

# Charter

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*The history of all hitherto existing societies  
is the history of class struggles.*

-KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS,  
*THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO*

# Index

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## CLASS AND GENDER

- Race, Class, & Virginitly: The “Purity Myth” Continues  
—*Michaela Brown* 8
- A Classless Haven  
—*Keya Mitra, English Department* 10
- Pillars for the Sky  
—*Rosa Cordovan* 13

## CLASS AND SOCIETY

- Spokane’s Struggle with Class  
—*Dr. Laura Brunell, Political Science Department* 18
- Domesticity and the Society of Coffee House and Tavern Dwellers  
—*Alexandra Manning* 21
- The Peasant’s War of 2015  
—*Dr. Eric Cunningham, History Department* 26
- Date of Enlistment  
—*Ned Fischer* 34
- Chasing Tails: The Interplay Between Economic Power  
and Culture on Social Class  
—*Sara Reed* 37
- The Party  
—*Garick Sherburn* 40

## SOCIOECONOMICS

- For Justice and Happiness  
—*Corwin Bryan* 46
- The Beggar Dilemma  
—*Katie Cronin* 50
- Wealthiest Nation, Poorest Healthcare  
—*Tyler Taceran* 52
- Bill Gates Versus Steve Jobs: A Contrast of Class  
—*Dr. Todd Finkle* 56
- A Different Kind of Valentine’s Day  
—*Victoria Varyu* 59
- Many Parts, One Body  
—*Tyler Laferriere* 61

## CLASS AND EDUCATION

The Creation of an Academic Underclass	
— <i>Richard T. McClelland, PhD., Department of Philosophy</i>	68
More than Money: The Cost of a College Education	
— <i>Emily Rice</i>	75
Students, Money, and Why You Should Care	
— <i>Marjan Charness</i>	78
The PSAs Were Right	
— <i>Kellie Malone</i>	80
You Can't Sit With Us	
— <i>Caitlin Sinclair</i>	82
Unfiltered	
— <i>Brian Kosciuszka</i>	85

# Letter from the Editor

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I joined Gonzaga University's class of 2013 in 2009, an eager student from a rural town, ready to experience college life. I picked up *Class Matters*, a collection of *New York Times* articles that was our freshman read, and thoroughly enjoyed the book. *Class Matters* discusses how our clothes, health-care, and education, among other things, affect what class we live in. It also looks at the issue of class identity in America. Despite overwhelming statistics that prove otherwise, the majority of Americans on the lower and higher outliers, identify as middle class.

Although I found this shocking, the reality of the statistic did not sink in until I was a sophomore. I was in Philosophy 201, the study of human nature, when a student in the middle of the room told the class that poor people are poor because they don't work hard enough. I was surprised. I didn't think people actually thought that.

That same year, I went to a discussion that the Climate Committee held on class at Gonzaga. I went with a friend and we were both excited to be surrounded by other students who cared as much about how class status affects the lives of students as we did. But upon arrival we learned we were wrong. The majority of the stu-

dents were there for extra credit and were more interested in which bar to go to than how hard it was to survive at Gonzaga and hold a job, or how the reality of poverty affects students.

This is not the Climate Committee's fault, nor is it the fault of the students in attendance. Class is an uncomfortable topic to discuss; talking about it in public can cause social ostracism and other students to disregard other opinions you hold. There are things that we, at Gonzaga, do wrong when we talk about class, and some of these things are fixable, but what is most important is having the discussion.

As such, I bring you the 2012-2013 edition of *Charter*, which focuses on the theme of class. Within this journal are a variety of opinions and interpretations of students brave enough to share what class means to them. Not all the articles align with the traditional associations of class, and they were included for that reason. Initial interpretations of class tell us about who we are as a community, how we associate class with gender, socioeconomics, or history. We have begun the conversation, and I hope future students, faculty, and staff will be brave enough to continue it.

# Class and Gender

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# Race, Class & Virginity: The “Purity Myth” Continues

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MICHAELA BROWN

“The desirable virgin is sexy but not sexual. She’s young, white, and skinny. She’s a cheerleader, a babysitter; she’s accessible and eager to please (remember those ethics of passivity!). She’s never a woman of color. She’s never a low-income girl or a fat girl. She’s never disabled. ‘Virgin’ is a designation for those who meet a certain standard of what women, especially young women, are supposed to look like. As for how these young women are supposed to act? A blank slate is best.”

-Jessica Valenti, *The Purity Myth: How America’s Obsession with Virginity is Hurting Young Women*

**A**FTER WATCHING AND reflecting on Jessica Valenti’s award winning documentary “The Purity Myth” I was struck by the accuracy of her assessment. Indeed, the perpetuated image of purity and virginity in our western psyche often excludes the “other.” A virgin today, as Valenti describes, is white, young, pretty, skinny, wealthy, and able bodied.

Why is this? Why is the “other” removed from consideration all together? Focusing on the lack of virginal value associated with low-income women and women of color we begin to uncover an ancient bias that has continued to linger amongst our society.

In ancient Athens, most female citizens were preserved as wives, while the roles of prostitute, concubine, and rape victim were reserved for foreign women. If women were by nature, according to ancient understandings, more sexually promiscuous than men, than foreign women were even more hyper-sexed and lascivious. Since a woman’s value was intimately associated with her abilities to produce male heirs for her husband, and because foreign women could not bear legitimate male heirs, a foreign woman’s value was diminished. Again, the goal of marriage in Athenian society, was to produce legitimate children, and because foreign women, by law, were incapable of fulfilling that role there was no reason to marry them. Fur-

ther, since virginity was tied to marriage, and foreign women, by common practice, did not marry in Athenian society the “gift” of virginity was never attached to them, or at least it was not something to be preserved or protected. Today, centuries later, we see remnants of this ideology perpetuated in our society.

Statistically black women in the United States are the least likely of any race or gender to get married. Why? Is there something innately wrong with black women that does not qualify them as potential wives? Or does this unfortunate statistic have ancient roots? I think these questions are worth considering. Beyond race, I also find it interesting that, low-income girls are excluded from the virginal image. Dowries were essential in the lives of the Athenians, for they not only protected the wives, but also secured the marriages. Although evidence is sparse as described by Sarah Pomeroy, in her book *Goddesses, Whores, Wives,*

*and Slaves*, there did exist a class of citizen women who could not obtain a dowry. With few Athenian men willing to look beyond the lack of financial gain, dowry-less women rarely became wives, but rather assumed the role of concubine or prostitute. Once again, we see a marginal group excluded from the right to marry, which consequently causes their exclusion from the virginal ideal that is still revered by society today. For example, few are surprised when inner city youth become pregnant, yet it is deemed devastating when an elite private school girl gets knocked up.

Unfortunately, the perpetuated “purity myth” that attempts to measure a woman’s worth based on an adherence to an ancient virginal ideal continues to suppress women of every ethnicity and class. Perhaps it is not a question of how to integrate the “other” into the virginal image, but how to dissolve the patriarchal constructed image altogether.

KEYA MITRA

**D**URING THE TEN months I spent on a Fulbright grant in India in 2008, I was constantly confronted by disparities in class and the enormous divide between the rich and poor. Every time I ventured outside I was surrounded within seconds by clusters of emaciated children begging for money. But these class differences, which were substantial and disconcerting, were temporarily eradicated when I decided to clear my mind after four months of battling the chaotic streets of India and signed up for a ten-day Vipassanna meditation retreat between May 7 and 18, 2008, at the largest meditation center in the world.

Though the austerity of the place terrified me, I'd been drawn to the idea of the retreat for years. I hoped that perhaps a self-imposed isolation from society could bring me closer to the sense of quiet and peace I'd craved my entire life. Simplicity of thought seems impossible in a world in which multi-tasking is virtually mandatory in order to be at least minimally productive. In fact it seems almost necessary to

hole up at a silent retreat to get your sense of sanity back.

Being the lifelong capitalist that I am, I of course balked at the idea of a “free” meditation retreat. What quality of spirituality would a retreat run entirely on donations, one that didn't even charge for food, offer me? I searched for “legitimate” (i.e. expensive) meditation retreats on the Internet and found myself forced to admit that these retreats—while luxurious, with their Ayurvedic massages, five-star-hotel-quality rooms, and free facials—seemed more like romantic getaways than venues for enlightenment. And so I resigned myself to accepting the “free” option, finding consolation only in the knowledge that I'd found a “bargain” deal—free food, lodging, and spirituality to boot for ten days!

My premonition that my time at the retreat would resemble prison life was corroborated when I entered my room, or cell, at the meditation center. It was the size of a tiny bathroom, with a wooden block as a bed, a sticky brown stain in the middle of the linoleum floor, and a cobweb-rid-

den fan mounted just above the bed. Let me repeat: *a sticky brown stain*. It was all I could do not to spend hours speculating about where that stain had come from and who must have defecated in the cell after going crazy from ten days of silence.

And yet the meditation center itself was stunning. The center overlooks a cluster of sprawling hills. From the balcony just outside my room I could watch shepherds gathering together sheep and cows. Occasionally a plucky rooster or chicken ventured into a pond at the foot of the hills. Around dawn the sky was a slate gray and the mountains took on a silver sheen, towering and striking yet subdued in the distance.

We were required to turn in our cell phones, computers, and reading materials on the first day. After relinquishing my reading materials I was briefly overtaken by a panic. What if someone tried to break into my room? How would I call 911 (was there even a police station in a town like Igatpuri, which basically consists of the inhabitants of the meditation center and a few cows, sheep, and chickens)?

These moments of terror crept up throughout the retreat. The type of meditation taught at this center doesn't consist of simply "zoning out," or repeating a pleasant-sounding mantra.

Instead it requires you to actively scan your body, head to toes, toes to head, while maintaining perfect equanimity (a word used so many times during my ten days there that I thought one more mention of the word—or anything that sounded remotely similar—would send me over the edge). The meditation asks you to endure the physical pain that comes from sitting cross-legged for ten to twelve hours in a day and to survey that pain objectively and without judgment, keeping in mind that everything passes with time.

During the ten days of the retreat I slept perhaps a total of ten hours, and for the first time in my life I lost my appetite. At times I walked into the gold-tipped pagoda and settled into my cushion, exhilarated by the hundreds of women around me (the retreat was gender-segregated), and other times I wrestled with a bitter sense of loneliness.

I could only venture guesses about those around me—I found myself constantly wondering why the woman next to me, sporty and pretty, couldn't stop burping during meditation, or what the striking Brazilian woman donning dregs and a taut figure was thinking, or how it was that the attractive blonde girl with the skinny arms and blinding white glasses could smile so serenely as she ate in silence, facing a dusty wall?

Despite the long, arduous sessions of meditation, I found the experience inspiring. For the first time during my stay in India, I was surrounded by women from all rungs of the social ladder. Some women came to the meditation center in elaborate saris and curled hair, while others wore the simplest and threadbare outfits. The fact that the entire retreat was free made it impossible for the richest to request the most expensive accommodations or for the choosy to complain about the food. The women at the retreat ranged from premier socialites to servants.

And the spirit of generosity defining the assistant teachers and staff was unlike anything I have experienced or perhaps will again experience in my lifetime. My third day of the retreat I was approached by a woman who said that she had heard I was ill with parasites and wanted to help move me to a “special room” with an attached bathroom on the other side of the campus. I assumed, by her demeanor, that she was hired help—not only did she clean my former room, but she happily lugged my backpack, sleeping bag, and a huge box of bottled water to my new room in the blistering heat of a summer afternoon.

After arranging the room for me, she smiled and expressed,

once again, her desire to make me comfortable and help me however possible. I found myself in the uncomfortable position of not knowing how to respond to her kindness. I was tempted to tip her five hundred rupees but knew that she would find my offering offensive. And yet I had grown so accustomed to tipping any stranger who lifted a piece of luggage for me or opened a door that a gesture of generosity from a stranger left me baffled and uncomfortable. I later discovered that the woman, who’d moved me with such joy, wasn’t a paid member of the staff—no one was financially compensated at the retreat. Every individual working at the retreat serves the participants for free, believing in generosity without rewards. At the end of the retreat, the woman who had helped me move presented me with a beautiful white shawl and asked me simply to return to the retreat one day, and to never forget her.

And I never will.

# Pillars for the Sky

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ROSA M. CORDOVA

**T**HERE IS A Chinese proverb that states, “Women hold up Half the Sky.” It is a known fact that roughly three billion of the six billion human inhabitants of the earth are female. These women make up one half of every class level, yet women comprise 70 percent of the world’s poorest people.<sup>1</sup> Why is this the case and what can we do (we, being the privileged members of the world’s wealthiest society)?

What is our responsibility as the privileged few to these women and to their families? The problem may seem too vast, too overwhelming, yet we have the resources, the money, and the time to reach out to those who are often cast aside by those pursuing capitalist ventures and gains. The problem with those of us who are privileged members of the hegemonic power of the world is that we have a sense of entitlement. We forget to ask what we can do for them. We think we know the best solution to their problems as a result of our status, but we are not the ones who struggle to

find food every day. We are not the ones who watch our children die of malaria, and we are not the ones who are ignored by the leaders of society. No country can get ahead if it leaves half of its population behind.

Many women in the poorest societies in the world work hard for their families to keep their children safe. They give birth in terrible conditions, starve so their child is fed, and often work while taking care of more than one ailing child. These women are undervalued and their work is dismissed because it does not seem to make a vast improvement in the economic conditions of their substantially struggling financial system; however, for every dollar a woman earns, she invests 80 cents in her family.<sup>2</sup> According to the book *Half the Sky*, “often women are the breadwinners in the family; therefore mothers are the key to get the society out of poverty.” Imagine the difference in the lives of these women if we enabled them through education and career training as well as something

1. Kristoff, Nicholas & WuDunn, Sheryll. *Half The Sky*. New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.

2. Ibid.

as simple as a sustained amount of food for their family.

A woman cannot focus on her education if she is worrying about her hungry child. Supply her with rice along with an education and child care and she can save the world. A woman cannot save the world without saving herself and a woman cannot save herself without saving those who she loves. In order for the class struggles of the world to

disappear today, we must supply more pillars of strength for those who hold up the sky. Those of us who are the privileged few have what these women want. We have the education and the resources. They have the love and the passion. Together we can all enable and supply aid to these women. After all, it would be very dark without half the sky.





# Class and Society

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# Spokane's Struggle with Class

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*Dr. Laura Brunell of the Political Science Department spoke with Charter on topics of class in Spokane, as well as her experience as a professor in the community.*

CHARTER: During your time living and teaching in Spokane, have you witnessed the rise and fall of the middle class? As manufacturing in the city began to shutter, how did you see the city change?

DR. B: I have lived in Spokane since August 2002. In that time, I have seen evidence of the greater income polarization of the US. My neighborhood on the South Hill has become more affluent.

All the shopping centers have been re-done in the past few years, all decked out in urbane, gentrified tones of beige. Lexus and Mercedes SUVs abound. There are dental and orthodontic offices on every corner.

Meanwhile, other parts of the city are as poor as ever. There are hundreds of homeless and unemployed people pan handling on our street corners.

It's not the case that manufacturing jobs have disappeared in Spokane. We have a large areas of Spokane and Spokane Valley

devoted to manufacturing jobs. These jobs are not as well paid as they once were and they probably have fewer benefits that family wage manufacturing jobs of the 1950s and 60s. But there are many people in Spokane (and all over America) trying to eke out a living on service-industry jobs – as baristas, waitresses, house cleaners, day-care providers – jobs that do not pay a living wage and have no benefits.

CHARTER: Does the class divide manifest itself differently in Spokane than in other cities you've lived in? How so?

DR. B: Not really. It's very typical, really. There are pockets of Spokane that are affluent and ringed by neighborhoods that are solidly professional and middle class. But there are other areas, it seems most of Spokane, that are working class and underclass, where people are mostly un- or underemployed. In other words,

Spokane is very geographically stratified by class. It is possible for middle and upper class people to live, shop, send their kids to school, play soccer, eat out, etc. with very little contact with the working and underclasses other than passing through their neighborhoods on the way to the mall.

CHARTER: What role can Gonzaga play in the Spokane community in helping close the class gap?

DR. B: GU is one of the region's largest employers. It provides Spokane with hundreds of living wage jobs, many with tuition benefits for employees. That is a huge boon to middle class Spokane. Our students also patronize local businesses and health care providers and pay rents to local landlords (and, unfortunately, slumlords). So many Spokane families' livelihoods depend on GU. Does it close the "class gap"? No, but it does keep many, many Spokane middle class families in the middle class.

CHARTER: What do you believe is the most effective way to bridge the gap between the working and middle classes?

DR. B: I'm not sure what you mean by "bridge the gap". Do you mean foster interactions between working and middle class

people? These categories overlap. Do you mean interactions between the working poor and the better off? If so, this is a tall order as the whole world is organized around niche markets today and residential segregation ensures that the two groups have little to do with one another. I like to start by tipping my barista every time I get a coffee; by acknowledging the humanity of people waiting on me, by making small talk with the person checking my groceries, grooming my dog, serving my burrito, making my pita at the Pita Pit.

I thought about that the other day when I was at the Pita Pit. I thought about the college age girls making my sandwich and the sandwiches of hundreds of GU students their same age who are better dressed, have better haircuts, and have straight teeth, iPads and cars, and meal plans provided by their parents. It must be really hard to wait on such people everyday for \$8/hr with no real prospect for "moving up" the socio-economic hierarchy.

CHARTER: As a professor of Political Science, what role do you believe the government/public sector has in a class-based society?

DR. B: The government/public sector plays a huge role. It provides jobs to millions of people

in the armed forces, in education, in policing, in the civil service. It creates and sustains the middle class through the maintenance of these jobs. It also redistributes resources “earned” by those at the upper ends of the income distribution to those in the middle and lower reaches. I have to put “earned” in quotes, however, because I don’t think anyone can earn a billion dollar bonus. Mother Theresa, teachers in underprivileged schools, people who work emptying bed pans and comfort-

ing the sick: these people deserve much more in the way of monetary compensation than they receive. But people who sit in fancy offices and figure out ways to make money by inventing “financial products” and then ask us to cover their losses? Those people do not deserve the millions and billions of dollars they pay themselves. So it’s hard to call taxing them “income redistribution.” I call it giving the money back to the people it was taken from in the first place.

# Domesticity and the Society of Coffee House and Tavern Dwellers:

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*Tools for Shaping Class and Gender  
Identities in the Nineteenth Century.*

ALEXANDRA MANNING

**T**HE MIDDLE CLASS of the early nineteenth century was a poorly defined group in terms of economic, social, and cultural distinction from the working class. In an effort to distinguish itself from the lower classes, the middle class absorbed the ideology of domesticity, a set of exclusive rules and practices related to the nature of a moral family life. White middle class women and men both considered the home a refuge from the corruption of city life, but their roles within the subculture of suburban life were very different. Women committed themselves to running the household, educating their children and supporting their husbands' endeavors. White middle-class men, on the other hand, neither committed fully to domestic life or urban life. Instead, they found a medium between both environments

in taverns, which the law prohibited women and black men from entering. Tavern and coffee house disturbances, business conferences, and political debates helped to define the new democratic, urban middle and working class cultures of the mid-nineteenth century. Middle class male identity focused on rowdy assertions of physical courage and superiority, class pride and American patriotism. Middle class men and women used the ideology of domesticity and the freedom of tavern life to assert their superiority over working class citizens and prevent the upward mobility of the poor.

Both male and female middle class Americans savored the ability to retreat from cities into the isolation and quiet of suburban life. The suburban residence became an asylum for the preservation of traditional social values

that urban trade, industry and politics constantly threatened. It became a crucial institution of civilization that relieved some of the stress of the conflicting demands of modern city and traditional family values.<sup>1</sup> Female roles within middle-class suburbia prior to the nineteenth century included the maintenance of the home, participation in philanthropic organizations, the rearing and education of children and respect for the dominance of one's husband in affairs of the estate (until the passage of women's property acts in the 1840s).<sup>2</sup> The fulfillment of these roles depended on the ability of husbands to provide enough capital for their families to live comfortably within the suburb. The fulfillment of traditional gender roles became a mark of privilege that distinguished middle class women from those of the working class, who could hardly afford to house and feed their children, let alone to stay home to educate them. Although some middle-class women worked, they did not have to take on an

occupation for subsistence. This distinction allowed them to separate themselves from the female poor, who could not afford the luxury of domestic life.<sup>3</sup>

In the nineteenth century, middle class women, barred from higher education, committed to professions that allowed them to carry out their assigned gender roles, including the profession of primary teaching. Literacy among women doubled between 1780 and 1840, which provided the educational support necessary to show that they could fill the same technical and legal positions that men occupied in the early nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> In its beginning stages, the women's rights movement received weak support from suburban women, who enjoyed the idea of involvement in some political and educational movements, but still honored the patrilineal system greater than their desire for freedom.<sup>5</sup> In the United States presidential election of 1920, over half a century after the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, only one in three women voted,

1. Michael Kaplan, "New York City Tavern Violence and the Creation of a Working-Class Male Identity," *Journal of the Early Republic* 15, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 593.
2. Anne M. Boylan, "Women and Politics in the Era before Seneca Falls," *Journal of the Early Republic* 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 365. 3. Howard P. Chudacoff and Peter C. Baldwin, *Major Problems in American Urban and Suburban History*, (Boston, MA: Charles Hartford, 2005), 192-199.
4. Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1980), 11
5. Boylan, "Women and Politics," 375-376.

indicating a fear and hesitance of renouncing former customs.<sup>6</sup> Some historians have speculated that the women who did not vote did so for fear of their husbands and the complete dissolution of domestic life- a completely foreign concept.

Many middle class women considered the engagement of working class women in street life rather than in the establishment and maintenance of a home evidence of mental instability, parental neglect, a disregard for family life, and openness to pervasive urban vices.<sup>7</sup> Many women from the suburbs believed that poor women could not fulfill their prescribed roles due to a lack formal education and housing resources. Since working women did not adhere to traditional gender roles, the middle class did not consider them completely female, but instead genderless scavengers who fulfilled very little purpose.<sup>8</sup> In response to the growing numbers of working class females that resulted from suburban housewives committed to reform movements that established working class homes that allowed working

women to participate in a diluted version of middle class suburbia, while still requiring them work. One member of New York's Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children stated that "only the humble, the virtuous, and the industrious poor truly deserve charity," indicating that the middle class provided charity only to the men and women who met their moral conduct standards.<sup>9</sup> Their refusal to treat working class citizens equally widened the gap between the emerging middle class and the poor and weakened female support for the Female Rights Movement.<sup>10</sup>

The reform movements rooted the ideology of gender within the ideology of class and pecking order and reestablished the fixed nature of classes that existed before the establishment of the middle class.<sup>11</sup> Poor women could only ascend the class hierarchy if they married a man whom fortune favored in the affairs of business or politics. Upward class mobility through work was limited; a woman could not supersede her class status through a professional appointment. The reform-

6. William L. Chenery, "One in Three Women Vote: Five Men to Three Women Went to Ballot Booths In New York State," *New York Times*, December 19, 1920, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf>

7. Baldwin and Chudacoff, *Major Problems*, 193.

8. Boylan, "Women and Politics," 368-369.

9. *Ibid.*, 373.

10. *Ibid.*, 370-375.

11. Baldwin and Chudacoff, *Major Problems*, 192-194.

ers that both provided necessities to lower class women and supported the women's rights movement advocated for feminine equality in respect to males within their same class, but did not advocate equal treatment of women regardless of class status.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the social and class divisions between middle class and poor women weakened the movement for women's suffrage and denied lower class women the ability to overcome their class status through drudgery.

Although middle class white males benefited from the security of domestic family life, their worth as individuals was considered separate from their participation in the suburban buffer. In contrast to traditional female roles, male gender roles changed with the fiscal value of their occupations and the benefits associated with them.<sup>13</sup> Middle class males evaluated each other by comparing their urban business, political and social accomplishments, whereas poorer men expressed their manliness through violence and political revolts,

which gave them the opportunity to relieve the stress of class restrictions and economic limitations through force.<sup>14</sup>

Although the expression of manhood differed between the middle and lower classes, both forms of male exposition occurred within taverns. Eighteenth century taverns did not segregate males based on class status or even race (excluding black Americans and sometimes Irishmen), which created a forum for debate over social, political and class limitations. One of these discussions focused on the support for the two major political parties, both led by wealthy men.<sup>15</sup> Primarily women opposed male resistance to the ideology of domestication, preferring to remain in the pubs and taverns rather than to return to the demands of family life, led the temperance movement in 1837.<sup>16</sup>

Middle class males founded coffee houses, on the other hand, originally to provide facilities for change counting and other monetary affairs. Some coffee houses devoted a floor to commercial

12. Martin Schultz and Herman R. Lantz, "Occupational Pursuits of Free Women in Early America: An Examination of Eighteenth-Century Newspapers," *Sociological Forum* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 105-106.

13. Kaplan, "New York City Tavern Violence," 59.

14. *Ibid.*, 610.

15. Sean Wilentz, "On class and Politics in Jacksonian America," *Reviews in American History* 10, no. 4 (December, 1982): 46.

16. Bruce Laurie, *Working people of Philadelphia, 1800-1850* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 40 & 120.

exchanges to maintain the daily business provided by traders, sailors and merchants. The houses also published information regarding the most recent political developments and marine information for sailors. Apart from business and politics, coffee houses also contained private reading rooms, lottery offices, and, in some cases, large arched ballrooms fit with ribbons and banners for the celebrations of naval exploits and at other times the rooms were set with chandeliers and rich purple tapestries for celebrations of peace or the end of trade embargos.<sup>17</sup> The trade houses also allowed for political debates to occur in cases of large controversy, such as the election of 1828 between Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams, one of the dirtiest in American History.<sup>18</sup>

The American middle class in the nineteenth century worked to distinguish itself from the lower classes through wealth, cultural customs and differences in gender ideologies that were nontransferable. The ideology of domesticity became a crucial tool that allowed middle class women to assert their superiority over working women

who could not afford housing or the luxury of unpaid labor. The home provided the middle class an asylum from the corruption and alarming evolution of urban politics, cultural customs, and lifestyles. Females and males expressed the gender stereotypes associated with their sex through differed forums. Women of the new middle class devoted themselves to domestic affairs and professions related to nurturing children, domiciliary upkeep and the conservation of family values. Males benefitted from domestic life—were members of both urban and suburban groups. They developed a new society within coffee houses and taverns that allowed for free expression of thoughts regarding social and political reform and encouraged the practice of traditional male activities including war meetings, political debates, and commercial business ventures. Middle class men and women successfully used the ideology of domesticity and the freedom of tavern and coffee house life to assert their superiority over working class citizens and prevent the upward class mobility of the poor.

17. The President and Fellows of Harvard College, "Business and the Coffee House," *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 2, no. 3 (May, 1928), 13.

18. Excerpt, "The Carolina Observer: Fayetteville," *North Carolina Newspaper Project, State Library of North Carolina & North Carolina State Archives*, April 5, 1827, under "Excerpt, Fayetteville Carolina Observer, April 5, 1827," <http://www.archives.ncdcr.gov/exhibits/dmedia/sect-1828.xml#2> [accessed February 12, 2013].

# The Peasant's War of 2015

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DR. ERIC CUNNINGHAM,  
*DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY*

A LITTLE OVER a year ago, when the Occupy Wall Street movement became the toast of the Fall 2011 fashion-protest season, I found myself in the minority of my own social class (the intelligentsia, for lack of a more congenial term to describe educated professionals, media figures, academics, and other officially “smart” people) in that I thought the whole affair was little more than bad street theater. OWS felt weirdly reminiscent of the Arab Spring of 2010-11, which, though different in its aims, effects, and levels of violence, was also supported enthusiastically by the smart-people-class because it advertised itself as a gathering of disenfranchised masses calling for more global justice. What the world now knows about the Arab Spring is what a lot of us suspected from the beginning, i.e., that despite the earnest efforts of many brave people who stood strongly for democracy (and are still struggling against their new regime to get it), the whole thing was largely a vehicle for the political aspirations of the Muslim Brotherhood. The

Occupy Wall Street movement, for its part, didn't seem to have much of an agenda at all. *Adbusters* magazine, which helped organize and fund the spontaneous event, was aiming for something equivalent to the Tahrir Square uprising in Cairo, but it never panned out as a bona-fide regime-toppling movement. In the end, OWS was mostly a collection of frustrated liberal bourgeoisie and disenfranchised proletarians protesting the fact that really rich and powerful people are really rich and powerful, and don't feel at all guilty about it. When the police finally came to chase everybody away, the protesters went home and that was pretty much that. The Machine, invigorated by this minor test of its power, continues to hum right along.

It's unfortunate that so many people in the smart-people-class unquestioningly buy the superficial rhetoric of media-driven social justice movements, because few of these movements really do anything to hinder the operations of real political tyrants, financial pirates, or corporate racketeers.

While they do allow high-principled activists to congratulate themselves for staring down injustice and inequality in the public square, the reality is that the purveyors of injustice and inequality are doing just fine pretty much everywhere. One would have to be recklessly optimistic to imagine a successful future for liberal democracy in Egypt, Libya, or Syria—and as for bringing down the global corporate financial structure—the six largest banks in the U.S. (Bank of America, Citigroup, JP Morgan, Wells Fargo, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley) made combined profits of \$63 billion last year,<sup>1</sup> are systematically absorbing a growing sector of the national GDP,<sup>2</sup> and have exploited an impressive array of international loopholes that allow them to pay a fraction (if any) of the 35 percent corporate tax that they owe.<sup>3</sup> Given the (ostensibly populist) Obama administration's reluctance to prosecute Wall Street wrongdoers,<sup>4</sup> it seems unlikely that grassroots democracy is going to add much to the sum total of justice in the world, at least where global finance is con-

cerned.

The world is obviously being managed (or strategically mismanaged, depending on your perspective) by the rich and powerful, and this feels like a bad thing for almost everybody who isn't rich and powerful. Something must be done, we think, even if that thing is sleeping in parks, throwing rocks through Starbucks' windows, or making some similar attempt to "speak truth to power." But did anybody really think—even before the reports from the OWS front were filled with stories of vandalism, drug abuse, bomb threats, sexual assaults, and people defecating on the hoods of police cars—that setting up tent villages in the environs of America's financial districts was going to accomplish anything besides gratifying the consciences of its participants? I confess that the only thing the Occupy Wall Street movement taught me is that if Americans are really this naïve, this self-congratulatory in their aimless gestures—and this willing to abandon their causes the minute the cops show up—then maybe freedom and democracy

1. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-10-03/no-joy-on-wall-street-as-biggest-banks-earn-63-billion.html>. Accessed 5 February, 2013.

2. <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2010/apr/27/sherrod-brown/six-largest-banks-getting-bigger-brown-said/>. Accessed 5 February, 2013.

3. <http://boldprogressives.org/if-banks-paid-their-full-taxes-we-could-re-hire-all-130000-teachers-laid-off-during-the-recession/#.URBaKaVZXgo>. Accessed 5 February, 2013.

4. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/untouchables/>. Accessed 5 February, 2013.

are already finished. The mind-boggling discrepancy in wealth and power between the global elites and the rest of us really is a problem, but taking to the streets in protest, given our apparent level of organization and vision, is more likely a greater source of entertainment for the elites than it is any threat to their well-being.

A big part of the problem here is that the OWS people created a false conflict in its manufacturing of the “one-percent vs. us” showdown. After all, who exactly are the “one percent?” If we look at this question from a global perspective, we find out that anybody making \$34,000 a year belongs to the richest one-percent of the world’s population.<sup>5</sup> That figure would certainly include all of the smart-people-pundits in the American media, probably all of America’s tenured college professors, and most of the practitioners of America’s “top ten” blue collar jobs<sup>6</sup> —indeed, since the average median household income in America was over \$50,000 in 2011, we can probably conclude that at least half of the households in the United States

belong to the global one-percent. Now obviously the OWS activists were not protesting their own greed and affluence, even if the world’s 100 million or so homeless people might have regarded their nice tents, field kitchens, and drinking water supplies with great envy. So what were they protesting? The exclusively American one-percent?

In the United States, the top one-percent of incomes begins near the \$500,000 per year mark, but concealed in the thin slice between the 99.0th and 99.9th percentile, we find greater disparities in income than exist anywhere in the huge gap between rock-bottom-broke and \$500,000.<sup>7</sup> The top bracket of American earners (the 0.01 percent), make average incomes of \$31 million, with the tippy-top making between \$45 and \$70 million.<sup>8</sup> It goes without saying that the annual salaries of America’s richest people are a drop in the bucket compared to the sum total of their financial assets. Bill Gates, for example, whose net worth is about \$65 billion, could make five times more money on simple interest in one

5. <http://hotair.com/headlines/archives/2011/10/30/attention-protesters-youre-probably-part-of-the-global-one-percent/>. Accessed 5 February, 2013.

6. <http://www.careerbuilder.com/Article/CB-786-Who-is-Hiring-Top-10-Blue-Collar-Jobs/>. Accessed 5 February, 2013.

7. <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/05/24/where-do-you-fall-on-the-income-curve/>. Accessed 5 February, 2013.

8. <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/10/30/nyregion/where-the-one-percent-fit-in-the-hierarchy-of-income.html>. Accessed 5 February, 2013.

minute than the \$1,480 that the average wage laborer on Planet Earth earns in one month.<sup>9</sup> So perhaps American bankers are the villains—but if we look at the way global capitalism has been trending since 1900—with a steep increase in velocity after 1945, and warp speed after 1990—it becomes harder to associate the phenomenon of global capitalism with any one country, or any one profession. Despite stereotypical depictions of the one-percent as a homogenous class of evil, rich, financier fat-cats with offices on Wall Street, most of the people who actually work on Wall Street are peons compared to the “über rich,” or as they are known in academic circles, the Transnational Capitalist Class.

The members of the Transnational Capitalist Class, or TCC, are not merely “rich people,” and they certainly aren’t just Americans. They are a relatively small (less than 30,000 strong) number of people around the world who have, over the last forty years or so, acquired so much power, wealth, and influence that they now constitute an authentic

global ruling class.<sup>10</sup> According to sociologist Leslie Sklair, the TCC is made up of 1) owners of transnational corporations, 2) globalizing bureaucrats and politicians, 3) globalizing professionals, and 4) consumerist elites, a sub-group of commercial and media people whose power reflects the fundamental importance of consumerism to the operations of global capitalism.<sup>11</sup> What makes the TCC different from the good old-fashioned robber barons of past centuries is that they are both products and producers of a global power apparatus so integrated in its functioning and totalizing in its scope that it has already effectively eclipsed the modern, international, state-based world order. The end of the Cold War, which multiplied opportunities for global investment, and the creation of the internet, which multiplied the speed at which capital could be transferred, have created a new elite whose wealth and power are almost impossible to even measure, let alone “take down.”

The TCC is an authentically global class, made up of the super-wealthy from every continent.

9. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/business-tech/120331/global-pay-scale-international-labor-organization>.

10. William I. Robinson and Jerry Harris, “Towards A Global Ruling Class? Globalization and the Transnational Capitalist Class.” [http://net4dem.org/mayglobal/Papers/RobinsonHarris7\\_16.pdf](http://net4dem.org/mayglobal/Papers/RobinsonHarris7_16.pdf). Accessed 5 February, 2013.

11. Leslie Sklair, “The Transnational Capitalist Class and the Discourse of Globalization,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 14, no. 1 (2000): 67-85. <http://www.theglobalsite.ac.uk/press/012sklair.htm>. Accessed 2 February 2013.

They are well-educated, technologically savvy, and pursue an agenda whose goals lie well beyond the local concerns of their native lands.<sup>12</sup> As Sklair observes, the economic interests of TCC members are “globally linked rather than exclusively local and national in origin,” and proceed from a “shareholder-driven growth imperative.” Moreover, the TCC “seeks to exert economic control in the workplace, political control in domestic, international, and global politics, and culture-ideology control in every-day life through specific forms of global competition, and consumerist rhetoric and practice.” In terms of their personal habits and aspirations, TCC members “tend to share similar life-styles, particularly patterns of higher education, and consumption of luxury goods and services.” An increasingly—and voluntarily—isolated group, TCC members patronize “exclusive clubs and restaurants, ultra-expensive resorts in all continents, private as opposed to mass forms of travel and entertainment, and ominously, increasing residential segregation . . . in gated communities.”<sup>13</sup>

When we consider the degree to which the TCC elites have re-

defined the world and their place in it, the reality of “our” status as high-tech serfs—to say nothing of the inefficacy of our “mass protests” against them—hits home with a force both comic and horrifying. The realization of our relative powerlessness should lead us to question the motives of the smart-people class, who parrot the TCC mantras of “social justice,” “sustainability,” “health,” “education,” “peace,” and “security.” Perhaps I am indulging in dark conspiratorial fantasies here, but I see little reason to believe that what the elites mean by these things is the same thing that “we” mean. As our civilization awaits the arrival of medical technologies that promise to extend human life through nanorobotic drugs and gene-doping (for those who can afford it); as we look for the advent of brain chip implants that will raise intelligence and creativity to super-human levels (also for those who can afford it—the rest of us will have to make do with public health care that serendipitously pays for the abortions of our pre-marginalized offspring); as our leaders expand the scope of authorized drone aircraft attacks to include “domestic terrorists” and call for

12. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/01/the-rise-of-the-new-global-elite/308343/>. Accessed 4 February, 2013.

13. Sklair. Accessed 2 February, 2013.

the “brainwashing” of citizens against private gun ownership;<sup>14</sup> as UN commissions tell us that the private ownership of property is incompatible with long-term environmental sustainability<sup>15</sup>—I can’t help but think that somebody is creating a world very different from the one most of us are used to and would like to keep living in. Add to these science-fiction realities the presence of a class of people who own nearly 40 percent of the world’s wealth,<sup>16</sup> and want more, and the prospects do not seem particularly promising for the “masses.” Unfortunately, camping out in city parks shouting “we are the 99!” is not going to improve the situation. They know who we are.

What we may be seeing here is the fulfillment of grim forecasts made by a number of twentieth-century “prophets” (Huxley, Orwell, Nabokov, LeGuin, and Dick to name only a few) concerning the inevitable degeneration of progressive material civilization into some form of pseudo-enlightened plutocracy. Among the more insightful of these predictions were those of C.S. Lewis, whose 1946 classic, *The Abolition*

*of Man*, describes a future world managed by a cadre of elites that he calls “the conditioners.” The members of this class, after using the educational system to debunk traditional values as discourses of subjective power, then redefine the world as a realm of subjective power. Having thus destroyed the basis of objective truth they take control of the state, economy, and culture, and begin to remake the world in their own image.<sup>17</sup> Not all of this is “new,” obviously. Lewis acknowledges that the yearning of some men for world domination has been a persistent theme of human history, but he reminds us that the technologies of the modern world create unique possibilities for a relatively easy installation of totalitarianism. “The man-moulders (sic) of the new age,” he wrote, “will be armed with the powers of an omniscient state, and an irresistible scientific technique: we shall get at last a race of conditioners who really can cut out all posterity in what shape they please.”<sup>18</sup> For Lewis, the arrival of the conditioner-elites, who stand apart from the common herd, live detached from traditional values,

14. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onMoasnCXDo>. Accessed 5 February, 2013.

15. <http://www.democratsagainstunagenda21.com/>. Accessed 5 February, 2013.

16. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/social-inequality-and-the-concentration-of-global-wealth-never-have-so-few-owned-so-much/27286>. Accessed 5 February, 2013.

17. C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001 reprint of 1944 original).

65.

18. *Ibid.*, 60.

and act according to their wills, heralds no less than the abolition of humanity.

If there is any consolation to be had in contemplating the conditioners' takeover of the world, it would be the likelihood (given the speed with which things happen these days) that the Dawn of the Conditioners and the Twilight of the Conditioners will turn out to be the same historical moment. The people who created global capitalism booby-trapped it by basing the whole scheme on borrowed money and consumerism; these are not exactly "sustainable" economic practices. Being the masters of a debt- and consumption-driven economy is only fun as long as the peasants are working and can make enough money to buy stuff; it stops being fun when jobs disappear, rents go unpaid, personal and public debts skyrocket, and money becomes worthless—at which point the masters are forced to foreclose on trillions of dollars of non-performing debt instruments, and have to deal with masses of angry, unemployed people. This sequence is, of course, already in progress—so the good news, strange though it may be, is that despite the cool efficiency and fabulous style with which the conditioners have taken paper ownership of the earth, they're not really in control of any-

thing—and if the 0.01 percent are not in control, the rest of us have reason to take heart. It will probably take the collapse of the system to bring this truth to everybody's awareness, but that seems to be in progress too. I doubt there is much that can be fixed or reformed at this point, but there will be a great deal of rebuilding to do after the global economy falls apart. There should be endless opportunities to create a real global community, provided we wake up, grow up, shake off our tendency to get sucked in by conditioner programs and propaganda, renounce our envy and resentment of conditioner power and wealth, and begin living the values that define a truly human planetary society. These are—and have always been—freedom, simplicity, humility, responsibility, honesty, integrity, compassion, and love (by which I mean nothing more complicated than a proactive willingness to surrender our surplus claims upon the good things in life so that others can enjoy them too).

History's next great social war will ultimately be won with two easy to grasp (if hard to execute), 99 percent effective, non-violent strategies, and they have nothing to do with occupying city parks or heckling stock brokers on their way to work. The first is to refuse to comply with anti-humanistic,

life-destroying, top-down social conditioning, no matter the cost; the second is to refuse undue wealth, power, or prestige, no matter the temptation. The struggle humanity faces is not concerned with the conquest of territory, the acquisition of resources, or even the destruction of an oppressive class, but rather for the striving for expanded consciousness, and the prize will be self-emancipation from fear, ego, and the desire to control things that can't be controlled. May all 100 percent of us prevail.

# Date of Enlistment

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NED FISCHER

I AM TWENTY. I was fourteen when my grandpa died and, though I didn't understand at the time, my grandpa had a very unique perspective on life. He grew up in a place I know nothing of, Kansas, in the middle of a time I can only imagine, the Great Depression. I feel that place has a profound effect on people... I just have a strange affinity to the Northwest and my grandpa's sense of home was in the plains of the Midwest.

My grandpa loved to tell stories, which is something my culture is slowly forgetting. My grandpa had two main types of stories he would tell me. A majority of his stories were of his life growing up in a small southern Kansas town. He and his brother Charles would get into all sorts of shenanigans.

The other stories my grandpa would tell were of his experiences in World War II. I am twenty years old. Though I have lived through 9/11, and an era of terror warfare, I have never known the imminent danger of a world war, nor have I felt the shock of being drafted. My generation is supposed to save

the world, to be a generation of heroes... When I look at my generation I do not see the courage, and perseverance that defined my grandpa's generation. His was truly the hero's generation.

As a stalwart hero my grandfather not only lived through World War II, he survived the Great Depression as the youngest child of nine in a destitute family living in the center of the Dust Bowl. He would tell me stories of peeing on electric fences for a nickel, and how finding any sort of change made he and his siblings feel like kings. Despite all this hardship came a strong feeling of pride that accompanied these stories told by my grandpa. It has been almost a decade since I've heard one of his stories, but I know he would not have traded the small town and dusty farming for any thing. Though his final years were close to us, his family, in Washington, he always considered Kansas home.

I do not feel that there is a sense of legacy in Americans today. Nor is there the pride that came with my grandpa's poor farming roots. This makes me

wonder if the American Dream is dead along with the idea of self-betterment. Maybe it died when my grandpa's generation came home from the war and bought cars, houses, vacuums and all manner of other paraphernalia from the Sears catalog. Maybe this abundance was the fulfillment of the dream... It certainly wasn't for my grandpa who became a preacher and spent the next dozen years raising a family on the charity of his congregation.

This all came back to me today when we had a discussion in History about the causes of World War II both immediate and prolonged. When my grandpa was stationed in the Philippines, he tended a garden at the crossroads he was stationed, and one day he was told that the war was over, that he could go home. My grandpa told me how that tiny garden meant so much to him in that one moment.

It's strange how something so seemingly insignificant can change with such a meaningful event. There he sat in that field of yams, or maybe it was onions, head in his hands and just repeated, "I'm goin' home". This story means more to me now than it did when my grandpa first told it.

All of this got me thinking about place, permanence, legacy. Two hours later I'm completing my umpteenth Google search in

fifteen minutes, and I stumble across a poorly done site about army enlistments in Kansas during World War II. At the bottom third of the page after the name Charles Lawson, is Ernest Lawson. Just like that. But his name is nothing more than a name, serial number, and enlistment date. There is nothing there that tells his story. Nothing at all really, unless you'd have known Charles, his brother, who was the name and number prior to his on the list. No details that tell he wrote and published a book, that he was a Colorado senator, that he had three daughters, and eventually three grandchildren. There's nothing of his home, life, fears, hopes, or dreams; especially nothing about a little garden on a small island out in the Pacific.

I am twenty years old. There might not be anyone alive who can tell me where this garden is. Even if I can find all this information I may never be able to track this place down. It is in a far off country half way across the planet with a million different gardens between here and there. Even worse, there is a chance this place may not even exist anymore. Life is progress, gardens get pushed aside to make room for new developments. Why does it matter? Because this was the end of an age, and it was an age someone I knew and loved experienced. This

may come to nothing. I may find this place, I may not, who knows. Part of this is me trying to connect with a man I wish I knew better, and part of it is me trying to find out where I come from and what that means to me.

My grandpa's legacy, to me, is the stories he left me. My grandpa left me stories of life with much less, but also with stories of great triumph. The generation that fought the largest war of all time also fought the greatest class struggle in American history. As my generation fights wars we are unsure of, and struggles through what has become a lengthy recession, I wonder where the cohesion has gone. It seems the gump-

tion that fueled my grandparents is gone and with it a piece of the American Dream. I hope, as I write, I will know more of what my grandpa spoke of, that his stories will inspire me in a way that could help teach me what good I can do. Then again, I am twenty years old. My idea of legacy has changed drastically since my grandpa told me his last story.

Maybe this article will have a follow-up, maybe not. This could just be my flavor of the month, but I don't think so. I don't think knowing all of these things would change me or make me a better person. I'm not sure what it would do.

# Chasing Tails: the Interplay Between Economic Power and Culture in Social Class

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SARA REED

WHEN SHARON'S SHAMBLING red sports car screeched to a halt in front of my host mother's expansive three-story home/veterinary clinic complex to pick me up, I knew I was about to cross a silent gap between social classes. Both Marianne and Sharon loved to tease, protected their cats ferociously, and welcomed me with open arms—and yet the two of them looked at each other across a stark distance. Marianne operated a successful business and collected the dues of a landlord; Sharon's family lived in a ramshackle apartment behind a struggling café. Sharon floundered in school and focused on how people related to one another rather than her tasks; Marianne pursued her plans with steel-enforced focus. Economic power clearly played a role in creating this gap, but it seemed that another force was driving two worldviews and modes of operation: culture.

Research by Walter J. Ong

S.J. found that culture differs dramatically depending on literacy levels, which in turn relies heavily on economic level, as found in the studies of Dr. Donna M. Beegle. Thus we find economic difficulty resulting in a lack of literacy that affects the formation of a culture bracketed by a certain economic class – different economic classes have distinctive cultures. As Ong found, cultures with literacy (oral) emphasize patterns such as interpersonal relationships, oral communication, and situational thought rather than abstract analysis. In contrast, literate (print) cultures value linear thought, analysis, and written sources of information. As interpreted by Beegle, oral cultures encourage spontaneity, the physical, emotion, and the present while print cultures emphasize time, focus, planning skills, and delayed gratification. Both researchers connect oral culture with poverty and warn against the assumption

that only the presence of a written language differentiates the two cultures; their very structure and functioning patterns contrast.

The simple presence of one culture or another does not automatically classify an entire society, however, as Ong clarifies. 'Primary orality' indicates a society totally untouched by written language, while 'secondary orality' includes a wide spectrum of cultures that have written language, but not all of its members have absorbed it. This means a portion of its members participate in print culture, almost always an elite class. A 'residual orality' remains in the culture of secondary orality that increases or decreases in an inverse relationship to literacy. Thus, the American hope to teach all children to read does not contradict the fact that Americans participate in orality as well as a degree of literacy. In fact, some Americans may not participate in print culture at all. As Beegle notes, those individuals caught in generational poverty often never find any value in literacy whatsoever, remaining in a primarily oral culture.

Of the two cultures in America, print culture clearly dominates our society economically and educationally today. The modern workplace values analysis, time management, and linear progression rather than spontaneity and emotion. The written word over-

powers oral communication in most professions. In elementary through higher education, print culture fits student tasks and goals much better than oral culture. Students gain most of their information from textbooks, emails prevail over personal conversation with professors, and time management, writing capabilities, and analytical astuteness stand out among expectations. Oral culture does not accommodate these necessities well, leading to struggles to succeed academically as well as a lack of familiarity with traditional standards of high status. This cultural handicap results in a secondary handicap: a lack of education. After graduation, students comfortable with print culture have not only earned a diploma but have also more easily absorbed hallmarks of educated high culture. In conversation they can subsequently drop references to TS Eliot or Sir Isaac Newton that show their appreciation for tradition and learning, just as English ladies did hundreds of years ago to establish the level of their accomplishments. Those who favor oral culture must work harder to impress a potential employer or contact with a reference to Dante simply because Dante was delivered to them in written form.

This lack of education, proven through a transcript or through

mien, of course feeds back into economic repercussions. Without a degree, it's harder to find a job and it's harder to earn a decent salary. The impoverished often do not even understand the value and opportunities inherent in education, discouraging them from pursuing it further. Here we begin a downward spiral and a vicious cycle that makes the poor, oral culture status perpetual. However, this system is not as absolute as it might seem. For example, a college graduate who chose to accept a bare-bones salary as a missionary or social worker would not fit the paradigm of the lower class. Does this rest on the graduate's upper class knowledge, the economic power represented by the costly accomplishment of a diploma, or the potential economic power that follows it? Before we jump to say that the difference is purely economic, consider another case. If a janitor without any substantial education read Shakespeare every night and loved to write analytical essays, would we comatosely consider the janitor entirely low-class because of his or her lack of economic power? We would not. Instead, we would

find ourselves surprised, certainly, and not entirely comfortable with filing the janitor in the lower class category – the janitor crosses over into the cultural aspect of the upper class without obtaining the economic aspects. Conversely, a wealthy owner of a construction company who arrives at an art oeuvre without any idea how to pronounce 'oeuvre' would have the economic power of the upper class without its culture. Economic power only forms the discrete half of the complicated constitution of social class.

Economic power and culture form a complicated sieve to sift individuals into their place in the human pecking order. Cultural communication styles drive economic realities, economic realities determine access to elements of high culture, and high culture turns into economic enhancement. The two spin round and round, chasing each other's tails. They cannot separate – but they can and do separate the girl with the too-loud sports car and the woman with the vet clinic. Both must be understood in order to grasp the forces behind social class.

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# The Party

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GARICK SHERBURN

**T**HE OTHER DAY I was invited to a party on Facebook. The theme was “classy as ever.” My first thought: What? My second thought: Check the invite list. It was a pretty impressive group of my friends and peers. Thirdly, I checked to make sure I had the day off and indeed I did. My fourth thought was what was for dinner courtesy of my growling stomach. My final thought, WHAT AM I GOING TO WEAR?!?!

I raced to my closet and ripped the door open in the most dramatic fashion I could. I stared blankly at my mountain of dirty clothes and began digging for something to spark my imagination. Classy, classy, classy. What did that even mean? My closet contained perhaps 250 articles of clothing, 2,100 different combinations and styles of clothes, well perhaps only 1,700 because of all my dirty laundry and nothing was peaking my interest. This was quite the predicament to say the least.

I eventually settled on a simple bowtie and a black shirt. I mean, I got compliments on my bowtie style all the time so I figured I'd

give it a shot. I gave myself one final glance in the mirror and I'll be honest, I looked fine. I may have come up with the simplest outfit possible but I still felt great about myself. My face was shining and I was raring to go. I had a party waiting for me.

My friends and I decided to show up fashionably late because who goes to parties on time anyway? Squares and freshmen, that's who. And we were certainly not that. Upon arrival at the party, I saw two girls on the porch, one of them sporting some mascara tears. She was wearing some pretty skimpy tights, a skirt that could have been a little lower if you ask me, a tiara, and a loose fitting sweater that didn't really match anything with the rest of her ensemble. The other girl was wearing a horrid watermelon pink prom dress. Remember when those were in style? That's right, never. Before we went in I heard the teary eyed one say, “I look too classy for this right now.”

Despite the atmosphere on the outside, we got to the real party and had a great time. I got to chat with friends, the music

was pretty tasteful, and everyone seemed to be having a good time. Well, maybe except that girl on the porch. In fact, she never returned to the party. She never really returned to my thoughts either.

A few weeks later I got the full scoop on the porch girl. Her name was Emily, a soon to be graduate of Gonzaga University. Apparently, she was going to this party in hopes of impressing a man with her over-the-top classiness. In fact, the party and theme was all a device for her to impress this guy. I was mortified. Why didn't I ever think of doing that? Anyway, the party was a complete bust because the mystery man in question turned out to be in a committed relationship. Clearly, Emily didn't do her homework of Facebook stalking before crushing. Rookie mistake.

However, something still bothered me about Emily and the fact that she blamed her tears for making her situation worse because she "Looked too classy for this right now." What did she mean by that? Her outfit was too classy for her to be upset? That her classiness made it impossible for her to feel emotions? That her outfit made her classy so she couldn't have a successful party? And that's when I realized something about the party.

I remember when I looked around everyone had different

outfits. Some girls wore dresses, some wore sweaters, some flats, some heels. The guys wore suits, a nice dress shirt, jeans, you name it, it was all there. No one looked like one another and no one wore similar outfits. People weren't defining classiness based on what they wore. Everyone was there to have a good time and to be with friends.

I remember looking in the mirror and being pumped up based on how I looked. Of course, I may not have been the best dressed gent at the party but I still felt super classy. Why? Because my classiness was exuding from a special place within. Clothes shouldn't define who we are because no one is the same and no one dresses the same. If anything, clothes enhance who we are and how we feel. Clothes should express who we are as individuals. They give us that extra push into feeling something we've never felt before. I may not have known the textbook definition of classy, but I was still classy because I felt good about myself. If I had worn a tux to the party, I would have felt super fancy and all, but I would have felt overdressed.

Classiness is defined by what makes us feel good on our own perceptions. Emily thought her clothes made her classy when they were only inhibiting her. She tried to make her clothes do the

talking when her heart should have defined her classiness. She should have worn something that made her feel great as opposed to what she thought she was supposed to wear to make her classy. A true classy individual exudes it from within.

If I've learned anything from my short time at GU, it's that I know who I am and I'm not afraid of that. I'm not trying to put a show on for people every day or trying to fit in. I'm

just who I am and it has led me to some great friendships and great memories. And I certainly wasn't relying on my clothes to make me someone else. I encourage Emily to be herself next time. Wear something that makes you feel good as opposed to what you think you should wear. Your beauty will exude not from your clothes but from within. Be bold, be beautiful, but most importantly, be yourself. Good luck to you, Emily.





# Socioeconomics

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# For Justice and Happiness

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## *Considerations of Social Class in the U.S. and the World*

CORWIN BRYAN

**A**TOWERING WHITE structure rises above the city, with a balcony on every floor. Terraces, each containing lush foliage and a hot tub, jut from the building, wrapping around one side like a spiral staircase. The grounds, spreading out from the base of the monolithic hotel, are well kept, clean, sprinkled with bushes, trees and hedges. Among them are two tennis courts, and a large swimming pool with several quaint umbrella-covered seating areas. Along the edge of the grounds runs a fence.

Immediately on the other side of this fence are the unmistakable signs of poverty. Dirt lots, brick buildings with shoddy tin roofs, and terribly maintained streets in a cramped, seemingly nonsensical layout are enough for any passerby to identify this area as a slum.

This is a description of an aerial photo of São Paulo, Brazil. The contrast is so stark; one must take a moment to scrutinize the image for

any hints of editing, to make sure that the photographer didn't simply splice a photo of a luxury resort with a photo of a hopeless ghetto.

I've often heard it said that there are three things which determine roughly, if not inflexibly, our positions in society before we've even taken our first breaths: gender, race, and social class. And while I've heard most of my teachers, pastors, and role models address the first two, the third has remained for the most part untouched.

This has become far less true since I began my education at Gonzaga. In my social justice course, we left no stone unturned when it came to the most controversial issues, including poverty and homelessness. Discussions of these topics inevitably led to discussions of the overarching issue—social class. I now know that, in our society, the class into which one is born has everything to do with the class in which one will die, and everything to do with that person's health,

wealth and opportunity in the interim. I now know that no well-educated person could be unaware of this relation (especially since the 2011 Occupy movement<sup>1</sup>) except through an act of volitional ignorance, whether on the part of that person or that person's teachers.

I now know that the separations between rich neighborhoods and poor neighborhoods such as the ones in São Paulo exist in the U.S., and have been on the rise since 1970<sup>2</sup>, with the only difference being that they are often further separated—on opposite sides of a city, rather than opposite sides of a fence.

It seems most Americans would agree that this is a grave injustice, one that must be rectified, and one that can only be rectified with the help of government intervention. Many potential solutions are in place or have been offered, such as Medicaid, social security, and many other welfare programs, collectively supported by a higher progressive income tax. However, the income gap has

not shrunk. In fact, it has grown steadily in recent decades: today, of the world's developed countries, the U.S. boasts the highest income inequality.<sup>3</sup>

We live in a capitalist society, in which everyone is free to earn the lifestyle and the fortune to which they aspire. At least, this is the ideal—an ideal of which we fall short, to say the least. Certainly, many individuals with fortunes had to work to achieve them and nearly every individual with a fortune has to work to maintain it. However—and this is no small “however”—our fates are to a significant degree decided by factors outside of our control, such that a person born into a low socioeconomic class can work indefatigably his or her entire life and not escape that familiar poverty. According to the Pew Research Center, over 40 percent of Americans that grew up in the bottom quintile of the family income ladder will remain there as adults, and 70 percent will remain in or under the middle.<sup>4</sup> This is not free-

1. Rich Morin. “Rising Share of Americans See Conflict Between Rich and Poor.” Pew Research Center, Washington D.C. (January 11, 2012). <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/01/11/rising-share-of-americans-see-conflict-between-rich-and-poor/>, accessed on February 15, 2013.
2. Wikipedia contributors, “Income inequality in the United States,” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Income\\_inequality\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States&oldid=538002555](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Income_inequality_in_the_United_States&oldid=538002555) (accessed February 15, 2013).
3. Wikipedia contributors, “Income inequality in the United States.”
4. Susan K. Urahn et. al. “Pursuing the American Dream: Economic Mobility Across Generations.” Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (July 2012). [http://www.pewstates.org/uploadedFiles/PCS\\_Assets/2012/Pursuing\\_American\\_Dream.pdf](http://www.pewstates.org/uploadedFiles/PCS_Assets/2012/Pursuing_American_Dream.pdf), accessed January 24, 2013.

dom. And for as long as this is true, upward social mobility and the American meritocracy are and will continue to be illusions. That everyone in the United States has “earned what they have” is a dangerous myth, one often held aloft to defend the rich against higher income taxes, and one that has certainly contributed to the perpetuation and even growth of the income gap.

If we want the income gap to shrink, the popular opinion is (as stated above) that the government will have to intervene. I personally agree, since corporations comprise a significant part of the problem, and since individuals cannot effectively stand up against these corporations (supposing it is in fact the responsibility of the government to fight for its citizens when they cannot fight for themselves).

But just as with the assumption that we have all “earned what we have,” there are problems with government intervention. Is stricter intervention truly necessary to bring about justice? Does it infringe on the American ideals of capitalism and individual liberty? If so, are the ideals of

individual liberty and capitalism by nature opposed to the ideal of justice? Were these ideals ever compatible? If they were, are they any longer, in our modernist, materialist, consumer culture, in our post-globalization world?

In addition, should the spoils of the rich truly be transferred to the poor under the label of justice? The poor can be lazy, can take advantage of welfare programs, can spurn necessities to purchase luxuries, and indeed often do. For example, substance abuse is across the board more common among people who receive welfare as opposed to those who do not.<sup>5</sup> (I do not mean to imply causation in either direction.) In addition, the poor spend very nearly the same percentage of their income as the middle and upper classes on eating out and on entertainment, but spend significantly less on retirement plans and education.<sup>6</sup> The poor can be greedy and vicious just as much as the rich, because they are just as human.

If we are stripping the rich of the right to luxury in order to give to the poor the right to survival, this is certainly just. But if wel-

5. Rukmalie Jayakody et. al. “Substance Abuse and Welfare Reform.” National Poverty Center, Ann Arbor, MI (April 2004). [http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/policy\\_briefs/brief02/](http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/policy_briefs/brief02/), accessed January 24, 2013.

6. Jacob Goldstein and Lam Vo. “How The Poor, The Middle Class And The Rich Spend Their Money.” National Public Radio, Washington D.C. (April 1, 2012). <http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/2012/08/01/157664524/how-the-poor-the-middle-class-and-the-rich-spend-their-money>, accessed January 24, 2013.

fare checks often go to television providers or fast food restaurants rather than college savings funds, have we really made progress towards justice?

Considering the three factors that most affect a U.S. citizen's future—gender, race, and social class—I recall the social and political upheavals that had to take place to advance the rights of women and of racial minorities. A huge price was paid in moving from Seneca Falls to the 19th amendment, and an even greater price from the Quakers' first calls for abolition to the Civil Rights Act. It seems at this point reasonable to expect that a similar price will be paid in the fight for greater equality in the class system of the U.S., and that similar upheavals will be necessary to bring about a change.

Of all these considerations, though, there is one that I would deem by far the most important, and the least often addressed: What, finally, is the goal of these discussions of class? *Why talk about this at all?* With the U.S. Social Security system, with college courses in ethics, with the efforts of countries all over the world to close income gaps, what ends do we have in mind? Most often, it seems we are trying to achieve our capitalist ideal—one in which

upward social mobility is the reality, for anyone of any gender, or race, or social class (or religion, or ethnicity, or geographical region), one in which the only thing that determines someone's fate is his or her merit.

However, I would contend that there is a deeper motivation at the heart of this yearning towards the capitalist ideal. I would contend that, with all our efforts, we have one end in mind: *individual happiness*. For a human to be happy, he or she must be able to survive, and for a human to survive, he or she certainly must have a certain amount of health, wealth, and opportunity. Insofar as class inequality prevents individuals from surviving, class inequality must be fought.

But what if one day we achieve our surface goal—the capitalist ideal—without achieving our deeper goal—individual happiness? Once we reach the state in which everyone has what they need to survive, if we are still unhappy, fighting class inequality will not solve that problem. Once our most basic needs are met, any further health, wealth and opportunity is a materialistic luxury, and *luxury is incapable of bringing happiness*. To find happiness, we will inevitably have to look elsewhere.

# The Beggar Dilemma

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KATIE CRONIN

**Y**OU ARE DRIVING along that main street back home. Your window is down, and music is playing, when you approach a stoplight. On the corner ahead, you see a bum holding a sign reading: “Out of work, anything helps.” What do you do? Do you slow down, anticipating the green light, praying you do not have to stop next to that street corner? Do you avoid eye-contact and try to look busy? Do you panic? Maybe you start thinking to yourself, “Is he for real? No way, I’m not giving money to someone who might spend it on drugs or booze!” Perhaps you are more like a good friend of mine who becomes overwhelmed with sadness and pity. Maybe you didn’t see him at all. Or, perhaps you are the one person that hour, that day, that week who looks him in the eye and offers him a smile. I must be honest and say that I am guilty of all these tactics. Perhaps we need to reexamine our own mindset so that we can begin to look at that man with different eyes.

Here is what we should ask ourselves first about this man: “What put him on that street cor-

ner?” Maybe he was a construction worker who became injured, and he had to quit his job after the sick leave ran out and the medical bills stacked up. Maybe his wife and family left him because he could no longer provide for them. Maybe he lives in his car. Maybe he is an uncle, a brother, a husband, a father. This consideration has made him a human, with real, human problems. Now, he is no different than your uncle who also lost his job, but was lucky and privileged enough to have your parents take him in. While your car and shelter physically separate you from this human being begging on the street corner, it is your privilege that separates your humanity from his. His safety net does not exist.

Now that you realize this, the big question is: Should I give him money? I am going to start by asking who are we to judge what other people spend their money on? That being said, this is a decision that is essentially up to each individual. Here is what I am certain of. First, asking for money is a very difficult and shameful act. It may be one of the most diffi-

cult things I have ever had to do. Second, if a person is willing and desperate enough to beg and give up their dignity, they will use the money where it is most needed in their life.

Of course, money is not the only option. My good friend who pitied and sympathized with the man carries high protein energy

bars in her car. She will give these to beggars and offer her prayer to them. While money and food are nice, it may not be practical for all of us. So, offer a smile, a wave, or a simple "God bless" to the man. Give him the gift of recognizing his humanity. Change your vocabulary. Humanize others and find what is sacred within their spirit.

# Wealthiest Nation, Poorest Health Care

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## *Social Determinants of Health and the Neglect of the Lower Classes*

TYLER TACDERAN

**I**N THE INTERNATIONAL realm of health care, the United States is almost always ranked dead last among other developed nations. Using standards of measures such as infant mortality rates, life expectancy, and the overall prevalence of chronic disease such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, the United States is not performing to its potential. Countries that are half our size and that have a quarter of our budget spend less per capita on a better quality of health care. It is no doubt that health care is a complex and complicated issue; it seems that we are simply doing something wrong. Our health care system is inefficient, poor quality, and socially inequitable.

The current health care debate is generally focused on access and affordability of health care with an emphasis on preventive and primary care. These are definitely worthwhile efforts as it is an important step to extend health care benefits to everyone, but we must

also take a deeper look at the root cause of these problems. Social factors such as education, poverty, and social environment have a much greater impact on health and wellness than an individual's ability to see a doctor. These factors have such a strong influence in determining population health that health disparities based on social class are undeniable. To fix the state of health in our country we must take an upstream approach to address these systems of social injustices.

The phrases "health disparity" and "health inequity" are often used interchangeably, but for the purposes of this paper it is important to keep the two terms distinct. Health disparity refers to the difference in incidence, mortality, and prevalence of illness and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups. It is the gap that separates one group from another. Health inequity refers to how those differenc-

es in population health that can be traced to unequal economic and social conditions. Ultimately these conditions are systemic and avoidable thus being inherently unjust and unfair.

In May 2012, the Spokane Regional Health District published a report entitled “Odds Against Tomorrow: Health Inequities in Spokane County.” Epidemiologist Adrian Dominguez, conducted research to assess health disparities in the Spokane community based on education, income, neighborhood and race. The purpose of this study was to create awareness of the differences in health outcomes within the community and to link poor outcomes to social and economic conditions. Across the board, its findings showed that there are significant differences between the upper and lower classes in Spokane. Using the recent and relevant health statistics in the county, a clear disproportion of health is shown down the social gradient. The poor are at far greater risk for adverse health than the rich. I would like to take the time to share some of the more compelling statistics from this report, which particularly illuminate that these social factors are often out of the control of the individual.

Although money is not the only definition of social status, income is often the first indicator of class. Income seems to have

obvious effects on health because it decides an individual’s access to insurance, education, nutrition, etc. But, for a systemic approach to be effective, we must go beyond the obvious and see how profound the influence can be. For example, as an adult’s income decreases, their likelihood for physical inactivity increase. In Spokane County, “adults whose poverty level is below 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are 2.8 times more likely to be physically inactive compared to those whose poverty level is at or above 400 percent FPL,” and 4.6 more likely in Washington State. In regard to food insecurity it was found that adults below 100 percent FPL are 63 times more likely to skip or cut down the portion of meals because there was not enough money to buy food in Spokane County compared to adults at or above 400 percent FPL. Lower income correlates with obesity and diabetes finding that in Spokane County, adults below the federal poverty level are twice as likely to be obese and 2.2 times as likely to have diabetes (Dominguez, Wenzl, & Wilson, 2012).

Education is yet another factor that determines social class and mobility. Before a person can even start school for themselves, the health of an individual can be affected by the level of education of the parents. In Spokane County, “babies born to mothers who did not

complete high school are 2.5 times more likely to die before their first birthday” compared to babies born to mothers with advanced degrees. Another statistic regarding parental education in Spokane points that “children of parents who did not finish high school are 23.4 times more like to live in poverty than children whose parents received an advanced degree in Spokane County and 31.6 times more likely in Washington state” while the likelihood of poverty decreases to “1.8 if the parent receives a bachelor’s degree in Spokane County and 1.2 in Washington state when compared to children whose parents received an advanced degree.” As an adult’s education level increases, the likelihood of living in poverty significantly decreases. Regardless of access to health care, these two statistics seem particularly damning to the cyclic and systemic nature of poor education and poverty. (Dominguez, Wenzl, & Wilson, 2012).

It is important to remind ourselves that these disproportionate values are not random or arbitrary, but in fact very distinct and somewhat deliberate. Evidence to support this claim rests in statistical analysis of the Spokane neighborhoods. Using data from the last two decades, “Odds Against Tomorrow” sought to see how much location can determine health. In Spokane there is an 18-year gap in

life expectancy between the neighborhood with highest life expectancy, Southgate (84.03 years) and the neighborhood with the lowest life expectancy, downtown’s Riverside neighborhood (66.17 years). Although overall life expectancy in Spokane County has increased over the last two decades, the gap has become only wider between the two groups with little or no change in affluent or destitute neighborhoods. Riverside has the highest overall age-adjusted mortality rate, which is 2.6 times greater than Southgate. Identifying the top ten causes of mortality and matching the top five neighborhoods in Spokane County with the highest mortality rate for each cause revealed that four neighborhoods have a disproportionate burden of higher mortality rates: Riverside, Hillyard, East Central, and Emerson/Garfield. The same four neighborhoods dominated the statistics for highest mortality rates caused by cardiovascular disease, cancers, chronic lower respiratory disease, unintentional injury, diabetes mellitus, suicide, influenza, pneumonia, liver disease and Parkinson’s. Despite being only a few miles apart neighborhoods have large disparities in health based on social class. (Dominguez, Wenzl, & Wilson, 2012).

Where do we go from here? Seeing these significant differences between the top and bottom raises

serious questions on social justice in public health. Medical science has advanced in such a way that our greatest burdens of health have shifted from acute problems to chronic diseases. Overall people are living longer and recovering faster from illness, but the disparities still exist and the gaps have widened. Poor health is typically assigned to personal responsibility, individual behaviors, human nature or genetics, but after looking at the impact of these social factors it is easy to see how much is out of an individual's control. Health inequities are caused by inequities in our society. In the United States we see the burden of health disparities in the lower and middle class. We have come to accept these divisions in our health as an inescapable function of society, but this does not have to be the case.

The health inequities in our country are the expression of a larger symptom of social dysfunction that transcends the issues of wellness. The unfair distribution of health and quality of life calls us to act, not only out of duty to social justice but fiscal responsibility. By reducing these burdens of health inequities we can reduce overall spending on health care. Looking at the disparities in the

underserved Spokane community, we can join a nationwide effort toward health equity. Encouraging the development of local initiatives to address the social determinants of health will have a rippling effect across the country. By addressing the extremes of public health, we will take steps to close the gap and advance the health of the nation.

The institution of class creates societal barriers to equitable health. Class is more than demographic statistics such as income, education, or where you grew up – it is the attitudes and beliefs that you were raised with. Class is the stressors of financial instability, food insecurity, is taught through the ways society views you and how you are taught to view yourself. The physical, social, and psychological environment in the early development of a child governs so much about the health and quality of life of that child that it is difficult to avoid falling into the place in society that class dictates. There is a relationship between how we live our lives and the social environment that we are framed in. Continued deconstruction of class will help explain what allows these inequities to exist. If we continue to ask why and to ask if this is fair and just, we will come closer to resolving these injustices.

#### **Citation**

Dominguez, A., Wenzl, S., & Wilson, L. (2012). Odds Against Tomorrow: Health inequities in Spokane County. Spokane Regional Health District.

# Bill Gates Versus Steve Jobs: A Contrast of Class

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DR. TODD FINKLE

**W**OULDn'T LIFE BE SO simple if all I had to do to become a successful entrepreneur was add a few ingredients to my soul and "Wham-O" out I come Mr. Successful Entrepreneur. But life is not that simple. Little formal research has been done to determine the social class backgrounds of entrepreneurs. While conventional wisdom may appear to support the notion that entrepreneurs come from humble beginnings, anecdotal evidence shows the complete opposite.

In my 20+ years of experience in teaching and performing research in entrepreneurship, I have not found one magic formula that will explain the success for entrepreneurs, including a person's background. What's fascinating is that entrepreneurs can come from all walks of life. They can come from well off backgrounds, poor backgrounds or even grow up as orphans.

Some of the most famous entrepreneurs have come from more privileged backgrounds. Bill Gates, the richest person in

the United States, who co-founded Microsoft with Paul Allen in 1976, came from a wealthy family whose father was William H. Gates, Sr., a prominent attorney. His grandfather was a president of a bank. Internet entrepreneur, Mark Zuckerberg, the co-founder of Facebook came from a financially secure background. His mother is a psychiatrist and his father is a dentist.

Warren Buffett, the second richest man in the world, was one of three children born to Howard and Leila Buffett in the heart of the Midwest in Omaha, Nebraska in 1930 during the Great Depression. Buffett's great grandfather started a grocery store in 1869 in downtown Omaha. Buffett would later go on to work in the grocery store. Entrepreneurship flourished in the Buffett household. Buffett's father owned his own stock brokerage called Buffett-Falk & Company and he sold diamonds on the side to hedge for inflation. Buffett's youth was also influenced by his mother's family who owned their own print

shop. This exposure to entrepreneurship from all of these family members rubbed off on Buffett at a young age.

Other notable entrepreneurs include the co-founders of Google, Sergey Brin and Larry Page. Page and Brin met in 1995 while they were Ph.D. students in computer engineering at Stanford University. Page was from Lansing, Michigan, and was the son of a computer science professor at Michigan State University who specialized in artificial intelligence. Page's mother also taught computer programming at the Michigan State University. Page spent his youth learning about computers and immersed himself into multiple technology journals that his parents read. Page had a very impressive educational background. He attended a Montessori school initially, and then went to a public high school. He later went on to earn a Bachelor of Science Degree (with honors) in computer engineering from the University of Michigan. Page was then accepted to graduate school at Stanford where he met Brin and began his study of website linkages.

Sergey Brin was born in 1973 in Moscow Russia. At age six, Brin and his family, who were Jewish, fled Russia to the United States to escape anti-Semitism. Brin's father is a mathematics professor at the University of Maryland and

his mother is a research scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. Brin attended a Montessori high school and graduated with a degree in computer science and mathematics with honors from the University of Maryland. He then began to study computer science at Stanford University until he dropped out to form Google with Page.

On the other side are entrepreneurs that come from humble beginnings. For example, Dave Thomas, the founder of Wendy's, was an orphan. Gabrielle, "Coco" Chanel, the founder of the Chanel brand, was born to an unmarried couple, who were later married when she was a toddler. Her father was a peddler and mother came from a family of peasants. Her mother died when she was 12 years old. One week later she was abandoned by her father, who left her to be raised by the nuns in an orphanage.

Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple with Steve Wozniak, was orphaned as a baby and adopted. He was adopted by a working class family that had no college degrees. Jobs went to Reed College in Portland, Oregon, but dropped out after one semester. Sam Walton, the founder of Wal-Mart only had an 8th grade education.

Larry Ellison, the founder of Oracle, was born to a 19-year-old

unwed Jewish mother. Ellison's childhood began with a bout of pneumonia at nine months of age, which drove his mother to relinquish custody to her aunt and uncle hoping to provide him with a better upbringing. Ellison was adopted by his great aunt Lillian and her husband Louis Ellison. He did not know that he was adopted until he was 12 and did not meet or reunite with his birth mother until he was 48.

H. Wayne Huizenga is the only business person to create three Fortune 500 companies. Huizenga referred to his childhood as miserable, chaotic, and dangerous as his father's quick temper and mother's emotions led to a volatile combination.

His family had financial troubles, which contributed to a tumultuous family life. As a result, Huizenga became independent and intense at a very young age. Huizenga was extremely hard-working. At age 14, he helped out in the family business while his father was in the hospital. Huizenga also worked at gas stations and drove a truck in high school.

Entrepreneurship is such an exciting area to study. Entrepreneurs tend to be very dynamic people that come from all walks of life. The next time you meet an entrepreneur, take a moment to ask them about their background. You may be surprised!

# A Different Kind of Valentine's Day

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VICTORIA VARYU

**W**HEN I WAS eight years old, my family vacationed across the country to visit my brother who was living in New York City. I remember being immediately dazzled by the bright lights, the colorful billboards and the constant flurry of yellow taxicabs. One morning, as we ventured down the bustling, dirty streets, a homeless man reached out towards me asking for money. Wide-eyed and scared, I felt my daddy pull me closer to him and told the man we had nothing to give. From that day on I started to walk on the other side of the street from homeless people.

Years later, I went on a field trip to a soup kitchen. It was Valentine's Day, and feeding the homeless wasn't exactly how I had pictured spending my sunny afternoon, especially because I was still nervous to be around the homeless. My class left our cozy suburban city and arrived in Seattle at the chipper hour of six a.m. We were divided into two groups and to my dismay, all of my best friends were put into the group

that was to serve women and children. This meant I would be serving the men without anyone to team up with, which made me even more uncomfortable than I already was. I nervously twisted my apron strings as the men entered, taking note of their dirty skin, tattered clothes, and scruffy beards. A pitcher of cranberry juice was thrust in my hand and I was promptly instructed to serve anyone who "looked thirsty." I kept to the outside of the room trying to avoid approaching anyone, but eventually one of the men motioned to me for juice. He was by far the most intimidating of them all, standing at about 6'5" with dark, weathered skin, a deep voice, and a stained bandanna. I approached and shakily poured him some juice, and to my surprise his voice softened and he whispered, "Thank you, angel." Startled by his words, I looked into his dark eyes and immediately felt bad for all of the judgments I had made about him, and all the other men I was serving. Realizing I was staring, I im-

pulsively pulled out the Valentine that I had previously made for my friend and reached my hand out to give it to him. He seemed surprised, but excited, so I smiled at him and walked away feeling a rush of happiness.

After that, I worked hard refilling glass after glass of cranberry juice and laughing with the men who I came to find were genuinely kind people. They were appreciative of my efforts, and that day I realized that my preconceived judgments had been shallow and wrong; these men deserved to be treated equally.

My eyes were opened to my ignorance, and showed me that society gives homeless people a negative image many of them do not deserve. No matter what social, or economic class a person comes from they still deserve to be treated just the same as everyone else.

# Some Thoughts on Class: Many Parts, One Body

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TYLER LAFERRIERE

**T**HE DISCOURSE ON class and the notion of social classes as prime movers of history are recent phenomena, appearing only in the nineteenth century with Marxist philosophies and similar dialectics centered on socialism and the struggles between socioeconomic classes. Though people have long realized a difference between groups of people on the basis of wealth, social standing, ethnic heritage, religion, and gender, the concept of a struggle between these groupings for power and resources over the course of human civilization is relatively novel. Hitherto delineations of people between slaves and free people, nobility and peasantry, and even mercantile and landed aristocracies were accepted as parts of the social structures necessary to the functioning of the body of society. Even during the French Revolution, the lines between socioeconomic classes were unclear as nobles, clergy, and peasantry became separated by the forces of revolution and reaction. Nobles like the Marquis de Lafayette were

integral to the formulation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen while the common citizenry of Marseilles, Lyons, and Toulouse resisted the forces of secular and anticlerical revolution.

Despite the popular discourse over classes based upon money and the hypothesized dynamic of vitriol and oppression between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, between the “one percent” and “ninety-nine percent,” class cannot be limited to mere analysis of resources and economic standing. Each person is a member of varying cultural, ethnic, vocational, and sexual classes. As a male I am part of class; as an American of French, Irish, Norwegian, English, and Spanish descent I am part of multiple classes; as an economics and political science double major I am part of a class. Classes are part of what make individuals unique but also what binds them together. My classification as a member of the Catholic faith links me to over one billion other individuals throughout the world with whom

I might never possess any other form of connection or sympathy. Nationality as an American, even as a hyphenated American should I choose to define myself as such, binds me in patriotic sympathy to over three hundred million other persons. The scientific classification of Homo Sapiens unites the entirety of the human family into one class and one body. Society delineates class by career, loyalty to sports teams, age groups, sexual orientation, province, municipality, and a host of other labels and denotations. Class is an inescapable part of the human experience; it is ingrained in our heuristics as we seek to differentiate ourselves in “the stare of the other” as Jean-Paul Sartre postulated. Yet class unites us in fellow-feeling and allows us to group, to find belonging, and to establish many and varied communities.

Class presents many benefits, yet history demonstrates its ability to oppress not just along economic lines but along the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and gender. Women across many societies were confined to the home for thousands of years and treated as second-class citizens even into modern times. Slavery in the United States swiftly became a race-based system, and even after its fall cultural prejudices and poor forms of scientific analysis were used to keep

African Americans in poverty and subservience in the post-Civil War South. Jews, Armenians, Tutsis, and Albanians were the victims of genocide on the basis of ethnic roots. Homosexuality was considered a psychological disorder in the United States until the 1970s, and sodomy was still criminalized in the United States until the Supreme Court case *Lawrence v. Texas* in the 1990s. Class offers opportunity for solidarity, but this solidarity can in itself pose a danger when an outside group for varying cultural, economic, political, or historical reasons decides to target a particular class of person. Sociology strongly suggests that birth into a particular ethnic, social, or economic class permanently disadvantages a person in many countries. Ethnic minorities in the United States are disproportionately poor, lacking in education, ridden with criminal elements in their respective communities, and underrepresented on the political scene.

With all these issues surrounding class, one must wonder if humankind would benefit from a utopian classless society. However, even in a society supposedly without class, we would find ways to differentiate each other. Ostensibly communist societies such as the Soviet Union and China possess powerful and entrenched political classes. The U.S.S.R. was

governed mostly by ethnic Russians while China is still governed by predominantly Han Chinese. Even in small communitarian utopias, people are differentiated by job or task, varying positions of influence, and in many cases age and gender. Class is an unavoidable byproduct of our natural diversity of appearance, inherited traits, tastes, opinions, and habits. We may struggle against its adverse effects and even try to mitigate its existence, but class will always be with us. Even in theoretically meritocratic societies like the United States, classes exist; some people will always be higher on the social ladder than others if not for money then for expertise, accomplishments, age, or experience.

As a Jesuit institution, the Gonzaga community is exhorted to humanism, and even class, which across the annals of human societies has been used to tyrannize, can be given a humanistic flavor. If we are truly committed to diversity in all its forms, then we will realize class can be something to be embraced, cherished, and celebrated. By belonging to different classes of person with equally diverse instances of cross-cutting cleavages between those classes, we become unique. As St. Paul explains in his epistle to the Corinthians, we are many parts of one body. Inasmuch as

the body requires many specialized parts to function, so too does the human family require a variety of skills, talents, experiences, and interests to function well. If everyone had the same opinion, the same background, and the same witness to the human experience, it is likely we would not survive as a species. Variety allows us to grow on an individual and societal level. Class is merely a realization and description of this variety. That being said, each part of the human family, rich or poor, believer or atheist, black or white, day laborer or college professor, gay or straight, man or woman requires the utmost care, respect, and compassion. Just as the skin bleeds when one scratches off the upper layers of the epidermis, so too does society suffer when any one group in society is undervalued and cast off in disdain.

Although an archaic notion, the concept of the noblesse oblige could be important for a society wishing to respect class yet not succumb to its use as a tool of oppression. In the Medieval era, the landed aristocracy was exhorted by both religious and social pressures to care for the peasant class, protect them in times of war, and provide for them in times of paucity. An established nobility of titles, territories, and castles may no longer be a fact of the present, but this attitude of compassion

toward people of other classes could serve the contemporary world well. This disposition need not be one solely of the rich person's compassion and charity toward the poor. Rather, all people could embrace a noble love for all others, for each class has dignity in its own right. Classes of all types need each other not merely for survival but also to progress and prosper. Like many facets of

the human experience, class is one that can be manipulated for good or ill. It must therefore be the prerogative and responsibility of each member of each class to act with beneficence and forbearance toward all members of all other classes. This is our calling as humanists, as individuals of inherent dignity and worth because of and in spite of class, and as human beings in general.





# Class and Education

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# The Creation of an Academic Underclass

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RICHARD T. MCCLELLAND, PhD.

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY

“The university is a paradise; rivers of knowledge are there.”

Robert Burton, *The anatomy of melancholy* (1621).

THE TRADITIONAL NOTION of an adjunct professor as that of an individual who has a day-job, often professional in character, but who teaches one course “on the side,” usually at some college or university (and occasionally in a professional school) near them. For example, when I was working as an adjunct in the Philosophy Department at Seattle University (1993-1999) the director of the probation service for the state of Washington taught a

course in the Criminal Justice program; a Superior Court judge also taught a course in that program. A former student of mine who eventually went on to complete a law degree, and working full-time in a private law firm in Seattle, was invited to teach a course at the law school of the University of Washington. Finding this experience very positive, and finding himself gifted for such work, he eventually applied for a permanent position at one of the leading law schools in the Midwest, where he is today a Professor of Law. Such adjunctive appointments have been common in American universities since just after the Civil War.<sup>1</sup> In 2000, there were approximately

1. R. Toutkoushian and M. Bellas, “The effects of part-time employment and gender on faculty earnings and satisfaction,” *The Journal of Higher Education* 74 (2003): 172-195. Other articles I have found helpful for this essay are: J. Gappa, “The new faculty majority: Somewhat satisfied but not eligible for tenure,” *New Directions for Institutional Research* 105 (2000): 77-86; M. Martinak et al., “We’re so glad you asked: Maryland adjuncts speak out on their status, needs and opinions,” *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education* 54 (2006): 42-47; R. Fagan-Wilen et al., “The support of adjunct faculty: An academic imperative,” *Social Work Education* 25 (2006): 39-51; P. Frakt and J. Catagenera, “Making adjuncts part of the “family”: One university’s plan to support and reward part-timers,” *AAHE Bulletin* (2000)
- Continued on next page ...

450,000 temporary faculty teaching in the United States, most of them adjuncts. The number and percentage of academic appointments made at the adjunctive level has increased from around 20 percent (of all faculty positions, nationwide) in the early 1970s to a range of 40 percent (in four-year private institutions) to 60 percent (in community colleges), again of all faculty positions nationwide in the respective category of institutions. Upwards of 40 percent of all courses taught to undergraduates in their first two years of college are likely to be taught by adjuncts. This vast expansion of the adjunctive faculty goes well beyond the traditional notion of an adjunct, to encompass what has become a virtual underclass of academic workers. Gonzaga University is no exception to this general trend. Today, GU employs 408 full-time faculty, 376 part-time faculty, of whom 355 are adjuncts.<sup>2</sup> Generally, adjuncts at GU are limited to teaching at most 12 semester hours per year, and thus two three-credit courses per semester. The University has a policy of requiring that 60 percent of all courses be taught by full-time regular faculty, and re-

cent reports suggest that we are just barely adhering to that requirement.

Why call adjuncts an “underclass”? The main reasons are not far to seek. Most adjuncts are paid very poorly for their work (which is in most respects exactly similar to the work done by regular and full-time faculty). At GU most are paid about \$900 to \$1,100 per credit hour, or \$2,700 to \$3,300 per course.<sup>3</sup> By comparison, I as a full-professor of philosophy, and without regard to any other work that I may do, am paid nearly \$16,000 per credit hour. It is true that I also carry on a vigorous research program, but such is not formally required of me. I also advise students, but most adjuncts do so as well (often on an informal basis). I take part in faculty governance, committee work, and the like, where adjuncts do not normally do this kind of work. However, advisement and governance occupy a very small amount of my time and energy. What I am paid for fundamentally, is teaching. As a regular member of the faculty, I also receive a wide range of benefits, including comprehensive medical and den-

1. ... available at: <http://www.aahea.org/aahea/index.php/bulletin> (accessed Feb. 19, 2013). The literature is vast and virtually uncontrollable, though I will later suggest what I take to be urgent new additions to it that the subject requires.

2. These and some other facts about adjuncts at GU are available in the Gonzaga University Factbook 2012, pp. 43-45, which is readily available at the University's website.

3. There are exceptions to this level of pay, some rising to nearly three times as much, but such contracts are few and far between according to my sources.

tal insurance (which can include my spouse and children for very competitive rates), life-insurance, disability insurance, contributions to retirement funds, contributions to Social Security and Medicare. I am also eligible for periodic sabbatical leaves (though these are not granted automatically): one full year in seven and at 75 percent of my salary or one full semester (also in seven years) at 100 percent of salary. Regular faculty also enjoy tuition waivers for their spouses, other partners and children (the total value of which can be very great if you think about four years of tuition at **GU** for every child). Adjuncts at **GU** receive none of these benefits. I have a full measure of employment security, in so far as I cannot be dismissed from my faculty appointment without cause, the continuing presumption of reappointment obtains (tenure), and the University is obliged to keep me fully employed even if there were to be little demand for my services in the classroom.<sup>4</sup> None of these conditions apply to adjuncts.

So, what is it like to an adjunct? I will generalize from my own experience and that reported

to me by others, as well as the social scientific literature, some of which is reported in my opening footnote. If one is fortunate, one teaches regularly. When I was “adjuncting” at Seattle University, I averaged nine sections per academic year (**SU** operates on the quarter system and I taught in all four quarters), though most adjuncts do not have this privilege.<sup>5</sup> Adjuncts normally teach only lower-division undergraduate courses. In my department this means multiple section of Phil 101 and 201. Adjuncts live with a very high level of uncertainty of employment, usually not knowing for sure from one term to the next whether they will have work. Because of the rates of pay are so low, most adjuncts will teach in multiple institutions if they can. (One of my fellow-adjuncts at **SU** taught a full load there and another full load at a community college in the region. I have no idea when he slept.) This often means substantial commuting time and complex juggling of schedules (especially if the institutions in question do not follow the same academic calendar, e.g., one working on the quarter system and another on the early-semester

4. There are exceptions to these expectations, but they would turn on the University declaring financial exigency, which no institution of higher education will do except in the most dire of financial circumstances.

5. There are exceptions to these expectations, but they would turn on the University declaring financial exigency, which no institution of higher education will do except in the most dire of financial circumstances.

system). Low rates of pay, large class sizes, multiple institutional settings, little or no participation in faculty affairs and governance, absence of benefits, employment insecurity, all add up to very high levels of stress. For adjuncts with families, the stress spills over into the families.<sup>6</sup>

Why do universities and colleges do it? Why do they employ so many adjuncts? The main answer is simple: on average, an adjunct costs 20 percent what a regular faculty member costs (taking into account, salary, cost of benefits and other overheads that may apply). Thus, an institution employing hundreds of adjuncts can save very large amounts of money by doing so. For an institution like Gonzaga, this may amount to as much as 15 to 18 million dollars per year. For an annual operating budget in the region of \$250 million, we are thus talking about a savings of 6 to 7 percent of the total annual operating budget. This is quite enough, all by itself, to insure that the university makes its budget year by year. And since we have little or no capacity to borrow to make up budget defi-

cits (occasional, for example, by shortfalls in enrollment), this makes employment of large numbers of adjuncts very attractive from a fiscal point of view. It also allows for greater flexibility in planning the work-load of faculty as a whole, if nearly half of the faculty head-count are adjuncts who can be let go at very short notice or whose level of work can be altered at very short notice and for whom the university has no long-term responsibilities. The combination of cost savings and flexibility is nearly irresistible to academic administrations and their boards of trustees or other governance structures. And, of course, once the institution starts down this road, the impetus to continue such policies mounts every year.

Why do adjuncts do it? Here it is difficult to get much beyond anecdotal evidence, partly because social scientific studies of adjunct satisfaction with their work depends on self-report, for which there are ample confounding variables beyond the control of the investigators (it is rarely in the interests of adjuncts to

6. About 60 percent of all adjuncts are women, for many of whom the added and asymmetrical stresses of child-care can only add to their burdens. The issue of stress is one area that is, I believe, grievously under-explored in the social scientific literature on adjunctive appointments. We know that continuing high levels of stress hormones (such as cortisol) can be very toxic for the human body, and adjuncts live with such levels more or less constantly. For more on stress and its costs see J. Schulkin (Ed.), *Allotaxis, homeostasis and costs of physiological adaptation* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); and cf. B. McEwen, "The neurobiology of stress: From serendipity to clinical relevance," *Brain Research* 886 (2000):

tell investigators what they actually think about their conditions of employment). Most adjuncts I have known do this kind of work (and do it with full conscientiousness) because it is the only work they can find in the academic world. Most adjuncts do not possess PhD's or other terminal degrees, and many do not wish to pursue (or cannot afford to pursue) advanced terminal degrees. Thus, for example, 85 percent of adjuncts employed at GU have non-terminal Master's level degrees, according to the 2012 University Factbook (p. 45). Most adjuncts either do not write for publication or are able to do so only at very minimal levels (not least because they lack time and energy to devote to such work). Most have been unable to secure regular academic employment, either due to being under-qualified (especially relative to the competition) or due to bad luck.<sup>7</sup> This does sometimes mean that adjuncts are less well-qualified for university teaching than are regular faculty members. But it also

means that they must compete for the lowest ranking positions. They do so, in large part, because that is what is available to them. They also do so because they love learning, love teaching, and love being in a university setting.<sup>8</sup>

So, what, if anything, is wrong with this picture? After all, aren't adjuncts fortunate to have any employment in universities and colleges at all? Shouldn't institutions of higher education take advantage of any cost savings they can find? Indeed, do they not have an obligation to take such advantage? Aren't Jesuit universities like Gonzaga simply following the pressures of the market-place by employing large numbers of adjuncts on very institutional-friendly terms? All this may be true, but it is still exploitative and unjust, in my view, for Gonzaga (and other institutions similarly placed) to perpetuate the academic underclass of adjuncts. We, as an institution, do not pay them what they are worth, do not support their professional development, expose them to repeat-

7. Academic employment is very similar to a crap-shoot, in case anyone is wondering. Even for the very well qualified, failure to obtain a regular academic appointment may be due to factors entirely outside of the applicants' knowledge and control. Some highly qualified adjuncts, with PhD's and solid records of past.

8. The issue of whether adjunctive teaching adds to or subtracts from the educational value of their courses for students is vexed. See the discussion in Fagen-Wilen et al. (2006), pp. 42-43 (reference in footnote 1). There is some evidence suggesting that students who take courses from adjuncts are less likely to pursue those subjects further than they would be if the course were taught by regular faculty. There is also some evidence that adjuncts encourage grade-inflation in response to their need for high student-satisfaction with their work.

ed and long-term high levels of stress, do not satisfy their rights to minimal social support by way of benefits, and in general deny them the social status of regular faculty members (such as it may be). That is to say, the institution is humiliating some of its members. And, as Avishai Margalit has argued, a decent society is one whose institutions do not humiliate people.<sup>9</sup> Margalit's requirement is very minimal, and I would argue, is almost maximally minimal for counting as a decent society.<sup>10</sup> It is indecent of us to treat anyone who works as a faculty member in the fashion which is customary for treatment of adjuncts.

There is much talk today at Gonzaga about achieving excellence as an institution of the liberal arts and sciences, to the extent of transforming the university into an elite institution of this type.<sup>11</sup> We can learn a good deal about what is required for such a transformation by looking at the University of Notre Dame, which has actually done this.

Notre Dame started this transformative process in the 1970s, when they raised a very substantial amount of money to add to their endowment, something on the order of 400-600 million dollars. Shrewd management of those funds and ample additions to them have results today in an endowment at Notre Dame of 6.25 billion dollars. The earnings of that endowment have gone far to enable Notre Dame to hire a world-class faculty, to recruit and retain a very high caliber of student body, to build and maintain world-class research and other facilities. The process has taken 30 years or more. Notre Dame is twice the size, roughly, of Gonzaga. If Gonzaga is to become an elite Catholic institution of higher education in the liberal arts and sciences starting in the next ten years, it will need to raise at least 800 million dollars in new endowment capital, and to manage that endowment with similar shrewdness and success, such that by 2050 it amounts to some 3 billion dollars (In current dollars). There

9. A. Margalit, *The Decent Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 1.

Compare the comment in Fagen-Wilen et al. (2006), p. 41: "...the three-fold increase from 1987 to 1994 of adjunct faculty in schools of social work [may be viewed] as somewhat exploitative and inconsistent with social work values."

10. For more advanced levels of decency, most of which belong to human beings by right, in my view, see R. Wilkinson and K. Pickett, *The spirit level: Why greater equality makes societies stronger* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009).

11. President McCulloch called for such a transformation at GU within the next ten years in his address to the faculty on Thursday, August 23, 2012. Ways and means for achieving such a transformation are currently the subject of conversation in the faculty.

is no other way to transform faculty, student-body and facilities to achieve truly elite status. But what about decency? The only realistic solution consistent with the Jesuit emphasis on social justice, it seems to me, is for the institution to commit itself to the long-range

transformation of the status of its adjuncts, by promising a share in the earnings of that burgeoning endowment to enhance adjunctive salaries, benefits and other conditions of employment. Only so will we achieve excellence and also save our institutional souls.

# More than Money: The Cost of a College Education

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EMILY RICE

I CAME TO Gonzaga for much more than an education. Born in the lower middle class with a love for reading that sparked in the second grade and a work ethic that solidified when I was a freshman in high school, I knew that getting out of my small town required me to get more than a degree. I needed to immerse myself into a different culture.

In high school, I read Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. This, coupled with my high school English teacher's many lectures on the differences between lower middle class rural culture and upper middle class urban culture, clued me in that I had a lot to learn.

It was with this in mind that I applied to only private liberal arts colleges, filled out my FAFSA, and applied for all of the scholarships I qualified for. I was accepted to Gonzaga University, which I chose because it was close to home. The route from freshman to senior year was moderately difficult, but as May approaches I am fairly certain that it was worth it.

The *New York Times* printed

an article on February 9, 2013, titled "Battling College Costs, a Paycheck at a Time" that I found interesting. To borrow some of their statistics:

- 17 percent of full-time undergraduates of traditional age work 20 to 34 hours a week
- 6 percent of full-time undergraduates of traditional age work 35+ hours a week
- Students who work fewer than 30 hours a week are 1.4 times more likely to graduate within six years than students who spend more than 30 hours a week in a job
- The average debt among all bachelor's degree recipients from public universities was \$13,600 (2010-2011 school year)
- The average cost of four-year public university during the 2012-2013 school year is \$12,110

Looking at the numbers as a student who has worked between

25 to 35 hours at two (or more) jobs the last three years, I feel excellent about graduating in four years as a double major. But this path has not been an easy one to walk and it has taken an oppressive work load, loans, and at least 18 credits for the last six semesters. It bothers me when others trivialize my work. Representative Virginia Foxx, in the same *New York Times* article, said, "I spent seven years getting my undergraduate degree and didn't borrow a dime of money." This is easily attributed to hard work ethic, the number of years associated with the degree, and straight forward inflation. What is more troubling to me is a quote from Pilar Mendoza, Assistant Professor of higher education administration at the University of Florida. The *New York Times* quotes her: "You have two choices: You either work, or you acquire debt."

This representation of higher education is a class problem, and so is the approach the *New York Times* took to looking at the cost of education. They realize that it is typically lower class students who struggle, but they alienate the problem. For most students from lower income backgrounds the question is not working or acquiring debt, it's how much work can I do, how many loans can I afford to repay and still pass my classes?

I lay the claim that Gonzaga University lives in a bubble, a fiscally stable bubble. Our community culture is reflected through that fiscally stable bubble.

Not everyone here is upper middle class, but enough people are. I went through high school hoping to get into a college that would allow me to lay the paving stones that would make it possible for me to fit into someone else's culture by the time I reached graduate school. However, the same obstacles that made it necessary for me to enroll in a private university to step up my class also made it impossible for me to participate in the dominant culture of our school. I work too much, study too much, and spend too much time with a handful of close friends to participate in community service, parties, and study abroad.

Does this mean I'm not ready to play the games that the middle and upper middle class will demand that I play post-graduation? Hardly.

If nothing else I come out of Gonzaga having fought for every ounce of education that I have gained, and an underdog mentality that makes me want to fight to earn my place in society.

But, I must also keep in mind that I am an incredibly lucky anomaly in the education system. I was raised in a family that

wanted to see my success, and from a young age was told that B's weren't going to be good enough if I wanted to get into college. Although I transferred to a high school with few resources that would have led me to a college education, every teacher I worked with wanted to see my success. I, my work ethic, and my upcoming graduation are a product of the society that I came out of: supportive, happy, success-oriented.

There are consequences to this growth. There is a cost to a college education that transcends monetary transactions. My sister took me aside my freshman year at Gonzaga. She did not congratulate me for my acceptance or my

hard work. She scolded me. She reminded me that no matter how high I go, I never have the right to snub my nose at her or forget where I came from.

Hard as that sounds, she was right. I am a product of my lower middle class environment. If I deny that, I deny all the work I have done to get where I am today. That is neither fair to the people who made it possible for me to get here, or to myself. I may end up in Phoenix or San Diego or even Boston someday, but I will always be a girl from Republic and I have earned the right to be taken seriously as such.

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# Students, Money, and Why You Should Care

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MARJAN CHARNES

**T**HE GONZAGA UNIVERSITY core curriculum distinguishes itself from the academic requirements of other universities in its requirement that students complete at least one course with a social justice designation. Classes that carry this designation often include some sort of service learning project that aims to show students how to apply the skills taught in their classes to work for the greater good. However, this requirement is hardly necessary in order to spur student action to work for social change. At San Jose State University, a small group of students put their heads together to raise the minimum wage in their city. Not unlike many students at Gonzaga, as many as 80 percent of the students at SJSU “work[ed] at least 30 hours a week,” often for minimum wage, which they realized did not come near close to covering their basic needs like rent and food.

Those students decided that the minimum wage should be sufficient enough to provide for a

decent standard of living. There is a distinction between a minimum wage and living wage – a minimum wage is merely a federal or state mandate of the absolute lowest wage that an employer can pay its employees. A living wage, on the other hand, takes the minimum wage a step further in ensuring that the wage paid is sufficient for providing a standard of living that meets the basic needs of the worker. Harvard University notes that “the [federal] minimum wage does not begin to meet the needs of working people or families anywhere in the country; in fact, it puts a parent with one child below the federal poverty line.” This results in the use of government programs as a way to bridge the ever-present gap that exists in the income of a minimum wage worker. Businesses paying their workers the bare minimum are, in effect, depending on the government to cover the income that they refuse to pay.

The students at SJSU believed that working a full-time job

should allot the worker a livable source of income. They worked together to put a ballot initiative up to vote in the 2012 election that would have raised the San Jose minimum wage from eight to ten dollars per hour. In doing so, they “boost[ed] the earnings of tens of thousands of workers by \$4,000 a year.” The students were opposed by the very well-funded Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce, which actively campaigned against their efforts. Nonetheless, the students were ultimately successful, and voters at the ballot box agreed that eight dollars per hour was an insufficient amount for a full-time worker to comfortably subsist.

Many of us, as students, have worked part-time job that have

paid minimum wage or near it. Imagine having to subsist entirely on the minimum wage – now realize that thousands of hard working Americans are forced to do so every single day. Ask yourself if people working full-time deserve to be paid accordingly. Ask yourself if \$7.25 per hour – the current federal minimum wage – would honestly be enough to be self-sufficient and living in a city like Washington, DC or Phoenix, AZ. Before making judgments about things like a minimum wage or what constitutes a living wage, put yourself in the shoes of someone who has no choice but to work for \$7.25 an hour, 40 hours per week. You might just find that you have more in common with those San Jose students than you think.

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# The PSAs Were Right

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KELLIE MALONE

THERE ARE VERY few hit music stations that have not included Foster the People's song "Pumped Up Kicks" in their playlists over the past year. Beneath the catchy chorus lies a sinister subject that has caused much controversy for the band in recent years: it describes a student as he is readying himself to perform a school shooting. Presumably, this is because of "all the *other* kids with the pumped up kicks," that repeats over and over in the chorus (*italics mine*). It is a cry of exclusion, with the speaker separating himself from the "other kids" because he doesn't own the popular shoes that they have, making him of a lower class in the school hierarchy. Now, this message has to be taken with a grain of salt; there is obviously some serious mental instability involved in a situation that would go to such an extreme as killing one's fellow students. However, this song serves as a catalyst to examine similar cases found every day with far less dire and explicit consequences. This topic can be found throughout pop culture, from Macklemore's song "Wing\$," in which the speak-

er thinks he finds acceptance via his Nike Air Jordan shoes, to the comedic movie "Mean Girls," where one caddy group of girls manages to tear their high school apart. These may all seem like pop-culture "duh" statements about including our peers, a sentiment often heard in PSAs and middle school assemblies. However, there are studies that prove the importance of acceptance into these micro-class distinctions in the mental health and well-being of students.

Before the speaker of "Pumped Up Kicks" mentally breaks down, he seems to be a victim of the class distinctions that we, as students, so often create for ourselves. In the micro-societies of our schools, from elementary through college, it seems to be the cliché to classify our fellow peers, and ourselves, as "nerds," "jocks," "popular," etc. Studies have shown that where students fall within these clichés actually holds a lot of weight in regards to the mental stability of students later in life, so they should not be taken so lightly. In the *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, a group of psychologists performed a study of preadolescents and adolescents

from 11 to 14 years of age shows that exclusion from the cliques that form in school put them at high risk for depression later in life. In other words, failing to find acceptance within the accepted classifications set forth by one's peers could spell hardship for the rest of that person's life. The cliché suddenly doesn't seem so lighthearted.

To apply this notion closer to home, it is important to note that there are similar studies done at liberal colleges eerily similar to Gonzaga. In a study done by *Johns Hopkins University Press* entitled, "Social Class and Belonging: Implications for College Adjustment," it notes that, "clearly educational institutions have class- (and gender-, race-, and ability-) based markers that define, implicitly or explicitly, who 'belongs' and who does not." These findings say that the ability for students to adjust to the college experience is based very closely on societal factors. Many of these factors, such as race, gender, and background, cannot be changed. Nonetheless, factors remain that students and schools *can* control and change. This, I feel, is the important fact on which to focus. The same study concludes, "Knowing that [poorer

college outcomes] primary influence may be about belonging...is very useful, because we can change the extent to which institutions of higher education are welcoming and inclusive with respect to social class." This study gives support to the fact that the exclusionary class distinctions we impose on ourselves and our community are not set in stone. On the contrary, there are facets of our college experience that we can control to create a community conducive to positive college outcomes for ourselves and our peers.

It seems to be in our human nature to make sense of the world through classifications. While this may seem a set factor in life, we often forget that it is also in our nature to think critically about the world around us. In that sense, examining the environment we've created in our micro-societies (i.e. schools) through our fairly arbitrary class distinctions offers us all a chance to diminish the alienation so many students feel.

What do you know, the PSA's were right.

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# You Can't Sit with Us

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CATLIN SINCLAIR

“**W**ORK SMARTER, NOT harder,” my high school Algebra II teacher chirped from his perch at the head of the classroom as he pecked away at my superfluous work with an inky red claw. Regardless of accuracy, he encouraged the use of efficient mental strategies; he taught us to think as the crow flies. In math class and on the copious amount of standardized tests students take, thinking pragmatically is an essential technique for academic success. However, thinking in straight lines in social interactions allows people to construct sweeping group classifications. We abbreviate individuals into purely their most salient features supplemented with prejudice, bias, and stereotypes. We condense perceptions of people around us into previously created cognitive categories. It's quick. It's cheap. It's also incredibly demeaning and socially negligent.

As social creatures, humans choose to associate with groups of people with whom they can identify. Loneliness and social rejection cause extensive emotional trauma because much of the for-

mation of the self stems from social interactions (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2005). Also, cooperation activates the brain's reward center (Decety, Jackson, Sommerville, Chaminade, & Meltzoff, 2004). We share a biological and psychological desire to get along with others effectively. Every second, our brains also tackle the Herculean task of sifting through piles of stimuli and picking out the few items that require our immediate attention. Without this ability, we would not be able to successfully respond to or interact with one another.

Nonetheless, we have gotten lazy, and we rely on the capacity to categorize relentlessly. Instead of dealing with solely cognitive tasks, we also classify people where they fit most conveniently within our mental and social frameworks. While we are able to cut down time and steps, our social equations fail to include all the necessary variables. We neglect to include the details. The taxonomy of society we have created seems more like a single yes or no question: Are you like me? Rather than reaching developed

understandings about ourselves, our peers, or our foreign counterparts, we create boundaries and distance ourselves from anything and anyone who does not align with our personal classifications. We draw the straightest dividing lines. Does that please the crowd?

Gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, education, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, height, weight, taste in music, relationship status, type of toothpaste and direction of toilet paper roll. Our boundaries are infinite and somewhat ridiculous. The Fairly OddParents episode “The Same Game” provides a rather astute observation (Hartman & Leichter, 2001). The neighborhood dentist, Dr. Bender, and his son, Wendell, berate Timmy for his imperfect teeth. In order to end the ridicule, Timmy wishes that everyone looked exactly alike, and everyone turns into gray blobs. When he attempts to witness his triumph, the Benders continue to mock Timmy for they are “the grayest of the gray blobs.” As this – somewhat unconventional – source explains, people can pinpoint minute and often irrelevant differences and will continue to do so regardless of any evidence to the contrary. We have the ability to magnify dissimilarities between ourselves and others, thereby assigning them a social value and cementing our

own arbitrary classifications.

Following years of technological advancement, society turns its focus to productivity and globalization. Anything we can do quickly, we love. Anything that we can do quickly with worldwide reach, we love more. For example, communications of the 21st century are instantaneous and broad. We watch live news feeds from developing nations and share our thoughts with all our family and friends as they occur to us. Even with access to this abundance of information, we fail to recognize the commonalities that tie together our sprawling human community. Instead, we draw more lines, build more walls, and distinguish more groups constantly at odds with each other. It is like a childish tape line dividing a bedroom: this is mine, and this is yours. In *The Once and Future King*, soon-to-be King Arthur learns an important lesson about human boundaries and war from a goose: “How can you have boundaries if you fly? Those ants of yours – and the humans to – would have to stop fighting in the end, if they took to the air,” (White, 1958, p. 172). We are too close to the ground, too close to the classifications we create to see how all the groups and divisions could fit together in cooperation. The shortcuts we take lead to inaccurate characterizations of others, and we miss

the opportunity to benefit from cooperation.

As long as we maintain social negligence, we will perpetuate arbitrary social classifications. Efficiency in the social sphere makes us susceptible to oversimplification, cementing stereotypes, and discrimination. Exclusion is im-

mature, and war is childish because they stem from misused cognitive shortcuts. Groups do not do individuals justice. Social interactions should be beautiful in their complexity and variation. Like unique works of art, we should not be able to recreate them.

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BRIAN KOSCIESZA

**I**F THERE IS one thing that has simultaneously lifted up and torn down humanity to great degrees, it is the creation, acceptance, and eventual ubiquitous use of the Internet.

The World Wide Web has done truly remarkable things since Al Gore invented it back in the 90s. It brought us Google, which has brought any piece of information to our fingertips within a few quick clicks of a certain combination of keys on a keyboard. Wikipedia, in one fell swoop, made the *Encyclopedia Britannica* a useless expenditure unless you're decorating a study in a Victorian mansion. Facebook would eventually reconnect old friends from years past, and nearly one billion other people.

The vast power and capabilities of this technology has unlimited potential and, from what I can see, people are continuing to stretch its seemingly nonexistent limitations into unknown and magnificent territory.

However (you knew there was going to be a "however," didn't you?), along with gems, the Internet has brought just as many

stains, particularly in the area of debate and accountability. Internet anonymity produces a certain confident charisma in users; a quick look at YouTube comments will prove that in moments. I clearly recall the day I was catching up on news (another great thing the web provides), and I found myself in a decidedly conservative news website. As a fairly liberal person striving to work in the media some day, I try to follow what the conversations are on each side of the aisle. I found myself on an opinion piece regarding the Boy Scouts and whether or not they will accept gay members. As you imagine, this piece was quite virulently against such inclusion. Out of habit, I commented my own take at the bottom, scanned a few of the comments, and went on about my day.

It wasn't ten minutes before I had a reply. Without going into too much detail, my "dissenting opinion" was worthy cause to label me a "fudge packer," "fag lover," and some more using even greater descriptive language. And it kept coming throughout the day; I kept getting emails inform-

ing me that somebody had commented and called me this name or that name. Now, my point here (before I upset anybody) is not to say that a conservative website offended me, a liberal. Had I done the same on a liberal website, I'd be called a "stupid republican" or any other variation of that kind. The point here is that right now, there is absolutely no Internet accountability. In a few moments, I could create an account with a fake name and a fake email, and start harassing people if I so chose to do so.

Internet anonymity is draining us of class and showing a side of humanity that is truly abhorrent. Casual racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism are absolutely rampant; some, so much so, that they even seep out when folks *aren't* anonymous. If I opened up my Facebook timeline right now, I guarantee I would not have to look hard to find someone using "gay" or "retard" as an insult, whether as a general status update, or flat-out calling someone a name.

We live in a time where the United States is extremely divided. Who wasn't absolutely stunned when Congress actually agreed on bipartisan immigration legislature? I know I was, and I couldn't be the only one considering the last five years of political gridlock we've witnessed as a

country. All I can think of when I consider this environment of "my team vs. your team" is that we're doing it wrong - completely wrong. These days, we don't debate; we tell another person that they're wrong. And, if that fails, we resort to ad hominem attacks. And, of course, if that is also unsuccessful, we correct their grammar and spelling.

Internet anonymity *fosters* this climate. When you are stripped of your identity, you are no longer responsible for what you say and therefore can say absolutely anything with no consequence—in theory at least. A few months ago, YouTube made a switch to using Google accounts as users (since Google acquired YouTube). A result of this was that your actual name appeared instead of an anonymous username. And I noticed that ever since the change happened I have a) commented *much* less on YouTube and b) kept my comments more constructive, less profane, and classy.

Maybe it's a bit of a leap, connecting political gridlock with Internet anonymity. But if, as a society, we could live in an environment of cohesiveness and camaraderie, wouldn't that undoubtedly be reflected in the government we vote into office? Into the beliefs we hold? Or the way we treat others? Habits, as they say, are not born, but learned,

and practice certainly makes perfect. So the next time you post on Gonzaga Confessions or Zag Shamed, just try to remember

that you *are* accountable for what you say, even in anonymity.

In the mean time, stay classy, Gonzaga.

