategies of the real estate and housing market. The discriminatory practices and disadvantages that persist in Detroit, and other parts of our country are really a disservice and an injustice to our citizens. Elizabeth Cady Stanton reviews the natural right of every man and woman to have the chance to achieve his or her individual destiny. However, those who are limited by oppression and discrimination are at a disadvantage because they are not given the same amount of chances and access to completely develop. These repercussions are a direct

reflection of the inconsistency in our social system and our systems of law. In Detroit, the people mostly affected by injustice and discrimination is the lower class or poorer people of color.

ETS 181 Bibliography Project
Student C

ETS 181 Paper 3: Class and Literary Texts
April 13, 2015
3.1. Emergent Bibliography:

Some Principles of Stratification

Davis, Kingsley, and Moore, Wilbert E. "Some Principles of Stratification." *American Sociological Review*. April 1945. pp. 242-249

Summary.

"Some Principles of Stratification" argues the reasoning behind stratification. The chapter discusses the idea that different positions carry prestige. This idea is significant because in order for a society to function, it is important to distribute its members into social positions so that they can perform the tasks that they are assigned to well. Individuals gain prestigious positions because some positions are inherited while others require specials skills and training. The obtainment of power and the reason behind the prestige that different positions are allotted is directly relatable to the success, or a reward system that comes with having power. Rewarding comes with different positions and some receive higher rewards than others. This rewarding allows for unequal rights as the authors explain, "if the rights and perquisites of different positions in a society must be unequal, then the society must me stratified" (Moore 15). If everyone was treated equally with the same amount of "reward" people would have no incentive to get their jobs done, thus stratification is necessary in creating a successful working community. In "Some Principles of Stratification", the reason for stratification is debunked answering the question of why different positions carry different prestige and the reason certain positions acquire the different positions of power.

Evaluation.

One of the strength's of the author's argument is that in order to have a functioning society, it is essential to delegate different positions of power. Moore states that "[a]s a functioning mechanism a society must somehow distribute its members in social positions and induce them to perform the duties of these positions" (Moore 14). In order to have things run smoothly in a society there must be stratification so that people are working to be their best. However, on of the weaknesses I found in Moore's argument came about when Moore stated that " a society must have, first, some kind of rewards that it can use as inducements, and, second, some way of distributing these rewards differently according to positions" (Moore 15). I agree that in order for a society to properly function there must be a system where those who are skilled take on the big duties, yet I feel as though the reward system could potentially ruin a society. However, Moore states that "[t]he rewards and their distribution…give rise to stratification" (Moore 15). The rewards that are being distributed give a serious rise into stratification because each person wants a better life for himself or herself and will do whatever they can to get to the most powerful position in order to obtain the best rewards. This part of Moore's argument seemed a bit flawed to me because I noticed that there was a sense of unfairness as to how people will obtain these rewards if more powerful positions are "inherently more agreeable than others….[as well as] functionally more important than others" (Moore 15).However, the author later explained that rewards do not inflate according to the task a person does. The author explains that society needs to "give sufficient reward to [positions] to insure that they will be filled competently" (Moore 16). A sustainable reward makes the levels of stratification a bit less competitive if the rewards being given are allotted to consistent powerful peoples who do their job sufficiently. The rewards will push the community and the members to do well and thus create a successful community all together.

Synthesis.

In *Some Principles of Stratification*, the idea that stratification is what makes up America's success appears in C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite* as Mills discusses that because of elites, America

has success. Although sometimes the levels of stratification are unequal, just as in *Some Principles of Stratification*, Mills explains that "[i]n so far as national events are decided, the power elite are those who decide them…"(Mills 95). Mills explains that if there were no power elite, then big national decisions would not be made. In "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter", the author has a similar stance on the fact that America was born on stratification as there will not be a sense of diversity without the different races, classes, and genders. In addition, Joan Acker's piece discusses how America would not be the same without stratification because the two work places, domestic and business, would not function properly if there were not some sort of stratification system. Finally, the idea that America will always be with stratification is also prominent in "Racial Inequality: Emphasis on Explanations" by James Conrey as Conrey states that stratification is indeed on the rise as "racial inequalities of the type addressed…cannot be easily reduced unless the dominant group and controlling elites are willing…to give up some of the advantages" (Conrey 253). As Conrey states it will be very hard to find a sense of racial justice because elites will always have power unless they turn it over. All in all, the idea that stratification is not going away is very prominent in all of the texts. One idea mentioned in *Some Principles of Stratification* that was not mentioned in the other four texts is the idea that positions stay the way they are because they get rewarded for doing well. The idea of rewards was not discussed further in any of the other texts.

In regards to relating *Some Principles of Stratification* to *The Artificial Nigger* by Flannery O'Connor, there are many characters in *The Artificial Nigger* that carry different positions of prestige. For example, Mr. Head's age gives him leverage over Nelson. Mr. Head says that "age was a choice blessing and that only with years does a man enter into that calm understanding of life that makes him a sustainable guide for the young" (O'Connor). As Mr. Head sees himself as a "sustainable guide for the young", it puts him at some sort of advantage over Nelson. Because Mr. Head has influence over young Nelson, one of Mr. Head's "rewards" is to have Nelson think as he does so he can stay close to home. Mr. Head's view on African Americans directly effects Nelson because when Nelson sees his very first African American man on the train walk down the aisle, Nelson "hated [the black man] with a fierce raw fresh hate; and also, he understood now why his grandfather disliked them" (O'Connor 6). The African American on the train did nothing but walk by, and Nelson feels a sense of hate for him. Why is it that the black man did not have to do anything to deserve Nelson's hate? The answer to that question directly relates to the impact the decisions of the elite have on those of a lower class. Because the elite, Mr. Head, hates African Americans, so does his grandson Nelson because that is all Nelson knows. Thus, that is why the problem of stratification, especially in the terms of race, will almost always thrive in America because people learn and take lead from the elites, just as Nelson takes after Mr. Head in judging the black man on the train.

The Power Elite

Mills, Wright C. *The Power Elite*. 1956

Summary.

C. Wright Mills discusses the root of the elite and their impact in America in The Power Elite. The power elite is made up of men who make decisions and the outcomes of those decisions translate into the lives of everyday people. The elite is not made up of just one solitary figure, rather it is composed of different levels of power. Mills discusses the three big components that make up power. The economy, the government (politics), and the military are the three major components that work together to create make up power, also known as "the big three". Within these three forces, the economy is dominated by cooperations, the government is dominated by executives, and the military is controlled by the government. The idea of "the big three" is important in understanding where the elite system stems and how it is a constant force throughout the history of America and will be in America's future. The big three are led by the powerful males that make up the Power Elite. These elites have power, prestige, and money that is important because it shapes the culture of the elite and thus creating a serious gap between the elites and the lower class. Overall, the idea of the power elites making decisions in the fields of government, military, and the economy is

very important to the success, growth, and further stratification in America. Without the elites, jobs would not be done proficiently and America would not be as successful as it is today.

Evaluation.

One of the strongest points in Mills' The Power Elite was explaining the power that certain elites held over those without power. Mills states that "[w]hether or not [elites] profess their power, their technical and political experience of it far transcends that of the underlying population" (Mills 87). Mills adequately explains that every decision the elites make transcends to the population that is not elite. This control elites have over the entire population is a prime example of the powerful lives they live. Thus, making the reader realize the serious stratification in America. Another strength of Mills' argument was his repeated examination of the big three. Mills states that the economy, military, and government are a "triangle of power [that] is the source of the interlocking decorate that is most important for the historical structure of the present" (Mills 90). Mills explains that the elites would basically have little power if it were not for the big three. Without the big three being run by the elites, America's structure will not be proficiently run. Mills further backs up his argument by explaining that "[no] one, accordingly, can be truly powerful unless he has access to the command of major institutions, for it is over these institutional means of power that the truly powerful are, in the first instance, powerful" (Mills 91). Mills discusses that the true power of the elite comes from the positions needed in running the big three. In addition, Mills does an excellent job of describing how the gap between the elites and the non-elites has developed. Mills explains that the elites tend to "accept one another, understand one another, marry one another, tend to work and think if not together at least alike" (Mills 91). Mills does an excellent job of explaining that the elites are composed of a group of tight knit people who are all very similar. Thus, it is very hard for a non-elite to break into this group and obtain power. This gap between the classes is explained by Mills stating that "in America today there are in fact tiers and ranges of wealth and power of which people in the middle and lower ranks know very little and may not even dream" (Mills 92). Mills' excellent description of how people who are not apart of the tight knit elite circle do not have chances of stepping foot, or even dreaming, in the world of the elites strengthens his argument and adequately displays the gap between the elites and the non-elites. Finally, I found that Mills' had a weak description of how the power of elite is everywhere. Mills was very short explaining that "[i]n short, our definition of the power elite can not properly contain dogma concerning the degree and kind of power that ruling groups everywhere have. Much less should it permit us to smuggle into our discussion a theory of history" (Mills 96). I feel as though Mills could have developed this thought further, giving the reader more insight to the power of the elite all around the world. I think that if he were to develop this further, he would have strengthened his argument and made a better understanding for the reader of the giant gap between the elites and the non-elites.

Synthesis

The Power Elite by C. Wright Mills brought up ideas that appeared similarly in *The Principles of Stratification* and "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter". First of all, the idea that C. Wright Mills produced dealing with the three components of power that include the economy, the government, and the military, directly relate to the ideas in "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter" in retrospect to the fact that there are three important components such as race, gender, and class that go into the stratification system. The three elements in each of the works directly relate to each other and make up the successes and failures of America's history, present, and future. Mills' work relates to *The Principles of Stratification* because both pieces work to uncover the reason behind why certain individuals are put in the positions they are in. C Wright Mills' work in *The Power Elite* does relate to "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized" in the way that the big three all have different positions in which different amounts of money are earned. Thus, if C Wright Mills were to have a say in Joan Acker's work then he would say yes, the world of capitalism is indeed racialized and gendered because to be at the top of the big three, you must be in the relm of elites and in America, women and races other than white are not. Finally, C. Wright Mills does not touch on how there can be a resolution to the race issue, yet in "Racial Inequality: Emphasis on Explanations" Conyers has ideas

for making race equal in the future. However, this contrasts Mills' idea that America can not function with out certain types of stratification so the two pieces are contrasting in that sense.

In C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite*, the division of classes and the giant gap created from the elites being so disconnected from other levels of society is also seen in *The Artificial Nigger*. In *The Power Elite* the fact that the elites "form a more or less compact social and psychological entity; they have become self-conscious members of a social class. People are either accepted into this class or they are not, and there is a qualitative split, rather than merely a numerical scale, separating them from those who are not elite" (Mills 91). The separation of the elites and those who are not elite is clear in O'Connor's text as the white people are considered the elites and the black people are not. The first sign of this separation of the two classes is seen in the setting of the story as Mr. Head explains to Nelson that he has never seen black people before. Mr. Head states that "'[t]here hasn't been a nigger in this country since we run that one out twelve years ago and that was before you were born'" (O'Connor 3). Mr. Head makes it clear that the gap between him and Nelson and the African Americans is so large that they do not even live in the same area as them thus making the white people feel and appear to be elite. Another area of the story when the cognitive dissonance was clear was when Mr. Head was showing Nelson the kitchen on the train. The social gap here was very clear as Mr. Head was told by African American workers that "passengers are NOT allowed in the kitchen" (O'Connor 6). Mr Head replied by saying "'there's good reason for that…because cockroaches would run the passengers out!" (O'Connor 6). In response to Mr. Head, all of the white passengers "laughed and…Nelson felt a sudden keen pride in him" (O'Connor 6). Although Mr. Head was very rude and intrusive to the black worker in the kitchen, Mr. Head felt as though it was his right to be in the kitchen because of the color of his skin. The stratification gap was made clear when all of the other white passengers laughed along with Mr. Head as he made fun of the kitchen where the African Americans work. This securitization of African Americans that took place on the train was a prime example of how the gap between different classes is so large, not only physically, but mentally as well.

"Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter"

Anderson, Margaret L and Collins, Patricia H. "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter." *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Summary.

"Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter" focuses on the idea of the matrix of domination. This domination deals with race, class, and gender and why they continue in society due to the reason that some lives care more privileged, or valued, more than others. Anderson and Collins ask the reader to suspend their judgments about race, class, and gender and focus on understanding the different experiences of different groups rather than studying individuals and what they look like. By doing this, and looking at all three elements (race, class, and gender) of stratification, the world will become more understanding of the setting of the United States in general. In order to understand the social rankings, the authors explain that it is important to not compare and understand experiences. The chapter also discusses the celebration of diversity and how Americans treat diversity without understanding the different experiences cultures go through. Without race, class, and gender existing together, it is unclear how the social stratifications and America would work today.

Evaluation.

The biggest strength I noticed in "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter" is the idea that certain people have more value in society than others due to their race, class and gender. The author explains, "[r]ace, class, and gender matter because they remain the foundations for systems of power and inequality that, despite our nations diversity, continue to be among the most significant social facts of people's lives" (Collins 1). I thought this part of the text was very strong in support to the author's argument that even though Americans celebrate diversity, it is not enough to celebrate diversity when the "diversity" is the root of the issue of stratification in America. Instead, the author suggests looking into the experience that each group has undergone in order to understand each class so therefore to eliminate judgments that accompany the social stratification. The author strongly

supports this idea by saying "the study of racial and ethnic groups begins by learning the diverse histories and experiences of these groups. In doing so, we also transform our understanding of White experiences" (Collins 3). The author explains that if we can look into the experiences of other cultures, then we are able to understand where they are coming from. Thus, we can know to look into the experiences of everyone, no matter their rank, and see their background and why they act or live the way they do. Thus, "[r]ethinking class means seeing the vastly different experiences of both wealthy, middle-class, working class, and poor people in the United States and learning to think differently about privilege and opportunity" (Collins 3). Indeed, the author does an excellent job in explaining how in order to understand the social stratifications; we must look into the experiences of others. One weakness I noticed in this text was when the author discussed the importance, or lack there of, celebrating diversity. The author states that "[d]iversity initiatives hold that the diversity created by race, class, and gender differences are pleasing and important, both to individuals and to society as a whole—so important, in fact, that diversity should be celebrated" (Collins 9). I do not think the author expressed that celebrating diversity is just not enough to change or alter the social stratification system. I think that the author did not adequately describe that the idea of celebrating diversity creates more outliers as the author simply described that the importance of celebrating diversity is "an important part of coming to understand race, class, and gender, but it is not enough. One problem is that people may begin hearing the voices as if they were disembodied from particular historical and social conditions" (Collins 9). I feel as though this idea developed by the author was not further investigated and as the reader, I wanted to know why has nobody put an end to this celebration of diversity. Because I believe it is impossible to be able to hear how each voice could be heard or celebrated I think that this element of the argument was not adequately looked into or resolved in any way. The strongest part of the argument was the idea that race, class and gender are "intersecting categories of experience that affect all aspects of human life…they simultaneously structure the experiences of all people in this society" (Collins 4). This point of the argument was very strong because I agree that all three elements add to the social stratification in America. All three elements indeed affect "individual consciousness, group interaction, and group access to institutional power and privileges" (Collins 4). All three elements of race, class, and gender determine a person's power and privilege. This part of the argument was so strong that it illustrated the makeup of the stratification system of the United State's history by stating, "race, class, and gender emerge as fundamental categories of analysis in the U.S setting, so significant that in many ways they influence all of the other categories. Systems of race, class, and gender have been so consistently and deeply confided in U.S laws that they have had intergenerational effects on economic, political, and social institutions" (Collins 5). The author does an exceptional job of backing up their argument by explaining that race, class, and gender together have affected the power structure in the United States. All three are equally responsible to contributing to why there have been unequal opportunities for many.

Synthesis:

"Why Race, Class, and Gender" relates mostly to "Racial Inequality: Emphasis on Explanations" in the sense that in order for there to be a less stratified world, then different cultures need to come together to understand each other. Just as Collins explains, racial discrimination will lead to individuals thinking they're better than others. That concept is the root the issues discussed in "Racial Inequality: Emphasis on Explanations". "Why Race, Class, and Gender" contrasts with the other texts with the idea that diversity should be celebrated. Diversity, according to the other texts, is what has been creating cognitive dissonance and social stratification.

Flannery O'Connor's *The Artificial Nigger* shows that age can directly effect cognitive dissonance in the terms of "Why Race, Class and Gender Still Matter". Mr. Head's age puts a direct influence over Nelson by creating the sense of elitist power. This power causes Nelson to feel dependent upon his elite, Mr. Head, by explaining that he "felt a sudden keen pride in [Mr. Head]. He realized the old man would be his only support in the strange place they were approaching. He would be entirely alone in the world if he were ever lost from his grandfather" (O' Connor 6). Nelson realizes that he needs to count of his elitist grandfather in order to be safe. The feeling of

power that Mr. Head has over Nelson comes from the idea in "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter" as the author explains "race, class, and gender intersect with other categories of experience, such as sexuality, ethnicity, age, ability…Historically, these intersections have taken varying forms from one society to the next; within any given society, the connections among them shift" (Collins 5). The fact that Mr. Head's age gives him a sense of power allows for Nelson to feel safe. Mr. Head continues to create the gap of elitism verses the other social stratification systems as he teaches Nelson to view the city as a culture. This relates to "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter" because the author of "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter explains that "culture is traditionally defined as the 'total way of life' of a group of people" (Collins 10). Mr. Head shows Nelson the culture of the city, where the lower end of the scale live by telling Nelson to "'Squat down… and stick your head in [the sewer]'" (O'Connor 8). As Mr. Head shows Nelson the sewer he is showing him the image that the city is as dirty and unworthy as a sewer therefore creating the gap that divides different levels of stratification.

"Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?"

Acker, Joan.

Summary.

In Joan Acker's "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?", the topic of race and gender in the world of capitalism is explored. Acker explains how the industrial capitalism in America began with the dominance of a white male. Acker continues to explain that race and gender have always been integral parts of how the stratification system works in America. As the country itself was being developed, Acker explains how masculine-dominated capitalism has restricted women and other races to become high up on the class scale by setting a precedent. Acker explores the different areas in which races and genders are needed. Thus, the big decisions made by white males directly influence those who participate in domestic or lesser jobs. Through his text, Acker explains the stratification that comes with capitalism is not necessarily fair, yet it is essential to how our society runs.

Evaluation.

The first strength I found in Joan Acker's piece was her description of the history behind the stratification that comes with capitalism. Joan describes that "[s]lavery existed prior to the development of industrialism in the United States: Capitalism was built partly on profits from that source" (Acker 126). The fact that a stratification system was already in place is a very important component in Acker's argument because it provides evidence that the issue of inequality in the work place in particular has been around for many years. Not only in the workforce, but socially discrimination has been a serious problem for many years in America as "[a]fter the abolition of slavery in 1865, severe exploitation, exclusion, and domination of blacks by whites perpetuated racial divisions cutting across gender and some class divisions, consigning blacks to the most menial, low-paying work in agriculture, mining, and domestic service" (Acker 126). Acker's use of the history of America adequately described and helped prove that being a certain race can put a person at the lower end of the stratification system, no matter a person's skill due to the past. This idea translates into another area of Acker's work that exhibited strength. Acker explains that this system is what has made American capitalism develop as "the market operates through forms of rationality that are historically masculine and involve a sharp split between instrumental reason on the one hand, emotion and human responsibility on the other" (Acker 126). Here Acker explains clearly that there needs to be a division of jobs, or classes, because certain jobs necessary in the success of America need to get done. For example, the job of raising children needs to be done by someone, while the jobs of creating capitol need to be done by others. These two emotional and business fields need to be tackled by different types of personnel in order for America to be successful. Thus overall, "[c]apitalist expansion across the American continent created additional groups of Americans who were segregated by race and gender into racial and ethnic enclaves and into low-paid and highly exploited work" (Acker 126-7). Acker explains that these different sets of working groups were treated unfairly as they were not paid well for the work that they were doing. Overall, I think that

Acker did an excellent job of explaining the negative and positives to the issue of capitalism being gendered and racialized.

Synthesis

Joan Acker's text, "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?", relates to "Some Principles of Stratification" in the way that Acker, like Davis and Moore, tries to uncover the reason behind social stratification. Not just in general like Davis and Moore, but more closely linked to capitalism. All in all, however, both pieces work to uncover the reason behind inequality. *The Power Elite* also relates to Acker's text because as C. Wright Mills discusses, one of the main contributors to social stratification is the power of the economy. Thus, capitalism is very important in the eyes of Mills and Acker as to why the economy is radicalized. The matrix of domination, discussed in "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter" compares to "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?" in Acker's point that the white male is dominating the market. Finally, "Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?" relates to "Racial Inequality: Emphasis on Explanations" in the sense that biases can determine the amount of money a person, especially an African American makes.

Joan Acker discusses the impact race and genders have on capitalism. In regards to race, Flannery O'Connor's *The Artificial Nigger* the wages certain races earn directly reflects the area in which they live. Because African Americans do not make as much money as the white male, they live is run down places as Nelson notices. When Mr. Head and Nelson become lost in the city, they come to a part of the city where "[t]he houses they were passing...were all unpainted and the wood in them looked rotten; the street between was narrower" (O'Connor 9). As Nelson continues to look around the street he sees "a colored man. Then another. Then another" (O'Connor 6). Nelson notices that there is a direct correlation between a run down part of the city and the race of those who inhabit it. Joan Acker would describe the reason for this incident being a result of "industrial capitalism [emerging] in the United States" (Acker 125). Aker points out that the industrial capitalism is run by "white males, with a gender- and race-segregated labor force, laced with wage inequalities" (Acker 125). Joan Acker clearly explains that because the capitalist system is run by white males, it is hard for those of a different race, or gender, to obtain a well paying job. Thus, in *The Artificial Nigger* it makes sense that the African American people live in run down parts of society because their race inhibits them from obtaining positions of higher pay. That being said, Joan Acker also feels that stratification in somewhat necessary for America's success. Acker explains that she "argue[s] that industrial capitalism, including its present neoliberal form, is organized in ways that are, at the same time antithetical and necessary" (Acker 131). This sense of necessity for lower paid jobs is seen in *The Artificial Nigger* when Nelson and Mr. Head observe the workers of the kitchen. The workers are necessary in making the train system function, however, they do not get the same kind of pay because of the color of their skin.

"Racial Inequality: Emphasis on Explanations"

Conyers, James E. "Racial Inequality: Emphasis on Explanations." *Western Journal of Black Studies* 26.4 (2002): 249-54. *ProQuest*. Web. 11 Apr. 2015.

Summary.

The author, Conyers, discusses the three different types of racial inequality that include biases, deficiencies, and discrimination within structures of the levels of stratification. The author explains that social inequality is often stemmed from cultures within the group of the minority. Elites and powerful members also tend to create inequality as they feel as though they are higher than others. Conyers concludes the text by explaining the different ways that racial inequality can be fixed by strategies of aiding the less fortunate and putting a legal end to discrimination. These main ideas of the text address the issue of racial inequality and then come together to address ways to go about fixing the issue.

Evaluation.

One area where I found strength was the portion of the text that explained that racism is a result of people's thoughts. This was a new view and I thought that Conyers did a strong job of explaining this by saying "Racism, as a doctrine of justifying the subordination of races, emerged individuals holding such a view" (Conyers 250). The theory that race was created by individuals is a very interesting theory because it seems as though it would be an easy theory to eradicate. However, that is not the case because even today race inequality still exists. Thus, it was strong of the author to bring up this idea initially, so that solutions would accurately follow. One of the weak points in Conyers' argument was his description of biases and deficiency theories. Conyers states that "there is a crucial difference between 'bias' theories and previously discussed 'deficiency' theories: bias theories place the responsibility for racial inequality on the dominant group and 'deficiency' theories blame the group in question for its inequality" (Conyers 251). I think that the description of these two theories is somewhat always focusing on the elite. I think that the dominant groups can be blamed for the theory of racial inequality because they seem to be the push behind it all. The elites are in charge of "socio-political and economic circumstances" (Conyers 251) and it is clear that their ideas can control the dominant group *in addition* to the group. The elite clearly has the power to control the group so therefore I think Conyers distinction of the two was weak and did not strongly support his argument.

Synthesis

The main connection between "Racial Inequality: Emphasis on Explanations" and the other texts I read was the similarities discussed in "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter". In "Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter" Collins expresses the importance of suspending judgments and not jumping to conclusions about a certain race or minority group until their experiences are understood. Similarly, Conyers explains that one of the main reasons racial inequality is present today is because of the biases people develop. Conyers' text also relates to "Some Principles of Stratification" because Conyers discusses many of the roots behind racial stratification in particular. *The Power Elite* is more positively written, as the text explains that there is a need for social stratification where "Racial Inequality: Emphasis on Explanations" seems to strike down all positivity as Conrey's anger about racial injustices is expressed. Finally, I think Conrey would agree with Acker in regards to the capitalist system being racialized.

The ideas presented in "Racial Inequality: Emphasis on Explanations" are present in *The Artificial Nigger*. Conyers' idea that there are many biases is especially present as Nelson views his first black man on the train. Nelson "felt that the Negro had deliberately walked down the aisle in order to make a fool of him and he hated him with a fierce raw fresh hate; and also, he understood now why his grandfather disliked them" (O'Connor 5-6). The black man on the train did nothing but walk by and thus Nelson's over thinking and fear of the unknown created a bias against all black people. Another place where bias is seen is when Mr. Head and Nelson are traveling through the run down parts of the city. In the city, "[b]lack eyes in black faces were watching them from every direction" Mr. Head instills a bias in Nelson by making Nelson think that where he was born is a bad place by saying that "'this is where you were born right here with all these niggers'" (O'Connor 9). Mr Head creates the image that African Americans are bad, or evil to Nelson. These biases are one of the main reasons race and class directly correlate today as Conyers explains that "[p]rejudice and discrimination are the principal sources of racial inequality in 'bias' theories" (Conyers 251).

3.2. Thesis Statement:

Social stratification stems from racial misunderstandings that are due to a lack of knowledge, understanding, value, and opportunity thus creating a huge gap between white elitists and lower class African Americans.

I arrived at my thesis statement by re-summarizing the texts and consolidating the ideas into one to two sentences as followed:

> Some principles of stratification: why different positions carry prestige and how do individuals obtain these positions
>
> The power Elite: Elitism is tight knit groups made up of men and their families. These men make decisions that translate down into the everyday lives of the non-elite.
>
> Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter: Race, Class, and Gender still matter because certain racial ethnicities, classes, and genders are valued more than others in society making stratification an inevitable result.
>
> Is Capitalism Gendered and Racialized?: Because men and women do not make equal pay and different races receive unequal pay, the capitalist system is run by elitist of the same gender and race thus making it almost impossible for minorities to get ahead.
>
> Racial Inequality: Emphasis on Explanations: Race discrimination stems from the formation of biases and the lack of resources and initiatives to cure the discrimination making racial inequality a serious issue that adds to the gaps of stratification.

Required Texts for Unit Two

2

Some Principles of Stratification

KINGSLEY DAVIS
WILBERT E. MOORE

In a previous paper some concepts for handling the phenomena of social inequality were presented.[1] In the present paper a further step in stratification theory is undertaken—an attempt to show the relationship between stratification and the rest of the social order.[2] Starting from the proposition that no society is "classless," or unstratified, an effort is made to explain, in functional terms, the universal necessity which calls forth stratification in any social system.

Throughout, it will be necessary to keep in mind one thing—namely, that the discussion relates to the system of positions, not to the individuals occupying those positions. It is one thing to ask why different positions carry different degrees of prestige, and quite another to ask how certain individuals get into those positions. Although, as the argument will try to show, both questions are related, it is essential to keep them separate in our thinking.

Most of the literature on stratification has tried to answer the second question (particularly with regard to the ease or difficulty of mobility between strata) without tackling the first. The first question, however, is logically prior and, in the case of any particular individual or group, factually prior.

The Functional Necessity of Stratification

Curiously the main functional necessity explaining the universal presence of stratification is precisely the requirement faced by any society of placing and motivating individuals in the social structure. As a functioning mechanism a society must somehow distribute its members in social positions and induce them to perform the duties of these positions. It must thus concern itself with motivation at two different levels: to instill in the proper individuals the desire to fill certain positions, and, once in these positions, the desire to perform the duties attached to them. Even though the social order may be relatively static in form, there is a continuous process of metabolism as new individuals are born into it, shift with age, and die off. Their absorption into the positional system must somehow be arranged and motivated. This is true whether the system is competitive or non-competitive. A competitive system gives greater importance to the motivation to achieve positions, whereas a non-competitive system gives perhaps greater importance to the motivation to perform the duties of the positions; but in any system both types of motivation are required.

If the duties associated with the various positions were all equally pleasant to the human organism, all equally important to societal survival, and all equally in need of the same ability or talent, it would make no difference who got into which positions, and the problem of social placement would be greatly reduced. But actually it does make a great deal of difference who gets into which positions, not only because some positions are inherently more agreeable than others, but also because some require special talents or training and some are functionally more important than others. Also, it is essential that the duties of the positions be performed with the diligence that their importance requires. Inevitably, then, a society must have, first, some kind of rewards that it can use as inducements, and, second, some way of distributing these rewards differentially according to positions. The rewards and their distribution become a part of the social order, and thus give rise to stratification.

One may ask what kind of rewards a society has at its disposal in distributing its personnel and securing essential services. It has, first of all, the things that contribute to sustenance and comfort. It has, second, the things that contribute to humor and diversion. And it has, finally, the things that contribute to self-respect and ego expansion. The last, because of the peculiarly social character of the self, is largely a function of the opinion of others, but it nonetheless ranks in importance with the first two. In any social system all three kinds of rewards must be dispensed differentially according to positions.

In a sense the rewards are "built into" the position. They consist in the "rights" associated with the position, plus what may be called its accompaniments or perquisites. Often the rights, and sometimes the accompaniments, are functionally related to the duties of the position. (Rights as viewed by the incumbent are usually duties as viewed by other members of the community.) However, there may be a host of subsidiary rights and perquisites that are not essential to the function of the position and have only an indirect and symbolic connection with its duties, but which still may be of considerable importance in inducing people to seek the positions and fulfill the essential duties.

If the rights and perquisites of different positions in a society must be unequal, then the society must be stratified, because that is precisely what stratification means. Social inequality is thus an unconsciously evolved device by which societies insure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. Hence every society, no matter how simple or complex, must differentiate persons in terms of both prestige and esteem, and must therefore possess a certain amount of institutionalized inequality.

It does not follow that the amount or type of inequality need be the same in all societies. This is largely a function of factors that will be discussed presently.

The Two Determinants of Positional Rank

Granting the general function that inequality subserves, one can specify the two factors

Davis, Kingsley, and Wilbert E. Moore. "Some Principles of Stratification." The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender. Boulder, CO: Westview, 2011. 16-19. Print.

that determine the relative rank of different positions. In general those positions convey the best reward, and hence have the highest rank, which (a) have the greatest importance for the society and (b) require the greatest training or talent. The first factor concerns function and is a matter of relative significance; the second concerns means and is a matter of scarcity.

Differential Functional Importance. Actually a society does not need to reward positions in proportion to their functional importance. It merely needs to give sufficient reward to them to insure that they will be filled competently. In other words, it must see that less essential positions do not compete successfully with more essential ones. If a position is easily filled, it need not be heavily rewarded, even though important. On the other hand, if it is important but hard to fill, the reward must be high enough to get it filled anyway. Functional importance is therefore a necessary but not a sufficient cause of high rank being assigned to a position.[3]

Differential Scarcity of Personnel. Practically all positions, no matter how acquired, require some form of skill or capacity for performance. This is implicit in the very notion of position, which implies that the incumbent must, by virtue of his incumbency, accomplish certain things.

There are, ultimately, only two ways in which a person's qualifications come about: through inherent capacity or through training. Obviously, in concrete activities both are always necessary, but from a practical standpoint the scarcity may lie primarily in one or the other, as well as in both. Some positions require innate talents of such high degree that the persons who fill them are bound to be rare. In many cases, however, talent is fairly abundant in the population but the training process is so long, costly, and elaborate that relatively few can qualify. Modern medicine, for example, is within the mental capacity of most individuals, but a medical education is so burdensome and expensive that virtually none would undertake it if the position of the M.D. did not carry a reward commensurate with the sacrifice.

If the talents required for a position are abundant and the training easy, the method of acquiring the position may have little to do with its duties. There may be, in fact, a virtually accidental relationship. But if the skills required are scarce by reason of the rarity of talent or the costliness of training, the position, if functionally important, must have an attractive power that will draw the necessary skills in competition with other positions. This means, in effect, that the position must be high in the social scale—must command great prestige, high salary, ample leisure, and the like.

How Variations Are to Be Understood. In so far as there is a difference between one system of stratification and another, it is attributable to whatever factors affect the two determinants of differential reward—namely, functional importance and scarcity of personnel. Positions important in one society may not be important in another, because the conditions faced by the societies, or their degree of internal development, may be different. The same conditions, in turn, may affect the question of scarcity; for in some societies the stage of development, or the external situation, may wholly obviate the necessity of certain kinds of skill or talent. Any particular system of stratification, then, can be understood as a product of the special conditions affecting the two aforementioned grounds of differential reward.

NOTES

1. Kingsley Davis, "A Conceptual Analysis of Stratification," *American Sociological Review.* 7:309–321, June, 1942.

2. The writers regret (and beg indulgence) that the present essay, a condensation of a longer study, covers so much in such short space that adequate evidence and qualification cannot be given and that as a result what is actually very tentative is presented in an unfortunately dogmatic manner.

3. Unfortunately, functional importance is difficult to establish. To use the position's prestige to establish it, as is often unconsciously done, constitutes circular reasoning from our point of view. There are, however, two independent clues: (a) the degree to which a position is functionally unique, there being no other positions that can perform the same function satisfactorily; (b) the degree to which other positions are dependent on the one in question. Both clues are best exemplified in organized systems of positions built around one major function. Thus, in most complex societies the religious, political, economic, and educational functions are handled by distinct structures not easily interchangeable. In addition, each structure possesses many different positions, some clearly dependent on, if not subordinate to, others. In sum, when an institutional nucleus becomes differentiated around one main function, and at the same time organizes a large portion of the population into its relationships, the *key* positions in it are of the highest functional importance. The absence of such specialization does not prove functional unimportance, for the whole society may be relatively unspecialized; but it is safe to assume that the more important functions receive the first and clearest structural differentiation.

empirical agenda, or else lose the heart of our field to other disciplines.

NOTES

1. Here and throughout, detailed keys to the literature are provided by Morris and Western (1999). Other summaries of the literature include Levy and Murnane (1992) and Danziger and Gottschalk (1993; 1995). Comparative trends in earnings inequality are described in OECD (1996, ch. 6).

2. The precise figure depends on the measure used to adjust for inflation, and this is a hotly contested issue.

3. There are at least four different measures of economic well-being that can be examined here: hourly wages, annual earnings, household total earnings, and wealth. All show the same basic pattern, with pronounced rises in inequality. We show hourly wages here because they do not confound labor supply components, such as hours worked and income pooling, with labor pricing. Wages thus better represent the job structure.

4. Inequality does appear to be on the rise in post-socialist economies, although the quantitative evidence here is less reliable. The forces making for such change are, at least on the surface, very different than those at work in the United States, except insofar as one understands them as proceeding from "marketization" in its various forms (e.g., deunionization, deregulation of wages).

5. About 25 percent of the 25–34-year-old population had a four-year college degree in 1995.

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11

The Power Elite

C. WRIGHT MILLS

The powers of ordinary men are circumscribed by the everyday worlds in which they live, yet even in these rounds of job, family, and neighborhood they often seem driven by forces they can neither understand nor govern. 'Great changes' are beyond their control, but affect their conduct and outlook none the less. The very framework of modern society confines them to projects not their own, but from every side, such changes now press upon the men and women of the mass society, who accordingly feel that they are without purpose in an epoch in which they are without power.

But not all men are in this sense ordinary. As the means of information and of power are centralized, some men come to occupy positions in American society from which they can look down upon, so to speak, and by their decisions mightily affect, the everyday worlds of ordinary men and women. They are not made by their jobs; they set up and break down jobs for thousands of others; they are not confined by simple family responsibilities; they can escape. They may live in many hotels and houses, but they are bound by no one community. They need not merely 'meet the demands of the day and hour'; in some part, they create these demands, and cause others to meet them. Whether or not they profess their power, their technical and political experience of it far transcends that of the underlying population. What Jacob Burckhardt said of 'great men,' most Americans might well say of their elite: 'They are all that we are not.'[1]

The power elite is composed of men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences. Whether they do or do not make such decisions is less important than the fact that they do occupy such pivotal positions: their failure to act, their failure to make decisions, is itself an act that is often of greater consequence than the decisions they do make. For they are in command of the major hierarchies and organizations of modern society. They rule the big corporations. They run the machinery of the state and claim its prerogatives. They direct the military establishment. They occupy the

Mills, C. Wright. "The Power Elite." *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender.* Boulder, CO: Westview, 2011. 100-11. Print.

strategic command posts of the social structure, in which are now centered the effective means of the power and the wealth and the celebrity which they enjoy.

The power elite are not solitary rulers. Advisers and consultants, spokesmen and opinion-makers are often the captains of their higher thought and decision. Immediately below the elite are the professional politicians of the middle levels of power, in the Congress and in the pressure groups, as well as among the new and old upper classes of town and city and region. Mingling with them in curious ways are those professional celebrities who live by being continually displayed but are never, so long as they remain celebrities, displayed enough. If such celebrities are not at the head of any dominating hierarchy, they do often have the power to distract the attention of the public or afford sensations to the masses, or, more directly, to gain the ear of those who do occupy positions of direct power. More or less unattached, as critics of morality and technicians of power, as spokesmen of God and creators of mass sensibility, such celebrities and consultants are part of the immediate scene in which the drama of the elite is enacted. But that drama itself is centered in the command posts of the major institutional hierarchies.

1

The truth about the nature and the power of the elite is not some secret which men of affairs know but will not tell. Such men hold quite various theories about their own roles in the sequence of event and decision. Often they are uncertain about their roles, and even more often they allow their fears and their hopes to affect their assessment of their own power. No matter how great their actual power, they tend to be less acutely aware of it than of the resistances of others to its use. Moreover, most American men of affairs have learned well the rhetoric of public relations, in some cases even to the point of using it when they are alone, and thus coming to believe it. The personal awareness of the actors is only one of the several sources one must examine in order to understand the higher circles. Yet many who believe that there is no elite, or at any rate none of any consequence, rest their argument upon what men of affairs believe about themselves, or at least assert in public.

There is, however, another view: those who feel, even if vaguely, that a compact and powerful elite of great importance does now prevail in America often base that feeling upon the historical trend of our time. They have felt, for example, the domination of the military event, and from this they infer that generals and admirals, as well as other men of decision influenced by them, must be enormously powerful. They hear that the Congress has again abdicated to a handful of men decisions clearly related to the issue of war or peace. They know that the bomb was dropped over Japan in the name of the United States of America, although they were at no time consulted about the matter. They feel that they live in a time of big decisions; they know that they are not making any. Accordingly, as they consider the present as history, they infer that at its center, making decisions or failing to make them, there must be an elite of power.

On the one hand, those who share this feeling about big historical events assume that there is an elite and that its power is great. On the other hand, those who listen carefully to the reports of men apparently involved in the great decisions often do not believe that there is an elite whose powers are of decisive consequence.

Both views must be taken into account, but neither is adequate. The way to understand the power of the American elite lies neither solely in recognizing the historic scale of events nor in accepting the personal awareness reported by men of apparent decision. Behind such men and behind the events of history, linking the two, are the major institutions of modern society. These hierarchies of state and corporation and army constitute the means of power; as such they are now of a consequence not before equaled in human history—and at their summits, there are now those command posts of modern society which offer us the sociological key to an understanding of the role of the higher circles in America.

Within American society, major national power now resides in the economic, the political, and the military domains. Other institutions seem off to the side of modern history, and, on occasion, duly subordinated to these. No family is as directly powerful in national affairs as any major corporation; no church is as directly powerful in the external biographies of young men in America today as the military establishment; no college is as powerful in the shaping of momentous events as the National Security Council. Religious, educational, and family institutions are not autonomous centers of national power; on the contrary, these decentralized areas are increasingly shaped by the big three, in which developments of decisive and immediate consequence now occur. . . .

Within each of the big three, the typical institutional unit has become enlarged, has become administrative, and, in the power of its decisions, has become centralized. Behind these developments there is a fabulous technology, for as institutions, they have incorporated this technology and guide it, even as it shapes and paces their developments.

The economy—once a great scatter of small productive units in autonomous balance—has become dominated by two or three hundred giant corporations, administratively and politically interrelated, which together hold the keys to economic decisions.

The political order, once a decentralized set of several dozen states with a weak spinal cord, has become a centralized, executive establishment which has taken up into itself many powers previously scattered, and now enters into each and every cranny of the social structure.

The military order, once a slim establishment in a context of distrust fed by state militia, has become the largest and most expensive feature of government, and, although well versed in smiling public relations, now has all the grim and clumsy efficiency of a sprawling bureaucratic domain.

In each of these institutional areas, the means of power at the disposal of decision-makers have increased enormously; their central executive powers have been enhanced; within each of them modern administrative routines have been elaborated and tightened up.

As each of these domains becomes enlarged and centralized, the consequences of its activities become greater, and its traffic with the others increases. The decisions of a handful of corporations bear upon military and political as well as upon economic developments around the world. The decisions of the military establishment rest upon and grievously affect political life as well as the very level of economic activity. The decisions made within the political

domain determine economic activities and military programs. There is no longer, on the one hand, an economy, and, on the other hand, a political order containing a military establishment unimportant to politics and to money-making. There is a political economy linked, in a thousand ways, with military institutions and decisions. On each side of the world-split running through central Europe and around the Asiatic rimlands, there is an ever-increasing interlocking of economic, military, and political structures.[2] If there is government intervention in the corporate economy, so is there corporate intervention in the governmental process. In the structural sense, this triangle of power is the source of the interlocking directorate that is most important for the historical structure of the present.

The fact of the interlocking is clearly revealed at each of the points of crisis of modern capitalist society—slump, war, and boom. In each, men of decision are led to an awareness of the interdependence of the major institutional orders. In the nineteenth century, when the scale of all institutions was smaller, their liberal integration was achieved in the automatic economy, by an autonomous play of market forces, and in the automatic political domain, by the bargain and the vote. It was then assumed that out of the imbalance and friction that followed the limited decisions then possible a new equilibrium would in due course emerge. That can no longer be assumed, and it is not assumed by the men at the top of each of the three dominant hierarchies.

For given the scope of their consequences, decisions—and indecisions—in any one of these ramify into the others, and hence top decisions tend either to become co-ordinated or to lead to a commanding indecision. It has not always been like this. When numerous small entrepreneurs made up the economy, for example, many of them could fail and the consequences still remain local; political and military authorities did not intervene. But now, given political expectations and military commitments, can they afford to allow key units of the private corporate economy to break down in slump? Increasingly, they do intervene in economic affairs, and as they do so, the controlling decisions in each order are inspected by agents of the other two, and economic, military, and political structures are interlocked.

At the pinnacle of each of the three enlarged and centralized domains, there have arisen those higher circles which make up the economic, the political, and the military elites. At the top of the economy, among the corporate rich, there are the chief executives; at the top of the political order, the members of the political directorate; at the top of the military establishment, the elite of soldier-statesmen clustered in and around the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the upper echelon. As each of these domains has coincided with the others, as decisions tend to become total in their consequence, the leading men in each of the three domains of power—the warlords, the corporation chieftains, the political directorate—tend to come together, to form the power elite of America.

2

The higher circles in and around these command posts are often thought of in terms of what their members possess: they have a greater share than other people of the things and experiences that are most highly valued. From this point of view, the elite are simply those who have the most of

what there is to have, which is generally held to include money, power, and prestige—as well as all the ways of life to which these lead.[3] But the elite are not simply those who have the most, for they could not 'have the most' were it not for their positions in the great institutions. For such institutions are the necessary bases of power, of wealth, and of prestige, and at the same time, the chief means of exercising power, of acquiring and retaining wealth, and of cashing in the higher claims for prestige.

By the powerful we mean, of course, those who are able to realize their will, even if others resist it. No one, accordingly, can be truly powerful unless he has access to the command of major institutions, for it is over these institutional means of power that the truly powerful are, in the first instance, powerful. Higher politicians and key officials of government command such institutional power; so do admirals and generals, and so do the major owners and executives of the larger corporations. Not all power, it is true, is anchored in and exercised by means of such institutions, but only within and through them can power be more or less continuous and important. . . .

If we took the one hundred most powerful men in America, the one hundred wealthiest, and the one hundred most celebrated away from the institutional positions they now occupy, away from their resources of men and women and money, away from the media of mass communication that are now focused upon them—then they would be powerless and poor and uncelebrated. For power is not of a man. Wealth does not center in the person of the wealthy. Celebrity is not inherent in any personality. To be celebrated, to be wealthy, to have power requires access to major institutions, for the institutional positions men occupy determine in large part their chances to have and to hold these valued experiences.

3

The people of the higher circles may also be conceived as members of a top social stratum, as a set of groups whose members know one another, see one another socially and at business, and so, in making decisions, take one another into account. The elite, according to this conception, feel themselves to be, and are felt by others to be, the inner circle of 'the upper social classes.'[4] They form a more or less compact social and psychological entity; they have become self-conscious members of a social class. People are either accepted into this class or they are not, and there is a qualitative split, rather than merely a numerical scale, separating them from those who are not elite. They are more or less aware of themselves as a social class and they behave toward one another differently from the way they do toward members of other classes. They accept one another, understand one another, marry one another, tend to work and to think if not together at least alike.

Now, we do not want by our definition to prejudge whether the elite of the command posts are conscious members of such a socially recognized class, or whether considerable proportions of the elite derive from such a clear and distinct class. These are matters to be investigated. Yet in order to be able to recognize what we intend to investigate, we must note something that all biographies and memoirs of the wealthy and the powerful and the eminent make clear: no matter what else they may be, the people of these higher circles are involved

in a set of overlapping 'crowds' and intricately connected 'cliques.' There is a kind of mutual attraction among those who 'sit on the same terrace'—although this often becomes clear to them, as well as to others, only at the point at which they feel the need to draw the line; only when, in their common defense, they come to understand what they have in common, and so close their ranks against outsiders.

The idea of such ruling stratum implies that most of its members have similar social origins, that throughout their lives they maintain a network of informal connections, and that to some degree there is an interchangeability of position between the various hierarchies of money and power and celebrity. We must, of course, note at once that if such an elite stratum does exist, its social visibility and its form, for very solid historical reasons, are quite different from those of the noble cousinhoods that once ruled various European nations.

That American society has never passed through a feudal epoch is of decisive importance to the nature of the American elite, as well as to American society as a historic whole. For it means that no nobility or aristocracy, established before the capitalist era, has stood in tense opposition to the higher bourgeoisie. It means that this bourgeoisie has monopolized not only wealth but prestige and power as well. It means that no set of noble families has commanded the top positions and monopolized the values that are generally held in high esteem; and certainly that no set has done so explicitly by inherited right. It means that no high church dignitaries or court nobilities, no entrenched landlords with honorific accouterments, no monopolists of high army posts have opposed the enriched bourgeoisie and in the name of birth and prerogative successfully resisted its self-making.

But this does *not* mean that there are no upper strata in the United States. That they emerged from a 'middle class' that had no recognized aristocratic superiors does not mean they remained middle class when enormous increases in wealth made their own superiority possible. Their origins and their newness may have made the upper strata less visible in America than elsewhere. But in America today there are in fact tiers and ranges of wealth and power of which people in the middle and lower ranks know very little and may not even dream. There are families who, in their well-being, are quite insulated from the economic jolts and lurches felt by the merely prosperous and those farther down the scale. There are also men of power who in quite small groups make decisions of enormous consequence for the underlying population.

The American elite entered modern history as a virtually unopposed bourgeoisie. No national bourgeoisie, before or since, has had such opportunities and advantages. Having no military neighbors, they easily occupied an isolated continent stocked with natural resources and immensely inviting to a willing labor force. A framework of power and an ideology for its justification were already at hand. Against mercantilist restriction, they inherited the principle of *laissez-faire;* against Southern planters, they imposed the principle of industrialism. The Revolutionary War put an end to colonial pretensions to nobility, as loyalists fled the country and many estates were broken up. The Jacksonian upheaval with its status revolution put an end to pretensions to monopoly of descent by the old New England families. The Civil War

broke the power, and so in due course the prestige, of the antebellum South's claimants for the higher esteem. The tempo of the whole capitalist development made it impossible for an inherited nobility to develop and endure in America.

No fixed ruling class, anchored in agrarian life and coming to flower in military glory, could contain in America the historic thrust of commerce and industry, or subordinate to itself the capitalist elite—as capitalists were subordinated, for example, in Germany and Japan. Nor could such a ruling class anywhere in the world contain that of the United States when industrialized violence came to decide history. Witness the fate of Germany and Japan in the two world wars of the twentieth century; and indeed the fate of Britain herself and her model ruling class, as New York became the inevitable economic, and Washington the inevitable political capital of the western capitalist world.

4

The elite who occupy the command posts may be seen as the possessors of power and wealth and celebrity; they may be seen as members of the upper stratum of a capitalistic society. They may also be defined in terms of psychological and moral criteria, as certain kinds of selected individuals. So defined, the elite, quite simply, are people of superior character and energy.

The humanist, for example, may conceive of the 'elite' not as a social level or category, but as a scatter of those individuals who attempt to transcend themselves, and accordingly, are more noble, more efficient, made out of better stuff. It does not matter whether they are poor or rich, whether they hold high position or low, whether they are acclaimed or despised; they are elite because of the kind of individuals they are. The rest of the population is mass, which, according to this conception, sluggishly relaxes into uncomfortable mediocrity.[5]

This is the sort of socially unlocated conception which some American writers with conservative yearnings have recently sought to develop. But most moral and psychological conceptions of the elite are much less sophisticated, concerning themselves not with individuals but with the stratum as a whole. Such ideas, in fact, always arise in a society in which some people possess more than do others of what there is to possess. People with advantages are loath to believe that they just happen to be people with advantages.

They come readily to define themselves as inherently worthy of what they possess; they come to believe themselves 'naturally' elite; and, in fact, to imagine their possessions and their privileges as natural extensions of their own elite selves. In this sense, the idea of the elite as composed of men and women having a finer moral character is an ideology of the elite as a privileged ruling stratum, and this is true whether the ideology is elite-made or made up for it by others.

In eras of equalitarian rhetoric, the more intelligent or the more articulate among the lower and middle classes, as well as guilty members of the upper, may come to entertain ideas of a counter-elite. In western society, as a matter of fact, there is a long tradition and varied images of the poor, the exploited, and the oppressed as the truly virtuous, the wise, and the blessed. Stemming from Christian tradition, this moral idea of a counter-elite composed of essentially higher types condemned to a lowly station, may be and has been used by the

underlying population to justify harsh criticism of ruling elites and to celebrate utopian images of a new elite to come.

The moral conception of the elite, however, is not always merely an ideology of the overprivileged or a counter-ideology of the underprivileged. It is often a fact: having controlled experiences and select privileges, many individuals of the upper stratum do come in due course to approximate the types of character they claim to embody. Even when we give up—as we must—the idea that the elite man or woman is born with an elite character, we need not dismiss the idea that their experiences and trainings develop in them characters of a specific type. . . .

5

These several notions of the elite, when appropriately understood, are intricately bound up with one another, and we shall use them all in this examination of American success. We shall study each of several higher circles as offering candidates for the elite, and we shall do so in terms of the major institutions making up the total society of America; within and between each of these institutions, we shall trace the interrelations of wealth and power and prestige. But our main concern is with the power of those who now occupy the command posts, and with the role which they are enacting in the history of our epoch.

Such an elite may be conceived as omnipotent, and its powers thought of as a great hidden design. Thus, in vulgar Marxism, events and trends are explained by reference to 'the will of the bourgeoisie'; in Nazism, by reference to 'the conspiracy of the Jews'; by the petty right in America today, by reference to 'the hidden force' of Communist spies. According to such notions of the omnipotent elite as historical cause, the elite is never an entirely visible agency. It is, in fact, a secular substitute for the will of God, being realized in a sort of providential design, except that usually non-elite men are thought capable of opposing it and eventually overcoming it.

The opposite view—of the elite as impotent—is now quite popular among liberal-minded observers. Far from being omnipotent, the elites are thought to be so scattered as to lack any coherence as a historical force. Their invisibility is not the invisibility of secrecy but the invisibility of the multitude. Those who occupy the formal places of authority are so checkmated—by other elites exerting pressure, or by the public as an electorate, or by constitutional codes—that, although there may be upper classes, there is no ruling class; although there may be men of power, there is no power elite; although there may be a system of stratification, it has no effective top. In the extreme, this view of the elite, as weakened by compromise and disunited to the point of nullity, is a substitute for impersonal collective fate; for, in this view, the decisions of the visible men of the higher circles do not count in history.

Internationally, the image of the omnipotent elite tends to prevail. All good events and pleasing happenings are quickly imputed by the opinion-makers to the leaders of their own nation; all bad events and unpleasant experiences are imputed to the enemy abroad. In both cases, the omnipotence of evil rulers or of virtuous leaders is assumed. Within the nation, the use of such rhetoric is rather more complicated: when men speak of the power of their own party or circle, they and their leaders are, of course, impotent; only 'the people' are omnipotent. But, when they speak of the power of their opponent's party or circle, they impute to them omnipotence; 'the people' are now powerlessly taken in.

More generally, American men of power tend, by convention, to deny that they are powerful. No American runs for office in order to rule or even govern, but only to serve; he does not become a bureaucrat or even an official, but a public servant. And nowadays, as I have already pointed out, such postures have become standard features of the public-relations programs of all men of power. So firm a part of the style of power-wielding have they become that conservative writers readily misinterpret them as indicating a trend toward an 'amorphous power situation.'

But the 'power situation' of America today is less amorphous than is the perspective of those who see it as a romantic confusion. It is less a flat, momentary 'situation' than a graded, durable structure. And if those who occupy its top grades are not omnipotent, neither are they impotent. It is the form and the height of the gradation of power that we must examine if we would understand the degree of power held and exercised by the elite.

If the power to decide such national issues as are decided were shared in an absolutely equal way, there would be no power elite; in fact, there would be no *gradation* of power, but only a radical homogeneity. At the opposite extreme as well, if the power to decide issues were absolutely monopolized by one small group, there would be no gradation of power; there would simply be this small group in command, and below it, the undifferentiated, dominated masses. American society today represents neither the one nor the other of these extremes, but a conception of them is none the less useful: it makes us realize more clearly the question of the structure of power in the United States and the position of the power elite within it.

Within each of the most powerful institutional orders of modern society there is a gradation of power. The owner of a roadside fruit stand does not have as much power in any area of social or economic or political decision as the head of a multi-million-dollar fruit corporation; no lieutenant on the line is as powerful as the Chief of Staff in the Pentagon; no deputy sheriff carries as much authority as the President of the United States. Accordingly, the problem of defining the power elite concerns the level at which we wish to draw the line. By lowering the line, we could define the elite out of existence; by raising it, we could make the elite a very small circle indeed. In a preliminary and minimum way, we draw the line crudely, in charcoal as it were: By the power elite, we refer to those political, economic, and military circles which as an intricate set of overlapping cliques share decisions having at least national consequences. In so far as national events are decided, the power elite are those who decide them. . . .

6

It is not my thesis that for all epochs of human history and in all nations, a creative minority, a ruling class, an omnipotent elite, shape all historical events. Such statements, upon careful examination, usually turn out to be mere tautologies,[6] and even when they are not, they are so entirely general as to be useless in the attempt to understand the history of the present. The minimum definition of the power elite as those who decide whatever is decided of

major consequence, does not imply that the members of this elite are always and necessarily the history-makers; neither does it imply that they never are. We must not confuse the conception of the elite, which we wish to define, with one theory about their role: that they are the history-makers of our time. To define the elite, for example, as 'those who rule America' is less to define a conception than to state one hypothesis about the role and power of that elite. No matter how we might define the elite, the extent of its members' power is subject to historical variation. If, in a dogmatic way, we try to include that variation in our generic definition, we foolishly limit the use of a needed conception. If we insist that the elite be defined as a strictly coordinated class that continually and absolutely rules, we are closing off from our view much to which the term more modestly defined might open to our observation. In short, our definition of the power elite cannot properly contain dogma concerning the degree and kind of power that ruling groups everywhere have. Much less should it permit us to smuggle into our discussion a theory of history.

During most of human history, historical change has not been visible to the people who were involved in it, or even to those enacting it. Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, for example, endured for some four hundred generations with but slight changes in their basic structure. That is six and a half times as long as the entire Christian era, which has only prevailed some sixty generations; it is about eighty times as long as the five generations of the United States' existence. But now the tempo of change is so rapid, and the means of observation so accessible, that the interplay of event and decision seems often to be quite historically visible, if we will only look carefully and from an adequate vantage point.

When knowledgeable journalists tell us that 'events, not men, shape the big decisions,' they are echoing the theory of history as Fortune, Chance, Fate, or the work of The Unseen Hand. For 'events' is merely a modern word for these older ideas, all of which separate men from history-making, because all of them lead us to believe that history goes on behind men's backs. History is drift with no mastery; within it there is action but no deed; history is mere happening and the event intended by no one.[7]

The course of events in our time depends more on a series of human decisions than on any inevitable fate. The sociological meaning of 'fate' is simply this: that, when the decisions are innumerable and each one is of small consequence, all of them add up in a way no man intended—to history as fate. But not all epochs are equally fateful. As the circle of those who decide is narrowed, as the means of decision are centralized and the consequences of decisions become enormous, then the course of great events often rests upon the decisions of determinable circles. This does not necessarily mean that the same circle of men follow through from one event to another in such a way that all of history is merely their plot. The power of the elite does not necessarily mean that history is not also shaped by a series of small decisions, none of which are thought out. It does not mean that a hundred small arrangements and compromises and adaptations may not be built into the going policy and the living event. The idea of the power elite implies nothing about the process of decision-making as such: it is an attempt to delimit the social areas within which that process, whatever its character, goes on. It is a conception of who is involved in the process.

The degree of foresight and control of those who are involved in decisions that count may also vary. The idea of the power elite does not mean that the estimations and calculated risks upon which decisions are made are not often wrong and that the consequences are sometimes, indeed often, not those intended. Often those who make decisions are trapped by their own inadequacies and blinded by their own errors.

Yet in our time the pivotal moment does arise, and at that moment, small circles do decide or fail to decide. In either case, they are an elite of power. The dropping of the A-bombs over Japan was such a moment; the decision on Korea was such a moment; the confusion about Quemoy and Matsu, as well as before Dienbienphu were such moments; the sequence of maneuvers which involved the United States in World War II was such a 'moment.' Is it not true that much of the history of our times is composed of such moments? And is not that what is meant when it is said that we live in a time of big decisions, of decisively centralized power?

Most of us do not try to make sense of our age by believing in a Greek-like, eternal recurrence, nor by a Christian belief in a salvation to come, nor by any steady march of human progress. Even though we do not reflect upon such matters, the chances are we believe with Burckhardt that we live in a mere succession of events; that sheer continuity is the only principle of history. History is merely one thing after another; history is meaningless in that it is not the realization of any determinate plot. It is true, of course, that our sense of continuity, our feeling for the history of our time, is affected by crisis. But we seldom look beyond the immediate crisis or the crisis felt to be just ahead. We believe neither in fate nor providence; and we assume, without talking about it, that 'we'—as a nation—can decisively shape the future but that 'we' as individuals somehow cannot do so.

Any meaning history has, 'we' shall have to give to it by our actions. Yet the fact is that although we are all of us within history we do not all possess equal powers to make history. To pretend that we do is sociological nonsense and political irresponsibility. It is nonsense because any group or any individual is limited, first of all, by the technical and institutional means of power at its command; we do not all have equal access to the means of power that now exist, nor equal influence over their use. To pretend that 'we' are all history-makers is politically irresponsible because it obfuscates any attempt to locate responsibility for the consequential decisions of men who do have access to the means of power.

From even the most superficial examination of the history of the western society we learn that the power of decision-makers is first of all limited by the level of technique, by the *means* of power and violence and organization that prevail in a given society. In this connection we also learn that there is a fairly straight line running upward through the history of the West; that the means of oppression and exploitation, of violence and destruction, as well as the means of production and reconstruction, have been progressively enlarged and increasingly centralized.

As the institutional means of power and the means of communications that tie them together have become steadily more efficient, those now in command of them have come into command of instruments of rule quite unsurpassed in the history of mankind. And we are not yet at the climax of their development. We can no longer lean upon or take soft comfort from the

historical ups and downs of ruling groups of previous epochs. In that sense, Hegel is correct: we learn from history that we cannot learn from it.

NOTES

1. Jacob Burckhardt, *Force and Freedom* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1943), pp. 303 ff.

2. Cf. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *Character and Social Structure* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1953), pp. 457 ff.

3. The statistical idea of choosing some value and calling those who have the most of it an elite derives, in modern times, from the Italian economist, Pareto, who puts the central point in this way: 'Let us assume that in every branch of human activity each individual is given an index which stands as a sign of his capacity, very much the way grades are given in the various subjects in examinations in school. The highest type of lawyer, for instance, will be given 10. The man who does not get a client will be given 1—reserving zero for the man who is an out-and-out idiot. To the man who has made his millions—honestly or dishonestly as the case may be—we will give 10. To the man who has earned his thousands we will give 6; to such as just manage to keep out of the poor-house, 1, keeping zero for those who get in. . . . So let us make a class of people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity, and to that class give the name of *elite*.' Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935), par. 2027 and 2031. Those who follow this approach end up not with one elite, but with a number corresponding to the number of values they select. Like many rather abstract ways of reasoning, this one is useful because it forces us to think in a clear-cut way. For a skillful use of this approach, see the work of Harold D. Lasswell, in particular, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936); and for a more systematic use, H. D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, *Power and Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

4. The conception of the elite as members of a top social stratum, is, of course, in line with the prevailing common-sense view of stratification. Technically, it is closer to 'status group' than to 'class,' and has been very well stated by Joseph A. Schumpeter, 'Social Classes in an Ethically Homogeneous Environment,' *Imperialism and Social Classes* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Inc., 1951), pp. 133 ff., especially pp. 137–47. Cf. also his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper, 1950), Part II. For the distinction between class and status groups, see *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (trans. and ed. by Gerth and Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946). For an analysis of Pareto's conception of the elite compared with Marx's conception of classes, as well as data on France, see Raymond Aron, 'Social Structure and Ruling Class,' *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. I, nos. 1 and 2 (1950).

5. The most popular essay in recent years which defines the elite and the mass in terms of a morally evaluated character-type is probably José Ortega y Gasset's, *The Revolt of the Masses*, 1932 (New York: New American Library, Mentor Edition, 1950), esp. pp. 91 ff.

6. As in the case, quite notably, of Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939). For a sharp analysis of Mosca, see Fritz Morstein Marx, 'The Bureaucratic State,' *Review of Politics*, vol. I, 1939, pp. 457 ff. Cf. also Mills, 'On Intellectual Craftsmanship,' April 1952, mimeographed, Columbia College, February 1955.

7. Cf. Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 125 ff. for concise and penetrating statements of several leading philosophies of history.

12

Who Rules America?

Power and Politics

G. WILLIAM DOMHOFF

Do corporations have far too much power in the United States? Does the federal government ignore the interests of everyday people? The great majority of Americans—70 to 75 percent in some surveys—answer "yes" to both questions.[1] This chapter explains why their answers are accurate even though there is freedom of speech, the possibility of full political participation, and increasing equality of opportunity due to the civil rights and women's movements. In other words, it attempts to resolve a seeming paradox that has bedeviled social scientists and political activists for a long time: How is it possible to have such extreme corporate domination in a democratic country?

This paradox is made all the more striking because corporations do not have as much power in most other democratic countries. The wealth and income differences between people at the top and the bottom are not as great, and the safety net for those who are poor, ill, or elderly is stronger. Why does the richest nation in the world also have the most poverty compared to any other democratic country?

Using a wide range of systematic empirical findings, this chapter shows how the owners and top-level managers in large companies work together to maintain themselves as the core of the dominant power group. Their corporations, banks, and agribusinesses form a *corporate community* that shapes the federal government on the policy issues of interest to it, issues that have a major impact on the income, job security, and well-being of most other Americans. At the same time, there is competition within the corporate community for profit opportunities, which can lead to highly visible policy conflicts among rival corporate leaders that are sometimes fought out in Congress. Yet the corporate community is cohesive on the policy issues that affect its general welfare, which is often at stake when political challenges are made by organized workers, liberals, or strong environmentalists. The chapter therefore deals with another seeming paradox: How can a highly competitive group of corporate leaders cooperate enough to work their common will in the political and policy arenas?. . .

G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America? Power and Politics*, Fourth Edition, pp. xi–xii, 45–51, 57, 67–68, 216–218.

I Stand Here Ironing

Tillie Olsen (1913–)

See page 159 for a biographical note on the author.

I stand here ironing, and what you asked me moves tormented back and forth with the iron.

"I wish you would manage the time to come in and talk with me about your daughter. I'm sure you can help me understand her. She's a youngster who needs help and whom I'm deeply interested in helping."

"Who needs help." . . . Even if I came, what good would it do? You think because I am her mother I have a key, or that in some way you could use me as a key? She has lived for nineteen years. There is all that life that has happened outside of me, beyond me.

And when is there time to remember, to sift, to weigh, to estimate, to total? I will start and there will be an interruption and I will have to gather it all together again. Or I will become engulfed with all I did or did not do, with what should have been and what cannot be helped.

She was a beautiful baby. The first and only one of our five that was beautiful at birth. You do not guess how new and uneasy her tenancy in her now-loveliness. You did not know her all those years she was thought homely, or see her poring over her baby pictures, making me tell her over and over how beautiful she had been—and would be, I would tell her—and was now, to the seeing eye. But the seeing eyes were few or nonexistent. Including mine.

I nursed her. They feel that's important nowadays. I nursed all the children, but with her, with all the fierce rigidity of first motherhood, I did like the books then said. Though her cries battered me to trembling and my breasts ached with swollenness, I waited till the clock decreed.

Why do I put that first? I do not even know if it matters, or if it explains anything.

She was a beautiful baby. She blew shining bubbles of sound. She loved motion, loved light, loved color and music and textures. She would lie on the floor in her blue overalls patting the surface so hard in ecstasy her hands and feet would blur. She was a miracle to me, but when she was eight months old I had to leave her daytimes with the woman downstairs to whom she was no miracle at all, for I worked or looked for work and for Emily's father, who "could no longer endure" (he wrote in his good-bye note) "sharing want with us."

I was nineteen. It was the pre-relief, pre-WPA[1] world of the depression. I would start running as soon as I got off the streetcar, running up the stairs, the place smelling sour, and awake or asleep to startle awake, when she saw me she would break into a clogged weeping that could not be comforted, a weeping I can hear yet.

After a while I found a job hashing at night so I could be with her days, and it was better. But it came to where I had to bring her to his family and leave her.

It took a long time to raise the money for her fare back. Then she got chicken pox and I had to wait longer. When she finally came, I hardly knew her, walking quick and nervous like her father, looking like her father, thin, and dressed in a shoddy red that yellowed her skin and glared at the pockmarks. All the baby loveliness gone.

She was two. Old enough for nursery school they said, and I did not know then what I know now—the fatigue of the long day, and the lacerations of group life in the kinds of nurseries that are only parking places for children.

Except that it would have made no difference if I had known. It was the only place there was. It was the only way we could be together, the only way I could hold a job.

And even without knowing, I knew. I knew the teacher that was evil because all these years it has curdled into my memory, the little boy hunched in the corner, her rasp, "why aren't you outside, because Alvin hits you? that's no reason, go out, scaredy." I knew Emily hated it even if she did not clutch and implore "don't go Mommy" like the other children, mornings.

She always had a reason why we should stay home. Momma, you look sick. Momma, I feel sick. Momma, the teachers aren't here today, they're sick. Momma, we can't go, there was a fire there last night. Momma, it's a holiday today, no school, they told me.

But never a direct protest, never rebellion. I think of our others in their three-, four-year-oldness—the explosions, tempers, the denunciations, the demands—and I feel suddenly ill. I put the iron down. What in me demanded that goodness in her? And what was the cost, the cost to her of such goodness?

The old man living in the back once said in his gentle way: "You should smile at Emily more when you look at her." What *was* in my face when I looked at her? I loved her. There were all the acts of love.

It was only with the others I remembered what he said, and it was the face of joy, and not of care or tightness or worry I turned to them—too late for Emily. She does not smile easily, let alone almost always as her brothers and sisters do. Her face is closed and sombre, but when she wants, how fluid. You must have

[1]Works Progress Administration. This government program provided work to many unemployed people during the Depression.

seen it in her pantomimes, you spoke of her rare gift for comedy on the stage that rouses laughter out of the audience so dear they applaud and applaud and do not want to let her go.

Where does it come from, that comedy? There was none of it in her when she came back to me that second time, after I had to send her away again. She had a new daddy now to learn to love, and I think perhaps it was a better time.

Except when we left her alone nights, telling ourselves she was old enough.

"Can't you go some other time, Mommy, like tomorrow?" she would ask. "Will it be just a little while you'll be gone? Do you promise?"

The time we came back, the front door open, the clock on the floor in the hall. She rigid awake. "It wasn't just a little while. I didn't cry. Three times I called you, just three times, and then I ran downstairs to open the door so you could come faster. The clock talked loud. I threw it away, it scared me what it talked."

She said the clock talked loud again that night I went to the hospital to have Susan. She was delirious with the fever that comes before red measles, but she was fully conscious all the week I was gone and the week after we were home when she could not come near the new baby or me.

She did not get well. She stayed skeleton thin, not wanting to eat, and night after night she had nightmares. She would call for me, and I would rouse from exhaustion to sleepily call back: "You're all right, darling, go to sleep, it's just a dream," and if she still called, in a sterner voice, "now to go sleep, Emily, there's nothing to hurt you." Twice, only twice, when I had to get up for Susan anyhow, I went in to sit with her.

Now when it is too late (as if she would let me hold and comfort her like I do the others) I get up and go to her at once at her moan or restless stirring. "Are you awake, Emily? Can I get you something?" And the answer is always the same: "No, I'm all right, go back to sleep, Mother."

They persuaded me at the clinic to send her away to a convalescent home in the country where "she can have the kind of food and care you can't manage for her, and you'll be free to concentrate on the new baby." They still send children to that place. I see pictures on the society page of sleek young women planning affairs to raise money for it, or dancing at the affairs, or decorating Easter eggs or filling Christmas stockings for the children.

They never have a picture of the children so I do not know if the girls still wear those gigantic red bows and the ravaged looks on the every other Sunday when parents can come to visit "unless otherwise notified"—as we were notified the first six weeks.

Oh it is a handsome place, green lawns and tall trees and fluted flower beds. High up on the balconies of each cottage the children stand, the girls in their red bows and white dresses, the boys in white suits and giant red ties. The parents stand below shrieking up to be heard and the children shriek down to be heard, and between them the invisible wall "Not To Be Contaminated by Parental Germs or Physical Affection."

There was a tiny girl who always stood hand in hand with Emily. Her parents never came. One visit she was gone. "They moved her to Rose Cottage" Emily shouted in explanation. "They don't like you to love anybody here."

She wrote once a week, the labored writing of a seven-year-old. "I am fine. How is the baby. If I write my letter nicely I will have a star. Love." There never was a star. We wrote every other day, letters she could never hold or keep but only hear read—once. "We simply do not have room for children to keep any personal possessions," they patiently explained when we pieced one Sunday's shrieking together to plead how much it would mean to Emily, who loved so to keep things, to be allowed to keep her letters and cards.

Each visit she looked frailer. "She isn't eating," they told us.

(They had runny eggs for breakfast or mush with lumps, Emily said later, I'd hold it in my mouth and not swallow. Nothing ever tasted good, just when they had chicken.)

It took us eight months to get her released home, and only the fact that she gained back so little of her seven lost pounds convinced the social worker.

I used to try to hold and love her after she came back, but her body would stay stiff, and after a while she'd push away. She ate little. Food sickened her, and I think much of life too. Oh she had physical lightness and brightness, twinkling by on skates, bouncing like a ball up and down up and down over the jump rope, skimming over the hill; but these were momentary.

She fretted about her appearance, thin and dark and foreign-looking at a time when every little girl was supposed to look or thought she should look a chubby blonde replica of Shirley Temple. The doorbell sometimes rang for her, but no one seemed to come and play in the house or be a best friend. Maybe because we moved so much.

There was a boy she loved painfully through two school semesters. Months later she told me how she had taken pennies from my purse to buy him candy. "Licorice was his favorite and I brought him some every day, but he still liked Jennifer better'n me. Why, Mommy?" The kind of question for which there is no answer.

School was a worry to her. She was not glib or quick in a world where glibness and quickness were easily confused with ability to learn. To her overworked and exasperated teachers she was an overconscientious "slow learner" who kept trying to catch up and was absent entirely too often.

I let her be absent, though sometimes the illness was imaginary. How different from my now-strictness about attendance with the others. I wasn't working. We had a new baby, I was home anyhow. Sometimes, after Susan grew old enough, I would keep her home from school, too, to have them all together.

Mostly Emily had asthma, and her breathing, harsh and labored, would fill the house with a curiously tranquil sound. I would bring the two old dresser mirrors and her boxes of collections to her bed. She would select beads and single earrings, bottle tops and shells, dried flowers and pebbles, old postcards and

scraps, all sorts of oddments; then she and Susan would play Kingdom, setting up landscapes and furniture, peopling them with action.

Those were the only times of peaceful companionship between her and Susan. I have edged away from it, that poisonous feeling between them, that terrible balancing of hurts and needs I had to do between the two, and did so badly, those earlier years.

Oh there are conflicts between the others too, each one human, needing, demanding, hurting, taking—but only between Emily and Susan, no, Emily toward Susan that corroding resentment. It seems so obvious on the surface, yet it is not obvious. Susan, the second child, Susan, golden- and curly-haired and chubby, quick and articulate and assured, everything in appearance and manner Emily was not; Susan, not able to resist Emily's precious things, losing or sometimes clumsily breaking them; Susan telling jokes and riddles to company for applause while Emily sat silent (to say to me later: that was *my* riddle, Mother, I told it to Susan); Susan, who for all the five years' difference in age was just a year behind Emily in developing physically.

I am glad for that slow physical development that widened the difference between her and her contemporaries, though she suffered over it. She was too vulnerable for that terrible world of youthful competition, of preening and parading, of constant measuring of yourself against every other, of envy, "If I had that copper hair," "If I had that skin. . . ." She tormented herself enough about not looking like the others, there was enough of the unsureness, the having to be conscious of words before you speak, the constant caring—what are they thinking of me? without having it all magnified by the merciless physical drives.

Ronnie is calling. He is wet and I change him. It is rare there is such a cry now. That time of motherhood is almost behind me when the ear is not one's own but must always be racked and listening for the child cry, the child call. We sit for a while and I hold him, looking out over the city spread in charcoal with its soft aisles of light. "*Shoogily*," he breathes and curls closer. I carry him back to bed, asleep. *Shoogily*. A funny word, a family word, inherited from Emily, invented by her to say: *comfort*.

In this and other ways she leaves her seal, I say aloud. And startle at my saying it. What do I mean? What did I start to gather together, to try and make coherent? I was at the terrible, growing years. War years. I do not remember them well. I was working, there were four smaller ones now, there was not time for her. She had to help be a mother, and housekeeper, and shopper. She had to set her seal. Mornings of crisis and near hysteria trying to get lunches packed, hair combed, coats and shoes found, everyone to school or Child Care on time, the baby ready for transportation. And always the paper scribbled on by a smaller one, the book looked at by Susan then mislaid, the homework not done. Running out to that huge school where she was one, she was lost, she was a drop; suffering over the unpreparedness, stammering and unsure in her classes.

There was so little time left at night after the kids were bedded down. She would struggle over books, always eating (it was in those years she developed her enormous appetite that is legendary in our family) and I would be ironing, or preparing food for the next day, or writing V-mail to Bill, or tending the baby. Sometimes, to make me laugh, or out of her despair, she would imitate happenings or types at school.

I think I said once: "Why don't you do something like this in the school amateur show?" One morning she phoned me at work, hardly understandable through the weeping: "Mother, I did it. I won, I won; they gave me first prize; they clapped and clapped and wouldn't let me go."

Now suddenly she was Somebody, and as imprisoned in her difference as she had been in anonymity.

She began to be asked to perform at other high schools, even in colleges, then at city and statewide affairs. The first one we went to, I only recognized her that first moment when thin, shy, she almost drowned herself into the curtains. Then: Was this Emily? The control, the command, the convulsing and deadly clowning, the spell, then the roaring, stamping audience, unwilling to let this rare and precious laughter out of their lives.

Afterwards: You ought to do something about her with a gift like that—but without money or knowing how, what does one do? We have left it all to her, and the gift has as often eddied inside, clogged and clotted, as been used and growing.

She is coming. She runs up the stairs two at a time with her light graceful step, and I know she is happy tonight. Whatever it was that occasioned your call did not happen today.

"Aren't you ever going to finish the ironing, Mother? Whistler painted his mother in a rocker. I'd have to paint mine standing over an ironing board." This is one of her communicative nights and she tells me everything and nothing as she fixes herself a plate of food out of the icebox.

She is so lovely. Why did you want me to come in at all? Why were you concerned? She will find her way.

She starts up the stairs to bed. "Don't get me up with the rest in the morning." "But I thought you were having midterms." "Oh, those," she comes back in, kisses me, and says quite lightly, "in a couple of years when we'll all be atom-dead they won't matter a bit."

She has said it before. She *believes* it. But because I have been dredging the past, and all that compounds a human being is so heavy and meaningful in me, I cannot endure it tonight.

I will never total it all. I will never come in to say: She was a child seldom smiled at. Her father left me before she was a year old. I had to work her first six years when there was work, or I sent her home and to his relatives. There were years she had care she hated. She was dark and thin and foreign-looking in a world where the prestige went to blondeness and curly hair and dimples, she was

slow where glibness was prized. She was a child of anxious, not proud, love. We were poor and could not afford for her the soil of easy growth. I was a young mother, I was a distracted mother. There were other children pushing up, demanding. Her younger sister seemed all that she was not. There were years she did not want me to touch her. She kept too much in herself, her life was such she had to keep too much in herself. My wisdom came too late. She has much to her and probably little will come of it. She is a child of her age, of depression, of war, of fear.

Let her be. So all that is in her will not bloom—but in how many does it? There is still enough left to live by. Only help her to know—help make it so there is cause for her to know—that she is more than this dress on the ironing board, helpless before the iron.

1961

POETRY

THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN
BY W. H. AUDEN

(To JS/07 M 378
This Marble Monument
Is Erected by the State)

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be
One against whom there was no official complaint,
And all the reports on his conduct agree
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint,
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.
Except for the War till the day he retired
He worked in a factory and never got fired,
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.
Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,
(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)
And our Social Psychology workers found
That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.
The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day
And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.
Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,
And his Health-card shows he was once in a hospital but left it cured.
Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Installment Plan
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.
Our researchers into Public Opinion are content
That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;
When there was peace, he was for peace: when there was war, he went.
He was married and added five children to the population,
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his generation.
And our teachers report that he never interfered with their education.
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

From *Another Time* by W. H. Auden.

SUPA Core Strategies
Writing to Learn
July 7, 2015

Summary

Overview

You might assume that summary is the most basic of practices linking reading and writing, and in some ways you'd be correct. It certainly doesn't seem like it should take much thought or attention, or much critical acumen. Essentially, you just re-tell what you read (or saw, or experienced) *in your own words*. The "in your own words" guideline is typically the most highly emphasized of all instructions specific to summary.

Actually, re-telling something in your own words can be a bit of a challenge. But there are other qualities of summary that can be even more challenging to grasp, and as important if not more important, than using your own words.

Think for a minute about the difference between a friend who summarizes a film from beginning to end following the exact order of the plot ("okay, so first this man got shot, and then there was an explosion, and then…oh wait, I forget something…") versus a friend who keeps in mind that perhaps what you need to know is what makes the film interesting or worth seeing ("Right, so at essence the film is neo-noir: it takes the classic crime drama and updates it by having two women fall in love while they are ripping off the mob…").

The latter summary indicates that the movie has a distinct point of view, that it is *doing* something, that it has a purpose (to offer a new twist on a classic form, for example). The latter summary also suggests that the speaker is doing some thinking prior to summarizing—making choices about what to include and what to exclude, what to highlight and what to subordinate, and also deciding how to *contextualize* the film (it's a drama, but a very specific kind of drama…). The speaker knows too the kinds of things that will matter to the audience, and uses concepts that others who know and appreciate films will get right away. The summary is rhetorically effective.

So, the point is that we reference and interact with texts most successfully and persuasively when we develop more than a perfunctory understanding of them, when we discern which details, ideas, claims, and qualities are the most important, the most relevant, and how they are related to each other.

Do keep in mind that in a summary you don't want to evaluate the text ("I think ultimately the writer's argument fails because…"). *But* it is a really good idea to draw attention to the *writer's* point of view ("This writer is clearly concerned about the representation of Muslims in the mainstream media…), and in turn to signal your *interest* in the text.

Exercises:

Summarizing in Stages

Just for fun, start with a two-sentence summary of a film (or an episode of a television show) you have recently seen and that you think is worthy of other people's attention. Then share it with a few classmates, and take notes on the feedback you get. Are you capturing the most significant elements of the film/episode? Are you being true to its intentions? Are you exercising your own critical assessment of the film's/episode's qualities?

Move next to one of the shared readings, and work through three summaries:

In class—

- Write a one- or at the most two-*sentence* summary of the text, encapsulating what you think is the gist of the piece, including context (so-and-so is writing in response to…) and the writer's particular perspective or take on the issue.

- Write a one-*paragraph* summary, expanding the scope of your references to the text. Hit the main ideas (rather than just one main idea), and establish how those ideas are related to one another. So, not a list of ideas or points, but a web of ideas or points that have some logical connection to one another.

Share each of your summaries with peers, and get a sense of what your classmates include or leave out, or focus on, or deem most significant.

Then, for homework—

- Write a one-*page* summary of the text, establishing in greater detail how the writer makes her argument—who she cites, for example, the manner in which she organizes material (section headings, for example), the way she develops her argument/s (the rhetorical choices she makes, or concessions, or stylistic moves).

Summarizing using Joe Harris

Here are some guidelines for a critical summary drawing on the guidelines in Joe Harris' "Coming to Terms."

1. Read **carefully**. Be sure you fully understand what the article is saying.
2. Shift your focus from ***what*** **the article is saying, to** ***how*** **and** ***why*** **it is saying** what it's saying—in other words read for what the writer is trying to *do* in the text [this is what Harris refers to as the writer's "project"]: that is, how the writer gets from point A to point B; how the writer works with and through a question or an issue; how the writer evolves his or her thinking. Look at the underlying structure of the text—what's repeated? what seems significant or strange or important? These are what Harris refers to as the **aims, methods, and materials** of a text.
3. **Find a focal point**, something that transcends simple "coverage" or representation (Harris) of the ideas in the text. Think, for example, of where this text fits in with what you currently recognize about the course inquiry: What is your "interest" in the text, in the course inquiry? What would you like to make visible to others through your summary?
4. Choose a **flashpoint** to preface the summary—something that helps you **show YOUR reader a perspective on the article**. Even if you don't integrate the words and phrases of the flashpoint into your summary, starting the summary with a flashpoint helps you direct your reader to both the local and global features of the text.
5. Consider the **uses** and **limits** of the text: what it does well or persuasively, and where it chooses not to go.

An example

Here's a sample critical summary of a text to help you get a sense of how you might approach the task.

Flashpoint: "Oh yes, everything takes a different flavor when a woman does it."—Orlan quote.

In his July, 2009 *Guardian UK* article entitled "Orlan's art of sex and surgery" journalist Stuart Jeffries interviews controversial French artist Orlan during the running of an exhibit of her work at the Pompidou Centre in Paris. Jeffries provides background on Orlan—both biographical background, specifically addressing when she changed her name and identity, and the seminal event in 1978 that inspired the next thirty years of her artistic endeavors. Jeffries describes a number of Orlan's projects, including the numerous surgeries she has elected to undergo for the purposes of having her body mirror famous pieces of art. Though Jeffries makes it clear that Orlan's art has generated much debate over the years among critics and reviewers and likely visitors to her exhibits, he seems more interested in finding out what drives Orlan to produce the art that she produces, and what she sees as the relationship between her artistic projects and culture at large. He asks her if through surgery she's trying to make herself more beautiful, for example, or if she's trying to change perceptions of beauty. The quotes he attributes to Orlan in response to his interview questions are thought provoking and go quite a way toward illuminating why *anyone* would elect to carve up her body in such extreme ways, or draw spectators' attention to her body and its intimate functions (menstruation, child birth, etc) through videos and installations. Everything about Orlan can at first seem seem weird and off-putting, but Jeffries is not attempting to fuel that visceral response; he's offering his readers another way of thinking about Orlan by introducing us to her aesthetic and her politics. There are a number of quotes Jeffries includes in his article that explicitly address what Orlan sees as the gendered power struggle that characterizes artists and their subjects across time. She says that one of her projects is to disrupt the dynamic of male artist and female subject, to subvert the dominance of the male gaze. It's clear that Jeffries is both compelled by Orlan and a little disturbed by her, and his article generates the same reaction in me. I'm interested in reading about her art and her politics, but I don't know that I would want to attend an exhibit or meet her face-to-face.

Jeffries, Stuart. "Orlan's art of sex and surgery." *Guardian UK* 1 July 2009. Print.

Davis & Moore's
"Some Principles of Stratification"
Context and Criticism

Functional Theory of Stratification

GORDON MARSHALL. "functional theory of stratification." A Dictionary of Sociology. 1998. *Encyclopedia.com*. 3 Jul. 2015

functional theory of stratification In a classic article outlining 'Some Principles of Stratification' (*American Sociological Review*, 1945), Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore argued that unequal social and economic rewards were an 'unconsciously evolved device' by which societies ensured that talented individuals were supplied with the motivation to undertake training which would guarantee that important social roles were properly fulfilled. In this way, the most important functions would be performed by the most talented persons, and the greatest rewards go to those positions which required most training and were most important for maintenance of the social system.

The theory was (and remains) highly influential but has generated enormous controversy. (M. Tumin 's *Readings on Social Stratification*, 1970, offers a good selection of the classic contributions to the debate.) Davis and Moore's argument is based on the functionalist premise that social order rests on consensual values which define collective goals that are in the general interest. In order to encourage those who are best able to realize these goals it is necessary to offer unequal rewards. Both of these propositions have allegedly been found empirically wanting. Critics have also suggested that the theory is simply an apologia for inequality. Some also maintain that it is tautological (circular), since it proposes that the occupations and other social roles which are most highly rewarded are most important to social stability, and then cites the high levels of reward as evidence of their social importance. What was lacking throughout the lengthy debate, and has yet to be found, is a criterion of 'social importance' that is conceptually independent of the rewards being allocated. Nevertheless, the theory continues to inform important topics of sociological discussion, including for example the literatures on social mobility and social justice.

Important Criticism

See (in "supplemental materials" on Bb):

> Tumin, Melvin M. 1953. "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis." American Sociological Review 18(4):387–393.

as well as Davis's reply, which was in the same journal (and is in a separate file in the "supplemental materials" on Bb).

C. Wright Mill's "The Power Elite"

Context and Criticism

New York Times
May 14, 2006
ESSAY

The Deciders

By JOHN H. SUMMERS

"The powers of ordinary men are circumscribed by the everyday worlds in which they live, yet even in these rounds of job, family and neighborhood they often seem driven by forces they can neither understand nor govern."

The opening sentence of "The Power Elite," by C. Wright Mills, seems unremarkable, even bland. But when the book was first published 50 years ago last month, it exploded into a culture riddled with existential anxiety and political fear. Mills — a broad-shouldered, motorcycle-riding anarchist from Texas who taught sociology at Columbia — argued that the "sociological key" to American uneasiness could be found not in the mysteries of the unconscious or in the battle against Communism, but in the over-organization of society. At the pinnacle of the government, the military and the corporations, a small group of men made the decisions that reverberated "into each and every cranny" of American life. "Insofar as national events are decided," Mills wrote, "the power elite are those who decide them."

His argument met with criticism from all sides. "I look forward to the time when Mr. Mills hands back his prophet's robes and settles down to being a sociologist again," Arthur Schlesinger Jr. wrote in The New York Post. Adolf Berle, writing in the Book Review, said that while the book contained "an uncomfortable degree of truth," Mills presented "an angry cartoon, not a serious picture." Liberals could not believe a book about power in America said so little about the Supreme Court, while conservatives attacked it as leftist psychopathology ("sociological mumbo jumbo," Time said). The Soviets translated it in 1959, but decided it was pro-American. "Although Mills expresses a skeptical and critical attitude toward bourgeois liberalism and its society of power," said the introduction to the Russian translation, "his hopes and sympathies undoubtedly remain on its side."

Even so, "The Power Elite" found an eclectic audience at home and abroad. Fidel Castro and Che Guevara debated the book in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra. Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de

Beauvoir published excerpts in their radical journal, Les Temps Modernes. In the United States, Mills received hundreds of letters from Protestant clergymen, professors and students, pacificists and soldiers. This note came from an Army private stationed in San Francisco: "I genuinely appreciate reading in print ideas I have thought about some time ago. At that time, they seemed to me so different that I didn't tell anyone." In the aftermath of the global riots of 1968, the C.I.A. identified Mills as one of the most influential New Left intellectuals in the world, though he had been dead for six years.

The historical value of "The Power Elite" seems assured. It was the first book to offer a serious model of power that accounted for the secretive agencies of national security. Mills saw the postideological "postmodern epoch" (as he would later call it) at its inception, and his book remains a founding text in the continuing demand for democratically responsible political leadership — a demand echoed and amplified across the decades in books like Christopher Lasch's "Revolt of the Elites" (1995), Kevin Phillips's "Wealth and Democracy" (2002), Chalmers Johnson's "Sorrows of Empire" (2004) and Thomas Frank's "What's the Matter With Kansas?" (2004).

Much of "The Power Elite" was a tough-talking polemic against the "romantic pluralism" embedded in the prevailing theory of American politics. The separation of powers in the Constitution, the story went, repelled the natural tendency of power to concentrate, while political parties and voluntary societies organized the clash of interests, laying the people's representatives open to the influence of public opinion. This "theory of balance" still applied to the "middle levels of power," Mills wrote. But the society it envisioned had been eclipsed.

For the first time in history, he argued, the territories of the United States made up a self-conscious mass society. If the economy had once been a multitude of locally or regionally rooted, (more or less) equal units of production, it now answered to the needs of a few hundred corporations. If the government had once been a patchwork of states held together by Congress, it now answered to the initiatives of a strong executive. If the military had once been a militia system resistant to the discipline of permanent training, it now consumed half the national budget, and seated its admirals and generals in the biggest office building in the world.

The "awesome means of power" enthroned upon these monopolies of production, administration and violence included the power to prevent issues and ideas from reaching Congress in the first place. Most Americans still believed the ebb and flow of public opinion guided political affairs. "But now we must recognize this description as a set of images out of a fairy tale," Mills wrote. "They are not adequate even as an approximate model of how the American system of power works."

The small groups of men standing at the head of the three monopolies represented a new kind of elite, whose character and conduct mirrored the antidemocratic ethos of their institutions. The corporations recruited from the business schools, and conceived executive training programs that demanded strict conformity. The military selected generals and admirals from the service academies, and inculcated "the caste feeling" by segregating them from the associational life of the country. Less and less did local apprenticeships serve as a passport to the government's executive chambers. Of the appointees in the Eisenhower administration, Mills found that a record number had never stood for election at any level.

Above the apparent balance of powers, Mills said, "an intricate set of overlapping cliques" shared in "decisions having at least national consequences." Rather than operating in secret, the same kinds of men — who traded opinions in the same churches, clubs and schools — took turns in the same jobs. Mills pointed to the personnel traffic among the Pentagon, the White House and the corporations. The nation's three top policy positions — secretary of state, treasury and defense — were occupied by former corporate executives. The president was a general.

Mills could not answer many of the most important questions he raised. How did the power elite make its decisions? He did not know. Did its members cause their roles to be created, or step into roles already created? He could not say. Around what interests did they cohere? He asserted a "coincidence of interest" partially organized around "a permanent war establishment," but he did little more than assert it. Most of the time, he said, the power elite did not cohere at all. "This instituted elite is frequently in some tension: it comes together only on certain coinciding points and only on certain occasions of 'crisis.' " Although he urged his readers to scrutinize the commanding power of decision, his book did not scrutinize any decisions.

These ambiguities have kept "The Power Elite" vulnerable to the charge of conspiracy-mongering. In a recent essay in Playboy called "Who Rules America?" Arthur Schlesinger Jr. repeated his earlier skepticism about Mills's argument, calling it "a sophisticated version of the American nightmare." Alan Wolfe, in a 2000 afterword, pointed out that while Mills got much about the self-enriching ways of the corporate elite right, his vision of complacent American capitalism did not anticipate the competitive dynamics of our global economy. And of late we have seen that "occasions of crisis" do not necessarily serve to unify the generals with the politicians.

Yet "The Power Elite" abounds with questions that still trouble us today. Can a strong democracy coexist with the amoral ethos of corporate elites? And can public argument have democratic meaning in the age of national security? The trend in foreign affairs, Mills argued, was for a militarized

executive branch to bypass the United Nations, while Congress was left with little more than the power to express "general confidence, or the lack of it." Policy tended to be announced as doctrine, which was then sold to the public via the media. Career diplomats in the State Department believed they could not truthfully report intelligence. Meanwhile official secrecy steadily expanded its reach. "For the first time in American history, men in authority are talking about an 'emergency' without a foreseeable end," Mills wrote in a sentence that remains as powerful and unsettling as it was 50 years ago. "Such men as these are crackpot realists: in the name of realism they have constructed a paranoid reality all their own."

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Mills's *The Power Elite*, 50 Years Later

by G. William Domhoff

NOTE: This is a reprint of a journal article with the following citation:
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Fifty years ago, C. Wright Mills completed his trilogy on American society with the publication of *The Power Elite*, which encompassed, updated, and greatly added to everything he had said in *The New Men of Power* (1948) and *White Collar* (1951). The book caused a firestorm in academic and political circles, leading to innumerable reviews in scholarly journals and the popular press, most of them negative. Bristling with terms like "the warlords," "the higher immorality," "the power elite," "crackpot realism," and "organized irresponsibility," it nonetheless contained a very large amount of research, much of it in the 47 pages of Notes. It became a classic because it was the first full-scale study of the structure and distribution of power in the United States by a sociologist using the full panoply of modern-day sociological theory and methods.

The Power Elite also broke new ground because it was one of the few critical studies of the American power structure inside or outside the academy that did not start with a class-struggle perspective, which caused it to be criticized as vigorously by Marxists as it was by liberals and conservatives. According to Mills, there was "political determinism," i.e., a potentially autonomous state in today's terms, and "military determinism" as well as "economic determinism," the concepts he used to criticize what he saw as the overemphasis on the primacy of the forces and relations of production within the Marxian mode of production framework. The book thereby opened space for and helped create the field of power structure research, which employs a range of empirical methods in an attempt to synthesize competing theoretical views. Although seldom read or cited today by those studying power structures, *The Power Elite* has achieved iconic status in most introductory sociology textbooks, where it is usually compared with the pluralist and Marxist perspectives on power and politics.

How do its main claims look today in light of subsequent events and research? From the perspective of this power structure researcher, the book still has an astonishing relevance and freshness in many of its characterizations of how the country operates. For anyone who thinks that there have been major changes in the nature and functioning of the corporate community, or that individualistic and relatively issueless political campaigns are something new, or that the current "high and mighty" are more arrogant or corrupted by power than in the past, re-reading it is a sobering reminder that some things have not changed as much as many people might think due to our tendency to mythologize and romanticize the past. As for the more important matter of theoretical soundness, it appears that Mills was mostly right about the top levels of the power structure, but mostly wrong about the other levels of American society. Most of all, his synthesis of Max Weber, Karl Mannheim, Karl Marx, Franz Neumann, Harold Lasswell, and Progressive- Era historians underestimated the volatility and capacity for change within a capitalist society, including a possibility few, if any, social scientists anticipated: a successful corporate counterattack that would reverse the gains made by organized labor.

Today, Mills looks even better than he did 50 years ago in his characterization of the benefactors of American capitalism as a corporate rich led by the chief executives of large corporations and financial institutions, who by now can be clearly seen as the driving force within the power elite. His analysis also remains right on target as far as the nature of the political directorate, who circulate between corporations, corporate law firms, and government positions in

the same way they did 50 years ago (and well before that, of course). Thanks to subsequent research, we can add that the political directorate learns about policy issues and rubs shoulders with academic experts through a corporate-financed network of foundations, think tanks, and policy-discussion groups. Although Mills knew of these organizations because he drew much of his information about the corporate community from *Business Week*, *Fortune*, and other business sources, he did not give them the attention they deserved in terms of formulating new policies that are carried to government through a variety of clearly defined avenues, such as testimony before Congress, blue-ribbon commissions, corporate-backed politicians in both parties, and appointments to government (Domhoff, 2006).

As right as Mills was to include the military chieftains in the post-World War II power elite, he was wrong to give them equal standing with the corporate rich and appointees to the executive branch from the policy-planning network. On this issue there already was a consensus among pluralists, Marxists, and other critics within a few years after the book appeared, and nothing that has happened since, or that has been unearthed by historians about past military doings, has challenged that consensus. This point is demonstrated most directly by the fact that military leaders are immediately dismissed if they disagree with their civilian bosses, as seen numerous times since the early 1960s, and most recently in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, when a top general was pushed into retirement for daring to say there was a need for more troops than former corporate CEO and current Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his think-tank advisors thought necessary.

Once we move below the power elite that Mills so tellingly portrayed, I think there are more serious problems with his analysis, some of which should have been apparent at the time, some not. Mills first of all underestimated the power of Congress and too quickly dismissed the political parties as indistinguishable on power issues. The power structure that he analyzed was, in fact, based in fair measure on a strong corporate grip on power at the legislative level, made possible by the fact that Northern industrial and financial capitalists controlled the Republican Party and Southern plantation capitalists controlled the Democrats within an overall electoral context where it is impossible for a third party on the left or right to arise because of the single-member-district plurality system of American elections, as reinforced by the inclusion of a huge prize not part of most electoral systems: the presidency.

Due to this domination of both political parties by segments of the capitalist class, it was difficult, if not impossible, at the time for the parties to be different in the way that Mills thought they should be. To the degree that the liberal-labor coalition that developed during the New Deal could exercise any electoral and legislative power, it had to do so inside the Democratic Party and in the context of a sordid bargain with the segregationist Southern Democrats. Most critically, that bargain included acceptance of elite white domination of the low-wage labor force in the South, especially African Americans. It also meant tacit acceptance of the exclusion of African Americans from craft unions and good jobs in the North, which assuaged the many white workers who harbored feelings of racial superiority or saw African-Americans as a potential threat to their job security.

When it appeared that the liberal-labor coalition could generate enough support to pass progressive legislation, the Southern Democrats usually joined with the Northern Republicans to form the conservative voting bloc, thereby thwarting legislation that would benefit the working class. The only two defeats of any significance for this conservative voting bloc occurred first in 1935, when the industrial union movement in the North was able to create enough disruption and elect enough liberals to force a split between Northern and Southern elites, and then again in 1964, when the civil rights movement in the South forced another rift between Northern and Southern elites. The insurgents thereby won legislation of great benefit to workers and African Americans, namely,

the National Labor Relations Act and the Civil Rights Act, although it always has to be kept in mind that the labor relations act excluded domestic and agricultural labor, and that the strongest enforcement provisions were excluded from the Civil Rights Act, due to the insistence of the Southern Democrats. Moreover, the Southern Democrats renewed their anti-labor alliance with the Republicans in 1939 and wrote amendments to the National Labor Relations Act that outlawed several successful collective strategies developed by the unions. Those amendments, delayed by the need for good relations with organized labor during World War II, were passed as the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 (Gross, 1981).

Still, both the industrial union movement and the civil rights movement, and later the social movements aided and inspired by the civil rights movement, show that the United States is not a "mass society" in the sense that Mills meant it, i.e., one in which everyday people have no organizational bases and hence no way to develop their own opinions and political trajectories. Despite his earlier research showing that people often come to their own opinions, usually through discussions with family and friends, Mills compounded the problem by overstating the role of the media in shaping public opinion. He thereby contributed to the mistaken belief that most people are bamboozled, a belief that leads to an overemphasis on ideology at the expense of organizational factors in explaining why most wage workers do not actively challenge those in power.

Although Mills agreed that the unions were, to some extent, an independent power base at the middle levels, he did not take the dynamic of class conflict seriously enough to contemplate that it might be possible for unions to lose most of their hard-won gains. In effect, he assumed a stalemate, and even some degree of accommodation, between "sophisticated conservatives" in the power elite and the "new men of power" in the unions. Contrary to Mills, who believed that underlying class tensions were, by then, confined within administrative and judicial structures that would prevent the outbreak of class struggle, we now know based on historical research that there never was any real acceptance of unions on the part of the sophisticated conservatives (Gross, 1995). Moreover, the sophisticated conservatives quietly resumed an all-out class war as early as 1965 due to a National Labor Relations Board decision that management had to bargain with unions on the possibility of outsourcing. It was a capitalist victory in the effort to reverse that decision, along with an attack on construction unions for their alleged role in the inflationary spiral, that spelled the beginning of the end for whatever power labor unions had achieved.

Mills's concept of a mass society also prevented him from seeing the organizational resources available to African Americans through their churches and colleges in the South and their involvement in the Democratic Party in the North. This combination of power bases, coupled with the brilliant and unanticipated use of strategic nonviolence, which attracted the support of activists from predominantly white universities and white Northern churches, led to dramatic changes in the American power structure. The civil rights movement inspired other new movements that were based in the fast-growing universities of the era--especially the antiwar and women's movements, and also the environmental and consumer movements, and later the gay and lesbian movement.

But it turned out that these various movements had conflicts among themselves. In particular, many white union members, especially in the building trades unions, saw the civil rights, women's, and environmental movements as threats to their good jobs and status claims as proud white males. Moreover, many white union members did not like what they saw as the anti-Americanism of the anti-war movement. They were not crazy about the war, but they came to dislike the protestors even more. Thus, and contrary to Mills's view, it was not lack of power bases, but lack of unity, that limited the possibilities for progressive changes in the overall power structure.

Within this context, the New Deal coalition began to fragment within a year or two after Mills's death in 1962. In particular, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 set in motion a train of events that led to the abandonment of the Democratic Party by the Southern rich because they could no longer use the party to keep African Americans powerless. They then carried a majority of white Southerners into the Republican Party on the basis of appeals to racial resentments, religious fundamentalism, super-patriotism, and social issues like gun control. The liberal-labor coalition in the North simultaneously fractured, due to white resistance to the integration of neighborhoods, schools, and unions. The two political parties became increasingly different nationwide along liberal-conservative lines, with many white workers now on the conservative side.

The nationwide white turn to the Republicans made it possible for Mills's sophisticated conservatives to turn right on policy in the 1970s once the inner cities were calm again and the power elite was faced with new economic problems due to spiking oil prices and inflation, along with the challenges to their markets by the German and Japanese corporations they had decided to nurture after World War II in order to create a global capitalism. We know in detail about this decision to turn right because the issues were debated in think tanks like The Brookings Institution and policy-discussion forums like the Committee for Economic Development, where the majority said no to permanent wage and price controls, increased planning, and related liberal Keynesian policies. Instead, they advocated monetary policies that would cure inflation through throwing people out of work, cutbacks in the welfare state, deregulation of key business sectors, and continuing attacks on unions. The newly formed Business Roundtable, which gradually emerged as part of the anti-union offensive of the 1960s, took charge of the right turn. This, of course, brings us to the present moment, an almost unbroken march to the right on economic issues, along with an increasing concentration of the wealth and income distributions.

Finally, where do things stand in terms of Mills's major theoretical claims? At the most general level, the historical and cross-national evidence leaves me in agreement with Mills that the economic, political, and military sectors are potentially independent power bases, although I would add that power also can be generated from a religious organizational base, as seen in the civil rights movement, the rise of the Christian Right, and the Iranian Revolution. In terms of the United States, however, historical and sociological research leads me to place far more emphasis than Mills did on corporate capitalism and class conflict as the dominant factors in the power equation. Events and research in the United States since the 1960s also leave me with a belief that there are potential power bases for popular action that Mills overlooked, but with the proviso that these social movements are often in conflict with each other. Until organized labor, liberals, and leftists can forge a coalition of non-violent social movements and focus on Democratic Party primaries if and when they enter the electoral arena, the power elite will continue on its merry way whatever the consequences for everyone else.

References

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