STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY

1NC STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY SHELL

A. TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

LISTENING TO THE EXPERIENCES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY, ONE GETS A MUCH A MUCH MORE COMPLEX AND CONTRADICTORY DESCIRIPTION OF THE WORLD THAN THE CLEAN AND SIMPLISTIC NARRATIVE OFFERED BY THE AFFIRMATIVE.

CONSIDER VIVIAN'S STORY OF HER EXPERIENCE WITH SOCIAL SERVICES

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I'm a single mom with six children from the age of 18, 10, 9, 8, 2, and 1. I have a full-time job as a Maternal Child Health Advocate. I help fight infant mortality, as an outreach worker. I live in a three- bedroom apartment with just my children.

I was born in Germany. My father was in the service. I have a sister and two brothers, and we came over here to my mother's family when I was 9. I never met her family before that so it was all new to us. We were used to living good even though we had abuse in the family from my father. We still never missed a meal: we still, you know, had a roof over our head.

I have scars on me today from when my father used to beat me bloody. I remember when I was a child, I was looking out the window and I was tapping on the window and all of a sudden something just came across my back and just stung so bad, and I realized that my father had hit me in the back with a belt. And he just kept hitting me and hitting me, and I remember my mother arguing with him and cleaning me off and everything, and then eventually, it was a lot of time passed, but eventually we left him because she was getting broken ribs and black eyes, and I was getting bloody. I don't remember my sisters or anybody else getting hurt in that manner. . . .

I remember my mother dropping us off with her family. There was nothing we were used to but I remember my mom not being my mom like she used to be. Her family didn't treat us very well because they didn't know us. They didn't treat us well. They used to starve us, literally starve us and not wash our clothes. It was nothing we was used to. When I was younger living with my father, we had a maid, you know, and we had poodles overseas, I mean, I had two poodles named Fifi, one black one, one white one. When I came over here it was like hell. Like, you know, my mom dropped us in hell.

It was in the '70s. And we lived everywhere. Where I live today with my kids is the longest place I have ever stayed, and I have stayed there four years. You know, I was always alone. My sister was the favorite, and I was a big girl, chubby, so everybody teased me a lot, nobody really loved me but I was there, you know. But, as

I got older, when I really needed like a mother figure, a woman, you know my mom started working in bars and stuff like that. I don't remember being put under nobody's wing. nobody teaching me anything, how to save money, or you know anything. . . .

I dropped out in the seventh grade. I had trouble because I can't even spell today. It's hard for me to learn, but I can learn, I'm teachable, it's just that it's hard for me to learn.

I wouldn't tell people that I can't do it but they knew it if I was in their class. But nobody stepped up to the plate to say this child needs help. Nobody ever reached out until like recently when I did it for myself.

I dropped out, my mom was really heavy into her drinking, into her friends. She was getting welfare; she

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couldn't buy us clothes; she could hardly feed us. She'd get the food stamps in the beginning of the month, then at the end of the month everything would be gone so there was no money in the house, nobody to help us. My father never wrote us. My grandmother used to say my mother was the black sheep of the family. My mother used to tell us I'm the black sheep; they're not going to help me; they're not going to do nothing for my kids. And then she used to huddle us around and say that we're the five Musketeers and we got to stick together, but it didn't happen like that 'cause she wound up leaving me, 'cause I had dropped out of school and I started hanging out, and you know, I got loose. And I got pregnant when I was 17. And I had my baby at 18 years old. And then when I had my baby, she packed her stuff and she rented her room and left us in there. My first baby and she left me, and I got on drugs then, crack cocaine, and so did my brothers and sister.

It was just us. 'Cause Mommy had left. We didn't have nobody now so we was just doing our thing. We were getting high, when we wanted something to eat we would have to go out there and ask folks to give us money. Then, eventually when I had my son, I was with his father, but then I got tired so I wanted a job, so I went out there and I tried. I was scared because I had no education, you know, I was scared. I was drinking when I first got the job. But I was scared because I didn't know that much, but I went and got a job anyway. My son was about 9 months old and then he got sick and went in the hospital. Somebody had fed him with dirty hands or something and his blood got infected, and they had to keep him in the hospital and then that's how I lost the job. Because I stayed at the hospital with my son. His father was very abusive to me, and, so I had to run, even though I was on drugs, I still ran. And me and my son wound up in the shelter system, and I was still on drugs.

I was receiving the welfare, but I also wanted to go back to school and do everything. But I just didn't know how to do every- thing all by myself because I had this child, I knew I wanted to go to school. I knew everything I had to do but to put everything in perspective was so hard for me to do, you know? So I was on welfare for all them years.

I wound up having two children from this man I met in the shelter. He was very abusive. I wound up leaving him, too, because he didn't want to help me with the babies. I didn't want to live like I was living. We were staying in this little room. He wasn't helping; he would come in the house with drugs instead of Pampers and milk and stuff like that. We would get the welfare checks, but we were on drugs. We were sick. So when I left him I checked myself into a rehab. I just wanted to get away from him; and, I got away and I stayed in the rehab for three months. I have an aunt, my mother's brother's wife. I asked her can she please take the kids 'cause I knew she had six kids of her own and I knew she was responsible. I didn't ask my mom because I knew my mom wasn't going to do it. So my aunt took them and welfare paid her the food stamps and the benefits to take my kids temporarily while I was in the rehab. And I acquired Section 8 before I went in the rehab, and I have been on it ever since. So Section 8 has helped me a lot to get myself stable because, if it didn't, I'd still be living here and there and living with this fool and that fool. I have survival skills, I know how to survive as far as to utilize the agencies in my community, to go here and there for food and stuff like that. But it's a time where you want to grow out of that and. you want the agencies to help build you up. So when I got tired of that I started coming out of my house telling the agencies, "Look, I been on drugs for 12 years, I'm 11 years clean, I have such and such amount of kids, I have no education, I want to go back to school and I want to take care of my children."

I know I gotta work, I know I gotta take care, I know I gotta go to school, that's the first and foremost, I have to get an education because I need an education in order to do a job, but nobody will send me to school. And I took the test, the GED test, and I guessed the whole test, and I missed it by 24 points. And I went back and I said, "I need more help, please could you send me to get more help?" But they kept saying, "It's no help, there's no help for you. there's no help for you."

Social Services is good to help you like when you're in a bind. But that system is there to, how you say, keep

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you in one place and one place only. They say they want to help you but when you throw your opinions, or can you help me do it this way or that way, they go, "No. You either do it our way or there is no way, or you're going to find it outside somewhere else." So that's the attitude I had to find, I had to do their way, but I also had to go out there and find other baskets to put my eggs in, so to speak. You know what I'm saying? And, I'm not saying it didn't help a lot of people, I'm not saying it didn't help me 'cause it did help me when I had nobody, it fed me, it fed my children, but as far as that system, it's not set up right, I don't think. A lot of people that's on it today don't want to be on it, they don't want to be on it. If they had other options, they would try for other options than to deal with Social Service. But life is, everyone has dreams, everyone has goals, if they could find the right resources to help them with their goals, they would deter from Social Service because Social Service, they don't want you to have nothing. You can't have nothing, you can't be nobody on Social Service, but who they want you to be. If they say, "Only thing we going to pay for is nurse's aide," I don't like nurse's aide, I don't feel for nurse's aide, I don't, you know, that's not what I'm feeling, I don't have the interest in nurse's aide. "Well that's the only thing we'll pay for, and that's it. If you don't want to be a nurse's aide, you going to find help somewhere else." And that shouldn't be so. They do that because they know you need the help. They know you need the help.

They're making you go to work, okay, for the benefits. I mean they don't give you time to get on your feet. As soon as they know you got a job, they just snatch the rug from out of you, and you have to learn how to adjust. Once they find out you get a job, you have to learn the hard way how to start over and do without these services because you have a job now, so now you gotta learn how to do without Social Service.

I never had anything, believe me when I tell you, I never had anything. I always shop at Thrift Stores and always had to go to churches to get clothes. And, so when I got a job it was a good thing. Now I can keep laundry detergent in the house. Now I don't have to go to bus terminals and get tissue and beg for this and beg for that. So, I had a job, so I had to leave, 'cause I got pregnant again. I was going into pre-eclampsia and I couldn't work. So they fired me, I went through the union and everything to keep my job, but they was like, "We only take hard labor." If you can't do the hard labor, then they wanted me to resign. I didn't want to resign, I wanted to keep my job. But they fired me anyway, right? So I went on and had my baby. So I wasn't working. And I would pay the bills in the beginning of the month and we would get the little food stamps, and then at the end of the month I'd be broke.

We had Medicaid. Medicaid is excellent. We are still getting Medicaid. I had to buy Pampers and stuff like that, so at the end of the month I'd be, at the end of the week or the two weeks, I'd be broke. So I kept going to this program. And there's this director, and I would express my needs to her and she would always try to find me a job and try to do this and try to do that. Just like everybody else used to do, but hers was more like cradling. She would say, "Vivian, if you need anything, you get in contact with me."

Now I never had that in all the days that I've been through. I never had what she gave me. So I would go in there and I'd tell her I don't have no soap powder, no tissue and she would say, "Write out what you use, brand name, everything." And I go, she is different, because anybody else would say, we don't help with tissue, we don't help with soap. And I didn't want to be on welfare, I wanted me a job, I wanted to go back to school and I wanted to know how to raise my children, okay?

And Dr. Clark got me this job. I had been with the program for about 2 years. I've done so many things. She took me to Texas to the Children's Defense Fund. And last summer she said, "Listen Vivian, I think I got a job for you," that's how she talked, and she said, "Are you ready to come to work?" And then she told me to come on in to fill out this paperwork, and I've been there ever since. What I help women with today, is what I went through in the past. I don't treat them like they used to treat me. I have empathy for these women, I mean they

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come in they're hungry, or if they tell me they're hungry I will take a dollar out of my pocket and I will feed them because I know how I used to get treated. I have walked out of my house so determined so many days to get help for myself and to come home feeling worse than I felt. I have contemplated suicide, going out trying to get help for myself and going back home to the empty house. Until I met Dr. Clark. Today I'm a different person. I utilize everything. I'm not on welfare today, but I still have my Section 8 program in place. I still have my mental health service. I get Child Health Plus for my children. I still use my Family Services program for my children for their camp needs and everything. I'm not saying all agencies are bad, it's just sometimes the people that they put in there. They don't have sensitivity to people, so to speak, 'cause they never know where people are coming from and where they're trying to get to. It's not only Social Services; it's other agencies.

Right now I get up at 6 o'clock in the morning and I get the kids dressed, I get 'em fed and I get them out to day care by 8:30. I'm at work by 9 o'clock. I work from 9 to 5, and I come home. The kids come home from day care and the other two are at the Boys & Girls Club. I sometimes pick 'em up, but then I come home, I cook, I clean, I make them take showers and I help them with their homework and I make sure we get ready for tomorrow. And this is 5 days a week. If I have to take care of any business, I have to do that on my lunch break 'cause after I get off from work there's no more time. But the job is telling me that I have to get my GED but I need the work, so I'm trying to squeeze in school. I'm not going to say I'm gonna be back where I was, 'cause I'm never going back, 'cause I been out here, you know, for a while, I know I'm going to be struggling on how I'm going to take care of my kids, but I'm focusing more on my GED so I can go to college so I can get a better job to take care of my kids. That's my goal. And my day is very hectic. I try to clean on the weekends as much as I can, even during the day, but I don't get to bed 'til about 10:30 and then when I get to bed I be so tired, then the day come again, and then I'm starting over again. And nobody takes the kids, I have them, well, they go to school and everything, but when I come home it's like starting all over again. I'm trying to go to school if I can get help with my kids at night. And the day at my job is full because I'm helping other families and children.

I'm a Maternal Child Health Advocate. I'm trying to help other people find resources to help them in their lives. And I hate sending them to Social Services because I know Social Services sometimes doesn't help them.

I'm not going to say Social Services is wrong. It's just that they have a system to judge everybody the same way. And you can't fault them for that because they want to keep their guards up, you know, 'cause even the way they are now, the strict policy they have now, people still do fraud, you know. But I'm just saying, people have came from different lives, different lifestyles, everybody's not the same, a lot of people do want a lot of good things in life. They just need support, like me.

I have dreams for myself, I want my GED, I want to go to college, I want a good job, I dream of being a radiologist technician. And I want my children to go to college, I want us a home where I can grow roots and never move again. And I just want to live a comfortable life. I'm tired of being scared that I'm not going to make it, that I'm not going to be able to take care of my kids. I want to learn, once I learn my education, it's something nobody's going to ever take away from me. Just like the street education, nobody be able to take that away from me. So I know if I get that academically, it's something nobody could take away from me and my kids.

1NC STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY SHELL

LIKE THE POLICY ELITES THEY IMAGINE THEMSELVES TO BE, THE AFFIRMATIVE PREFERS AN EPISTEMOLOGY THAT RELIES ON TOP-DOWN, BUERACRATIC, AND MANAGERIAL APPROACHS TO POVERTY RATHER THAN A REFELCTION ON THE POSITION AND EXPERIENCES OF THOSE WHOSE LIVES WE DEBATE. WHILE WE DO NOT DENY THE AFF'S GOOD INTENTIONS, THEIR POSITION CROWDS OUT MORE EFFECTIVE WAYS OF ENCOUNTERING THE TOPIC AND ULTIMATELY PROVIDES THE RATIONALE FOR THE CONTINUED EXCLUSION OF PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY.

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, 19**95** (STANDFORD, WORKS OF WELFARE, P 38-40)

Research that focuses specifically on welfare policy is often inattentive to the questions of perspective, position, and discourse (PPD).1 Optical (perspective), field (position), and textual (discourse) metaphors all point to different moments in the process of knowledge construction. Each alone is insufficient for fully accounting how epistemic authority is achieved, yet together they constitute an important set of concerns for interrogating the politics of knowledge claims. Disavowing universality is a critical move necessary to highlighting the constitutive practices of knowledge construction. Recognizing the indispensable role of PPD, however, need not invalidate the work in question; instead, it can enhance the critical distance needed to justify the study of political economy from selected perspectives, certain positions, and particular discourses.2

Making perspective explicit involves confronting the possibility that much of welfare policy research is written from a top-down position and in a managerial discourse that assumes a particular point of view: an imagined policy maker/manager charged with the responsibility of containing the problems of welfare so that they do not become serious impediments to the smooth functioning of the overall system or society.3 Interrogating the PPD in welfare policy research from alternative perspectives/positions/ discourses opens up the possibility for research that accounts for the indignities of those who must experience the welfare system as it is currently constituted. **Neglected topics, alternative interpretations, and revisionist assessments emerge once the dominant PPD and its alternatives are articulated.**

It is important to stress that although the PPD of welfare policy research is most often expressed in statistical terms, providing an alternative political economy for welfare does not necessarily imply the need to limit research to qualitative narratives that relate the subjectivity of those on the bottom.4 Nor does it necessarily suggest that the goal of such ethnographic work should be the reporting of the unadulterated experiences of individuals in some allegedly pure form that can claim the "authority of experi¬ence."5 Interrogating PPD in any political-economic analysis is no less necessary for qualitative than for quantitative research. Research that critiques PPD grounds itself not in what is most objectively factual or what is most subjectively authentic, but in what is most informative in addressing the impediments to achieving political change. I want to suggest that interrogating the dominant PPD allows for what I call "inverting political economy" so as to narrate alternative understandings of political-economic arrangements.

It may be that policy analysts have overdone their commitment to "speak truth to power."6 As Charles Lindblom has suggested, policy analysts operating in the dominant mode have seen fit to take policy functionaries as their primary clients.7 **Most policy analytic work is done for those in power and involved in the managing of public problems rather than for those challenging power and confronting these problems in their everyday lives.** This sort of top-down perspective induces what Lindblom calls a "professional impairment" that prevents social scientists from being able to probe social problems and ameliorate them to the satisfaction of ordinary citizens.

The need for a bottom-up perspective for analyzing social problems usually implies two other moves.8 First, the bottom-up approach is usually meant to imply an attempt to understand the subject matter in terms of the subjective experience of those being studied. This move suggests the need to articulate a particular point of view while rejecting the top-down pretense of achieving objective understanding. The bottom-up perspective suggests the situatedness of all knowledge. Second, the bottom-up approach registers the need to get at the qualitative dimensions of the subject matter. Experience, not easily reducible to statistical representation, needs to be narrated, and often in the vocabulary of those being studied, if it is to be captured more faithfully. Yet, as the typology illustrated in Figure 3.1 suggests, it is possible to imagine at least four variants of research: top-down-quantitative and bottom-up-qualitative as the more common pair and top-down-qualitative and bottom-up-quantitative as the less frequently invoked strategies. All four are logical possibilities that encourage the rethinking of issues of PPD. >>>

AND, THE AFFIRMATIVE REFLECTS THIS MANAGERIAL APPROACH IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

<INSERT SPECIFIC LINK STORY>

1NC STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY SHELL

B. SO WHAT?

FIRST, THE AFFIRMATIVE DOES NOT SOLVE.

THE WAY WE SPEAK ABOUT POVERTY DICTATES THE POLICIES WE CONSTRUCT AND THE WAY THEY ARE IMPLEMENTED. UNLESS THE EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE IN POVERTY BEGIN TO PLAY A FUNDAMENTAL ROLE IN POLICY CONSTRUCTION – MANAGERIAL AND TOP-DOWN CONCERNS WILL CONTINUE TO FRAME THE DEBATE

RUSSELL-MORRIS, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, **2009** (BRIANNE, THE LOGIC OF WELFARE REFORM: AN ANALYSIS OF THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK OPPORTUNITY RECONCILIATION ACT OF 1996)

Discourse and policy go hand in hand, and so both must change in order for inequalities and thus poverty to be truly addressed. A change in poverty discourse must precede a change in antipoverty policy. New social welfare policy should be based in a discourse that promotes an understanding that inequality and poverty are entangled. The welfare state must change fundamentally in order to address and to dismantle the sources of structural inequalities, such as neoliberal capitalism and patriarchal gender relations, rather than the individual outcomes of those inequalities. Both Schram (1995) and O'Connor (2001) call for a need to view discourse and structure as connected. In other words, we must focus on how policy and the language that is used to discuss and create that policy reinforce each other, and only then can we begin to move beyond such a limited discourse. O'Connor argues that **poverty researchers** must work **independently of the State** so that they "generate a genuinely independent and critical body of knowledge that **aims to set rather than follow the agenda for policy debate"** (2001:293). If poverty knowledge is understood as part of larger cultural dynamics and their resulting economic, political, and social inequalities, poverty as a social problem is "de-pauperized" **and will be taken seriously as a problem with structural, not behavioral, roots**. Institutions, and not only the individual-level consequences of those institutions, would come under scrutiny and would be targeted for change (O'Connor 2001).

1NC STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY SHELL

AND, THE REFUSAL TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE LIVED EXPERIENCES IS ITSELF A KIND OF PSYCHIC GENOCIDE. THIS VIOLENCE ERASES SUBJECTS OF THE VERY KERNELS THAT MAKE LIFE MEANINGFUL AND ESTABLISHES THE CONDITIONS FOR OTHER EXAMPLES OF VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION.

HOOKS, TY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK, PROFESSOR, THEN DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, 1995–2004; BEREA COLLEGE, BEREA, KY, DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR-IN-RESIDENCE, BEGINNING 2004. CO-FOUNDER, HAMBONE LITERARY MAGAZINE. **2000** [BELL, WHERE WE STAND: CLASS MATTERS, P. 129-130]

The poor may be with us always. **Yet this does not mean that the poor cannot live well** cannot find contentment and fulfillment. Clearly when individuals lack food, .water, shelter, these immediate needs are more pressing and should be met. But satisfying needs of the spirit are just as essential for survival as are material needs. A poor person who has hope that their life will change, that they 'can live a good life despite material hardship, will be a productive citizen capable of working to create the condition where poverty is no longer the norm. **Without a fundamental core belief that we are always, more than our material possessions, we doom the poor to a life of meaningless struggle**. **This is a form of psychic genocide**. To honor the lives of the poor, we need to resist such thinking. **We need to challenge psychic assaults on the poor with the same zeal deployed to resist material exploitation**.

Solidarity with the poor is not the same as empathy. Many people feel sorry for the poor or identify with their suffering yet do nothing to alleviate it. All too often people of privilege engage in forms of spiritual materialism where they seek recognition of their goodness by helping the poor. And they proceed in the efforts without changing their contempt and hatred of poverty**. Genuine solidarity with the poor is rooted in the recognition that interdependency sustains the life of the planet.** That includes the recognition that the fate of the poor both locally and globally will to a grave extent determine the quality of life for those who are lucky enough to have class privilege. Repudiating exploitation by word and deed is a gesture of solidarity with the poor.

AlL over the world, folks survive without material plenty as long as their basic necessities are met. **However, when the poor and indigent are deprived of all emotional nurturance, they cannot lead meaningful lives even if their minimal material needs are met.** Visionary thinkers and leaders who are poor must be at the forefront of a mass-based movement to restore to the poor their right to meaningful lives despite economic hardship. **Real life examples and testimony will serve as the primary examples that poverty need not mean dehumanization. We need to bear witness**. Those of us who are affluent, in solidarity with the underprivileged, bear witness by sharing resources, by helping to develop strategies for self-actualization that strengthen the self-esteem of the poor. We need concrete strategies and programs that address material needs in daily life as well as needs of the spirit.

1NC STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY SHELL

C. SO, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

VOTE NEGATIVE TO DECONSTRUCT THE MANAGERIAL APPROACH DEPLOYED BY THE AFFIRMATIVE IN ORDER TO CULTIVATE A NEW EPISTEMOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH PEOPLE IN POVERTY. THIS METHOD IS MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE WITH POLICY-MAKING METHODS AND CAN DESTABLIZE THE DISCOURSES THAT INFORM THE 1AC.

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, **1995** (STANDFORD, WORKS OF WELFARE P. XXX)

Articulating alliances and building coalitions involve taking structures, even if they are discursively constituted, seriously. A politically directed social science of poverty therefore necessarily interrogates prevailing discourse, but treats it as structure firmly enmeshed in the reproduction of daily life of researchers and citizens alike. Another false dichotomy that finds its legitimation in a pragmatic orientation geared for achieving political efficacy, "discursive/material," like its cousin "symbolic/substantive," has its uses.

Not so much rejecting as deconstructing positivistic approaches to policy analysis, postmodern policy analysis involves highlighting how policy analytic work is implicated in its own representations of reality Postmodern policy analysis is therefore not so much "antipositivistic" as it is "postpositivistic." A postpositivistic orientation to policy analysis rejects the artifi cial distinctions that have plagued policy analysis, such as between theo- retical and empirical, objective and subjective, interpretive and scientific work. It recognizes that the "assumptions which provide epistemological warrant for empirical policy analysis are highly contentious" and that "empirical policy analysis masks ... the valuative dimensions of its own technical discourse."34 From this perspective, **policy analysis is at best insufficient and at worst seriously misleading if it fails to examine the presuppositional basis for what are taken to be "the facts" of any policy**. As an alternative, postmodern analysis examines how policy is itself constitutive of the reality against which it is directed. Postmodern policy analysis, therefore, may be defined as those approaches to examining policy that emphasize how the initiation, contestation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation of any policy are shaped in good part by the discursive, narrative, symbolic, and other socially constructed practices that structure our understanding of that policy, the ostensible problems to be attacked, the methods of treatment, the criteria for success, and so on.

1NC STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY SHELL

THE NEGATIVE'S METHOD OFFERS A BETTER WAY OF APPROACHING THE TOPIC. IT CULTIVATES COMMUNITES DEFINED BY CARE, NOT GOVERNMENT INTERESTS, AND LIBERATION NOT

RIMSTEAD, B.A. AT YORK UNIVERSITY, M.A. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, PH.D. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, **2001**, [ROXANNE, REMNANTS OF NATION ON POVERTY NARRATIVES BY WOMEN, PG. 1-6]

<<<There is a struggle over meaning between the poor and the non-poor that actually costs lives. The poor live shorter lives, are victims of more violence, die more frequently in childbirth and from disease, and are more likely to freeze to death on air vents in our cities or die in mine tragedies and other work-related accidents than the non-poor. As David Adams Richards has said in his book by this title, the poor live 'lives of short duration.' Less dramatically, however, the poor are also subject to cultural exclusion in a variety of everyday situations, ranging from not being able to afford access to the technological revolution, bank credit, and housing to not being able to thrive in school because of hunger, stigma, or lack of trust in the system. In Paulo Freire's words, the poor are subject to 'cultural invasion' by the meaning systems of the non-poor and must thus find a way to value their own thoughts about the world. In Knowing the Poor, Bryan Green has argued that sociologists must become better readers **of poverty by learning to resist the covert way government reports construct the reality of the poor in the interests of the non-poor**, the way these reports captivate readers in a content that appears innocent while actually achieving closure over lived reality, and the way these accounts of poverty impose documented reality upon situated reality. Green urges that we develop more emancipatory ways of reading poverty in order to resist setting up the official inquiry and the government document as the ultimate way of knowing the poor. As readers and teachers of literature, **we are part of this struggle over meaning** that marginalizes the poor in concrete as well as symbolic ways or liberates them to think oppositionally about their place in society. Since literature has traditionally been the field where individual and collective subjectivities are valorized**, we help define the poor when we read or fail to read their voices**. Likewise, when we fail to question stereotypes, dominant discourse, and textual conventions of portraying the poor, we may be complicit in the symbolic violence that normalizes the exclusion of the poor in market society. **Reading oppositionally means prying open both dominant and subversive representations of poverty in literary works and in everyday, popular discourses.**

It means recovering previously silenced voices. In this book, I propose to do so by creating a new category of analysis called 'poverty narratives,' a category which includes stories both by and about the poor. In a postreferential age, however, poverty narratives cannot be read as transparent windows onto the experiences and the feelings of the poor. Instead, they should be read as cultural sites where identities are constructed and negotiated rather than merely reflected, cultural sites of struggle between hegemonic and counter-cultural discourses, yet sites where more than discourse is at stake. This book is as much about the 'poverty of theory' to explain the complexity of everyday experiences, especially among muted subjects, as it is about theories of poverty and representation. Although I draw on numerous theories of poverty the better to understand poor subjects and how they appear in narrative forms and discourses, I am very much aware that no one overarching theory of poverty can make all poverty narratives coherent - not Marxist, Weberian, psychological, discursive, or cultural theory. Consequently, this book does not offer or adhere to one governing theory of exploitation or resistance or one methodology of decoding the ideology behind the images. Instead, these readings theorize the need to hold back from generalizing and to draw on many sources of knowledge, both academic and non-academic, to avoid imposing yet another top-down analytical structure on the poor. We can disturb the taken-for-granted notion that poor subjects are constituted of despair and silence and an impossible site for radical knowledge by making room for more detailed testimonies and more resistant ideologies, by considering the identities of poor subjects in relation to nation, gender, and class, and by making poverty central rather than a backdrop to our interpretation of textual culture. Instead of throwing up our hands and concluding that the subaltern cannot speak, cultural critics should allow the possibility that poor subjects have special knowledge and can and do speak as cultural subjects in ways that academic criticism has somehow been overlooking or devaluing. Stuart Hall has depicted the possibility that radical knowledge circulates actively but beyond academic grasp as the keeping of a secret: 'It is as if the masses have kept a secret to themselves while the intellectuals keep running around in circles trying to make out what it is, what is going on' (140). I do not propose to uncover the secret to resistance against poverty; but, in detailed, textured readings that refuse to overgeneralize about poor subjects or to naturalize oppression, I believe we can uncover many small secrets about subjectivity and everyday struggle as adaptive and resilient steps towards resistance or as self-defeating steps towards consent and domination. If there is one main secret to be uncovered in this process, it is surely not a monolithic identity for the poor or one theory of resistance, but the relational, social logic, the web of meanings that bind the poor and the non-poor. Poverty exists in relation to affluence. When a society and its national dream admire

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the rich because they acquire wealth and power that allows them to stand outside the community by virtue of elite schools, restaurants, and estates, the same community must denounce the other polarity, those who do not succeed in the national dream and are therefore denied access to education, nourishment, and housing by the same logic of meritocracy. As John Kenneth Galbraith wrote in The Affluent Society: 'People are poverty stricken when their income, even if adequate for survival, falls radically behind that of the community. Then they cannot have what the larger community regards as the minimum necessary for decency; and they cannot wholly escape, therefore, the judgment of the larger community that they are indecent. They are degraded for, in the literal sense, they live outside the grades or categories which the community regards as acceptable' (245). Perceptions and self-perceptions are shaped by the social need to cloak these polarities, this rift within a wealthy nation like Canada, and make differences in access to goods and to culture appear natural, or not at all. Although affluent societies have transformed the poor from a majority to a minority of the population (245), hence reducing their visibility and worth even further in respect to the larger community, Galbraith notes that '[w]e ignore it [poverty] because we share with all societies at all times the capacity for not seeing what we do not wish to see. Anciently this has enabled the nobleman to enjoy his dinner while remaining oblivious to the beggars around his door. In our own day, it enables us to travel in comfort by Harlem and into the lush precincts of midtown Manhattan' (252). The social practice of discursive marginalization and symbolic violence, blaming, naming, or erasing the poor, constructs them as inherently inferior and thus naturally outside of community, the state, the nation, and even cultural representation itself. An oppositional role in this struggle over meaning is to bring more poverty narratives into view and to ask questions which will reveal what is at stake when dominant images fix the subject in this way.>>>

STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY—LINKS

THESIS: STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY

BY BEING ATTENTIVE TO THE DOMINANT CLASS AND THEIR OWN, POOR PEOPLE HAVE A UNIQUE STANDPOINT WHEN IT COMES TO ADDRESSING THEIR NEEDS. WE ARE OBLIGATED TO STUDY, LISTEN, AND LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER TO REACH FAR BETTER CONCLUSIONS THAN WE WOULD ON OUR OWN.

SWIGONSKI, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, **1994** [MARY E., THE LOGIC OF FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH. SOCIAL WORK. V. 39 ISSUE 4. EBSCO]

<<<A standpoint is a position in society, involving a level of awareness about an individual's social location, from which certain features of reality come into prominence and from which others are obscured. Standpoint theory begins with the idea that the less powerful members of society experience a different reality as a consequence of their oppression. To survive, subordinate people must be attentive to the perspective of the dominant class as well as their own. As a result they have the potential for "double vision" or double consciousness--a knowledge of, awareness of, and sensitivity to both the dominant worldview of society and their own perspective. As a result, members of subordinate groups have the potential for a more complete view of social reality. This more complete perception should not be taken as in any way negating the serious and debilitating consequences of oppressions. On the contrary, members of oppressed groups must develop this more complete view as a survival skill to cope with oppression.

Feminist standpoint theory is rooted in the Marxian analysis of the conditions of the working class (Harding, 1991; Hartsock, 1983). Feminist standpoint references to women have been expanded in this article to encompass social work's more inclusive commitment to the empowerment of all oppressed groups. In feminist analysis the appropriate standpoint is that of women; in social work analysis the appropriate standpoint is that of the more general "other," of oppressed and disadvantaged populations: people of color, women, gay men and lesbians, children, poor people, elderly people, and differently abled individuals. This extension is consistent with feminist bell hooks's (1984,1989) analysis of the interlocking nature of all oppressions and her assertion that it is futile to argue about which oppression is primary. She argued that it is more fruitful to determine the links among oppressive systems and to understand their interactions.

What does this have to do with science or epistemology? Harding (1991) explained that epistemology (the theory of knowledge) is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge and with claims to knowledge and the logic of those claims. Standpoint theory, as an epistemology, states that less partial and distorted understandings of nature and social relations will result from research that begins from the standpoint of particular marginalized groups of human beings. Research grounded in standpoint theory strengthens the objectivity of understanding by refusing loyalty to the Western "native's" view of life and thought. It asserts that not just opinions but also a culture's best beliefs--what it calls knowledge--are socially situated (Harding, 1991). Standpoint theory offers an explanation of how research directed by social values and political agendas can produce empirically and theoretically preferable results.

Standpoint theory offers a less partial and distorted approach to understanding the nature and scope of knowledge to support social work's understanding of clients and practice. It recognizes that there are no perfect or universal answers (or a questions). But, even in the face of these constraints, we must nonetheless struggle to understand, to ask our questions, and to listen to each other.>>>

LINK: POLICYMAKING

WELFARE POLICY REFLECTS GOVERNMENTAL AND MARKET INTERESTS USING THE AGENDA OF THE STATE TO SUBJECTIVELY ANALYZE INFORMATION AND ACCORDINGLY FORM COUNTERPRODUCTIVE POLICIES

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, **1995** (SANFORD, WORDS OF WELFARE, P 4-5)

<<<Policy analysts now serve a highly constrained and expedient status quo. If problems have solutions requiring a challenge to entrenched interests and significant new resources, they will reach the decision agenda only in symbolic form. Policy analysts have become **the technicians of political compromise**— Thus many policy analysts have been coopted into the symbolic treatment of poverty by the sponsors and clients of their work.3

In what follows, I demonstrate the politically questionable character of the connection between welfare policy research and welfare policy making. Contemporary welfare policy research is created by the government and has come to be written in a discourse that reinforces state interests about how to understand "the poor." The structural connection has been reproduced in the discursive practices of welfare policy researchers. Reports on welfare policy research are written in an economistic-therapeutic-managerial discourse (ETM) that imputes to the poor the identity of self-interested, utility-maximizing individuals who need to be given the right incentives so that they will change their behavior and enable the state to manage better the problems of poverty and welfare dependency.4 This discourse concentrates almost exclusively on disembodied information on individual behavior as the primary way to isolate the causes of poverty and develop solutions.5

Welfare policy researchers often frame research and interpret data in ways that do not account for these biases. Examination of bias is most often limited to technical matters regarding rational models of behavior and decision making.6 Left unexamined are how the external contextual values of society as well as the internal constitutive values of the discipline together work to undermine the field's autonomy and bias its efforts.7 And because such research is often written in the objectivistic language of science, it is open to appropriation by others. Welfare policy research masquerades as neutral and autonomous data-confirmed knowledge, only to remain impotent when appropriated. Welfare policy research, like research in other disciplines, fails to conform to the myth of autonomous science. Prominent examples from the field offer reasons for challenging how ETM undermines the political autonomy of welfare policy research and reinforces its subordination to the late-modern welfare state.

The late-modern welfare state is the primary repository for the disciplinary practices of the modern age. Modernity is an age ordered according to social norms and institutions that are derived from a particular dilemma: the emancipation of the individual from tradition and other forms of conventional authority re-creates pressures for community.8 Modernity's most influential thinkers have turned again and again to questions of the self as a site for resolving this dilemma, generating a preoccupation with promoting a self-regulating self—that is, an autonomous, rational, self-sufficient self who can be counted on to use her or his freedom to conform to the imperatives of society and contribute to its overall well-being.9 Under these conditions, the state becomes preoccupied with what Michel Foucault calls the problem of governmentality—that is, with coordinating social exchanges among selves constituted so as to ensure the stability of the order.

Conformity to the ideal of a self-regulating self is contingent upon access to the means of realizing standards of individual competence implied in such an ideal. Yet, in late-modern deindustrializing America, the inability to conform and the pressure to do so intensify simultaneously, complicating the politics of the welfare state.1" The politics of late-modernity are in no small part preoccupied with this postindustrial variant of modernity's initial dilemma. Given that this is a market-centered society—where value is preeminently market value, and where worth, including self-worth, is most significantly determined in economic terms — pressures build to prove that one is not just autonomous and rational but also economically self-sufficient and productive.11 The politics of late-modernity are therefore centrally concerned

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with **evaluating which selves qualify as valuable** members of the economic order and what the state should do in response. Welfare politics is therefore a paradigmatic politics of the late-modern state.

The late-modern welfare state can be said to be a set of managerial practices designed to reform poor persons therapeutically so that they will respond to the right economic incentives.[12] **Welfare policy research in the dominant mode, not surprisingly, is fashioned out of a discourse tied to the needs of that state.** Much of welfare policy research employs econometric analysis to inform those with policy-making and managerial responsibilities about **how to change poor people's to make it behavior to make it more economically productive.**[13] This field has sought to promote an ostensibly autonomous and objective social science that can "speak truth to power" on matters regarding poverty and welfare. Yet **the ability of researchers working in this mode to influence policy is very much contingent upon the extent to which their work is consonant with the prevailing assumptions among state actors about welfare and poverty.**

Liberals and conservatives continue to debate "welfare dependency," but noticeably without attention to their shared discursive practices.[14] Yet it is these discursive practices that hold much of the politics of welfare policy research. On the surface, the research reflects the best available ideas, models, and explanations of poverty problems, backed up by the best available quantitative data.[15] Although such research has the potential to make it harder for unsubstantiated myths and shibboleths to serve as the basis of welfare policy,[16] the spate of state actions in the late 1980s and early 1990s regulating the sexual, marital, parental, and work habits of welfare recipients suggests that this is by no means always the case.[17] Instead, welfare policy research has often been treated by policymakers as irrelevant to attempts to regulate the behavior of the poor.[18] When policymakers do take welfare policy research into account, it is largely limited to technical considerations related to fine-tuning existing programs.[19] Welfare policy research in the dominant mode is thus both politicized and depoliticized.

There is, then, a politics to welfare policy research. It is not, however, a politics in the conventional sense of liberals versus conservatives. **It is instead a depoliticizing politics that reduces the problems of poverty and welfare dependency to the rational calculations of economically minded poor people who have been encouraged by the wrong incentives to engage in counterproductive behavioral pathologies, such as teenage pregnancy, out-of-marriage births, welfare dependency, drug abuse, and crime**.[20] The discourse ensures that welfare policy researchers will be able to participate in contemporary welfare policy making, but only on the basis of a politically tendentious subtext. All the while aspiring to scientific impartiality, **welfare policy research achieves political credibility not by its objectivity, but by its consistency with the prevailing biases of welfare policy discourse**. Free from neither the biases of scientific social science nor the interests of the policy-making process itself, welfare policy research is autonomous in only the most relative sense of the term.[21] >>>

LINK: POLICYMAKING

WELFARE POLICY AND POVERTY RESEARCH IS BIASED AND OBEDIENTLY REFLECTS THE DISCURSIVE CONTEXT OPERATING IN SOCIETY—REPLICATION OF THESE POLICYMAKING MODES WILL BE REDEPLOYED IN THE SERVICES OF ELITE INTERESTS

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, **1995** (SANFORD, WORKS OF WELFARE, P 6-10)

<<<The discursive constraints of welfare policy research suggest that the myth of autonomous and objective social science needs to be questioned.22 Those whose research is legitimated in the policy-making process engage in an exclusive discourse that precludes a wide variety of perspectives and concerns.

For instance, I know of no research estimating the extent to which welfare taking is associated with attempts to escape abusive relationships.23 **Welfare policy discourse also requires that researchers forgo much of what they might like to say in order that they still be considered legitimate.** This is the double bind of welfare policy research. On the one hand, as Bruno Latour has emphasized, it is in "doing science ... that most new sources of power are generated."24 On the other, science is most effective when it is a site for the production of knowledge/power that aligns itself with the political and economic arrangements of the "capital/state axis."25 In an age that valorizes science, **social science research has its role to play in promoting power practices.** Contrary to the idea of social science as a realm of autonomous thinking that can critique and inform public policies, social science is thoroughly rooted in these relations in contradictory ways. Social science has its greatest impact when it is uncritically accepting of the discursive context already operating in society. Social science proves to be at its most policy efficacious when it reinforces the dominant biases that often serve as the backdrop for its own statistical interpretations. Adolph Reed Jr. captures this well:

Policy professionals function in a world of shared norms, conventions and allegiances that can override other commitments; the community's belief structure also exalts this technicist mystique, i.e., the belief that careful search for consensually agreeable facts will produce consensus on policy. These circumstances overdetermine a tendency toward avoiding sharp criticisms of others' interpretations, as well as a tendency toward not venturing very far from the conventional wisdom or the common sense of the moment or what passes for it.26

On the surface, welfare policy research in the dominant mode appears to have achieved the status of an autonomous realm of applied knowledge. Scientific, with a legitimating base in economic and behavioral models, geared toward therapeutic intervention, directed at policy, and having achieved its own legitimacy and autonomy, welfare policy research appears to be the paragon of a politically engaged social science informed of a pragmatic spirit and dedicated to making change happen. Yet it is perhaps the overriding irony of welfare policy research that in practice it is all too rarely autonomous, if for no other reason than that its genesis is the state.27

The ascendancy of ETM in welfare policy research is attributable in part to the dominance of economics in the social sciences. It is also in part attributable to prevailing understandings of science. Yet, **another part of the story is found in the role the state played in creating welfare policy research as a field that could serve its purposes.** Robert Haveman, a leader in both practicing and chronicling welfare policy research, notes that there was a moment in the 1960s when policy analysts could start to believe that "logic, data, and systematic thinking were to compete with, if not dominate, 'polities' in the making of public decisions."28

Yet Haveman has also emphasized how the relationship of poverty research to antipoverty policy was actually inverted — that is, public policy transformed social science, rather than the other way around. The Johnson administration's War on Poverty called for a new kind of social research geared to promoting the experimentation and innovation necessary for mounting new antipoverty initiatives. In the process, the study of poverty was taken over by a new group of social scientists who were willing to study controversial topics of culture, race, and poverty in terms consistent with the economic initiatives of the government in Washington. Michael Katz has written that "the angry protest following Daniel Patrick Moynihan's 1965 report, The Negro Family: The Case for National Action, helped bury both the culture of poverty and the black family as acceptable topics in liberal social science and to pass the leadership in poverty research to economists. Economists met the government's need for systematic data, predictive models, and program evaluation."29 This dependent relationship helped produce a new field of academic study that entrenched an economistic-therapeutic-managerial discourse in poverty research. Haveman notes: **"From its outset, the War on Poverty was conceived of as an economic war; the designs, the debates, and the evaluations were all conducted in economic terms. Economics was the central discipline in both the action and the research components of the war."**30 In the process, poverty became the property of economists, "a technical subject to be discussed only by experts."31

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The innovations of welfare policy research, however, reinscribed age-old obsessions about the deleterious effects of welfare dependency, thereby forfeiting the ability to check the prejudices that served as the basis of so much social policy:

By placing government policy on a scientific basis, poverty researchers hoped to transcend politics and ideology. In the end, although they won several battles, they lost even the intellectual war**— the capture of the social science agenda by government combined with the capture of poverty research by economists to confine the scope of debate within market models of human obligation and interaction.** For all its emphasis on innovation**, poverty research remained preoccupied by the oldest question in the history of social welfare.** For more than two centuries, critics, reformers, and administrators all have asked: Does social welfare leave the poor less willing to work? Although the economists who dominated poverty research disagreed on answers, they asked the same questions. Rarely did they examine their assumptions about the role of market incentives on human behavior or the limits of market models as the basis for public social obligations. In the process, they either ignored or belittled the few alternative frames proposed.32

There is more politics to the discourse of welfare policy research. Besides promoting an economistic-therapeutic-managerial orientation to understanding welfare and poverty, ETM engenders research that is easily open to political appropriation. The myth of autonomous social science helps promote research that aspires to be objective and neutral. This orientation actually undercuts its autonomous stance in two ways. First, **researchers are discouraged from bringing a particular perspective to setting the research agenda. The agenda comes to be set by what topics are pressing in the policy-making process. The welfare policy researcher is relegated to the position of an underlaborer supplying research findings on predetermined topics such as "welfare dependency."** Second, research findings on such topics are presented in the language of objective social science, **leaving them open to appropriation by interpreters who use them for various political ends.**

Reagan-era examples of appropriation took place with studies on the effects of "work incentives" in the main cash assistance program for the nonaged poor—Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Since the late 1960s, states deducted the first $30 and the next one-third of earnings in redetermining eligibility of welfare recipients. The major studies found small effects on work.33 Preferring to require work rather than to reward it, the Reagan administration used these findings in 1981 to justify limiting the earnings disregard to the first four months of taking welfare.34 Incentives allegedly only encouraged welfare recipients to maximize their combination of welfare and earnings rather than to try to become self-sufficient strictly through employment. Yet this interpretation de-emphasized the role of the low-wage labor market in leaving recipients in limbo between welfare and full-time employment. Technical research on the effect of work incentives on earnings overlooked that with improved job prospects such incentives might promote more work. Studies on the Reagan changes also indicated no real effect on work effort.35 **This "no effect" consequence was touted as proof that the Reagan reforms were not draconian.** The suggestion that the Reagan revision of the disregard did not affect work effort, however, overlooked the fact that many people continued to work as much as they did before they lost the disregard, because of their commitment to working, the pride derived from having a job, or just the dire need to retain the income they gained from employment. Appropriators instead chose to interpret technically neutral analyses to fit their preconceived politics.

LINK: POLICYMAKING

DISEMBODIED INFORMATION AND NEUTRAL RESEARCH LEADS TO MISGUIDED POLICYMAKING

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, **1995** (SANFORD, WORDS OF WELFARE, P 17-18)

<<<More information, by itself, may not be better. More information, disembodied from the relevant structural context and expressed in a discourse that concentrates poverty in behavior, may mean more misguided regulation of the poor.72 Imagine it the other way around, and the implications of producing decontextualized social scientific information about the poor become painfully apparent. As Alan Wolfe quotes Martin Nicolas:

What if the machinery were reversed? What if the habits, problems, secrets and unconscious motivations of the wealthy and powerful were daily scrutinized by a thousand systematic researchers, were hourly pried into, analyzed and cross referenced, tabulated and published in a hundred inexpensive mass circulation journals and written so that even the fifteen-year-old high school drop-out could understand it and predict the actions of his landlord, manipulate and control him?73

The bulk of welfare policy research evaluates discrete empirical findings about individuals, devoid of consideration of contextual factors.74 There is a lack of critical reflection about how such individualistic explanations reflect about political biases of ETM. Like a shell removed from the beach, an anthropological artifact in a museum, or the proverbial quotation out of context, the discrete data of welfare policy research are rarely interpreted in terms of the racial, gender, and class contexts of daily lived experience, but instead are disembodied facts superimposed on their subject matter. When the broader context is invoked, it is often still part of an equation for predicting individual behavior. For instance, Wilson hypothesizes in The Truly Disadvantaged that inner-city ghetto neighborhoods that are "overwhelmingly socially disadvantaged" produce "concentration effects" while losing their ability to act as a "social buffer" and thereby inculcate bad values and fail to discourage deleterious social attitudes and practices.75 In response, studies soon began appearing that tested for "neighborhood effects" on work effort, family formation, welfare taking, criminal activity, and so on.76 Rather than examining issues of community development, researchers had reduced these issues to just another variable for predicting behavior and fashioning better models for informing attempts to change those behaviors.

In spite of the best of intentions not to "blame the victim" or to individualize structural sources of poverty, liberal welfare policy research often necessarily is subordinated to the exclusionary practices of ETM. The implications are profoundly conservative, as liberals themselves have openly agonized.77 The sources for this contradiction are the double bind of welfare policy research. **Analysts who want their research to contribute to the diminishing of poverty and related problems must write in ways that conform to the accepted rhetorical, analytic, and methodological standards of contemporary welfare policy research.** Implicitly believing that science, objectivity, and the dispassionate presentation of new factual information will in the end improve our collective ability to make things better, analysts to varying degrees accept the discursive constraints of welfare policy research.78 Their hope is that more information, in whatever form, even if expressed in terms of common conceits about "the underclass," "broken families," and "marital instability," will help add to the efforts to "solve" the paradox of poverty in an affluent society. Liberals therefore continue to write in this way even if the information they produce reinforces the idea that individual behavior is a prime cause of poverty.>>>

LINK: POLICYMAKING

WELFARE IS A CONTRADICTORY SYSTEM THAT REINFORCES SPECIFIC UNDERSTANDINGS OF POVERTY AND SOCIETAL NORMS THROUGH SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY DRIVEN AGENDAS. THE SYMBOLIC PURPOSES OF WELFARE LIMIT THE QUALITY OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED AND PERPETUATE RACIAL, GENDER RELATED AND ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATIONS BETWEEN RECIPIENTS

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, **1995** (SANFORD, WORDS OF WELFARE, P 125-128)

<<<The discursive dimension of welfare policy reinforces particular understandings of the problems of poverty and dependency. This includes the numbers on which policy makers and analysts often rely to assess the extent of these problems and measure the effectiveness of policies designed to attack them. A pertinent example is job training programs. By focusing largely on employment rates and earnings of program participants, without consideration of labor market conditions, the numbers produced in some evaluations of these programs reinforce the implied understanding that poverty is an individual problem best solved when the welfare-dependent person is counted as failing to take what employment the job market has to offer or whatever man the marriage market has made available. One major consequence of such a perspective is that the symbolic significance of these numbers operates to limit the benefits provided to poor people.

Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward's theory of welfare change offers a useful explanation both for policy changes over time and for the contradictory purposes of welfare policy at any one point in time. Piven and Cloward see welfare as a secondary institution that must serve the needs of the primary institutions of both the polity and the economy.12 It must promote political legitimacy as well as economic viability.13 It must mollify the poor by providing assistance while doing so only in ways that are consistent with the market. Benefits must help the poor survive while not undermining the incentive for them to participate in the market and take whatever jobs are available. Welfare is both benefits for those who are not in the labor market and a set of rules to reinforce the work ethic and the norms of self-sufficiency. Welfare policy thus becomes something that both provides assistance and regulates the conditions under which assistance is to be denied. These competing purposes make for a contradictory welfare policy that serves both political and economic purposes in ways that are simultaneously substantive and symbolic.14 This is especially the case for poor, able-bodied, single males who are expected to be self-sufficient without government assistance and therefore find it difficult to receive public benefits at all. They are ineligible for any federally subsidized form of public assistance, and must rely on state-funded general assistance programs.15

Some feminist theorists, such as Linda Gordon, Barbara Nelson, and Virginia Sapiro, have shown that welfare policy has historically also sought to reconcile the provision of benefits with ascendant notions of womanhood and motherhood.16 "Most social policy aimed at women has been designed explicitly to benefit them in their capacity as wives and mothers and more particularly, to benefit those who depend upon them for nurturance and domestic service: husbands, children, and elderly relatives."17 Welfare is a key part of what Nancy Fraser calls the "juridical-administrative-therapeutic state apparatus" (JAT), which imputes specific needs to clients and then requires them to satisfy those needs.18 The JAT seeks to reinforce socially constructed identities on behalf of the existing order more than it tries to provide individuals the rights to the specific resources needed to address their problems. Ironically, it has distinctive programs geared largely for female-headed families that fail to meet the particular needs or recognize the special circumstances of these families.19 Welfare policy in such a state constitutes women exclusively as "mothers"—a distinctive population with special needs. Yet being defined exclusively as a mother forecloses the possibility of a woman's being considered the family breadwinner, ensures the status of "dependent," and sets up the idea that a single woman and her children constitute a "broken family." The result is that "welfare mothers" are not seen as needing or deserving those supportive services, education, training, and other resources that will enable them to provide a "family wage" on their own.20 In these terms, welfare is not something that promotes people's rights to self-sufficiency; instead, it

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focuses on meeting specified needs according to clients' predefined roles or positions in society. Welfare at best meets women's needs as mothers, while their dependence in the family and the economy goes unaddressed.

Other analysts have emphasized the need to consider also the racial dimension of welfare policy. In the early progressive period, Gwendolyn Mink argues, efforts on behalf of the American welfare state were done in good part in the name of "an idealized American citizenry" to counter racial diversity.21 Welfare was rationalized, especially by white women reformers, as a socialization agent that promoted conformity with the norms of white motherhood. In the process, welfare perpetuated race as well as gender distinctions. Receipt of welfare was in large part premised on conformity that implicitly assumed white motherhood as the operative standard. Variations across ethnic and racial groups in family structure and the relationship to a wage-earning spouse were taken into account because the standard of white womanhood was implicit.22 Welfare policy is in this sense very much dedicated to making "them" more like "us."23

Welfare therefore can be said to serve symbolic purposes by reinforcing dominant, if conflicting, notions of work, motherhood, and family. Receipt of welfare marks recipients as "dependent" by virtue of their failing to measure up to ascendant notions in society of the ethic of work, the ideal of the virtuous mother, and the norm of responsible parent. In this way, welfare serves to reinforce the symbolic order that constitutes the everyday lives of all of society's members, including the poor. Welfare policy is as much about reinforcing a grand story or narrative about what it takes to be seen as self-sufficient person, virtuous woman, and responsible parent as it is about supplying the benefits and supportive services that can help people achieve self-sufficiency, virtue, and parental responsibility. Welfare policy is then at least as much about regulating the conditions under which people count as being entitled to make claims against the state as it is about supplying benefits.24 This means that welfare policy is dedicated at least as much to reducing welfare dependency as to providing resources to fight off the effects of poverty. As Joel Handler and Yeheskel Hasenfeld emphasize:

Social welfare policy cannot be fully understood without recognizing that it is fundamentally a set of symbols that try to differentiate between the deserving and undeserving poor in order to uphold such dominant values as the work ethic and family, gender, race, and ethnic relations. In this sense welfare policy is targeted not only at the poor, but equally at the nonpoor, through the symbols it conveys about what behaviors are deemed virtuous or deviant.

Welfare therefore arguably has both symbolic and substantive dimensions that coexist in contradictory fashion. The symbolic purposes of welfare often operate to limit the quality and quantity of substantive benefits provided under welfare.26 The substantive benefits the state provides are in fact constituted within a symbolic context that goes a long way toward determining their significance and value to the poor. Alternatively, substantive benefits operate to undercut the effectiveness of welfare policy by reinforcing dominant norms about self-sufficiency, womanhood, and parental responsibility. Benefits that enable mothers with children to live on their own outside the traditional two-parent family and without working pose a potentially serious threat to societal standards.27

For poor, able-bodied, single males, this often means receiving very little, if anything, in the form of public benefits that might help them escape their dependency. For poor women with children, this often means receiving benefits that do not help them overcome their dependence in the family and the economy. It is entirely possible that the recent welfare changes brought about by the Family Support Act may perpetuate these contradictions, if in their own distinctive and contemporary way. >>>

LINK: BUREAUCRACY *

THE BUREAUCRATIC SYSTEM OF AID DISTRIBUTION IS THE PROBLEM – CATAGORICAL REQUIREMENTS PREVENT SUCCESSFUL REFORM AND WILL MAINTAIN A SYSTEM THAT PRIVLIEGES EFFICEINT MANAGEMENT OVER THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, **1995** (STANDFORD, WORKS OF WELFARE, P 41-43)

The four categories of welfare policy research oversimplify. Each can itself take several forms. For instance, it is possible to imagine a variety of types of top-down ethnography, even if the idea of anything other than bottom-up ethnography may strike most ethnographers as odd. Some ethnographies may reflect a managerial orientation and serve managerial interests. Yet there remains the possibility that top-down ethnography might serve to contest managerial power. Barbara Sabol's excursion from publicly recognized New York City commissioner of human resources administration to covert impostor as welfare recipient is instructive.12

As the head of a welfare agency that served more than a million people and had an annual budget in 1992 of more than $6 billion, Barbara Sabol was an important, powerful, and highly visible participant in the New York City welfare policy-making system. She felt isolated from the human consequences of that system, however, and so she adopted another persona in order to see firsthand how the system affects the people who seek its assistance. From late April through October 1992, with the approval of Mayor David Dinkins, she periodically became a welfare recipient. Wearing disguises that included a sweatshirt, jeans, scarf, and wig, she applied for and eventually received food stamps and cash assistance, and "even showed up for three days for a mandatory work assignment" in another city office. It took her numerous appearances and six to eight weeks to get on the public assistance rolls: she was told repeatedly that she had not provided enough documentation; she found herself shunted from one office to another (more than once to the wrong one); she waited in long lines in dreary waiting rooms; she was treated rudely and dismissively by her own employees. She found that she was deprived of her privacy by a system that asked the most sensitive questions regarding her personal circumstances. Posing as one welfare recipient produced enough information for Sabol to suggest numerous changes in policy on concerns that policy makers usually do not include in their deliberations.

Sabol said that she went public with her forays into the bureaucracy when she did because the new administration in Washington was gearing up for welfare reform. Some suggested that the timing might have been tied to her own job prospects with that administration. In any case, Sabol's efforts are instructive, not so much for Washington policy makers as for what they say about how even a top-down exercise in participant observation may have its place in work designed to inform welfare discourse of an alternative point of view.

Sabol's research will probably not figure in any Washington welfare policy deliberations, and this is itself instructive. Policy makers tend to focus on the welfare system in terms of managerial concerns. They focus on total costs, eligibility requirements, mechanisms for reducing prolonged reliance on public assistance, elaborate reporting requirements, procedures for rooting out fraud, and so on. Sabol's work could inform policy makers if welfare policy discourse was predisposed to hear what she has to say. Its categories for welfare, however, make the problems she found secondary.

These categories do include the ostensible purpose of welfare — that is, to provide cash assistance to those who are deemed to be in need of it, and to do so in a timely way. They include at some level, usually the state government, consideration of the economic value of such benefits for recipients, although states have proven less and less interested in this question (this issue is discussed more fully in chapters 5 and 9). Yet these categories are unlikely to provide much space for considering how even services ostensibly provided to make life better for welfare recipients are structured in ways that actually are insensitive to recipients and their needs.13 Managerial discourse emphasizes management of the welfare system even at the expense of meeting recipient needs. Given the ascendancy of managerial categories, even programs designed to provide child care, work training and placement, and other additional

(card continues…)

LINK: BUREAUCRACY *

(…card continues)

supportive services are unlikely to meet the needs of program participants. Benefit increases themselves often lead to reduced buying power.14

Sabol believes that her efforts show that the system needs to be made more responsive to recipients. In particular, it needs to be much more expeditious in supplying jobs for recipients, processing applications, providing privacy, and making the entire system more supportive and less intrusive. She found the system to be a serious impediment to people who are busy trying to get their lives back on track. Time-consuming procedures and long delays suggest a system that is deeply suspicious of recipients. Moreover, it is a system less interested in enabling the eligible to receive aid than in preventing the ineligible from getting assistance.

The existing categories of welfare discourse discourage managers from considering any information other than what is relevant to the managerial needs of the existing system. Sabol's efforts, however, show that even ethnographic work done from a managerial perspective might be of some value in challenging those categories. Her work underscores how welfare policy discourse is a "politics of need interpretation."15 Nancy Fraser suggests that "needs talk" has become a critical site for struggle among contending groups as late capitalist society confronts the shifting boundaries separating "political," "economic," and "domestic" dimensions of life.16 As these boundaries blur, especially with the struggles of women, they become politicized and subject to contestation. Expert and bureaucratic discourses operate within more circumscribed settings in ways consonant with the broader hegemonic categories as to what is political, economic, and domestic.17 Struggles over needs in bureaucratic settings often involve the extent to which hegemonic understandings and connected bureaucratic categories will serve as the basis for defining people's needs, interests, and identities in terms of whether they will receive service and under what conditions. Welfare recipients marked as deficient in self-sufficiency will experience bureaucratic practices that treat them suspiciously and as people in need of regulation. **Any predisposition to have welfare operate in more supportive ways will recede into the background**. Like ethnographies that articulate alternative understandings of recipients and their needs, Sabol's work provides a basis for contesting the way in which the existing bureaucratic discourse imputes identities and needs to persons seeking assistance.18

LINK: DEBATE

ACADEMIC DEBATE IS THE SITE WHERE HEGEMONIC THEORIES ABOUT THE POOR ARE NATURALIZED – EVEN AFFIRMATIVES THAT FOCUS ON MATERIAL CHANGE ULTIMATELY REINFORCE DOMINATE WAYS OF VIEWING THE EXPERIENCE OF POVERTY

RIMSTEAD, B.A. AT YORK UNIVERSITY, M.A. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, PH.D. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, 2001, [ROXANNE, REMNANTS OF NATION ON POVERTY NARRATIVES BY WOMEN, PG. 1-6]

<<<When poverty is minutely constructed as an object of study in the sphere of academic discourse across various fields such as anthropology, history, literary studies, and the social and political sciences, there are significant choices to make with respect to challenging existing paradigms of power or remaining complicit with them. David L. Harvey and Michael Reed's highly informative systematic method of assessing academic paradigms of poverty reveals how their formal properties reflect on implicit ideological content. Their goal is to 'construct a theoretical space that maps the meta theoretical contours which structure current poverty debates' (270). One of their observations is that academic debate is usually limited to 'hegemonically approved paradigms' which define poverty as a 'distributive problem' whose solution lies with improving the life chances for the 'deserving' poor, but that radical paradigms which question the system of market distribution are rarely employed as frames of analysis (293). In other words, radical paradigms are consigned to the periphery of debate where they are 'mined' for information about class relations and causes of poverty. I think this explains why reading much of the positivist, sociological, and anthropological material on poverty is such a frustrating experience for a culturally oppositional critic, because it is often fundamentally hegemonic. Another source of frustration, of course, is that traditional class theory and modern applications of it tend to exclude or devalue the special type of oppression lived by the poor. Ruth L. Smith remarked on this aspect of the academic erasure of poverty when she wrote that, along with other disciplines such as social history and philosophy, Marxist theory itself tends to marginalize the poor as a result of its inner logic: 'The association of poverty with nature persists even in critiques of liberal society. As Marx and Engels developed their insight, they increasingly distinguished the industrial working class from the lumpenproletariat who were outside production relations and so outside even the possibility of class conflict and consciousness, false or true'.>>>

LINK: POLICY KNOWLEDGE

THE BELIEF THAT KNOWLEDGE CAN SOLVE SOCIAL PROBLEMS IS FALSE- THIS ONLY REPLICATES CURRENT PROBLEMS

O'CONNOR, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT U.C. SANTA BARBARA, **2001** [ALICE, *POVERTY KNOWLEDGE*, PRINCETON UNIVERSIT PRESS, P. 3]

[THE IDEA that scientific knowledge holds the key to solving social problems has long been an article of faith in American liberalism. Nowhere is this more apparent than when it comes to solving the "poverty problem." For well over a century, liberal social investigators have scrutinized poor people in the hopes of creating a knowledge base for informed social action. Their studies have generated massive amounts of data and a widening array of research techniques, from the community-based social surveys of the Progressive Era, to the ethnographic neighborhood studies conducted by Chicago-school social scientists in the 1920s, to the technically sophisticated econometric analysis that forms the basis of the poverty research industry today. Although its origins can be traced to what historian Daniel Rodgers calls the transatlantic "borrowings" of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century progressives, contemporary poverty research is very much an American invention, with a degree of specialization and an institutional apparatus that is unmatched in other parts of the world.1 And yet, poverty remains a fact of life for millions in the world's most prosperous economy, stubbornly resistant to all that social scientists have learned about its "causes, consequences, and cures."2]

Frustrated by what they routinely refer to as the "paradox" of "poverty amidst plenty," liberal social scientists often charge that politics and ideology are to blame. We know what to do about poverty, they believe, but ideologically motivated policy makers from both sides of the aisle lack the political will to do the right, scientifically informed thing. A powerful expression of such frustration came in response to the "end of welfare as we know it" in 1996, when three highly respected Department of Health and Human Services Department officials resigned in protest over President Clinton's decision to sign the harsh, Republican-sponsored Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act—now widely referred to as welfare repeal. "The passage of this new law tells us what we already knew," wrote HHS Assistant Secretary Peter Edelman in explaining his actions. "[P]oliticians make decisions that are not based on research and experience." Welfare reform was a triumph of politics and ideology over knowledge, that is, and a defeat for the policy analysts who had mustered an enormous amount of scientific data showing that the bill would send millions more children into poverty—very much in the hope of preventing politicians from doing the wrong thing.3

Accurate though it may be in its characterization of recent welfare reform, this explanation for what happened in 1996 has one overriding problem: it fails to acknowledge the role that scientific poverty expertise played in bringing welfare as we knew it to an end. Following a well-established pattern in post-Great Society policy analysis, the Clinton administration's poverty experts had already embraced and defined the parameters of a sweeping welfare reform featuring proposals that promised to change the behavior of poor people while paying little more than rhetorical attention to the problems of low-wage work, rising income inequality, or structural economic change, and none at all to the steadily mounting political disenfranchisement of the postindustrial working class. Approaching the poverty problem within the narrow conceptual frame of individual failings rather than structural inequality, of cultural and skill "deficits" rather than the unequal distribution of power and wealth, the social scientific architects of President Clinton's original, comparatively less punitive welfare reform proposal made "dependency" their principal target and then stood by helpless as congressional conservatives took their logic to its radical extreme. Their helplessness in the matter was not just a matter of "bad" politics laying "good" scientific knowledge to waste. It was also a failure of the knowledge itself.

LINK: POLICY KNOWLEDGE

WE MUST SHIFT THE WAY THE POLICYMAKING PROCESS WORKS IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR TRUE CHANGE.

O'CONNOR, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT U.C. SANTA BARBARA, **2001** [ALICE, *POVERTY KNOWLEDGE*, PRINCETON UNIVERSIT PRESS, P. 4-5]

Taken on its own, the recent "end of welfare" offers evidence for one of the central arguments of this book: that building an antipoverty agenda will require a basic change in the way we as a society think collectively about "the poverty problem," a change that begins with a redirection in contemporary social scientific poverty knowledge. Here I am referring to the body of knowledge that, very much as a legacy of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, has attained a kind of quasi-official status in defining "the poverty problem" and assessing how social programs affect the poor. Besides being social scientific, this knowledge is based principally on quantitative, national-level data. It is produced by a network of public agencies, think tanks, university-based and privately operated research institutes that traffics in the shared language and recognized methods of applied economics and policy analysis. Although liberal in origins, poverty knowledge rests on an ethos of political and ideological neutrality that has sustained it through a period of vast political change. Very much for this reason, it can also be distinguished by what it is not: contemporary poverty knowledge does not define itself as an inquiry into the political ' economy and culture of late twentieth-century capitalism; it is knowledge about the characteristics and behavior and, especially in recent years, about the welfare status of the poor. Nor does it much countenance knowledge honed in direct action or everyday experience, whether generated from activism, program implementation, or, especially, from living poor in the United States. Historically devalued as "impressionistic," "feminized," or "ideological," this kind of knowledge simply does not translate into the measurable variables that are the common currency of "objective," "scientific," and hence authoritative poverty research.

Certainly I am not the first to make the argument that poverty knowledge, as currently constituted, needs to change. On occasion such an argument has been sounded by recognized poverty experts, exasperated, for example, by how their colleagues have allowed the political obsession with welfare dependency to overshadow the problems of wage decline, labor market failure, and rising inequality that continually get shunted off to the side in the poverty/ welfare debate.4 More often, though, the argument for change finds expression in the not-always-articulated frustration of people on the periphery of the poverty research industry—the program administrators, advocates, legislators, community activists, or, as in my own case, the foundation program officers— who since the 1980s have grown increasingly dissatisfied with the narrow, individualized focus of poverty research, who feel cut off from its technical language and decontextualized, rational choice models of human behavior, and who rankle at its refusal to acknowledge the value judgments underlying measures of welfare "dependency" that have come to play such a prominent role in recent policy. To be sure, thanks to poverty knowledge we now have a more accurate statistical portrait of who suffers from substandard incomes, housing, nutrition, and medical care—a far more diversified and shifting population than lingering stereotypes of the "other America" would allow. So, too, has poverty knowledge provided an indispensable picture of actual program spending and benefit levels that contradicts popular notions of welfare mothers living off the fat of the state. Poverty experts have also amassed convincing evidence about the links between poverty and macroeconomic performance, and about the extraordinary effectiveness of Social Security in reducing poverty among the elderly. And yet, however impressive its data or sophisticated its models, poverty knowledge has proved unable to provide an analysis or, equally important, a convincing narrative to counter the powerful, albeit simplistic story of welfare state failure and moral decline—a narrative that, with the help of well-organized conservative analysts, has come to inform policy discourse to a degree hardly imaginable twenty years ago.]

LINK: EXPERTISE

EXPERTISM EXCLUDES MINORITIES AND REPLICATES THE VERY SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IT TRIES TO SOLVE FOR—THIS REPRODUCES THE SAME PROBLEMS

O'CONNOR, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT U.C. SANTA BARBARA, **2001** [ALICE, *POVERTY KNOWLEDGE*, PRINCETON UNIVERSIT PRESS, P. 10-12]

A second major insight from historical analysis is that poverty knowledge is highly political in nature, in ways that go beyond its close association with the trajectory of liberalism, and that have led to the emergence of professional social science as the dominant source of expertise on poverty and welfare policy. To some degree this can be understood as part of the politics of knowledge—the ability of well-placed research entrepreneurs to act as advocates for particular approaches, theoretical frameworks, and for the necessity of social scientific expertise as the basis of enlightened policy. It is thanks to such efforts that poverty knowledge bears the markers of professionalization—specialization, standardized data, experimental methods, a body of theory, or at least a series of "testable hypotheses"—along with the mechanisms for training future generations to uphold established standards of scientific expertise. But the triumph of social science as a way of knowing poverty can also be understood as part of the politics of class, race, and gender in determining who qualifies and can participate as an authority—and who not—in the broader public sphere. Seen in this light, poverty knowledge can be characterized as the project of an increasingly credentialed, formally educated segment of the middle class—one that, despite important contributions from prominent female and nonwhite social scientists, has for most of its history been predominantly white and male. Moreover, the claim to scientific objectivity rests on technical skills, methods, information, and professional networks that **historically have excluded those groups most vulnerable to poverty:** minorities, women, and especially the relatively less-educated working class, putting poverty knowledge in a position **not just to reflect but to replicate the social inequalities it means to investigate.]** 10-11

This is not to say that poverty knowledge can be reduced to a playing out of material class interest (populist and conservative critics to the contrary, there really is not much money or professional glamour to be had from studying the poor), nor to deny that individual social scientists have been capable of transcending their class, race, and gender-bound identities. It is to recognize, though, that not only despite but because of its quest for a particular scientific standard, poverty knowledge has been filtered, not just through the experiences and cultural biases of the privileged, but through the social position of "the professors" in relation to "the poor." It is in this regard that recent changes in political economy take on a special significance for poverty knowledge, not just as they affect the demographic "composition" of poverty, but as they pit the more- against the less-educated in the distribution of economic punishments and rewards. In the "new," information-hungry, postindustrial economy, poverty experts are in a position to benefit from the transformations that have i destabilized the industrial working class; in economists' language, it is an economy that brings ever-greater "returns" to education while devaluing indus- ; trial skills. And yet, poverty experts show little inclination to question whether their own stake in the "new economy" might affect their interpretation that its disparities can be explained primarily as differences in education and skill—suggesting, in a way reminiscent of earlier cultural criticism, that the poor should simply strive to be more like us.

It is this disparity of status and interest that make poverty research an ines-capably political act: It is an exercise of power, in this instance of an educated elite to categorize, stigmatize, but above all to neutralize the poor and disad-vantaged through analysis that obscures the political nature of social and economic inequality. By the same token, it is the power to construct and give scientific weight to ideas of what is natural, "functional," or socially desirable, in terms that are exclusive of, if not in direct opposition to, the poor. Finally, it is the power to constitute or at least to influence the categories of social policy in ways that are of material consequence to the poor, whether those categories have to do with determining the particulars of who is eligible (or "deserving") of public assistance or with establishing the broader parameters of the welfare state.

LINK: EXPERTISE

LACK OF ADVENTAGEOUS POLICIES MADE BY THE MIDDLE/UPPER CLASS TAKES AWAY FROM THE COMPLEXITIES AND FIRST HAND ANALYSIS OF POVERTY.

VIVYAN C. **ADAIR AND** SANDRA L. **DAHLBERG**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AT HAMILTON COLLEGE, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON—DOWNTOWN, "RECLAIMING CLASS: WOMEN, POVERTY, AND THE PROMISE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA" PG 5-6, **2003**

Well tutored in shame, guilt, resentment, envy, and self-hatred—all of silence's handmaidens. These lessons are reinforced as our families are marked with debilitating tropes and punished with policy meant to control and contain our "dangerous" and "pathological" bodies.

One avenue by which some poor women transform their lives is through higher education, but even that pathway often is not benign. Our lives continue to be discounted and devalued in the post-secondary academy. In sometimes elaborate acts of confession, poor women are forced to publicly reject their cultures of origin to gain entry into academic institutions and to be viewed as worthy, "deserving" students and "legitimate" scholars. When we began our educational journeys, many of us believed (perhaps naively) that the academy was a place where we could be freed of class stigmas, a place where we would be judged on our own scholarship and hard work. Yet the process we continue to experience of moving from poverty to a professional class has been and remains full of twists and turns, carrying with it examples of rejection and loss, oppression and denial. Rather than being cleanly transformed by educational advancement and achievement, we were simultaneously erased and made painfully visible with poverty-class markers. Education does, however, provide the means for many women to secure economic solvency and intellectual fulfillment. It offers hope, even as that hope is complicated by pedagogies and policies that are ultimately detrimental to poor women.

In the United States, the standard academic lens through which poverty is examined is that of middle-class culture, which posits an adversarial stance toward the poor. **When poverty is being examined, for instance, poor people are seldom called on as expert witnesses**; academicians and the media rely instead on interpretations of poverty made by middle- and upper-income observers. Often in academic inquiry, more validity or status is accorded to the "disinterested" observer than to the active participant. In the case of poverty and the evaluation of higher education, this practice has too often resulted in a false inference that there is only one truth, one lens, by which the efficacy of higher education can be analyzed: the lens of the middle-class perspective. As a result, the stories of poor women are controlled or revised to conform to the middle-class lens. Too often, when poor women critique our class system and its barriers to mobility, we are further marginalized by being labeled "ungrateful," which very clearly displays that privilege is the basis for respect and access to public discourse. These moves erase the complexities of poverty and prohibit firsthand poverty-class analyses of the American condition.

LINK: SILENCE

SILENCE JUSTIFIES THE CONTINUATION OF SYTEMIC RACISM, ONLY BY CHALLENGING THE PRESENT AND INCUDING OURSELVES INTO THE PROBLEM CAN WE SOLVE

ZUBERI AND BONILLA-SILVA, ZUBERI IS A PROFESSOR AND CHAIRMAN OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, BONILLA-SILVA IS A PREOFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, **2008**
[WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS, PG.9]

This **silence about race and methods** should not be misconstrued as being of merely academic significance. Statistical conceptions of race **play a critical role in guiding and justifying both private belief and public policy**. Almost all of the racial statistics conducted in the social sciences and sponsored by billions of dollars, from the federal government and private foundations, deal with causal inferences. Because such statistics look and sound scientific and are usually promulgated by reputable scholars, great weight is accorded them, even if their import is in fact distorted by subjective predispositions. If the statistics are misleading, inappropriate, or false, or if the methodology incorporates false assumptions, few scholars or public officials are in a position to detect it.

Today we are witnessing a revival of the biological idea of race in medicine and science, even though some social scientists have argued for years that race is a socially complex matter and that subjective predispositions and biases, more than biology or demography, govern our definitions and categories of racial difference. The van den Oord and Rowe article shows how some scholars developed their ideas under the sway of eugenic theories of race. Eugenics developed by using complex statistical models to justify racial reasoning. This is in fact, how the practice of statistics found its way into the social science. The publication of the van den Oord and Rowe article, and the subsequent publication of articles with similar points of view, demonstrates the continued acceptance of these theories in social science. However, **it is the silence** about the misuse of racial statistics as a cover for wrongheaded ideas about race across academic disciplines **that remains at the heart of the problem.**10 This silence also reflects how our disciplinary journals have done researchers a great disservice.

The misuse of methods in the study of race demands our attention. This issue needs deliberate and conscious study; we must analyze and provide answers. By recognizing that **the researcher is as important as what they study** we enhance our ability to contribute to an understanding of society. We are not Martians from another time or place, thus we cannot study society as outsiders. We are part of the world and study society from the inside. As we study, as we investigate, we must offer solutions that solve, and the world justifiably must demand not a lack of values and convictions, but rather the dedication to justice and an ability to present the truth as we understand it regardless of the challenges it may present

REFUSAL TO INCLUDE THE VOICES OF THOSE IN POVERTY IN POLICY CONSTRUCTION BOTH REFLECT AND EXPAND THE PRIVILEGE OF WHITENESS

HOLLOWAY **SPARKS,** ASST PROF OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, PENN STATE, **2003** (QUEENS, TEENS, AND MODEL MOTHERS RACE AND THE POLITICS OF WELFARE REFORM (PAPERBACK) BY SANFORD F. SCHRAM (EDITOR), JOE SOSS (EDITOR), RICHARD C. FORDING (EDITOR))

Hearings on welfare reform were held by more than a dozen committees and subcommittees across the House and Senate and gave hundreds of people an opportunity to talk to legislators about welfare reform. Committee members heard from Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, more than r6o members of Congress, a dozen governors, a half dozen mayors, two dozen welfare administrators, at least 6o academic experts, more than 75 representatives from nonprofits, ioo business representatives, and a host of other interested groups. Of the nearly 6oo witnesses, however, only 17 were welfare recipients.' Even this figure overstates the participation of welfare recipients because just four of these witnesses were actually still receiving AFDC at the time of their testimony. Four more were receiving transitional benefits such as child care assistance, and the remaining nine were former recipients. This latter group included one member of Congress, Representative Lynn C. Woolsey from California.

The fact that so few welfare recipients participated in congressional hearings would not have mattered as much if the testimony these women provided had been attended to more seriously. The counterdiscourse that they offered was unique. It expanded the list of reasons women needed welfare, argued for the continued necessity of a "safety net" for poor women and their children in distress, and challenged the stereotypes about welfare recipients so common in mainstream discussions about welfare reform. Their analysis of the welfare system, however, was mostly dismissed or simply ignored by defenders of the dominant discourse, perpetuating the patterns of external and internal exclusion apparent in the broader public sphere debate.

LINK: EXPERTISE—QUANTITATIVE POVERTY

EXPERTISM LEADS TO STIGMATIZATION, ISOLATION, AND THE BUREAUCRATIC ABILITY TO DENY ASSISTANCE

O'CONNOR, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT U.C. SANTA BARBARA, **2001** [ALICE, *POVERTY KNOWLEDGE*, P. 14-15]

[On the one hand is the notion, put forward initially by nineteenth-century social investigators, that poverty is an objective, quantifiable condition—measurable against a scientifically calculated standard of need known as the poverty line. This measure of poverty has since been absorbed into bureaucratic, political, and to a more limited degree popular culture—a way of determining program eligibility as well as **an indictment of society's neglect.** Equally important, at least in the eyes of its original proponents, is the social conviction the measure implies: poverty is not a mystery of nature; it can be explained, reduced, or eliminated by rational means. On the other hand, and far more ubiquitous in political and popular culture, have been the many social scientific variations on precisely the opposite theme: the notion, variously expressed in concepts such as social "disorganization," "deviance," or "dysfunction"; in metaphors such as the "vicious circle" or the self-perpetuating "tangle of pathology"; and in totalizing theories of the "culture of poverty," or, most recently, the "underclass," that poverty is deeply ingrained in "intractable" psychological and cultural processes that may very well be beyond rehabilitation or reform. Despite its current association with conservative politics, the culture of poverty and its variants gained the imprimatur of scientific objectivity within a liberal research tradition. As can be seen in recent efforts to measure the underclass according to behavioral indicators, they have since achieved the status of quantifiable fact—a status that at least some poverty experts, unable to control the politics of "blaming the victim," have subsequently come to regret. In this sense, at least, poverty experts have proved to be rather ineffective cultural brokers: even when offered in the name of social criticism or as a call to action, **their formulations of cultural deviance have been used far more readily and regularly to stigmatize, isolate, and deny assistance to the poor.** Alongside the language that has been absorbed into popular and political culture, over the past three decades poverty knowledge has also cultivated an increasingly technical jargon as the common, if not exclusive, language of poverty expertise. More than simply a question of quantification—the "amateur" researchers of the social survey movement were every bit as quantitative as current-day econometricians—the technical jargon of recent decades has taken poverty knowledge to a level of abstraction and exclusivity that it had not known before. It is a language laced with acronyms that themselves speak of particular data sets, policies, and analytic techniques (PSID, NLSY, TRIM, FAP, PBJI, EITC, and, albeit without a detectable sense of irony, Five Year Plans and a model known as the KGB). It also speaks of a self-contained system of reasoning that is largely devoid of political or historical context, in which individuals are the units of analysis and markets the principal arbiters of human exchange. The effect has been to put entire questions and categories of inquiry outside the boundaries of critical scientific discourse—capitalism, for example, like the institutionalized systems of race and gender relations, does not translate into variables that can be scrutinized within these models of cause and effect. On the whole, though, poverty knowledge has been perhaps most effective as a form of cultural affirmation: a powerful reassurance that poverty occurs outside or in spite of core American values and practices, whether those are defined in terms of capitalist markets, political democracy, self-reliance, and/ or a two-parent, white, middle-class family ideal. Although present in much of the social scientific literature before then, it was not until the 1960s that this theme became virtually institutionalized in research. That, after all, was when federal officials, designating "poverty" as a distinct social, policy, and analytic category, quite consciously detached it from the language of income distribution, class, and racial inequality. Poverty, to use the terminology of the day, occurs in some "other," separate America; as an aberration, an exception, a "paradox" of plenty rather than as an integral or necessary condition of the affluent society.8 **Built on this premise, poverty knowledge continues to hold out a certain promise: doing something about, even eliminating, poverty will not require radical change;** whether through social engineering, wage subsidies, economic growth, or the new/old-fashioned strategy of pushing people into the market, the paradox can be resolved without resorting to a massive redistribution of power and wealth. It also offers a substitute language, of deviance and deprivation, for the language of inequality. Most important from a policy perspective, it conceptually disenfranchises poor people from the larger political community—experts refer to the "working poor," not the "working class"—and in this way has helped to confine the reform conversation to the problem of welfare rather than the problems of political economy and work.

LINK: OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

OBJECTIVITY IS MADE IMPOSSIBLE BY GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE

CAMPBELL, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES AT RENSSELEAR POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE, **2009** (NANCY D., RECONSTRUCTING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES VIEW FROM FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY. P. 6-7)

<<<Social inequality shapes not only what science is done and how it is done, according to reconstructivists, but what science remains undone. David J. Hess defines this problem in the following terms:

Because political and economic elites possess the resources to water and weed the garden of knowledge, the knowledge tends to grow (to be "selected") in directions that are consistent with the goals of political and economic elites. When social movement leaders and industry reformers who wish to change our societies look to "Science" for answers to their research questions, they often find an empty space—a special issue of a journal that was never edited, a conference that never took place, an epidemiological study that was never funded—whereas their better funded adversaries have an arsenal of knowledge to draw on. . . . [T]he science that should get done does not get done because there are structures in place that keep it from getting done.13

Similarly, feminists have called for new ways of knowing and new institutional practices amenable to the project of "undone science." By subjecting the reconstructivist project to friendly feminist scrutiny, I seek to further its reach and amend its charter to the extent possible.

Before proceeding, a few caveats about the field of STS,14 which has too often focused on scientific controversy at the expense of attention to the persistence of governing mentalities that resist change, or the many sites in which an "intransigent politics of systemic unknowing blocks routes to knowledge."15 Coming up against the intransigence of past practices is simultaneously an epistemological and a political problem. Questions such as Why do we have the sciences we do? or Why do we have the policies we do? or Whose science is undone and why? have not tended to fall into the ahistorical domain of reconstructivism. Because historical and cultural questions concerning patterns of sanctioned ignorance or the "politics of systemic unknowing" do not come up in reconstructivist writings,16 these works tend to have an ahistorical, "forward-looking" feel to them despite leveling a critique of technological progress, momentum, or pacing. The reconstructivist question is "How can scholars with a broad range of motivations collaboratively extend technoscience studies so as to focus more insightfully on barriers and prospects for designing, constructing, and diffusing technologies differently—without presuming that any one scholar or subgroup of them has the right or [End Page 6] capacity to define what constitutes 'better'?"17 As feminists and reconstructivists point out, it is possible to define and set about achieving more ethical and more democratic ways of doing science.18 Thus it seems remarkably relativistic on the part of reconstructivists to undermine their own normative claims. Perhaps they do so to appear less prescriptive and possibly more inclusive than they were initially perceived to be.

The argument that there was "no uniquely correct position from which to study, advise, or intervene" in the practices of technoscience seems to have been intended initially as an inclusive move.19 Reconstructivists try to avoid the discrediting pitfall of essentialism—or "overstating the case," as David J. Hess put it in arguing "there is not necessarily an identifiable woman's perspective or African American perspective on every scientific issue and method."20 Failing to see that the essentialism versus constructivism debate is no longer the stake it once was, reconstructivists underplay taking a stance in ways that ironically obscure the standpoints from which they work. Reconstructivists have engaged the field of STS in a valuable internal conversation, the contours of which are familiar to feminists. Surprisingly, however, feminist epistemologists beyond Sandra Harding or Donna Haraway are rarely quoted in their writings, despite most reconstructivists seeing themselves as feminist.21

Striking resonances and parallels between post-positivist, feminist, and reconstructivist agendas include the following. "Facts" are constructed and are thus not determinative of the forms that social interactions and negotiations take. Negotiating the conceptual practices of power or ruling relations inevitably involves conflicting and partial perspectives. Coping with disagreement is a necessary part of social and political life (including those parts of it that shape decisions about what kinds of technoscientific innovation to pursue). Science is not about closure but about interpretive flexibility in the face of the ongoing production of uncertainty. Thus coping with uncertainty will inevitably challenge those for whom science raises more questions than it answers. Reconstructivists argue that "reconstructivism starts from the premise that 'better' design of sociotechnical life ought to be built directly into scholarly inquiry. Notions of better and worse inevitably involve a partisan component. . . . "22 Similarly, Haraway's work on "situated knowledges" acknowledges the inevitably partial and partisan processes by which knowledge claims are produced and negotiated.23 Weaving together the strands of similarity between feminist and reconstructivist science and technology studies reveals a tapestry against which the knowledge production projects of each stand out more clearly.>>>

LINK: OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

THE AFFIRMATIVE'S PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE TURNS THE RECIPIENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES INTO OBJECTS TO BE MANIPULATED—THIS PROCESS INEVITABLY REPLICATES STRUCTURAL DOMINATION

SWIGONSKI, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, **1994** [MARY E., THE LOGIC OF FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH. SOCIAL WORK. V. 39 ISSUE 4. EBSCO]

Logical positivism asserts the possibility of value-free theory and science based on the use of the senses and reason. Knowledge for knowledge's sake is believed to be both desirable and possible. But in the 1960s, critics of science discovered that those in charge of the neutral sciences were over-whelmingly white, male, and privileged occupants of positions in advanced industrialized society (Rose, 1983). The sciences are inextricably part of the social order that supports them. Hubbard (1988) called our attention to the political, value-laden nature of scientific activity in her assertion that "the pretense that science is apolitical and value neutral is profoundly political because it obscures the political role that science and technology play in underwriting the existing distribution of power in society.... Science and technology always operate in somebody's interest" (p. 13). In societies where power is organized hierarchically (by class, culture, or gender), there is no possibility of an impartial, disinterested, value-neutral perspective. Social work's commitment to value-directed actions stands in contrast to positivist commitments to value-free endeavors. A profession that prides itself on a humanitarian value base cannot rely on a research grounded in the assertion that its methods can and should strip values from its work and findings. From its inception, social work research has been an applied research. The profession's commitment to practical ends requires that social work researchers possess an acute awareness of the value-laden potentials of the process and products of our science. Social work practitioners more readily become involved with research activities that honor the profession's commitment to client empowerment and social transformation. In both the planning and implementation of research activities, researchers need to attend to the policy implications of their inquiries (Cook & Fonow, 1990). Subject-Object Separation Logical positivism builds on the epistemological assumption of the possibility of separation of the observer from the observed, the knower from the known (Lincoln & Guba, cited in Wood, 1990). This thinking requires that the subject and object of research activities be treated as separate, noninteracting entities. The scientist is viewed as an independent observer who minimizes any relationship between the self and the subject of study. The actions of the researcher are constructed so that they do not infect or alter objective truth. However, it now appears that both the observer and the observed occupy the same causal plane. Both are influenced by the same sociocultural factors. **The objects of our research are**, in fact, **gazing back at us** (Harding, 1991). The requirement of subject-object separation stands as a significant barrier to social work practitioner involvement in the research process. This separation casts the practitioner in the role of an observer and reporter of reality, rather than as its cocreator and interpreter with the client (Witkin, 1991). A scientific approach that recognizes the social bond and the reciprocal nature of interactions between people in social contexts would be more consistent with the assumptions of social work practice. Objectivity Logical positivism builds on the ontological assumption of a single, tangible reality "out there" (Lincoln & Guba, cited in Wood, 1990). Positivist approaches to science assume that there is an objective world of facts and universal laws, independent of scientists and their community, waiting to be known. The assumption that the social world is knowable through observation and recording of objective reality by an independent researcher leads to the assertion that all people using the proper scientific method will come to the same conclusion. In this approach to scientific activity, bias is identified and eliminated from research activities through techniques such as randomization and control groups. This approach to objectivity views facts as independent of, and unaffected by, the cultural assumptions of the scientists who discover them. This approach to objectivity and the related search for universal laws that apply across cultures and times also strips the context from the products of science. A profession whose hallmark is a commitment to enhancing clients' dignity and worth must question approaches to research in which activities **reduce clients to mere objects of observation or manipulation**. The profession's dual focus on the individual in a social context and the inclusion of diversity as integral to understanding human behavior stand in contrast to narrow definitions of objectivity that "decontextualize" research activities. Harding (1991) deemed this objective approach inadequate because the methods of the scientific approach as applied are incapable of identifying or extracting sociocultural values and interests shared by the community of scientists. The scientific methods based on the assumptions of positivism allow for the detection of bias in individual scientists, but those methods do not detect commonly held assumptions or biases. Biases shared by the community of scientists are embedded in sociocultural values that are entrenched in the statement of the problem and in the choice of concepts included in the hypotheses to be tested. Language, values, and perceptions are all shaped by culture. Scientists cannot simply suspend the influences of their culture. Our best beliefs, as well as our least defensible ones, have social causes (Harding, 1991). Harding challenged scientists to a stronger objective approach that examines social and cultural influences. Social work practitioners and researchers are human observers with particular personal and social backgrounds who need to recognize the role investigations play in creating rather than merely discovering social phenomena (Witkin & Gottschalk, 1988). Social work's commitment to working with individuals as they interact in society requires an emphasis on contexts, perhaps more than any other profession (Wood, 1990). Social welfare research cannot engage in context stripping and the resulting diminished relevance for the sake of operational rigor. Such research needs to embrace the strongest possible definition of objectivity, one that requires systematic identification of both individual and cultural assumptions as they shape research efforts and simultaneously preserve the contextual richness and meaning of scientific findings.

LINK: STATISTICS

BY BELIEVING THAT WE CAN "MEASURE" POVERTY, WE ACCEPT THE MORAL FOUNDATION OF EUGENICS INHERENT WITHIN STATISTICS

ZUBERI AND BONILLA-SILVA, ZUBERI IS A PROFESSOR AND CHAIRMAN OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, BONILLA-SILVA IS A PREOFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, **2008**
[WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS, PG.8]

The language of statistics is full of terms and symbols that have no meaning to social scientist across disciplines and usually are not important to anyone who is not an expert in the specific discipline's practice of statistics. But the foundations of statistical applications to the study of society are the same and can be understood and debated on the basis of basic mathematics and logical statements. Yet there is no set logic in the methods themselves that lead to them being used by sociologist, economist, or political scientist. These various disciplines use statistics in particular ways because of a consensus among the practitioners. Thus, the accepted practices of statistical analysis unfortunately are not the result of the logic of the methods, but a result of the consensus making process within the discipline.

I elaborate on this point by pointing out that current statistical methodologies were developed as part of the eugenics movement and continue to reflect the racist ideologies that gave rise to them. Early in its development, social statistics were inextricably linked to the numerical analysis of human difference. Eugenic ideas were at the heart of the development of statistical logic. This statistical logic, as well as the regression type models that they employed, is the foundation on which modem statistical analysis is based.

In these cases, I ask the audience to think of the example of the statistical relationship between an individual's race and intelligence. I ask them to imagine that a researcher poses the question: "Is a person's level of intelligence the result of their race? "6 I suggest that the researcher establishes what we can study by how they have asked the question. This hypothetical question requires that we accept that both intelligence and individual racial identity can be measured using some type of instrument. In the social sciences, the instrument of measurement is a survey, or written examination. Thus, this hypothetical case requires us to believe that we can measure an individual's racial identity and intelligence by the use of a survey questionnaire or examination. By its very design, this hypothetical question has forced us to accept the logic of understanding the nature and relationship between race and intelligence. Both race and intelligence are presented as individual attributes. We are forced to consider the statistical relationship as something that can be learned from the data. But, in fact, the statistical relationship between the two variables is a result of how they have been designed and our acceptance of them as appropriate for statistical analysis. That is, we are not learning from the data, we are in fact presenting data that we have generated by our own biases. We believe that race can be measure by an individual, and that this measurement is objective and consistent across individuals. We also must accept that intelligence can be measure by a test. Both systems of collecting data and using statistics to analyze them were born in the intellectual movement of eugenics

LINK: POVERTY—MATERIAL VIEWS

MATERICAL VIEWS OF POVERTY MISUNDERSTAND THE LIVED REALITY OF THE IMPOVERISHED

MYERS, VICE PRESIDENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM STRATEGY, WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL, **1999** [BRYANT L., *WALKING WITH THE POOR*, P. 13]

<<The way we understand the nature of poverty and what causes poverty is very important, because it tends to determine how we respond to poverty. Articulating what poverty is and what causes it helps us determine the source of much of our understanding of what transformational development is and how it should be practiced. The purpose of Chapter 3 is to try and integrate the best of what people have been thinking about the nature of poverty and its cause.

We must begin with ourselves. We need to work hard to discover our assumptions and our preconditioning regarding poverty. This is particularly true for Christians, because there has been a variety of views of the poor, depending on one's Christian tradition.

Chapter 3 then reviews the changing views of poverty as a way of showing that understanding poverty is a never-ending task. In the early days of development many assumed that poverty could be explained by the absence of things. This was followed by adding the absence of ideas or knowledge to the mix, and then, as the systemic nature of poverty was explored, the absence of access to power, resources, and choices became part of our understanding of poverty. In the 1980s a systems view of poverty emerged with Robert Chambers's proposal that poverty is a system of entanglement. In the early 1990s John Friedman added to the discussion by describing poverty as the lack of access to social power, with an emphasis on adding political participation. Weighing in from a Christian perspective, Jayakumar Christian built on Chambers and Friedman by describing poverty as a system of disempowerment that creates oppressive relationships and whose fundamental causes are spiritual. Finally, I introduce Ravi Jayakaran's holistic framework of poverty as a lack of freedom to grow.

The chapter then explores the causes of poverty. I look at the interplay between the physical and social causes of poverty as causes largely external to the poor. I then explore the largely internal contribution to poverty re- suiting from mental and spiritual causes. Drawing heavily on Jayakumar Christian, I propose that the nature of poverty is fundamentally relational and that its cause is fundamentally spiritual.

The poor are poor largely because they live in networks of relationships that do not work for their well-being. Their relationships with others are often oppressive and disempowering as a result of the non-poor playing god in the lives of the poor. Their relationship within themselves is diminished and debilitated as a result of the grind of poverty and the feeling of permanent powerlessness. Their relationship with those they call "other" is experienced as exclusion. Their relation with their environment is increasingly less productive because poverty leaves no room for caring for the environment. Their relationship with the God who created them and sustains their life is distorted by an inadequate knowledge of who God is and what God wishes for all humankind. Poverty is the whole family of our relationships that are not all they can be.

The relationships of the poor don't work for the well-being of the poor because of spiritual values held by others and by the poor that do not enhance and support life. Selfishness, love of power, and feelings of ordained privilege express themselves in god-complexes. Loss, of hope, opportunity, and recognition mar the identity of the poor. Racism, ethnocentrism, and ostracism erode the intended blessing of having many cultures. Fear of spirits and belief in gods that cannot save obscure the offer of the God who desires to save. At the end of the day, the causes of poverty are spiritual.>>

LINK: POVERTY—GENERIC

HOMOGENOUS DISCUSSIONS OF WELFARE POLICY BAD DOESN'T TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONALIZED IMAGES AND CONSEQUENTLY TREATMENT TOWARDS THOSE OF DIFFERENT GENDERS AND ETHNICITIES

CAHN, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LAW AT GEORGE WASHINGTON LAW UNIVERSITY, **1997** (NAOMI R, SYMPOSIUM: REPRESENTING RACE OUTSIDE OF EXPLICITLY RACIALIZED CONTEXTS, 95 MICH. L. REV. 965)

<<<Poor black men and women occupy separate raced and gendered spaces in our culture. n114 As African Americans, they are both perceived as part of the underclass in our society; n115 however, as men [*986] and women, they are perceived differently. Poor black men are generally depicted as delinquents who are inadequately present in the home because they are in the street or in prison; n116 they are encouraged to spend more time with their families and provide more support. n117 Women are home-based and domestic, while men are "active" in the outside world. Paradoxically, then, while both images traditionally have had positive attributes when applied to whites - women are nurturing, men are rational - they are almost completely negative when applied to poor black men and women.

There is an anger toward welfare mothers for staying at home and taking care of their children, and toward poor fathers for allegedly deserting their children. While this anger conforms to traditional notions of the male role, it contradicts traditional women's roles: women are supposed to stay home and take care of children. Ironically, the purpose of the mother's pensions laws, and, at least in part for its first thirty years, of AFDC, was to enable women to stay at home with their children and remain homemakers. n118 The state provided financial aid as a substitute for having a man in the house, or for women leaving the house to work. It was only as more blacks - and unmarried women generally - received welfare that the expectations began to change.

Black women have always worked outside of the home. n119 Establishing programs such as workfare simply institutionalizes images of black women as workers, rather than mothers. It also punishes black women for seeking to enjoy some of the prerogatives that [*987] white women have traditionally enjoyed, such as the luxury of not working because of the necessity of caring for children. n120

Within the ideology of the cult of domesticity, men are the breadwinners. Indeed, in defining their roles, this is how men view themselves. n121 Again, however, like black women, black men take their places outside of these traditional images. The child support cooperation requirement treats all men in a fashion that is consistent with an image of noncooperation and abandonment. This disparaging image of black men has deep historical roots. The dominant negative cultural image of the black man is as the savage and criminal beast, n122 and this image is highly successful in influencing public policy. n123 In the media, black men are portrayed as dangerous, thereby influencing "legislators to seek immediate control of young Black men." n124 Similarly, police profiles tend to single out black men as potential, or actual, criminals. n125 [*988]

Maya Angelou explains that the caricatured black man, presented in minstrel shows, was someone " 'devoid of all sensibilities and sensitivities. [Minstrel shows] minimized and diminished the possibility of familial love.' " n126 Historically, black men who were slaves were unable to enter into binding marriages; they were frequently separated from their children with little thought. n127 Unlike white children, whose status was determined by their father, the status of black children was determined by their mother. n128 It is the evocation of this caricature, that black men do not care about their children, that appears to inform efforts at child support enforcement. The reality behind this rhetoric contradicts the caricatured image. >>>

LINK: POVERTY—"THE POOR"

THE AFFIRMATIVE REDUCES THE EXPERIENES OF PEOPLE IN POVERTY TO A HOMOGENOUS CATEGORY – THIS DISTANCE TREATS PEOPLE AS OBJECTS TO BE STUDIED AND CONTROLED

RIMSTEAD, B.A. AT YORK UNIVERSITY, M.A. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, PH.D. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, **2001**, [ROXANNE, REMNANTS OF NATION ON POVERTY NARRATIVES BY WOMEN, PG. 1-6]

<<<As a label itself, 'the poor' can function as a fiction of separateness and homogenization because, besides signifying objective difference from ' the non- poor,' it simultaneously invokes a long genealogy of discourses on subjective difference and distance. In reality, however, people often pass in and out of poverty in wealthy nations so that lumping 'the poor ' together in this fixed category is deceptively monolithic. Contemporary socio logical studies often begin by insisting on heterogeneity and shifting membership among the poor and the homeless. As the authors of a recent government study on women and labour market poverty in Canada have emphasized, membership among the poor and the non -poor shifts constantly, and the people moving through each category are fundamentally the same at the outset despite profound differences in material circumstances and social status which poverty brings: the poor are not substantially different from the non-poor. Many of the poor have full-time employment and levels of educational attainment similar to the non-poor. The poor are a diverse group made up of the elderly, children, single mothers, husband-wife families, disabled people, and young men and women who find themselves poor from time to time as a result of a variety of circumstances - separation, divorce, unemployment, a disabling accident, or sickness. (Gunderson et al., 41) Similarly, in 'Homelessness,' Alex Murray emphasized that the category of 'the homeless' in Canada consists of people who move in and out of the state of homelessness and that their profile shifts according to region, period, and individual circumstances. According to Murray, recent research contests the romanticized notion' of the homeless as hoboes who choose Skid Row over work and indicate s, instead, that women, children, and families are increasingly present in the numbers of the homeless, though less visible on the street. Furthermore, the majority of homeless sing le men are not romantic wanderers given to idleness but have been found ' to regard work favourably ... usually they moved to find work and would move elsewhere if work were available' (37). Murray also notes that many are trapped in poverty because the only work they have access to is the exploitative day labour system into which government employment and welfare agencies in Canada regularly stream them (37). Consequently, Murray calls for two radical correctives to the distorting popular images that separate and homogenize the homeless: first, the recognition of their connectedness to mainstream society and to each other (through alternative notions of community), and second, the recognition of the diversity of people who lose their homes du e to variations in regional, historical, and individual circumstances. So powerful are the hegemonic images of the poor in North America as inherently different and inferior that contemporary sociological studies must continually break down these monolithic, negative images that colonize the popular imaginary in order to pave the way for more factual studies or more sophisticated social theories. Given the power of social myth s to shape perceptions of the poor eve n against scientific knowledge, it is all the more surprising that the humanities have not paid more attention to how these taken-for granted images are deployed as cultural values in literature. Behind the homogenization of the poor and the homeless into a race apart lies the buried story of their true connectedness to dominant groups. One learns from reading many stories of the poor and theories of poverty that most of us are at risk of poverty because it is more situational and systemic to social relations in market society than inherent to a separate 'race' of people. Social myth s that the poor are idle and inherently predisposed to poverty reassure the middle classes that only those who deserve to or let themselves will fall from economic security. Suppressed narratives of middle- and upper-class social guilt and social fear about poverty comprise the reverse side of the Canadian / American Dream of 'making it' and are thus defining forces in the national imaginary of a wealthy nation.>>>

LINK: POVERTY—DISCOURSE

WE ARE NOT BEYOND EXPLOITATION, EDUCATION ALLOWS FOR POOR WOMEN TO MITIGATE THE MARKS OF THEIR PUNISHMENT

VIVYAN C. **ADAIR**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AT HAMILTON COLLEGE, "RECLAIMING CLASS: WOMEN, POVERTY, AND THE PROMISE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA," PG 28-29, **2003**

<<<My own life offers evidence of this cultural phenomenon. As a child, as an adult, and even as a single-parent college student (attempting to rewrite my story and value as one of transformation and mobility), I was read and punished as a poor woman even as I disciplined my own body to patrol my physical presence in the material world. Yet it is also true that, although I was marked as deviant and pathological, I eventually learned to resist and work against debilitating class and gender markings. The ability to engage in critical thought and analysis, to counter with a new discourse of authority, and to envision the relationship among ideology, social privilege, and oppression (garnered through access to post-secondary education) provided me with the tools to begin to attempt to fully read and mitigate—although never to erase—the marks of my own punishment, discipline, and position as sign of cultural dis-ease. Ironically, it was through exposure to the discipline of critical analysis that I began to resist and reconsider—deconstruct and rearrange—the bodily signs of my own very public punishment.

Recycled images of poor, welfare women permeate and shape our national consciousness.5 Yet as is so often the case, these images and narratives tell us more about the culture that spawned and embraced them than they do about the object of the culture's obsession. Simple, stable, and often widely skewed cover stories tell us what is "wrong" with some people, what is normative and what is pathological. By telling us who "bad" poor women are, we reaffirm and re-evaluate who we, as a nation and as a people—of allegedly good, middle-class, white, able-bodied, independent, male citizens—are. At their foundations, stories of the welfare mother intersect with, draw from, reify, and reproduce mythic American narratives associated with a constellation of beliefs about capitalism, male authority, the "nature" of humans, and the sphere of individual freedom, opportunity, and responsibility. These narratives purport to write the story of poor women in an arena in which only their bodies have been positioned to "speak."6 They promise to tell the story of who poor women are in ways that allow Americans to maintain a belief in both an economic system based on exploitation and an ideology that claims that we are all beyond exploitation.

These productions orchestrate the story of poverty as one of moral and intellectual lack and of chaos, pathology, promiscuity, illogic, and sloth juxtaposed always against the order, progress, and decency of "deserving" citizens. Trying to stabilize and make sense of unpalatably complex issues of poverty and oppression and attempting to obscure hegemonic stakes in representation, these narratives reduce and collapse the lives and experiences of poor women to deceptively simplistic dramas, which are then offered for public consumption. The terms of these dramas are palatable because they are presented as simple oppositions of good and bad, right and wrong, independent and dependent, deserving and undeserving. Yet as an intergenerationally poor woman, I know that poverty is neither this simple nor this singular. Poverty is rather the product of complex systems of power that at many levels are indelibly written on poor women and children in feedback loops that compound and complicate politically expedient readings and writings of our bodies. >>>

LINK: POVERTY—GENERIC

THE AFF'S REFUSAL TO FOCUS ON AFRICAN-AMERICANS AS SPECIFIC SUBJECTS OF POVERTY CONTRIBUTES TO THE STIGMATIZATION OF BLACKS AND HINDERS OUR ABILITY TO CREATE CHANGE WITHIN POVERTY

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**

[[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.11-12]

Critical to the mobilization of qualitative research in the area of poverty studies is that we acknowledge the effects of the deep racial fault line in American society on the identity, self-concept, and behavior of those we stigmatize as poor. **Race is nearly invisible in mainstream policy research on poverty**, and this despite an incontrovertible reality: not only are the experiences of persons of color who are poor different, but different at least in part because persons of color are perceived and treated differently. Martin Gillen (1999) observes a fundamental premise—unexamined in most research on poverty—of the public perception of welfare in the United States: welfare (much like crime) is a province populated by African Americans. Although Gillen limits his focus to attitudes toward welfare recipients, Katherine Newman's (1999) study of low- wage workers in Harlem slips almost silently from framing poverty as a debate about the availability of work into one about the moral character of poor African Americans. Newman assumes without saying so that most middle-class Americans view African Americans as potentially shiftless nonworkers and welfare recipients. Without acknowledgment, Newman confirms what we have known since the mid-1960s—that our public discourse on poverty and welfare is almost exclusively a discussion about the African American poor.

Scholars who want to understand poverty and the public policy debates that surround it must grapple with race-coded discourse. Euphemisms such as the underclass, welfare poor, and cycle of poverty may sanitize language, but they cannot mask our racialized perceptions of poverty. Nor can they mask the continuing processes of cultural and institutional separation that isolate African Americans from the mainstream (Munger forthcoming). Our **race-coded discourse** about poverty divides the poor and working classes into two groups: whites who suffer the effects of declining wages, benefits, and job security and therefore are deserving; and blacks who a priori are stigmatized as potential welfare recipients and therefore are undeserving (Matsuda 1997). Until this divide is bridged, Gillen suggests, little will change in the symbolic politics of poverty.

LINK: SOLVING POVERTY—AFFLUENCE

THE AFFIRMATIVE ASSUMES A WORLD WHERE POOR PEOPLE CANNOT LIVE A GOOD LIFE. THIS REINFORCES NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES THAT BEING IN POVERTY AND BEING IMPOVERISHED ARE THE SAME THING. WITHOUT GETTING CONSENT AND TALKING TO THESE PEOPLE THE POOR WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO LEAVE POVERTY.

HOOKS, CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK PROFESSOR, THEN DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, 1995–2004; BEREA COLLEGE, BEREA, KY, DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR-IN-RESIDENCE, BEGINNING 2004. CO-FOUNDER, HAMBONE LITERARY MAGAZINE. **2000** [BELL, WHERE WE STAND: CLASS MATTERS, P. 127-129]

Our nation is not striving to eliminate the conditions that create poverty. And while we need strategies of resistance that put in place structures that will enable everyone to have access to basic necessities, in the meantime we must work to resist the dehumanization of the poor. Hope must come not through unrealistic fantasies of affluence but rather through learning ways to cope with economic hardship that" do not dehumanize the poor and make it impossible for them to change their lot when opportunities arise. There are poor people dwelling in the affluent communities where I live. They are usually white. Mostly they try to hide their poverty—to blend in. Many of them are elderly and remain in the community because their housing is affordable through rent stabilization. Some of them are young people, single parents, who have been lucky enough to find affordable small living spaces in affluent neighborhoods where they feel their children will have a better chance. These folks live happy successful lives even though they are poor, just as some individuals in poor communities who lack material resources live happy lives. But it is harder to be poor when affluence is the norm all around you.

Their way of life is the concrete experience that gives the lie to all'" the negative stereotypes and assumptions about poverty that suggest that one can never be poor and have a happy life. They offer a vision of a good life despite poverty akin to the one I saw in my childhood. They survive by living simply—by relying at times on the support and care of more privileged friends and comrades. They may work long hours but still not have enough money to make ends meet. Yet they do not despair. Were they seduced by mainstream advertising to desire and consume material objects that are way beyond their means, they would soon destroy the peace of their lives? Were they to daily bombard their psyches with fantasies of a good life full of material affluence, they would lose touch with reality—with the good to be found in the lives that they most intimately know. And this psychic estrangement would make them unable to cope effectively with the realities of what any poor person must do to enhance their economic well-being.

Poor people who see meaning and value only in affluence and wealth can have no self-respect. They cannot treasure the good that may exist in the world ‘around them. They live in fantasy and as a con-sequence are more vulnerable to acting out (overspending, stealing, buying something frivolous when they lack food). All these actions take away their power and leave them feeling helpless.

Given the reality that the world's resources are swiftly dwindling because of the wastefulness of affluent cultures, the poor everywhere who are content with living simply are best situated to offer a vision of hope to everyone, for the day will come when we will all have to live with less. If people of privilege want to help the poor, they can do so by living simply and sharing their resources. We can demand of our government that it eliminate illegal drug industries in poor neighborhoods. Imagine how many poor communities would be transformed if individuals from these communities, with help from outsiders, were given full-time jobs in the neighborhoods they lived in, employment created in the interest of making safe, drug-free environments. That could be a new industry.

Obviously, the culture of consumerism must be critiqued and challenged if we are to restore to the poor of this nation their right to live peaceful lives despite economic hardship. The poor and the affluent alike must be willing to surrender their attachment to material possessions, to undergo a conversion experience that would allow them to center their lives on nonmarket values. Affluent folk who want to share resources should be able to support a poor family for a year and write that off their taxes. Not only would this help to create a better world for us all (since none of our lifestyles are safe when predatory violence becomes a norm), it would mean that we embrace anew the concept of interdependency and accountability for the collectiveness of all citizens that is the foundation of any truly democratic and just society.

LINK: RACE—STATISTICS

FAULTY CONCEPTIONS OF RACE LEGITIMIZES AND PERPETUATES THE METHODOLOGIES OF THE PROBLEM

ZUBERI AND BONILLA-SILVA, ZUBERI IS A PROFESSOR AND CHAIRMAN OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, BONILLA-SILVA IS A PREOFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, **2008**
[WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS, PG.5-6]

In these discussions I always point out that the idea that racial differences are the cause of individual social status and achievement grew out of colonialism and the enslavement of Africans and Native Americans. The rise of democracy occurred at the same time as enslavement and colonialism. The establishment of European colonies in Africa, Asia, and America distinguished the beginning of the twentieth century. When Africans were emancipated from slavery in the West, colonization and segregation ruled the day in Africa and Asia. These apparent contradictions needed justification, and the birth of racial statistics gave scientific credibility to justifications of racial inequality. Usually it is at this point that someone in the audience points out that statistics have not been used exclusively by supporters of racist policies. They argue that, particularly in more recent times, social scientists have regularly used statistics to refute racist arguments. I agree with them on this important point; however, I mention that by employing racial statistics incorrectly they legitimate the use of methodologies that perpetuate the problem. In part, this is a result of a faulty understanding of the meaning of race, and a misuse of statistical methodology. I remind the audience that the top journals in sociology routinely publish articles in which the authors discuss the "effect of race." This use of causal language has important implications for how racial data are interpreted.4 In almost all of the articles in these journals race is viewed as an unalterable characteristic of an individual. This social construction of race as an unalterable characteristic places a conceptual limitation on the researcher's ability to understand racial dynamics. I argue that the very definition of race has changed over time; thus, to understand the impact of race one would need to understand the impact and nature of these changes in the definition of race. As a variable, race is not consistently defined as a variable across time and space, and thus comparing race over time is in reality a comparison of the changing social meaning of race

RACE IS A SET OF CONSTRUCTED SOCIAL RELATIONS—THE APPEAL TO DATA IN RELATION TO RACE ONLY REINFORCES THE STANDPOINT OF THE PRIVILEGED

ZUBERI AND BONILLA-SILVA, ZUBERI IS A PROFESSOR AND CHAIRMAN OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, BONILLA-SILVA IS A PREOFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, **2008**
[WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHOD, PG. 6-7]

I suggest that when we discuss the "effect of race," we are less mindful of the larger social world in which the path to success or failure is influenced. Usually someone in attendance argues that "race causes a person to be in a certain condition." This is like arguing that race is a proxy for an individ¬ual's biological makeup, or like smoking causes cancer. Alternatively, I suggest that we place statistical analysis of race within a historical and social context. It is not a question of how a person's race causes disadvantage and discrimination. The real issue is the way the society responds to an individual's racial identification. The question has more to do with society itself, not the innate makeup of individuals. Racial identity is about shared social status, not shared individual characteristics. Race is not about an individual's skin color. Race is about an individual's relationship to other people within the society. While racial identification may be internalized and appear to be the result of self designation, it is, in fact, a result of the merging of self imposed choice within an externally imposed context. When we forget or make slight of this point, social science becomes the justification for racial stratification. To this end, I argue that race is a social construct. Within this construct, the person of color does not exist outside of his or her othemess. It is the international belief in race as real that makes race real in its social consequences. Nevertheless, a belief is not a fact, and we should question how and why we believe something to be real. We must demystify aspects of currently accepted notions of racial statistics by showing the extent to which this research has been shaped by extrinsic factors such as the interests and social position of particular scholars/researchers and debated issues long since forgotten. **The views and social position of researchers have a lot to do with how they interpret racial statistics**. As our example with the "effect of race" discussed above, **researchers reach beyond the data when they interpret their statistical results**. Data do not tell us a story**. We use data to craft a story that comports with our understanding of the world**. If we begin with a racially biased view of the world, then we will end with a racially biased view of what the data have to say. Data may indeed speak to some users of statistics; however, it only speaks to the rest of us in the voice of the research.

LINK: POVERTY—RACIALIZED

THE MEDIA AND WELFARE STATE USE RACIAL AND GENDER CLASSIFICATIONS TO PORTRAY WELFARE RECIPIENTS AS BLACK SINGLE WOMEN WHO ARE LAZY AND IMMORAL

CAHN, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LAW AT GEORGE WASHINGTON LAW UNIVERSITY, **1997** (NAOMI R, SYMPOSIUM: REPRESENTING RACE OUTSIDE OF EXPLICITLY RACIALIZED CONTEXTS, 95 MICH. L. REV. 965)

<<<In contemporary culture, public welfare, race, and gender are integrally connected. While it is true that, proportionately, there are more African American recipients of welfare than white recipients, and proportionately, there are more blacks living in poverty than whites, the majority of AFDC recipients nevertheless are not black. n23 Yet the media routinely depict welfare recipients as African-American women, and, correspondingly, as lazy and immoral. n24 Race has also affected the distribution of welfare benefits - the history of AFDC shows repeated attempts to exclude African Americans through morality requirements. n25 [*971]

AFDC recipients are also gendered: they are mothers, n26 and they are unmarried. Statistics show that single mothers comprise ninety-five percent of the adults on AFDC. n27 Historically, however, all unmarried women and African American women were generally excluded from welfare because of their failure to comply with morality requirements. n28

Aid to Dependent Children ("ADC") was part of the Social Security Act of 1935, although its roots reach far earlier. Attempts to provide support for the children of morally worthy widows first received national attention at a 1909 White House Conference on Children. n29 Illinois enacted a Mother's Aid Law in 1911, which provided money to women so that they could mother their own children; the law limited eligibility to widows who were American citizens. n30 Thirty-eight states had enacted similar legislation by 1919. n31 The actual benefits received from these programs were highly variable - not only did a large percentage of potentially eligible mothers not receive aid, but the amount received was generally insufficient to allow women to stay home as full-time mothers. n32 Moreover, in light of the morality standards written into such laws, large categories of women could not receive aid. Only three of the laws allowed unmarried mothers to receive pensions, n33 and, in a 1931 study, the U.S. Children's Bureau found that ninety-six percent of the recipients were white, and only three percent [*972] were black. n34 After the enactment of ADC, blacks continued to be excluded through morality requirements;

n35 "man-in-the-house" rules n36 simultaneously discouraged the formation of two-parent families while policing the behavior of single women.

The history of aid to poor women is thus replete with attempts to control their lives by conditioning public welfare on their compliance with morality requirements. n37 The purpose of the morality requirements has, to some extent, changed: the original purpose of these requirements was to support worthy women, while the contemporary purpose is to stigmatize recipients. n38 [*973] >>>

LINK: HIGH THEORY

THE AFFIRMATIVE RELIANCE ON ESOTERIC THEORETICAL POSITIONS IS A LINK – THEY ARE TOTALIZING POSITIONS UNCONCERNED WITH EXPERIENCES OF THOSE IN POVERTY AND TREAT PEOPLE AS PAWNS IN A CHESS BOARD.

RIMSTEAD, B.A. AT YORK UNIVERSITY, M.A. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, PH.D. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, **2001**, [ROXANNE, REMNANTS OF NATION ON POVERTY NARRATIVES BY WOMEN, PG. 259-260]

<<<I would agree that it is useful to be vigilant about the dangers of mystifying subjectivity and prioritizing it *above* other form of knowledge, practices which Chris Weedon links with assumptions in humanist discourse of the free, se lf-de termining individu al and those of certain radical and essentialist theories of gender (78-9) and which Catherine Belsey also links with assumptions of autonomous agency (1988, 51- 2). But the fact remains that theories which are not informed by these subjectivities, even when acknowledging the *voices* of working- class women as worthy *objects* of study, *have* tended to be **too abstract or too idealist** to bring us much closer to any 'inside' knowledge of what Zandy referred to as 'th e boundaries and textures of working-class women's *lives.'* It seems that the mundane and messy sphere of material struggle, class identification, complicity, and the complexity of life in the concrete world *have* not been able to emerge through the highly abstract language and theory of literary discourse whereas these subjectivities are palpable in testimonies about the *lived.*

Paulo Freire, the great Brazilian educator, has urged that academics engage in *dialogue* with the oppressed in order to inform theory and praxis and avoid recolonizing the cultural spaces of oppressed people by making them into objects of study. When dominant groups refuse to listen to oppressed people's subjectivities, Freire observed, a form of 'cultural invasion ' takes place in support of systemic oppression: '[i]n this enomenon, the invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of the latter 's potentialities; they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression'. **Freire maintained that cultural synthesis will take place not when oppressed people become more familiar to intellectuals as *objects* of study but when they leave behind their status as objects of someone else's cultural imaginings to become the subjects of their own stories**. Intellectuals play a bridging role between the oppressed and emerging it is important to remember, after all, that the Lirmingham School embraced marginalized subjects not only by making them objects of study but also through an extensive university outreach program of adult education that sought to equip workingclass subjects with the tools for analysing their own relation to culture (During). In Canada , similar efforts of outreach - say, for example, that of Frontier College to educate illiterate workers on the work site - have not aimed for the same high level of critical analysis. I am not aware that any of the cultural studies programs in Canadian universities are currently invested in adult education outreach programs, unless of course one counts the passive form of TV university. 260 Remnants of Nation oppositional culture during cultural revolution , according to both Freire and Gramsci, because they listen to oppressed subjects who are capable of theorizing their own oppression and then lead the oppressed to greater subjecthood and greater cultural power in the public sphere. Freire describes the bridging function as leading others to critical cultural analysis of their own *lived* experience of oppression: Thus cooperation leads dialogical Subjects to focus their attention on the reality which mediates them and which - posed as a problem challenges them. The response to th at challenge is the action of the dialogical Subjects upon reality in order to transform it. Let me reemphasize that posing reality as a problem does not mean sloganizing: it means critical analys is of a problematic reality'. The shift of focus from orderly theory to the detailed consideration of disorderly culture is crucial to breaking down the homogenizing image of the poor as Other. For example, it allows us to regard marginalized narratives as alternative knowledge forms that are sufficiently complex in and of themselves as testimonies and minority theories that they cannot be contained or made coherent by theory alone. It also recognizes that many oppressed subjects have not had access to the production of cultural theory in any academically legitimate sense, but that they are, none the less, capable of theorizing their own oppression from their own stand point. **The most critical theoretical position** to take in interrogating the politics of representations of poverty is the position that **no *one* theory of class or poverty**, no single social or literary theory, **can explain adequately the complexity** of classed experiences as they are *lived* and reproduced through culture.>>>

LINK: HIGH THEORY

THEORY REPLICATES STRUCTURES OF DOMINATION

STARK, CHAIR OF LAW, WEST VIRGINIA COLLEGE OF LAW; PROFESSOR OF LAW, HOFSTRA, **2009** (BARBARA, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW, 2009 B.Y.U.L. REV. 381)

Theory is problematic in this context for the same reasons that theory is always problematic. It sacrifices the messy complexity of reality for the clarity of abstraction. John Rawls' A Theory of Justice 48 has been criticized, for example, because Rawls begins with the assumption that fair decisions about how to structure society can only be made behind a "veil of ignorance." That is, those making the decisions should not know their place in society and how they personally will be affected by their decisions. Rather, the decisions should be fair enough that they will be satisfactory, however one is situated. Rawls' decision makers are disembodied and disconnected. They literally have no physical reality; they are not old, or hungry, or pregnant. 49 They are not part of any family, community, or social network. As a corollary, theory inevitably omits or distorts the experience of some, while reifying that of others. 50

At the same time, theory is even more problematic in the context of global poverty than it is in others because of both the limitations of liberal theory 51 and the political reality of liberal hegemony in an international system of sovereign states. Theory is also problematic [*391] here because of its applications, the uses to which theory has been put. Human rights are grounded in liberal theory, but so was colonialism. 52

Indeed, some argue that the grand theory of the Enlightenment is oblivious to its own "will to power." 53 The Enlightenment made "man" rather than God the center of the universe. But its purportedly universal, objective, rational subject is in fact a Western white man. The Enlightenment's promised Utopia, similarly, is the universalization of Western culture. 54 Thus, liberal theory has been used to justify the colonialism and neocolonialism that, some suggest, is responsible for the ongoing impoverishment of the global South.

CRITICAL THEORY IS DIVORCED FROM MATERIAL REALITY – THIS WILL ONLY MAINTAIN WHITENESS. ONLY A CRITIQUE THAT IS ATTENTIVE TO IDENTITY CAN TRANSFORM SOCIAL REALITY

I.M YOUNG PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO (POLITY AND GROUP DIFFERENCES) AUGUST 17, 1990 .

Rejecting a theory of justice does not entail eschewing rational discourse about justice. Some modes of reflection, analysis, and argument aim not at building a systematic theory, but at clarifying the meaning of concepts and issues, describing and explaining social relations, and articulating and defending ideals and principles. Reflective discourse about justice makes arguments, but these are not intended as definitive demonstrations. They are addressed to others and await their response, in a situated political dialogue. In this book I engage in such situated **analysis and argument in the mode of critical theory.**

As I understand it, critical theory is a normative reflection that is historically and socially contextualized. Critical theory rejects as illusory the effort to construct a universal normative system insulated from a particular society. Normative reflection must begin from historically specific circumstances because there is nothing but what is, the given, the situated interest in justice, from which to start. Reflecting from within a particular social context, good normative theorizing cannot avoid social and political description and explanation. Without social theory, normative reflection is abstract, empty, and unable to guide criticism with a practical interest in emancipation. Unlike positivist social theory, however, which separates social facts from values, and claims to be value neutral, critical theory denies that social theory must accede to the given. Social description and explanation must be critical, that is, aim to evaluate the given in normative terms. Without such a critical stance, many questions about what occurs in a society and why, who benefits and who is harmed, will not be asked, and social theory is liable to reaffirm and reify the given social reality.

Critical theory presumes that the normative ideals used to criticize a society are rooted in experience of and reflection on that very society, and that norms can come from nowhere else. But what does this mean, and how is it possible for norms to be both socially based and measures of society? Normative reflection arises from hearing a cry of Normative reflection arises from hearing a cry of suffering or distress, or feeling distress oneself. The philosopher is always socially situated, and if the society is divided by oppressions, she either reinforces or struggles against them.

LINK: WELFARE*

THE STATE TREATS WELFARE RECIPIENTS AS LAB RATS AND SANCTIONS EXPERIMENTS TO TEST WAYS OF CHANGING THEIR BEHAVIOR THROUGH PENALTIES, REWARDS, AND LIMITATIONS OF AID. THIS EXPERIMENTATION SOMETIMES EXPANDS OUTSIDE THE REALM OF WELFARE AND LEGITIMIZES MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC TESTING ON THE IMPOVERISHED

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, 19**95** (STANDFORD, WORKS OF WELFARE, P 14-15)

<<<Haveman has stressed that one of the great achievements of public policy's transformation of social science in the 1960s was the subsidization of large-scale experiments to assess the effects of welfare on work, childbearing, and family formation among the poor.57 Most noteworthy have been the guaranteed income experiments of the 1960s and 1970s and the workfare demonstrations of the 1980s.58 Experimentation has more recently achieved an unprecedented role in the making of social policy. New federal rules on "waivers" for how states administer AFDC programs require experimental evaluation of these changes.59 **Most of these experiments involve behavioral inducements and penalties designed to get recipients to leave welfare, such as two-year time limitations for the receipt of welfare, rewards for getting married, penalties for having additional children while receiving public assistance, and denial of aid to teen mothers living independently.60 Experimentation has arrived as an institutionalized part of welfare policy making.61**

This undoubtedly has occurred, but what is significant about it may have more to do with **legitimating the idea that people in poverty can be uncon-senting subjects of government-sanctioned experiments.** There is an insidious, if unintended, subtext to the rise of this new "social experimentation," though what I have in mind is hardly the conservative critique against "social engineering" as hopelessly idealistic and meddlesome. From the income maintenance experiments of the 1960s to the workfare demonstrations of the 1990s — that is, from liberal-minded experiments about a guaranteed income to conservative-minded programs requiring work for benefits —welfare policy research has been implicated in a pernicious but pervasive logic: the poverty of poor people is a mysterious thing, attributable in good part to their individual behavior, worthy of being medicalized in terms of experimental interventions that are designed to test the viability of various schemes for changing their behavior. Policy makers might have a hard time justifying this sort of nonconsensual "experimentation" when providing benefits for the nonpoor; however, there is little political opposition to treating the poor as a special group for whom such experimentation is appropriate.62

Paralleling a long-standing American tradition that has assumed the propriety of experimenting on marginalized populations, especially poor persons of color, the idea of social welfare experiments reinforces attitudes concerning other more aggressive treatment of the poor, such as their use in the testing of new medicines and for the study of the effects of untreated sexually transmitted disease, and even forced sterilization.63 Recent revelations about experiments by the U.S. Department of Energy examining the effects of radiation on unsuspecting low-income pregnant teenagers further underscore this tradition of assuming that persons in poverty are more readily available for nonconsensual experimentation.64 Proposals concerning the mandatory use of contraceptive implants to reduce pregnancy among welfare recipients bring together social experimentation and more medicalized experiments on the poor.65 Under such circumstances, **even the best-intentioned social experimentation potentially reencodes "the poor" as the marginal "other." Experimentation**, at the least, **reinforces the idea that the goal of welfare policy research is to produce decontextualized information about the distinctive behavior of the poor so that the right mix of incentives and penalties can be introduced in order to get the impoverished to change their behavior. Experimentation is entirely consistent with ETM and the way it constructs the poor as deficient subjects of the welfare state.** >>>

LINK: DEMANDS

RADICAL DEMANDS ARE INSUFFICIENT – HISTORY PROVES THAT YOUNG ACTIVITS WILL QUICKLY BECOME APOLIGISTS FOR OPPRESSIVE STRUCTURES WHEN THEIR MATERIAL PRIVILEGES ARE IN DANGER OF BEING ALTERED.

HOOKS, TY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK, PROFESSOR, THEN DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, 1995–2004; BEREA COLLEGE, BEREA, KY, DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR-IN-RESIDENCE, BEGINNING 2004. CO-FOUNDER, HAMBONE LITERARY MAGAZINE. **2000** [BELL, WHERE WE STAND: CLASS MATTERS, P. 63-65]

<<<The Politics of Greed

Being overwhelmed by greed is a state of mind and being that most human beings have experienced at some time in our lives. Most children experience greed in relation to food—endless longing for sweets, longings that lead to hoarding, stealing, or some combination of these. Excessive indulgence in favorite foods, especially sweet ones, by children often leads to sickness. Consequently, many of us learn while quite young that greed has its dangers, that it causes suffering. Most children are taught that excessive desire is bad. Parents, even dysfunctional ones, do not wish to raise a child to be greedy. These childhood imprints lose power in today's hedonistic consumer culture where the good life has come to be seen as the life where one can have whatever one wants, where no desire is seen as excessive. Beyond childhood squabbles over toys or food where greedy desires to possess and hoard surfaced sometimes, for most folks, religious teachings were the only other place where greed was talked about, where it was deemed sinful and dangerous. The decline of substantive religious practice in contemporary everyday life engendered in part by the worship of technological advancement and our ongoing cultural obsession with progress has practically eliminated any concern with the ethics of greed.

Indeed, as a nation where the culture of narcissism reigns supreme, where I, me, and mine are all that matters, greed becomes the order of the day. While the sixties and seventies can be characterized as a time in the nation when there was a widespread sense of bounty that could be shared precisely because excess was frowned upon, the eighties and nineties are the years where fear of scarcity increased even as a culture of hedonistic excess began to fully emerge. Widespread communal concern for justice and social welfare was swiftly replaced by conservative notions of individual accountability and self-centered materialism. Zillah Eisenstein notes in Global Obscenities: "The extremes of wealth and poverty within the united states also mirror the extremes across the globe. The wealthiest 20 percent of U.S. citizens received 99 percent of the total gain in marketable wealth between 1983 and 1989. More than 38 million people live in poverty in the united states, of whom more than 40 percent are under eighteen years of age." The rich are getting richer and the \ poor poorer.

Radical young politicos from privileged backgrounds who had sought to intervene on oppressive capitalism became adults who were eager to find and keep their place in the existing economic system. And if this system was fast turning our nation into a world of haves and have-nots with little in between, they wanted to remain in the ranks of the privileged. Once they advocated living simply and sharing resources, now they join their more conservative counterparts in embracing and advocating individual gain over communal good. Together both groups put in place a system of protectionism to further support and perpetuate their diverse class interests.

Since the radicals and/or liberals who had once repudiated class privilege brought to their reclaiming of class power a more open view toward the masses than their ancestors, they were quite willing to let go of old notions, whether rooted in racism or sexism, to exploit the material desires of any group. More than any other group, in the nation's history, this group was and is willing to forego allegiance to race or gender to promote their class interests. If they could make a fortune promoting and selling a product to any group, **they were willing to play and prey upon any need or vulnerability that would aid in their accumulation of wealth**. Suddenly, spheres of advertising that had always excluded poor and lower-class people had no trouble mining their culture, their images, if it would lead to profit. A new generation of upper and ruling classes had come of age. They were motivated more by the desire for ever-increasing profit than by sustained allegiance to race or gender.>>>

LINK: UNIVERSAL DEMANDS

UNIVERSAL PROGRAMS FAIL, RAISING SOCIAL CONCIOUSNESS IS KEY TO THEIR PEDAGOGICAL THINKING

ZUBERI AND BONILLA-SILVA, ZUBERI IS A PROFESSOR AND CHAIRMAN OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, BONILLA-SILVA IS A PREOFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, **2008**
[WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS, PG.333-334]

Instead of the so-called universal programs and universal politics (by which authors often mean using class as the category around which to build a coalition) advocated by liberals and many progressives alike, we believe it is imperative for this episteme to be openly race conscious. Such a standpoint is better suited for producing realistic knowledge about racial matters, for ultimately helping to develop real communication across racial boundaries, and for producing the knowledge and practices that will ultimately help abolish race as a category of exclusion. In this we stand strong, like Frantz Fanon, Sojourner Truth, W. E. B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells, and so many others; we stand strong and proud of who we are and tell sociologists and other social scientists exactly what Fanon said in his Black Skin, White Masks: I am not a potentiality of something. I am wholly what I am. I do not have to look for the universal. No probability has any place in me. My Negro consciousness does not hold itself out as a lack. It is. It is its own follower. (1967, 135)

Third, the epistemology of racial liberation is unabashedly "political" in the sense that it is deeply reflective of and rooted in the liberation movements of the past, present, and future. "Knowledge," as Scraton has argued, "including the formalized 'domain assumptions' and boundaries of academic disciplines is neither value-free nor neutral . . . but is derived and reproduced in, historically and contemporaneously, in the structural relations of inequality and oppression that characterize established social orders" (Scraton 2004, 179). Hence the challenge for a critical epistemology like the one we are endorsing here "is to provide knowledge which engages the prevailing social structures . . . oppressive structures [such as] those based on class, gender, and race" (Harvey 1990, 2). Accordingly, **the epistemology of racial emancipation is fundamentally geared toward the production of knowledge that is socially and politically relevant** (Essed and Nimako 2006) and, hence, derides the current state of affairs in sociology and the social sciences where too many scholars do "small-scale research backed by large-scale grants" (Duberman 1999, 193).

LINK: REFORMISM

EXPANDING THE PROVIDED SERVICES GIVE THE PROVIDER A FALSE SENSE OF SATISFACTION AS THE IMPOVERISHED RECIPIENTS ARE ONLY FURTHER DEGRADED. THIS ALLOWS US TO ASSUME THE POSITION OF THE IMPOVERISHED WHEN IN ACTUALITY WE ARE THE FARTHEST THING FROM.

SCHORR, LECTURER IN SOCIAL MEDICINE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY, AND DIRECTOR OF THE PROJECT ON EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS AND OF ITS PATHWAYS, **1997** [LISBETH B. "COMMON PURPOSES," ANCHOR BOOKS. PG. 26-27]

Another way we keep the Ceiling on Scale hidden, is when we comfort—and delude—ourselves by not acting on the implications of how often model programs succeed by beating the system. They do so by going around the system, getting their people first in line in overcrowded clinics, developing personal relationships with professional colleagues to avoid the lack of responsiveness of other institutions, and by sending advocates along to make the system respond in ways it does not do under ordinary circumstances. They take advantage of whatever opportunities they find to maneuver between and around existing barriers.

Many Reform efforts thus achieve results in the words of one study, essentially by "tricking the system into giving what is needed to operate, without changing it fundamentally." In this way, model projects are able to innovate at the margins and attract demonstration funds and serve, as Heather Weiss of the Harvard Family Project has pointed out, as "**the safety valve to stave off systems change**." Gerald Smale, the British social innovation expert, goes further, saying that pilot programs, by providing enough exposure to the proposed change to allow the rest of the system to inoculate itself, often make the system actually more resistant to change.

But, most important, the techniques that work to beat the system when the model program is small and marginal can no longer help when it is time to expand and break through the Ceiling on Scale. As educator Deborah Meier points out, others operating within the system become resentful that favored innovators are not being held to the same constraints they chafe under. Efforts to reach greater numbers bring greater visibility, and greater visibility creates new demands to comply with old rules. That is why innovative programs cannot grow and thrive in an unchanged system.

Foundations became increasingly aware in the early 1990s that they were overemphasizing innovation for its own sake and ignoring the challenge of funding implementation on a significant scale. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and several others began to focus directly on the replication issue. In 1993, the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation joined to provide startup funding to Replication and Program Services, Inc. to promote the replication of programs serving social and community purposes. And Pew, together with the Rockefeller Foundation, support the Boston-based Going to Scale Project.

But acting on the finding that effective demonstrations so frequently bumped into the Hidden Ceiling on Scale would be no simple matter. Demonstrations don't make waves. Moving them into mainstream systems does. Moving demonstrations into the mainstream requires, to use T.S. Elicit's words, a willingness to "disturb the universe," because it means breaking the Hidden Ceiling on Scale by changing the legislative, funding, and regulatory foundations on which the replications are expected to operate.

LINK: PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE IGNORES CONTEXT

FAILINGER, PROFESSOR OF LAW, HAMLINE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW, **08** (MARIE A., GEORGETOWN JOURNAL ON POVERTY LAW & POLICY, 15 GEO. J. POVERTY LAW & POL'Y 209)

A first caution that restorative justice has to offer is that public benefit programs cannot be constructed around a simplistic anthropology of the person. In their policy form, **American public benefit systems have neglected their recipients' embeddedness in social systems and relationships**. 99 In providing both benefits and services, as well as in creating expectations for behavior (including work behavior of welfare clients), welfare programs--following the assumptions of objective legality--generally **pretend that these systems and relationships do not or should not influence the recipient's behavior**. 100 As in a criminal trial, they focus on what the recipient herself has done in the immediate past (the past week, the past month), and take no account of the recipient's long-term past history or the context of her life. These welfare programs do not inquire about abusive family members, unreliable day care providers, chronically sick children, busses that do not run on time or rides that are unreliable, and all of the factors that conspire against low-income workers' ability to meet the rigid expectations imposed on those who have low-wage jobs.

LINK: FAMILY PLANNING

THE AFFIRMATIVES LINKAGE OF REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM TO THE MANAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND BROADER SOCIAL STRUCTURES SHOULD BE RESISTED, OTHERWISE THE PLAN WILL BECOME A VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL ENGINEERING

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, **1995** (SANFORD, WORDS OF WELFARE, P 33-34)

For conservatives, "family planning" is a stark example of "social engineering." Yet, as Linda Gordon notes, Planned Parenthood, the dominant organization for providing such services for more than fifty years, assiduously sought to ensure that family planning, from contraception to "marriage" counseling, was seen as consonant with the dominant discourse of family.84 At various turns this has proven most difficult, particularly when contraception was shown to be at least as important to the unmarried as the married, or when abortion was finally determined to be part of women's right to privacy. More important, the integration of women's reproductive rights into family discourse has at times meant the subordination of efforts to achieve gender equality in order to rationalize reproductive freedom as consistent with family values. Family planning is a politically significant misnomer. The term obscures that fact that the most politically significant services offered in the name of "family planning," such as pregnancy counseling for unmarried teenagers, are often provided when the planning of a family is exactly what does not happen, or is what the young women want to avoid. Reproductive freedom includes the right not to have a family. The better response, however, is not to deny the need for the services implied by "family planning," but instead to legitimate them on their own terms. Rather than subordinate the laudable social goal of reproductive freedom, **it is better to resist the tendency to tie reproductive freedom to the family ideal**. Although there are bound to be moments in any struggle where the tie to dominant discourse may be strategically advantageous, the contradictions that come with achieving reproductive freedom in the name of family suggest that this is a tie that binds retrogressively.

Planning is its own misnomer here. Families are often ill equipped for planning, and planning for families is something that many people do poorly, for a variety of reasons that have more to do with the inadequacies of their circumstances than with the people themselves. Poverty, lack of education, youth, and many other factors make some people more dependent on attempts to engage post hoc in retrospective family planning. "Family planning" often deals with problems of poverty well beyond the family. Yet, perpetuating the profamily orientation within the context of allegedly rational "planning" would reinforce the idea that family structure is the key to solving the problems of poverty. This same family discourse justifies coercive intervention in other areas of public assistance, including the growing popularity of the idea that welfare recipients should be encouraged or required to submit to contraceptive implants.85 The dilemma for "family planning" advocates is how to legitimate their services within the dominant discourse on families without emphasizing family over other, more critical, causes of poverty.

While under assault by the right as antifamily, advocates of the Planned Parenthood variety have risked falling prey to profamily rhetoric as a way to eke out some legitimacy for reproductive rights. "Family" is the all-too-convenient card for rationalizing many social practices — some good, some reprehensible. It can irresponsibly justify almost all that is done in its name as well as limit consideration of practices that deserve to be affirmed in their own right even if they cannot be justified as serving the allegedly greater good of "the family." Abortion, in particular, as a critical form of reproductive freedom, especially for people living in poverty, needs to be justified on its own account, as feminists have demonstrated, as integral to realizing the social goods of gender equality and a more just society.86

LINK: SOCIAL SCIENCES

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ALL STUDIES OF RACE ARE INTRINSICALLY CONNECTED TO EUGENICS; THE AFF ONLY MAKES RACISM WORSE

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[WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS, PG.330]

'Unfortunately (or, maybe, predictably), because the social sciences were part of what Foucault (1973) labeled "the sciences of Man," the knowledge they produced was implicated in the "matrix of domination" (the race, class, gender, and sexual order of things) (Collins 2007), and fundamentally geared toward "social control" (Ross 1990).3 Hence, from the beginning, sociology as all the social sciences produced knowledge about "Others" (workers, people of color, gays and lesbians, etc.) as "deviants from the "norm" (defined as White, heterosexual, bourgeois, and male). Furthermore, social statistics were created as researchers sought to formally define these "deviant" others of color (Zuberi 2001a). Difference was not regarded in the social sciences as a salutary sign of human heterogeneity, but as clear proof of the inferiority of the "deviants" from the natural "order of things" (Foucault 1973; Zuberi 2001a, 2006). From a statistical point of view this meant that normalcy could be defined by the use of a so called bell curve (Zuberi 2001a).

Based on this "(White) gaze" (Foucault 1979), sociology explained racial inequality mostly as the outcome of the "deficiencies" of people of color whether they be construed as natural (i.e., biological) or cultural. In fact, African Americans and other people of color have been historically central to disciplines such as sociology for this reason exclusively: they have sewed, alongside women and workers, as the "abnormal," "deviants," and problem people" (Du Bois 1934; Zuberi 2006); they have served as the "object of study" as well as subjects for practicing social engineering and "reforms" of all sorts (Bhabha 1994). Whereas anthropology found most of its "savages" abroad (Said 1979; but see Baker 1998), sociology "found" them within (Zuberi 2006). Indeed, "The Art of Savage Discovery" has a long history in the social sciences

LINK: MARRIAGE PROMOTION

THE CRITIQUES FOCUS ON THE SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCES OF WELFARE, SUCH AS THE BROADER SOCIAL PROMOTION OF MARRIAGE, IGNORES THE REAL NEEDS AND LIVED EXPERIENCES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY. ONLY ADOPTING THE STANDPOINT OF THE OPPRESSED CAN SOLVE

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, **1995** (SANFORD, WORDS OF WELFARE, P. 140-141)

Conclusion

One of the greatest ironies of the Family Support Act of 1988 is that it is based on hard data and solid research that do not support the legislation in many respects.86 The research is often silent on key features of the legislation. When it does speak to specific revisions, it often contradicts other parts of the legislation. Other times, concerning work requirements in particular, the research suggests that these changes are not likely to have much effect in providing recipients with the substantive resources they need to escape the poverty that makes them dependent on welfare. The failure of the final legislation to reflect the research lies in part in the compromises endemic to the legislative process, but the tenuous relationship between research and policy is also attributable to the fact that the research was used to legitimate preconceived policy approaches. This may be because **the symbolic dimension of the legislation has been emphasized over the substantive reality of what it will take in the way of resource commitments to enable many families to get off welfare and out of poverty.** Symbolic research has reinforced symbolic policies.

Historically, welfare as a policy has often been used to serve symbolic purposes at the expense of providing substantive benefits, in good part because a wide variety of groups have sought to address their symbolic concerns related to welfare and welfare recipients have remained politically powerless and unable to voice their concerns regarding the provision of substantive benefits. **Even liberal groups of professional women have proven at times to be interested more in what welfare symbolizes** about women's roles in society than in the provision of benefits that will enable women with children to ensure their families adequate resources. **Until women in need of public assistance get to speak for themselves**, welfare will in all likelihood continue to be a realm where symbolic purposes will override the provision of substantive benefits. In the meantime, women on welfare will be increasingly shunted into workfare to the neglect of their child care and needed presence in their homes and neighborhoods, while marriage rather than work will remain the primary route off public assistance

LINK: CENSUS *

THE AFFIRMATIVES DEMAND IS INFORMED NOT BY LIBERATION BUT BY ELITE INTERESTS. ACCURATE NUMERICAL ACCOUNTS MAKE IT SIMPLIER FOR THOSE IN POWER TO MORE EFFECTIVELY MANAGE INDIVIDUALS LIVING IN POVERTY WITHOUT A REAL CONCERN FOR THEIR EXPERIENCES.

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, 19**95** (STANDFORD, WORKS OF WELFARE, P 123-4)

The distinction between symbolic and substantive dimensions of policy is itself somewhat artificial; however, its usefulness has been demonstrated in policy analysis for some time. Murray Edelman's work on symbolic politics effectively underscores the need to consider the symbolic roles most policies play.3 Edelman's writings on welfare reinforce the idea that **welfare is a contested terrain that, to a large degree, serves symbolic purposes at the expense of substantive benefits**. The provision of welfare is constituted in a language, a set of professionally and scientifically sanctified objectives, and a constellation of bureaucratic requirements all designed to reinforce the idea that poverty and welfare dependency are chronic but treatable problems within the confines of existing policies.4

The symbolic significance of welfare lies in no small part in its role as a reminder that, although poverty and dependency are problems, the state has them under control and can manage them. Welfare is part of the state, and state leaders have an obvious interest in being able to talk about the nature of welfare problems in ways that are politically advantageous. State leaders are interested in both the activation and the quiescence of relevant elite and mass publics, as they want their support for both change and continuity in the program.5 State leaders, however, are also interested in reassuring the public that they have the information, resources, and plans of action necessary to handle the problem. The symbolic role of welfare policy, as with other policies, is to specify the origin and responsibility of the policy problem so that specific individuals, institutions, professional practices, and ideological perspectives are reinforced and authorized as appropriate for acting on the problem.6 Welfare therefore serves symbolic purposes by re-creating the conditions of political legitimacy for a political order incapable of ensuring or unwilling to ensure all of its members the opportunity to live life at some agreed-upon level of subsistence on par with that of, say, persons in other nations.7

Deborah Stone emphasizes how **public policies always unavoidably use narrative**, rhetoric, metaphor, and other discursive practices to suggest implied understandings of the problems they purport to attack.8 Conceptions of public problems are not given, nor do they predate policy solutions. Public policy debate rarely, if ever, goes forward with everyone agreeing as to the existence and definition of a particular problem. Instead, policy solutions are more likely to be the basis for discussion, with problems being defined in particular ways so as to justify treating them according to one or another policy approach. Rather than problem definition, it is more a process of problem selection, or even of "strategic representation" of policy problems.9 In this sense, **policies create problems**: **each policy creates its own understanding of the problem in a way that justifies a particular approach to attacking the problem**. The discursive practices embedded in any particular policy work to prefigure our understandings of policy problems. The use of symbols, metaphors, and other figurative practices promotes the narrative implied by the policy. Symbols, metaphors, and so on narrate a particular understanding of a problem and reinforce the idea that it is an accurate depiction. They "naturalize" that depiction by making it seem to be the only "real" way to understand the problem, and not just one of many ways to understand it.10

A symbol, for instance, according to Stone, is anything that stands for something else. The symbolic practices implicit in any policy approach suggest that the problem under consideration should be understood as if it were like something else; once the parallel is established, the problem can be treated that way, even if the analogy is tenuous at best. Attempts to make our understandings of public problems concrete in the form of quantified measurements are a form of discursive practice. Stone considers numbers the most preferred form of metaphor when it comes to public policy making, because numbers are often thought to be the antithesis of symbols, in that they suggest a precise and accurate depiction of what is being examined. But numbers are metaphoric, for all attempts to quantify imply a "decision rule" as to what will count as something. Such a criterion determines when ostensibly different things (e.g., different jobs) will be treated and therefore counted as the same thing, and when ostensibly similar things (e.g., working inside or outside the home) will be counted as different. Numbers do not simply count up a preexisting reality. Instead, they metaphorically and symbolically imply what does or does not count as if it were like something else.11

LINK: BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE

WORK IS NOT JUST ABOUT MONEY, BUT CULTIVATES COMUNITIES AND CONTRIBUTES TO AN INDIVIDUALS SENSE OF HONOR. WHILE THEIR POLITICS SEEM LAUDABLE, IT IS THIS SUBTLE ERASURE OF EXPERIENCE THAT SHOULD BE SCRUTINIZED ABOVE THEIR UTOPIAN DEMAND

NEWMAN, PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY AT HARVARD, **1999** [KATHERINE, NO SHAME IN MY GAME, PG. 104]

<<<Americans tend to think of values as embedded in individuals, transmitted through families, and occasionally reinforced by media images or role models. We tend not to focus on the powerful contribution that institutions and organizations make to the creation and sustenance of beliefs. Yet it is clear that the workplace itself is a major force in the creation of a "rebuttal culture" among these workers. Without this haven of the fellow-stigmatized, it would be very hard for Burger Barn employees to retain their dignity. With this support, however, they are able to hold their heads up, not by defining themselves as separate from society, but by calling upon their commonality with the rest of the working world.

This is but one of the reasons why exclusion from the society of the employed is such a devastating source of social isolation. **We could hand people money, as various guaranteed-income plans of the past thirty years have suggested. But we can't hand out honor**. Honor comes from participation in this central setting in our culture and from the positive Identity it confers.

Roosevelt understood this during the Great Depression and responded with the creation of thousands of publicly funded jobs designed to put people to work building the national parks, the railway stations, the great highways that crisscross the country, and the murals that decorate public walls from San Francisco to New York. Social scientists studying the unemployed in the 1930S showed that people who held WPA jobs were far happier and healthier than those who were on the dole, even when their incomes did not differ significantly. WPA workers had their dignity in the midst of poverty; those on the dole were vilified and could not justify their existence or find an effective cultural rationale for the support they received.

This historical example has its powerful parallels in the present. Joining the workforce is a fundamental, transformative experience that moves people across barriers of subculture, race, gender, and class. It never completely eradicates these differences, and in some divisive settings it may even reinforce consciousness of them-through glass ceilings, discriminatory promotion policies, and the like. But even in places where pernicious distinctions are maintained, there is another, overarching identity competing with forms that stress difference: a common bond within the organization and across the nation of fellow workers. This is what makes getting a job so much more than a means to a financial end>>>

LINK: BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE

HOLDING A JOB IS MUCH MORE THAN A SOURCE OF INCOME, IT IS S SOCIAL SYSTEM IN ITSELF. THE AFFIRMATIVE'S UTOPIC DEMAND CANNOT ACCOUNT FOR THESE SMALL MOMENTS OF DIGNITY AND COMMUNITY THAT ARE CENTRAL TO SOME PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE POVERTY

NEWMAN, PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY AT HARVARD, 1999 [KATHERINE, NO SHAME IN MY GAME, PG. 119-121]

<<<Although having a meaningful, respected career is prized above all else in the United States, our culture confers honor on those who hold down jobs of any kind over those who are outside of the labor force. Independence and self-sufficiency these are virtues that have no equal in this society. But there are other reasons why we value workers besides the fact that their earnings keep them above water and therefore less in need of help from government, communities, or charities. We also value workers because they share certain common views, experiences, and expectations. The work ethic is more than an attitude toward earning money - it is a disciplined existence, a social life woven around the workplace. For all the talk of "family values;' we know that in the contemporary period, family takes a backseat to the requirements of the job, even when the job involves flipping burgers. We are supposed to orient primarily toward the workplace and its demands. This point could not have been made more forcefully than it was in the context of the welfare reform bills of 1996. Where once Americans expected women to stay home to raise children and were critical of those who didn't, public policy in the late 1990s makes clear that women are now supposed to employed even if they have young children. With the vast majority of women with children - even children under a year of age - in the labor force, we are not prepared to "cut much slack" for those who have been on welfare. They can and should work "like the rest of us," or so the policy mantra goes. This represents no small change in the space of a few decades in our views of what honorable women and mothers should do. But it also reflects the growing dominance of work in our understanding of adult priorities. We could attribute this increasingly work-centered view of life as a reflection of America's uneven economic history in the late twentieth century, a pragmatic response to wage stagnation, downsizing, and international competition: we must work harder. It is also part of a secular transformation that has been going on for decades as the United States has moved away from a home-centered agrarian economy to employment- centered lives outside the domestic sphere altogether. The more work departs from home, the more it becomes a social system of its own, a primary form of integration that rivals the family as a source of identity, belonging, and friendships. Women like Kyesha no longer feel content to take care of children at home, bereft of adult friends. They want a life that is adult-centered, where they have peers they can talk to. Where they might once have found that company in the neighborhood, now they are more likely to find it in the workplace. Those primary social ties are grounded in workplace relations, hence to be a worker is also to be integrated into a meaningful community of fellow workers, the community that increasingly becomes the source of personal friends, intimate relations, and the worldview that comes with them. **Work is therefore much more than a means to a financial end.** This is particularly the case when the job holds little intrinsic satisfaction. Those who get paid for boiling french fries in hot oil do not think they are performing a world-shattering role. They know their jobs are poorly valued; they can see that in their paychecks and in the tone of voice of the people whom they serve across the counter. But what they have that their nonworking counterparts lack is **both the dignity of being employed and the opportunity to participate in social activities** that increasingly define their adult lives. This community gives their lives structure and purpose, humor and pleasure, support and understanding in hard times, and a backstop that extends beyond the instrumental purposes of a fast food restaurant.>>>

LINK: BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE

THE AFFIRMAITVE IS THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF LIBERAL ACADEMIC POLITICS – FOR SOME FOLKS LIVING IN POVERTY, THE EXPERIENCE OF WORK IS TRANSFORMATIVE.

NEWMAN, PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY AT HARVARD, 1999 [KATHERINE, NO SHAME IN MY GAME, PG. 215-216]

<<<. Ebony's past is a case study in troubled families. Her father has a heavy drug habit and "works" as a hit man. His problems spread early on to her mother and brought chaos upon the whole household on many occasions. *My home was always in an uproar because my mother had me at a young age, when she was seventeen. She was still in school when she had me and trying* to *take care of me. But she couldn't do both. She was still living with my grandmotherat the time, so it wasn't as hard because my grandmother helped take care of me. When my mother finished high school, she left* to *go* to *college. Instead of her staying here in the city, she went away. I stayed with my grandmother. When my mother came back home and got back involved with my father and his bad ways, everything came back. . . . I was maybe four* or *five years old. She had a bad drug habit. It was something always with her* or *with him,* or *somebody in that house. Always some type of drug action in that apartment.* Despite this rocky beginning in life, Ebony believes that it is her responsibility to work, to finish school, to look after her grandmother, and to do what she can to help her mother back onto the straight and narrow path. She holds herself to a high standard and claims no credit from a distressed childhood.

Ebony's story, like the many others recounted in this chapter, is not simply one of overcoming a bad beginning, or becoming a paragon of virtue in a sea of vice. If we merely point to the outstanding diamonds in the rough and chalk up their victories to exceptional personality, we have learned nothing of any practical value. We do not know how to grow exceptional personalities; we can merely stand back and marvel at their existence. What is more important about these biographies is not their exceptional nature but their common appearance. In so many *routine* ways ghetto residents read the negative evidence before them and conclude that only a fool would follow in the footsteps of a loser, even when the loser is your own parent. Many a middle-class child has drawn the same conclusion when examining with a critical eye the mistakes of his or her own parents or siblings. It should not surprise us to learn that poor people do the same.

Theories of human development, which have stressed the power of intergenerational transmission of culture, take it on faith that the examples before us lead us to the same paths rather than down the other fork in the road. Or, if we make exceptions for individualism, we are more inclined to believe that advantaged youth will make the right choices, while the disadvantaged will be unduly influenced by the circumstances around them. The trajectories of Harlem's working poor tell us that this is untrue in many cases and that the messages of the mainstream world get through.

Those messages do not arrive in an unfiltered fashion, however. They pass through the sieve of personal experience and of observations of the fact that some groups of people arrive in this world with all the luck and others have to engage in uphill battles from day one. While holding their own feet to the fire, Burger Barn workers argue that black men, in particular, have it harder than the rest. The deck is stacked against them, and they come to recognize that truth and are hardened by it. Many of the African-American women at Burger Barn have had boyfriends, husbands, or brothers who have been defeated by relentless refusals, cold shoulders, and suspicion on the part of teachers, landlords, employers, and cops. Minority workers are not blind to the vast difference in life chances that separate them from the mostly well-to-do college students at Columbia College, less than ten blocks away, or the wealthy co-op dwellers on Manhattan's East Side. They do not assume that the distribution of good fortune is merely a reflection of merit, of just deserts. Forces of inequality, racism, and birthright have interfered with pure merit and help to explain why some people are living the good life and others must struggle.

Burger Barn workers know this as an experiential truth. It colors their sense of who deserves to be let down easily from the kind of blanket critique they often make of the bad apples in their own community. They do not back away from the commitment, so familiar to mainstream Americans, that we are, each and every one of us, responsible for our destinies, masters of our own fates. This belief they share with the great American middle class, for whom forces of economic destiny, structural inequalities, and the winds of change brought about by changing government policy pale beside the assumption of individual autonomy, control, and mastery. Poor people in the depths of the ghetto are at one with the rest of American culture in believing that whatever hand you have been dealt, you must make the most of it. They do temper their criticism just a bit when it comes to children they know who have been raised by incompetent parents, or young people who have been exposed relentlessly to the flash of drug money. All in all, however, they offer less of a moral safety net than the average liberal academic, who may be inclined to excuse most signs of deviance in favor of environmental explanations for character flaws. For the working poor, who have struggled against the odds, no one is entitled to a free ride.>>>

LINK: WORK BAD

THE AFF FAILS TO SOLVE FOR THE STIGMA ASSOCIATED WTH THE POOR BECAUSE THEY IGNORE THE FACT THAT POOR PEOPLE WANT TO WORK

HAWKSWORTH, PROFESSOR OF WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES AT RUTGER'S UNIVERSITY, **2006**
[MARY, *FEMINIST INQUIRY,* PG. 194-195]
Studies of AFDC recipients (the subset of the poor most frequently characterized in terms of the pathological theory of poverty) indicate that the belief that AFDC household heads do not work or will not work is simply mistaken. Although 63 percent of the four million women receiving AFDC benefits in 1995 had children under the age of five (Mink 1996), 70 percent of AFDC households had at least one earner during the years on welfare. In 40 percent of these households, the head of household earned the income; in the remainder, the earnings were those of older children within the household (Rein 1982; Spalter-Roth et al. 1995). In direct contrast to popular stereotypes, black women receiving AFDC worked far more often than white women. There was also much greater movement between welfare and work than the pathological theory suggests. Only 2 percent of households receiving public benefits remained on welfare for eight years or more (S. L. Thomas 1994). The vast majority resorted to welfare to upgrade their total income because their earnings from work were inadequate or because their earning capacity had been temporarily undermined through unemployment.

A number of studies of the attitudes of the poor toward work also challenge the pathological theory's accuracy. In answer to the question "Do the poor want to work?" research on the work orientations of the poor has concluded that the poor do indeed want to work. The work ethic is upheld strongly by AFDC recipients and work plays an important role in their life goals. Indeed, results from comprehensive studies of the attitudes of the poor toward work "unambiguously indicate that AFDC recipients, regardless of sex, age or race, identify their self-esteem with work as strongly as do the non-poor . . . . Despite their adverse position in society and their past failures in the labor force, these persons clearly upheld the work ethic and voiced strong commitments toward work" (Berkeley Planning Associates 1980, 92; see also Goodwin 1972; Schiller 1973; Goodale 1973; Kaplan and Tausky 1972; Gueron and Pauly 1991; Tienda and Stier 1991; Handler 1995; Edin and Lein, 1997).

LINK: UNDOING WELFARE REFORM

UNDOING WELFARE REFORM IS NOT ENOUGH, THE AFF DOES NOT TARGET THE ROOT CAUSE OF OPRRESSION

HAWKSWORTH, PROFESSOR OF WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES AT RUTGER'S UNIVERSITY, **2006**
[MARY, *FEMINIST INQUIRY*, PG. 196-198]

From a socialist feminist standpoint, the attack on poor women under the guise of "welfare reform" involves ideological distortions that cannot be grasped within a framework of partisan politics. Indeed, both the Democratic and the Republican parties made commitments to "end welfare as we know it." Bill Clinton advanced the slogan during his 1992 bid for the presidency, and the Republicans incorporated the idea into their "Contract with America" during the congressional elections in 1994. Both parties cooperated to pass legislation to replace AFDC entitlements with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which was signed into law by President Clinton in August 1996. According to socialist feminists, relentless harangues against the poor in both parties' campaign rhetoric have produced systemic misperceptions in American politics. "A poll of 1994 voters found that one of five believed that welfare was the largest federal government expense, larger than the military budget. The reality is that AFDC spending since 1964 has amounted to less than 1.5 percent of federal outlays" (Sklar 1995, 23).

While American voters are whipped into a frenzy of resentment against the "undeserving poor," the structural forces that threaten their fragile economic security go largely unnoticed. Changes in tax policy have produced the highest income inequality in the United States since 1929. During the past two decades, the share of the nation's income received by the top 5 percent of Americans increased nearly 25 percent, from 18.6 percent to 24.5 percent, while the share of income received by the poorest 20 percent fell by nearly 25 percent, from 5.7 percent to 4.3 percent. The richest quintile of Americans "earned" 46.9 percent of the nation's total income, while the middle 60 percent of the population earned 49.4 percent and the poorest quintile earned 3.8 percent (Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy 1995). As corporate profits have soared since 1979, many white-collar, high-paying positions, as well as many unionized manufacturing jobs, have been eliminated through "downsizing," while newly created jobs are concentrated in the far less lucrative service sector. "The sting is in the nature of the replacement work. Whereas 25 years ago the vast majority of the people who were laid off found jobs that paid as well as their old ones, Labor Department numbers show that now only about 35 percent of laidoff workers end up in equally remunerative or better paid jobs" (Uchitelle and Kleinfield 1996, 1, 14).

As the prospect of secure employment becomes increasingly rare, so too does the hope of earning a living wage. When adjusted for inflation, workforce-wide hourly wages fell 14 percent between 1973 and 1993. For those in the lowest ranks of the income pyramid, the loss in earning power has been much greater. "An unforgiving labor market, in recession and recovery alike, has hammered young, less-educated women. . . . Between 1979 and 1989, hourly wages plummeted for these women, falling most rapidly for African American women who didn't finish high school. This group's hourly wages, adjusted for inflation, fell 20 percent in that 10 year period" (Tilly and Albelda 1994, 9). Welfare recipients have fared no better: the median AFDC payment, when adjusted for inflation, has been slashed 47 percent since 1970 (Sklar 1995, 22).

From a socialist feminist standpoint, "impoverished women don't create poverty any more than slaves created slavery. But they are primary scapegoats for illegitimate economics" (Sklar 1995, 21). They provide a handy focal point for a vicious politics of resentment, while corporate greed escapes all public scrutiny. They provide the ideological camouflage for the fiscal doctrine of unlimited, unending deficit reduction [which] is not aimed at stable prices, full employment, and greater private investment. Rather, the motivations are to reduce the size of government, to disassemble the U.S. system of social insurance, and to maintain unyielding downward pressure on the price level. The implied economic policy is one of stagnation: a disproportionate weight is put on low inflation to the detriment of employment, investment, and general economic growth. The policy is also counter-redistributive: it favors wealth holders at the expense of wage-earners, the elderly, and the poor. If stated outright, these goals would be manifestly unpopular, so the sales pitch for extreme deficit reduction has to focus elsewhere—on creating and perpetuating misconceptions or downright superstitions about the federal budget and the public debt. (Sawicky, cited in Sklar 1995, 23-24)

For socialist feminists, capitalism remains the underlying problem of the liberal democratic state. Vitriolic policy debates manage to mask the increasing concentration of wealth by scapegoating African Americans, women, and the poor. As such, these diversionary debates must be understood as a brilliant strategic move in the "new class war," which will be systematically addressed only when the underclasses mobilize effectively to expropriate their expropriators.

LINK: WELFARE QUEEN/REFORM

WELFARE FURTHER PRUPETUATES A MOTHER'S INABILITY TO TAKE CARE OF HER CHILDREN DUE TO LONG WORKHOURS – AS CHILDREN GROW THEY LEARN FROM BY WATCHING, CREATING A VICIOUS CYCLE

VIVYAN C. **ADAIR**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AT HAMILTON COLLEGE, "RECLAIMING CLASS: WOMEN, POVERTY, AND THE PROMISE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA," PG 34, **2003**

<<<Welfare-reform policy is designed to publicly expose, humiliate, punish, and display "deviant" welfare mothers. Workfare and Learnfare— two alleged successes of welfare reform—require that landlords, teachers, and employers be made explicitly aware of the second-class status of these very public bodies. In Ohio, the Department of Human Services uses tax dollars to pay for advertisements on the side of Cleveland's RTA buses that show a Welfare Queen behind bars with a logo that proclaims, "Crime does not pay. Welfare fraud is a crime" (Robinson 1999). In Michigan, a pilot program mandating drug tests for all welfare recipients began on 1 October 1999. Recipients who refuse the test lose their benefits immediately (Simon 1999). In Eugene, Oregon, recipients who cannot afford to feed their children adequately on their food-stamp allocations are advised through flyers issued by a contractor for the state's welfare agency to "check the dump and the residential and business dumpsters" (Women's Enews 2001). In April 2001, Jason Turner, New York City's welfare commissioner, told a congressional subcommittee that "workplace safety and the Fair Labor Standards Act should not apply to welfare recipients who, in fact, should face tougher sanctions in order to make them work" (Women's Enews 2001). And welfare-reform legislation enacted in 1996 as the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) requires that poor mothers work full time in jobs that often do not provide medical, dental, or child-care benefits and that pay minimum-wage salaries that do not cover adequate food, heat, or clothing. Thus, through PRWORA, the state mandates child neglect and abuse. The crowds of good parents and their growing children watch and learn.

The bodies of poor women and children, scarred and mutilated by state-mandated material deprivation and public exhibition, work as spectacles, as patrolling images socializing and controlling bodies within the body politic. That body politic is represented in Foucault's work as the other half of the discipline-and-punishment circuit of socialization. It is here that material elements and techniques "serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them, turning them into objects of knowledge" (Foucault 1984b, 28). Again, the body and the text: text is in and of the body, body is in and of the text, in ways in which signifier and signified, metaphor and referent never replace each other but simply trace and chase each other. In this cycle of power, a template of meaning is produced through which only specific, politically viable readings of the bodies of poor welfare recipients and their children are possible.

Spectacular cover stories about the Welfare Queen play and replay in the national mind's eye, becoming a prescriptive lens through which the U.S. public as a whole reads the individual dramas of the bodies of poor women and their place and value in the world. These dramas produce "normative" citizens as independent, stable, rational, ordered, and free. In this dichotomous, hierarchical frame, the poor welfare mother is juxtaposed against a logic of "normative" subjectivity as the embodiment of dependency, disorder, disarray, and Otherness. Her broken and scarred body becomes proof of her inner pathology and chaos, suggesting the need for further punishment and discipline.>>>

STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY—IMPACTS

IMPACT: KNOWLEDGE COOPTION

EMPIRICALLY, MAINSTREAM POLICYMAKING KNOWLEDGE AND OBJECTIVE FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE SUCH AS STATISTICS HAVE BEEN RECORDED AND ANALYZED IN WAYS THAT MANIPULATE THE RESULTS—THE AFFIRMATIVE'S KNOWLEDGE WILL BE COOPTED

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, **1995** (SANFORD, WORDS OF WELFARE, P 10-14)

<<<A different sort of example is David Ellwood and Mary Jo Bane's 1984 federally funded study on the impact of AFDC on family structure and living arrangements. They found that

welfare appears to have a dramatic impact on the living arrangements of young single mothers. In a low benefit state, young mothers who are not living with a husband are very likely to live in the home of a parent. In high benefit states, these women are much more likely to live independently There is relatively strong evidence in our data that benefit levels influence divorce and separation rates to some degree. Among very young married mothers, the impact may be quite sizeable. Among most other women, the impact appears to be rather small We found little evidence that AFDC influenced the child-bearing decisions of unmarried women, even young unmarried women—Differences in welfare do not appear to be the primary cause of variation in family structure across states, or over time.36

This ostensibly neutral research targeted "welfare dependency" as a problem, with welfare as the cause and family structure as the effect, rather than the other way around. The strongest findings, however, were on the least controversial matter: living arrangements.37 Yet even this was framed as an issue of concern. Ellwood and Bane conclude "More research and attention needs to be focused on the desirability of encouraging young single mothers to remain at home or to establish independent households. Here is a place where policy really does make a difference."38 By 1994, Ellwood and Bane were members of the Clinton administration, which responded to growing concerns about teen pregnancy by joining an increasing number of states in proposing restrictions on aid to teen mothers living independently.39 No need for appropriators here; Ellwood and Bane could do that on their own, because their **technical research was already co-opted, given its focus on addressing the state's preset interest in reducing "welfare dependency,"** without consideration of the broader political-economic context that was working to put poor families at greater risk. Ellwood and Bane's most influential work, however, was subject to all kinds of appropriation. It suggested that large numbers of welfare recipients at any one point in time were in the midst of a long spell of welfare taking.40 This research contradicted most analysts' belief at the time that people relied on welfare only episodically.41 Although these statistics are very slippery, conservatives were quick to seize on them.42 In the end, this research proved influential in forging a "new consensus" on welfare among policy makers that "welfare dependency" was a significant problem.43

The appropriators overlooked critical measurement issues that might have explained the new findings; instead, the results were attributed to improved research methods.44 The methodological issues, however, highlight how **the implied context structured the research design and interpretation of the results**. For example, earlier studies stressed the frequency and length of welfare spells for the population over time, whereas the newer studies added consideration of statistics for the welfare population at any one point in time. Given that families who remain on welfare for short periods enter and leave the welfare system more rapidly, looking at the rolls at any one point in time would reveal a larger proportion of long-term recipients than would an examination of the rolls over time. Whereas Ellwood found that 65 percent of those on the rolls at any one point in time were in the process of receiving welfare for eight or more years, he also found that only about 30 percent of all families that ever received AFDC did so for eight or more years.45 In terms of the total population, about one-seventh (15 percent) lived in families where AFDC income was received during at least one year between 1970 and 1979, but only 2.2 percent of individuals lived in families that received income from AFDC in eight or more years.46 "In other words, looking at the rolls over a period of time shows a high degree of transiency, but looking at them at a point in time emphasizes persistent use."47 When Ellwood emphasized the latter, he reflected an

(card continues…)

IMPACT: KNOWLEDGE COOPTION

(…card continues)

interest in "targeting" long-term users for special services, but whether long-term use was really a prevalent problem was more of an open question than the people who used Ellwood's research would allow.48

Another issue was whether people who "slipped" on and off welfare during a period of time should or be considered as having had continuous stays on welfare. Mark Greenberg has noted that "the often-misunderstood point... is that [Ellwood] did not seek to, and did not measure total time on AFDC; [he] only sought to measure years in which AFDC was received."49 Therefore, although there might be honest differences about whether episodic multiple use of welfare implied long-term dependency, it was a serious mistake to suggest that Ellwood's research implied anything about the extent of continuous welfare use. More recent work shows a different picture than that painted by Ellwood's appropriators. Using monthly data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), LaDonna Pavetti found that a monthly analysis "produces a distribution with many more short spells of welfare [and] fewer long spells."50 Pavetti adds that 70 percent of all recipients who begin a spell of welfare will have spells that last for two years or less; only 7 percent of recipients who begin a spell of welfare receipt will have a spell that will last for more than eight years. Comparisons with earlier studies indicate that monthly data reveal far greater transiency in the welfare population, and that yearly data overstate extended continuous use.

Further, additional research suggests that welfare use lags well behind eligibility. According to Rebecca Blank and Patricia Ruggles:

Single mothers use AFDC in 62 to 70 percent of the months in which they are eligible, depending on the eligibility estimate used a substantial proportion of those leaving assistance programs appear to remain eligible to participate, but apparently choose not to do so. For AFDC, 50 percent of those leaving the program are still eligible at the time of exit, 30 percent are still eligible after 12 months.... Only 28 percent of those women who experience an eligibility spell will ever take up AFDC.... Most of these eligibility spells without take-up are very short spells. Twenty-three percent of them close within 1 month, another 21 percent of the remaining spells close within 2 months, another 13 percent of the remaining spells close within 3 months.... Despite the on-going preoccupation of many public officials with high AFDC and food stamp caseloads, these results indicate that only a minority of those who become eligible for these programs actually use them.51

Although extended use may exist to some extent, there are evidently numerous instances of nonuse as well.

Ellwood may have focused his research on trying to isolate the extended-use population so that they could be targeted for special services — a logical topic given policy makers' concern about "welfare dependency." And there is evidence from these studies that among AFDC recipients, single, especially never-married, mothers are much more likely to use welfare for extended, continuous periods of time.52 Yet, although identifying this and related populations may very well have been Ellwood's intention, **his efforts at targeting were misappropriated by commentators and policy makers to feed the growing preoccupation with abuses associated with "welfare dependency."** Ellwood's work, however, had **created the seeds of its own misuse**. Its alleged objectivity was in good part derived from the fact that it reflected the prevailing assumption that extended welfare use implied abuse of the system of public assistance. Extended welfare use was an issue to be quantified. In this context, the "length of stay" had meaning beyond time in the arid moralisms of promoting "self-sufficiency." The mitigating factors of labor markets and other circumstances were not a central component of this implied perspective. Unexamined was the postindustrial economy, with its declines in manual labor, decreases in wages, relocation of factories, and still other disruptions, which could have accounted for the longer welfare stays found in the Ellwood studies.

Conservatives, however, were not content to let it rest at that. More ammunition for reinforcing a "new paternalism" in social policy was in hand.53 The use of welfare could now more firmly be interpreted as an abuse that has to be unlearned. Extended welfare stays must imply something about people's growing willingness to be dependent on assistance.54 Even more troubling, the use of this research did not stress that some recipients were working while receiving welfare.55 Instead, narrowly focused studies were translated into definitive evidence of people forgoing work and abusing welfare.

What is perhaps most troubling about this debate over the frequency and duration of welfare "spells" is that none of the combatants, liberal or conservative, considered welfare taking as anything other than some disembodied act that recipients choose to start and end as they see fit. Given the ascendancy of ETM in welfare policy research, it is basically impossible to suggest that welfare taking may often be a commendable attempt by women in particular to cope with difficult domestic and economic circumstances. In downplaying the impact of social, economic, and administrative forces that push and pull recipients in and out of the welfare system, such an approach may overlook several important causes of both extended and episodic welfare taking. For example, about two million recipients annually are affected by the administrative practice known as "churning," whereby welfare agencies periodically drop recipients from the rolls incorrectly or for technical violations and then allow them to return after corrections have been made.56 Thus, it may be that welfare recipients would be on the rolls for longer spells than present research indicates but are not for reasons other than the recipients' own choosing. If we discount churn- ing, conservatives may be right that welfare taking persists for longer periods than much research suggests.

Yet, discounting churning is just what is wrong with the shared perspective of liberal and conservative analysts. Concentrating on producing neutral information on poor people's behavior, much research generates data that can be easily appropriated for various political ends. **Neglecting to account for the broader political-economic context of this behavior, such research often overlooks how the current system of public assistance perpetrates its own deleterious practices at the expense of the people it ostensibly is designed to serve.** Lacking pressure to account for that broader context, welfare research is free to become an experimental science. >>>

IMPACT: KNOWLEDGE COOPTION

THEIR KNOWLEDGE WILL BE COOPTED BY CONSERVATIVES TO JUSTIFY DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED POLICY POSITIONS—WE MUST CHALLENGE THE VERY TERMS OF THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATE ABOUT POVERTY TO SOLVE

O'CONNOR, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT U.C. SANTA BARBARA, **2001** [ALICE, *POVERTY KNOWLEDGE*, PRINCETON UNIVERSIT PRESS, P. 17-18]

A second theme running throughout the narrative is that poverty knowledge, especially in recent decades, has frequently assumed far different political meanings than what is envisioned by social scientists. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the transformation of the culture of poverty in the late 1960s and early 1970s from an argument for liberal intervention if not radical social revolution (as Oscar Lewis occasionally hinted) to an argument for conservative withdrawal from the welfare state—a transformation brought about as much by liberal and left critics who drew out the implications of the behavioris-tic cast of Lewis's theory as by an outright conservative embrace of the culture of poverty theory. While themselves avoiding thorny issues of culture, economists affiliated with the War on Poverty similarly saw their research used for unintended political purposes, when conservative policy analysts effectively appropriated their methods, findings, and to some degree their style of discourse to undermine support for the welfare state in the 1980s. It is not only the culture of poverty, then, that has been absorbed into conservative policy thinking—Charles Murray, indeed, insisted that unmarried mothers grown dependent on welfare were simply responding as any rational actor would to the perverse incentives of the liberal welfare state. It is more a matter of a knowledge base that, however unintentionally, has opened itself to conservative interpretation by locating the crux of the poverty problem in the characteristics of the poor. But the use of poverty knowledge for overtly conservative purposes also reveals an aspect of the relationship between knowledge and policy that liberal or purportedly "neutral" social scientists have continually underestimated—no matter how many times the best-laid plans of empirically informed policy intellectuals have gone either unattended or misconstrued. What matters in determining whether and how knowledge connects to policy is not only the classical enlightenment properties of rationality and verifiabil-ity; nor is it only the way knowledge is mobilized, packaged, and circulated; nor even whether the knowledge corresponds with (or effectively shatters) popularly held values and conventional wisdom. All of these things have, indeed, proved important in affecting the course of poverty and welfare policy. Even more important in determining the political meaning and policy consequences of poverty knowledge, though, has been **the power to establish the terms of debate**—to contest, gain, and ultimately to exercise ideological hegemony over the boundaries of political discourse. It is within this broader context, of ideological battle that for the past two decades has been dominated by the conservative right, that poverty knowledge has been used most effectively for politically conservative ends.

IMPACT: KNOWLEDGE COOPTION

TRADITIONAL SOCIAL CHANGE SUCH AS THE AFF FAILS BECAUSE THE "ELITES" HAVE A "MONOPOLY" THAT CONTROLS THE SYSTEMATIC IMPOVERISHMENT OF PEOPLE. THE ONLY WAY TO CREATE CHANGE IS THROUGH PEDAGOGICAL THINKING AND FIGHTING KNOWLEDGE WITH KNOWLEDGE.

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**

[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.259-260]

Social action is the third leg of the participatory research triad. In addition to challenging traditional epistemological assumptions, advocates of participatory research criticize the extent to which standard research practices tend to reinforce existing assumptions, institutions, and social structures. They maintain that the independent conservation and production of knowledge by disadvantaged or marginalized people is necessary to the project of changing present power relations. Building people's capacity to pursue organized inquiry and disseminate findings to strategic audiences is a vital component of movements for social change in the knowledge economy (Rahman and FalsBorda 1991,30-32; see also Hall 1979; Tandon 1982,79).

[W]e can see that a key weapon in the hands of the elites to make the people wait upon them for leadership and initiative, whether for "development" or social change, has been the assumed superiority of formal knowledge. Of this type of knowledge, the elites have a monopoly, unlike popular knowledge...

[Participatory methods] should give the common people—as the very subject of history—greater leverage and control over the process of knowledge generation.

Similarly,

[D]omination of masses by elites is rooted not only in the polarization of control over the means of material production but also over the means of knowledge production, including control over the social power to determine what is useful knowledge. Irrespective of which of these two polarizations sets off a process of domination, one reinforces the other in augmenting and perpetuating this process.

In order to improve the possibility of liberation, therefore, these two gaps should be attacked simultaneously wherever feasible . . . [I]t is absolutely essential that the people develop their own endogenous consciousness-raising and knowledge generation, and that this process acquires . . . social power. (Rahman 1991, 14)

IMPACT: ERROR REPLICATION

ONLY BY COMING TO UNDERSTAND THE ASPIRATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE POOR CAN WE BEGIN TO MAKE POLICIES THAT DO NOT REPRODUCE POVERTY THROUGH MORALIZING STEREOTYPES

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**
[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.15-16]
Our primary goal is to render the identity of poor persons more transparent and interpret the power holders."Tf we understand them not as sinners or saints but as constituents of the mainstream like ourselves, we will be willing to allow them the same latitude to fail or succeed that we grant insiders within our own communities.9 The first challenge then is to identify the aspirations of the poor and explore the relationship between their aspirations, experiences, and activities such as work. Gans argues that an individual's behavioral culture—ways of behaving learned in specific situations—may change along with situations; yet a person's aspirational culture sets long-term goals that govern behavior when the situation permits. When Opal Caples fails to notify her employer that she does not intend to come to work, and because Jason De Parle does not offer what we regard as an adequate, responsible, grown-up situational explanation for that failure—"too distraught" isn't enough—we naturally infer that she lacks a work ethic. De Parle's story, however, does not and cannot weave the web of information against which we should judge Opal's reason for staying home, much less predict her behavior if she enjoyed greater job security, had safer day care, and expected that she would be able to provide for her children throughout their lives.
Public policy has been guided by particularly simplistic understandings of welfare recipients as rational maximizers (see the examples examined by Williams 1992), and decades of microeconomic modeling of the effects of poverty programs have reinforced the idea that it is easy to move recipients from welfare to work by adjusting incentives and limiting moral hazards (the "natural" tendency to try to get an undeserved share of a "free" good such as welfare). Without actually demonstrating that such an approach will reduce poverty, reformers pay poor women the compliment of assuming that they will respond rationally to incentives or penalties that impact family finances.
This assumption reinforces a philosophy of welfare reform that is both morally deceptive and empirically invalid: morally deceptive because it embraces the notion that welfare recipients must be bribed or coerced to do the right thing, that they lack the moral character or will to act without such special prods; and empirically invalid because it ignores the complexity of the circumstances within which poor women must choose to secure resources for themselves and their children. Edin and Lain document shortfalls in the budgets of most welfare recipients, who share competing goals with welfare policy planners: successful family rearing and long-term employment. Public assistance doesn't help poor women resolve conflicts between their children's immediate needs and their own career goals and, as Christopher Jencks (1997) adds in his introduction to the study by Edin and Lein, other essential values that make a life livable beyond bare survival are entirely overlooked by welfare planners.11 Jencks observes that recent policy changes hold welfare recipe- Tents to standards of rationality and efficiency far higher than those we set for ourselves.12
The very shortcomings of poverty policies challenge ethnographers to deepen our understanding of the causes and effects of poverty. How should they proceed? What questions should they seek to answer, and what theory might guide their inquiry? As Herbert Gans has suggested, identity may be the most important key to change. The choices we make depend both on our experiences and understandings of our capacities and preferences. Such understandings of the self and desirability of particular decisions about education, work, marriage, and childbearing draw on cultural resources provided by interactions with others and our interpretations of those interactions over a lifetime. For all of us, poor and affluent, identity and self-esteem affect the goals we aspire to and the choices we make in particular settings or situations to move us toward those goals. Edin and Lein help us to appreciate the need to explore the relationship between identity, goals, and decision making in the lives of poor women.13 Ethnography now must take another step.

IMPACT: ERROR REPLICATION

SOLELY ATTEMPTING TO HELP THE POOR WITHOUT ADEQUATELY KNOWING THE ENTIRETY OF THE SITUATION IS DAMNING—IT LEADS TO THE INEVITABLE FAILURE OF INNOVATIVE POLICY CHANGES

SCHORR, LECTURER IN SOCIAL MEDICINE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY, AND DIRECTOR OF THE PROJECT ON EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS AND OF ITS PATHWAYS, **1997** [LISBETH B. "COMMON PURPOSES," ANCHOR BOOKS. PG. 30-31]

The roses that thrived in the hothouse can be bred to grow in huge numbers in well-tended fields for commercial harvesting, but not in concrete. Programs carefully developed under protective bubbles cannot be sustained in the arid soil of bureaucracies that value equity but not intensity; standardization but not flexibility; routine procedures but not discretion; categorization but not comprehensiveness; professional authority but not collaborative relationships; reduction of errors but not responsiveness to urgent human needs.

Replication efforts that ignore context are destined to remain forever outside the big systems (education, social services, work training, health care, family support, criminal justice, etc.)—in which society has placed the bulk of its investments in human and community renewal. Failing to recognize how powerfully the forces of inertia, cultural norms, and bureaucracy congeal into the concrete where no roses can grow means repeating the pattern over and over again.

Failure to recognize those forces also makes the task of spreading what works seem more intractable and mysterious than it has to be. Ronald Haskins, senior Republican staff member of the House Ways and Means Committee, says, "We have seen over and over that even if you can produce good results with small programs, when you expand to a national level, the effect often disappears." Ann Lieberman, early-childhood expert at Columbia Teachers College, says, "What we don't know yet is what you have to do to not lose the essence of these things when you scale up."

I submit that we do know how to keep the effect from disappearing and how to avoid losing "the essence of these things." You do that by not ignoring the institutional context, and by not leaving the responsibility for creating a more hospitable context to the front-line people, who are not in a position to change the wider environment.

We failed to see that **public reluctance to invest in the poor led to the dilution of effective programs**. The national ambivalence about helping the poor significantly hampers the spread of effective programs. Citizens who will support providing intensive, high-quality services to a few dozen poor and minority families as part of a demonstration balk at the investments required to make such services widely available. Thus, the proven effectiveness of intensive individualized services is routinely diluted—and destroyed—by the pressure to reach large numbers with inadequate resources.

IMPACT: ANNIHILATION

REFUSAL TO BEAR WITNESS TO LIVED EXPERIENCE RESULTS IN INDIVIDUAL ANNIHILATION

RIMSTEAD, B.A. AT YORK UNIVERSITY, M.A. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, PH.D. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, **2001**, [ROXANNE, REMNANTS OF NATION ON POVERTY NARRATIVES BY WOMEN, PG. 1-6]

<<<I do not mean to suggest that the horror of testimonials to poverty would be as intense as the horror of accounts of genocide or torture in other forms of testimonial literature, although sometimes this would certainly be the case. What seems relevant to a reading of poverty narratives is that the testimony is not necessarily objectively, realistically, or historically rendered precisely because there is such a difficulty of testifying, beyond silence, sometimes to unspeakable and incomprehensible acts of violence. Thus Felman observes that testimony of trauma as a form of literary utterance will sometimes not even attempt to represent reality transparently but instead will often claim to seek reality and discover in its place a crisis of language surrounding the inexpressible nature of its own substance. She writes: To seek reality through language "with one's very being," to seek in language what the language had precisely to pass through, is thus to make of one's own "shelterlessness" - of the openness and the accessibility of one's own wounds - an unexpected and unprecedented means of accessing reality, the radical condition for a wrenching exploration of the testimonial function, and the testimonial power, of the language ...' (28-9). The testimonial power of language, as identified in its literary, psychoanalytical, and historical application, is too complex to explore adequately here; but I would like to focus on one central concept because it might illuminate the present study. Felman and Laub explain that the therapeutic power of testimonial utterance exists largely in its capacity to externalize a story, to 'undo its entrapment' and 'articulate and transmit the story, literally transfer it to another outside oneself and take it back again, inside' (69), thus making it known more profoundly to its own teller. Not only does testimonial language demand a listener, it also derives its power from the fact that it reaches other witnesses who form an alliance around its perceived truths. In a literary sense, textual testimony discovers this alignment of witnesses in a reading community; it accordingly 'adds yet another witness' and becomes linked to other texts, to readers, and to history itself. Thus, Felman explains, 'life-testimony is not simply a testimony to a private life, but a point of conflation between text and life, a textual testimony which can pene trate us like an actual life' (2). For those who can align themselves, politically and ernpathically, with the truths, the subjectivities, and even the crises of language in testimonies, the impression created is that experience and history itself become more accessible. On the other hand, the mark of a truly oppressive power, as Dori Laub asserts about the Nazi system, is to convince its victims, 'the potential witnesses from the inside: that what was said about 'their otherness and their inhumanity was correct and that their experiences were no longer communicable even to themselves ..: (82). The reverse of historical access is the result: 'This loss of capacity to be a witness to oneself and thus to witness from the inside **is perhaps the true meaning of annihilation,** for when one's history is abolished, one's identity ceases to exist as well' (82).

IMPACT: COLONIZATION

MANAGERIAL DISCOURSE IS A FROM OF DISCURSIVE AND SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE – OBJECTIFYING THE POOR CAUSES SHAMING AND IS THE LINCHPIN OF COLONIZATION PROJECTS

RIMSTEAD, B.A. AT YORK UNIVERSITY, M.A. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, PH.D. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, **2001**, [ROXANNE, REMNANTS OF NATION ON POVERTY NARRATIVES BY WOMEN, PG. 1-6]

<<< The effect of negative social myths on the subjectivities of the poor in advanced industrialized countries has been, according to many contemporary social and political theorists, that the poor have tended to acquiesce in and thus consent to cultural exclusion. Negative constructions of identity function as powerful, dominant images so that the poor will not revolt, but will instead internalize isolating and blameworthy identities scripted for them through meritocracy, liberal democracy, and the American/Canadian Dream of upward mobility. Studies of class identity and the poor as a group in North America, such as The Hidden Injuries of Class (Sennett and Cobb), TheOtherAmerica: Poverty in United States (Harrington) , The Stigma of Poverty (Waxman), Worlds of Pain (Rubin) , The Real Poverty Report (Adams et al.), and The Poverty Wall (Adams), identify the lack of affirmative class identification among the poor as the basis of subordination and self blame which turn outward-directed anger to inward -directed shame. Although these sources agree that the popular image of the poor as a separate class of people is fundamentally distorting, they emphasize, none the less, that it is a powerful symbolic mean s of positioning the poor on the outside, especially in their own eyes. Frequent stigmatization imprints itself on poor subjects as a dominant narrative they must resist, internalize, or otherwise negotiate - but rarely ignore. Stigma is the psychosocial space they inherit and inhabit by virtue of falling to the side of the have-nots in a meritocracy, that dark, regressive nation within- a-nation which the wealthy nation must keep rediscovering, innocently, coyly, and with impunity. By drawing on cultural theories of identity formation (for example, with reference to Stanley Aronowitz's The Politics of Identity: Class, Culture, and Social Movements and Chaim Waxman's The Stigma of Poverty), chapter 5, called 'Subverting "Poor Me,'" analyses the internalization of negative constructions of identity by poor subjects in autobiographical works by Cy-Thea Sand and Maria Campbell. I read this internalization as evidence of discursive and symbolic violence against the poor and trace how poor people can be colonized by negative images. As someone who grew up in poverty and saw that poor people are more diverse and complex than the non-poor often realize, I know that no single theory, especially not one generated exclusively by the nonpoor, can explain the voices of the poor. Out of respect for the poor and their struggles to maintain 'dignity and daily bread ," we need to acknowledge from the outset that academic theory has too often in the past tended to over generalize about the poor, to represent the poor as an object of study to be measured and analyzed as a problem, rather than listened to. This is why we need to take the time to consider how academic discourse itself is an important cont ext shaping the study of poverty, a task I take on in the final chapter on contexts of oppositional criticism. In particular, the tendency for theories to make abstractions of identity and subjecthood has meant that characters and speakers bound by poverty are either extracted from their social and material contexts to have their situations falsely universalized or, conversely, are completely reduced to materiality and thus flattened into icons that remain silenced subjects. This is nowhere more evident than in the discussion of living space and poor houses in literature, both of which are often reduced to the aesthetics of person al taste or the background role of setting. Instead, I suggest we read living spaces by probing the connection between materiality and subjectivity - in other word s, how it feels to live in poor houses, how poor housing conditions shape sensibilities, how they limit life chances, complicate everyday lives, and impede well-being.>>>

IMPACT: DEHUMANIZATION

THE CURRENT OUTLOOK ON THE POOR HAS CAUSED THE POOR TO BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE WORTHLESS—THE FOCUS ON ATTAINMENT OF AFFLUENCE AS THE STANDARD SOLUTION FOR SOCIAL ILLS PRECLUDES OPPOSITIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND LEADS TO DEHUMANIZATION

HOOKS, CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK PROFESSOR, THEN DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, 1995–2004; BEREA COLLEGE, BEREA, KY, DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR-IN-RESIDENCE, BEGINNING 2004. CO-FOUNDER, HAMBONE LITERARY MAGAZINE. **2000** [BELL, WHERE WE STAND: CLASS MATTERS, P. 126-127]\

<<<Nowadays, a vast majority of our nation's poor believe that you are what you can buy. Since they can buy little they see themselves as nothing. They have passively absorbed the assumption perpetuated by ruling class groups that they cannot live lives of peace and dignity in the midst of poverty. Believing this they feel no hope, which is why folks with class privilege can label them nihilistic. Yet this nihilism is a response to a lust for affluence that can never be satisfied and that was artificially created by consumer culture in the first place. In the introduction to Freedom of Simplicity, Richard Foster states: "Contemporary culture is plagued by the passion to possess. The unreasoned boast abounds that the good life is found in accumulation, that 'more is better.' Indeed, we often accept this notion without question, with the result that the lust for affluence in contemporary society has become psychotic: it has completely lost touch with reality." Nihilism is a direct consequence of the helplessness and powerlessness that unrelenting class exploitation and oppression produce in a culture where everyone, no matter their class, is socialized to desire wealth— to define their value, if not the overall meaning of their lives by material status.

The result of this psychosis for the poor and underprivileged is despair. In the case of the black poor, that nihilism intensified because the combined forces of race and class exploitation and oppression make it highly unlikely that they will be able to change their lives or acquire even the material objects they believe would give their lives meaning. In the past few years, I have been stunned by the way in which unrealistic longing for affluence blinds the folks I know and care about who are poor, so they do not see the resources they have and might effectively use to enhance the quality of their lives. They are not unusual. .Fantasizing about a life of affluence stymies many poor people. Underprivileged folks often imagine that the acquisition of a material object will change the quality of their lives. And when it does not, they despair. In my own family I have seen loved ones fixate on a new car or a used car that is seen as a status object, pouring all their hard-earned money into this acquisition while neglecting material concerns that, if addressed, could help them change their lives in the long run.

I am thankful to have been born into a world where being poor did not mean that one was doomed to an unhappy life of despair. Yet the vast majority of the black poor today (many of whom are young) lack the oppositional consciousness that our ancestors utilized to endure hardship and poverty without succumbing to dehumanization. For the most part, today's poor lack the class consciousness that would shield them, from embracing the notion that one's value is determined by material goods. In the neighborhoods of my growing up, wise black, elders, many of whom had never had salaried jobs, shared their understanding that we are more than our material needs and possessions. They created lives of dignity and integrity in the midst of unrelenting hardship. They were able to do this because they refused to buy into the belief that acquiring material possessions is the only act that gives life meaning.

IMPACT: EXCLUSION/ALIENATION

THE POOR ARE NO LONGER PART OF THE "REAL" PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY ARE FORCED TO LIVE IN DESTITUTE CONDITIONS. THIS ALLOWS US TO ALIENATE THEM FROM THE REST OF SOCIETY INSTEAD OF HELPING THEM

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**

[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.4]

In two insightful essays written more than thirty years ago, Lee Rainwater and Herbert Gans envision the kind of writing and research that might disrupt the stereotypes on which the public debate about poverty is centered. Rainwater (1970, 9-10) proposes a psychological explanation for these stereotypes: we are susceptible to them owing to the great social distance between mainstream and "disinherited" members of society.

The central existential fact of life for the lower class, the poor, the deprived, and the discriminated-against ethnic groups, is that their members are not included in the collectivity that makes up the "real" society of "real" people. . . . Yet, at the same time, their activities are subject to surveillance and control by society in such a way that they are not truly autonomous, not free to make a way of life of their own.

As a consequence of our discomfort with our perceptions of the poor, [we] develop some understanding that "explains" the fact that there are people among us who are not part of us. . . In order to cope with the presence of individuals who are not a regular part of a society, its members develop labels that signify the moral status of the deviant and carry within them a full etiology and diagnosis, and often a folk therapy. . . . The social scientist inevitably imports these folk understandings into his own work. They yield both understanding and misunderstanding for him.

According to Rainwater, recognition that others live their lives under conditions we regard as intolerable starts the engine of stereotyping. We choose to believe that the poor are different from us, either because they have chosen poverty for reasons we would reject (they prefer being poor to working or are happy being poor) or because they are incapable of making choices that would improve their lot. The first assumption romanticizes the poor and celebrates their resistance and creativity. The second assumption denies that the poor are like us and marks them as sick, infantile, irresponsible, or depraved, arguing that theirs is an inferior citizenship that ought to be managed by others.

STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY—ALTERNATIVES

ALT: NARRATIVES

LISTENING TO THE VOICES OF THE POOR IS KEY TO CREATING BETTER POLICYMAKING AND DISRUPTING DOMINANT REPRESENTATIONS

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**

[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.19]

Part III considers the poor's capacity to change. The continuing skepticism of lawmakers encourages us to seek answers to poverty not only by creating a wider political consensus about the deservingness of the poor but also by increasing the poor's capacity for self-help. While policies for relief of poverty often presume the poor do not want to change, ethnography suggests that the poor are exactly like the mainstream—desiring a better life—but often are trapped by limited opportunity and a dominant culture that imposes negative images of them. Interventions that increase self-esteem, improve understanding of personal and institutional barriers to change, and convey practical forms of self-help build on the poor's aspirations for change. Lucie White describes remarkable personal encounters occurring in a government Head Start program that supply just the right mentoring and encouragement to help a woman break free of self-doubts and a destructive relationship. Frances Ansley describes how whole communities have learned about shared aspirations and possibilities for change through exploration and education guided by experts committed to participatory research—a form of inquiry that puts research skills at the disposal of the communities and groups to be benefited rather than politicians and policy makers. By such different and creative routes the poor and oppressed can attain greater self-understanding and take the initiative. Commentaries by Joel Handler and Michael Frisch that conclude this section explore hurdles faced by these aspiring agents of change—first, reaffirming their identity as individuals with capacity for change, and second, discovering what needs to be done.

Studies of poverty and low-wage employment that rely on understanding the **perspectives of poor persons have an important role to play in creating a more effective policy debate**. Interpretive research offers a direct response to the emphasis of some journalists, scholars, and politicians on the moral shortcomings of the poor. The voices of those who are struggling at the margins remind us that work and prospects for work shape perceptions and interpretations and, as a consequence, identities and choices for economic survival; they provide an eloquent response to the moral entrepreneurs of welfare reform whose characterizations of the poor often draw on stereotypes created by our reductive public discourse about poverty.

The value of firsthand interpretation of work and poverty lies not just in its capacity to reveal the otherwise hidden interplay between social circumstances, identity, and action but also in **its power to make the experience of poverty**– and thus the actions of those who live within it–**intelligible to others**. To interpret the causes and significance of life trajectories may be difficult, because the conclusions drawn from narratives often are ambiguous. The new ethnographic literature on poverty has been criticized for this ambiguity, especially for the moral ambiguity created by stories that show poverty as inextricably bound up with individual choice and seem to undermine their central implication: that a hierarchical, competitive socioeconomic structure makes poverty immensely more likely to occur in the lives of some individuals than in the lives of others. The fact and effects of poverty may be overlooked, while the very humanity of the poor—their ordinary virtue and fallible decisions—forecloses further discussion of the conditions that produce inequality and oppression. The contributors to this volume are particularly sensitive to the importance of integrating ethnography with research on the social structure and institutional contexts of poverty in order to provide a full understanding of these perspectives. **Narrative, a powerful conveyor of identity, exerts a powerful influence on perceptions of the poor at all levels.** Carefully crafted narratives such as those in this volume are therefore particularly timely correctives to the use of their identity as a cudgel with which to beat the poor.

ALT: NARRATIVES

STORYTELLING IS A NECESSARY COMPONENT OF ANY RESEARCH METHOD. NARRATIVES ARE ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO LEARN ABOUT AN ISSUE, AND GIVE PEOPLE WHO ARE UNDERREPRESENTED VOICE.

FERNANDEZ, DEPARTMENT OF ETHNIC STUDIES AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, FEBRUARY **2002** [LILLIAN, TELLING STORIES ABOUT SCHOOL: USING CRITICAL RACE AND LATINO CRITICAL THEORIES TO DOCUMENT LATINA/LATINA EDUCATION AND RESISTANCE. QUALITATIVE INQUIRY V. 8. PGS. 48-49]

<<<CRT and LatCrit identify storytelling, giving voice, or naming one's own reality as key elements of legal scholarship and important tools for achieving racial emancipation (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Montoya, 1995). Epistemologically, CRT and LatCrit privilege the experiential knowledge of people of color as critical ways of knowing and naming racism and other forms of oppression. Moreover, CRT and LatCrit offer an important analytical intervention—they place race and other socially constructed categories at the center of analysis. CRT and LatCrit do not view race as peripheral or incidental to the experiences of people of color. Rather, race, racialization, and racism are central to such narratives. For CRT and LatCrit scholars, storytelling or **narrative serves several important methodological functions** and benefits the person of color in a number of ways. First, **it allows the participant to reflect on his or her lived experience**. In this case, storytelling allowed my informant Pablo to reflect on his experience within a public educational institution. Second, **narrative allows the marginalized participant to speak or make public his or her story**. This of course happens within a mediated setting and usually within, although not limited to, a particular arena—the academy. Third, **storytelling or counter-storytelling also subverts the dominant story or the reality that is socially constructed by Whites** (Delgado, 1995). By offering an alternative to the master narrative (Ladson-Billings, 1998), it places the truthfulness and "objectivity" of that narrative in question. Finally, **storytelling can also be transformative and empowering**. Sharing one's stories with others raises the individual's consciousness of common experiences and opens up the possibility for social action. For researchers and educators, studying the experiences of marginalized Latina/Latino students is especially instructive. By looking to the marginal (and often misunderstood) sociocultural practices of Latina/Latino youth, we get a deeper understanding of how they are oppressed but, at the same time, use their personal agency to resist their social conditions. Critics of CRT and a related form of storytelling, testimonio, often charge that such narratives may not always be "true" or "objective" (Farber&Sherry, 1995; Stoll, as cited in Beverly, 2000). They claim that such stories may have a political agenda beneath them or that they may not be typical or accurate. Tied up in these critiques are questions of objectivity. Yet, most qualitative researchers have agreed that objectivity is not a tenable or useful principle in such work. Who is to say what is objective? How exactly is data "objective"? What type of methods will ensure objectivity? Most qualitative researchers agree that such questions are irrelevant and counterproductive and recognize instead that all research is subjective and that the researcher's subjectivity enters any research endeavor. Education scholars who use CRT and LatCrit should be aware that stories or narratives are mediated communicative events. The stories I have gathered through my research are mediated by me as the researcher and as a Latina doctoral student. These narratives are also produced under conditions dictated by academic research norms. In other words, these stories are constructed; there is no pure, complete story out there waiting to be recorded. Such a story can never be captured nor does it exist. Whatever story we do record is necessarily constructed by the individuals engaged in the interview process. Nonetheless, this does not diminish the value of such stories as testimonies to racism and other forms of oppression. The story I analyze in this article is part of a larger research project on Latina/Latino youth culture and schooling. This project explores how Latina/Latino youth culture in the city of Chicago both reflects and is constitutive of Latina/Latino ethno-racial identity. It also analyzes how Latina/ Latino teenagers take active roles not only as consumers but also as producers of a unique local youth subculture. I began this study in the spring of 1999, interviewing four Latina/Latino high school students (three young men and one young woman). In the fall of 1999, I interviewed two Latino college students and one Latina high school student. Since then, I have continued interviewing Latina/Latino high school and college students.11 The narrative I explore here comes from my meetings with Pablo, a Latino student at a Midwestern university. Pablo and I met twice, and our conversations lasted about an hour and a half each. This is the same format I followed with the other college student I interviewed at this university. Prior to our meeting, I e-mailed the participants with a general description of the purpose of my study to familiarize them with my topic and my personal interest in conducting this research. At the beginning of our meeting, I reiterated the focus of my study. Thus, the participants had a point of reference for our conversation. The interviews were unstructured and did not have a formal set of

(card continues…)

ALT: NARRATIVES

(…card continues)

questions (although in the second interviews, I did follow up on issues and/or questions raised in our first meetings). I began the initial interviews by asking each student to tell me about growing up in Chicago and the schools they attended. Having grown up in Chicago as well, I felt there were an affinity and a sense of familiarity between me and the participants as they made references to local institutions, cultural practices, and places I was able to recognize. The interviews went into their own (and markedly different) directions, guided only by the topics my interviewees brought up and by my further probing into some of those topics. The interviews with Pablo proved very useful, as he raised some very important issues about his educational experience that I was not expecting. Fernández / LATINA/LATINO EDUCATION AND RESISTANCE 49 Downloaded from http://qix.sagepub.com at UNIV OF TEXAS AUSTIN on July 24, 2009 Although we began by talking generally about his high school experience, he offered tremendous insight into how his experience was shaped as an immigrant, as someone whose native language is Spanish, and as a Latino student in the classroom with predominantly White teachers. Thus, he established an important context within which to examine the youth cultural practices that are central to my study. Gathering experiential knowledge about public education in Chicago from a student who actually went through the system is invaluable. It not only provides firsthand testimony but also serves as a counter-story to the dominant school narrative. I supplement Pablo's narrative with quantitative data on the school as well. But Pablo's story makes that data so much more meaningful by offering a real, firsthand account of the phenomenon that such statistics try to capture. Although storytelling can often record the violence of racial and other oppressions, CRT and LatCrit also suggest that the narrator's experiences can be potentially liberating. As Solórzano andVillalpando (1998) point out, CRT views race, gender, or class marginality as important social locations and processes, with many positive strengths, and as rich sources of information used to empower or transform those at the social margins. . . . the margins can and should be viewed as both sites of oppression and sites of resistance, empowerment, and transformation. (p. 215) Thus, although much of Pablo's narrative emphasizes the degradation of racist school practices towardLatina/Latino students, it also highlights the ways in which students resisted those practices. CRT also serves as an interpretive tool by guiding what we listen to in other's stories. I organize Pablo's narrative along the themes he raised in our interviews—race, students, and teacher expectations; vocational training; resisting and/or rejecting school; failing students; and students' lack of awareness about how the educational system operates against them.>>>

ALT: NARRATIVES

PARTICAPITORY RESEARCH IS KEY TO CREATE A CHANGE THAT BENEFITS THOSE OPPRESSED, ONLY ALLOWING "EXPERTS" TO FIND A "SOLUTION" REPRODUCES THE PROBLEM

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**
[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.245-246]
Scholars who study and write about poverty and low-wage work in early twenty-first-century America face important challenges in conducting and disseminating their research. The growing divide in wealth, life chances, and basic security that has become so pronounced in our country in recent decades increasingly distances university-based poverty researchers from some of their most important "subjects." Meanwhile, the academy's scramble to reinvent itself in the changed post-cold war funding environment means that scholars' ability to command respect within their institutional settings frequently hinges on how successful they are at marketing their projects and capacities to external entities that are in a position to pay for scholars' research services.
Participatory research is an alternative to reigning research methodologies that offers distinct advantages to scholars who are troubled by these developments.' This type of investigation emphasizes the involvement of people and communities normally excluded from the research process and the world of policy making. In the model's strongest form, participation occurs at every stage of the research endeavor, from the initial framing of research questions to the dissemination of results and the carrying out of social action based on the project's findings.
Participatory scholars themselves are a variegated lot, with roots in disparate settings that range from human resource management projects in manufacturing facilities in the world's north, to insurgent organizing among landless peasants in the global south (Greenwood and Levin 1998; Cancian and Armstead 1992; Reason and Roward 1981). My own values and experiences have brought me to the conclusion that the strands of participatory research that offer the most promise for meaningful work are those that first emerged from contexts of heated social contestation in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. These strands are importantly marked by their uneasy encounters with mainstream, post- colonial "development" practice in Third World countries. Researchers working in this vein have articulated sharp critiques of antipoverty projects imposed from above or abroad, and have produced a compelling literature about the ways that expert-led knowledge systems and expert-led projects—sometimes intentionally and sometimes not—tend to reproduce and reinforce existing relationships of power (Rahman 1993; Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991; Chambers 1983; Tandon 1982).

ALT: NARRATIVES

WHILE THE ALTERNATIVE MAY NOT SEEM RADICAL, READING THE NARRATIVES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY OFFERS NEW WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT SUBJECTIVITY THAT PRODUCES POLICY BASED ON COMMUNITY NOT MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

RIMSTEAD, B.A. AT YORK UNIVERSITY, M.A. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, PH.D. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, **2001**, [ROXANNE, REMNANTS OF NATION ON POVERTY NARRATIVES BY WOMEN, PG. 1-6]

<<<The discourses of poverty may be plural and contradictory, but the roots and consequences of these struggles over meaning are lived out by concrete subjects and, therefore, should not be restricted to a study of textual images alone. If we as a society grant more power to certain images of poverty, it is surely because these images perform a function. Dominant images of poverty tend to rationalize or naturalize the exclusion of the poor, cloak the existence of unequal distribution of wealth and life chances in mark et society - and also mask what Raymond Williams has called the spirit of 'uncommunity' at the heart of certain divisive practices of culture. I am suggesting that exclusionary cultural practices that keep the poor on the outside of mark et society and subservient are reproduced in literary studies not only through the dominant images of the poor but also in the way we naturalize these images by reading literary texts without interrogating the ideology behind poverty. Conversely, the field of literary studies needs to recognize resistant images of poverty and how they offer alternative visions of community and the lives of the poor, such as those featured in Sheila Baxter 's No Way to Live: Poor Women Speak Gilt and Gabrielle Roy's Bonheur d'occasion (The Tin Flute). Images resist hegemony in a self proclaimed 'class less' society when they expose the relational aspect of poverty, how the poor exist in relation to the non-poor, how the poor are defined as much by the way the non-poor police and dominate property, economic resources, and culture itself as they are by their own actions and choices. Besides testifying to the 'uncommunity' of a society divided into extreme positions over material interests and the damage that uncommunity visits on individual subjectivity as a practice of violence, resistant poverty narratives may also offer different utopic imaginaries of a society and nation,' visions of a more inclusive nation where the public good is defined not by deficit reduction but by sharing and investing in all members of the collective. Such narratives unfold alternative world views where poverty is not simply taken for granted as part of a natural social landscape but rather is resisted in courageous ways through acts of sharing, civil disobedience, and political activism - see, for example, 'A Question of Identity' (Sand), Cabbagetown (Garner), and Waste Heritage (Baird). We need reading practices that will allow poverty narratives to emerge as sites of radical possibility, where damaged subjectivities may be reconstituted through testimony and speaking out, where resistant poverty narratives may emerge in full relief against the backdrop of a wealthy nation, where alternative values may emerge as people opt out of one national dream based on acquisitiveness and posit another based on community.

ALT: BOTTOM-UP KNOWLEDGE—INVERT DISCOURSE

ASSERTING THE IMPORTANCE OF BOTTOM-UP ANALYSIS CAN PRODUCE AN POLITICALLY NECESSARY COUNTER-POINT TO CURRENT FORMS OF INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL AND GENERATE LEGAL REFORMS THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, **1995** (SANFORD, WORDS OF WELFARE, P 73-76)

In Minnesota in 1993, the number of food shelves had reached approximately 350. In all likelihood, developmemts in this area in Minnesota are indicative of developments around the country. Food shelves are becoming more commonplace. From the vantage point of food shelf users, the privatization of public assistance has elaborated a nationwide pattern: reduced public assistance for the poor means more and more families being shunted into the growing system of private emergency assistance. The paternalism of the system of public assistance intensifies as it moves from cash assistance to food stamps to food shelves. The growing reliance on in-kind benefits provided privately through such entities as food shelves suggests a turning away from the provision of publicly funded cash assistance. Like the poorhouse of old, this development represents a way of instituting dis-cipline and enforcing the concept of "less eligibility": the idea that assis-tance to the needy should be as much as possible less than what wage work provides, so that the poor will be willing to take whatever meager means of support the labor market will provide them. This age-old disciplinary logic gets insinuated into food shelf practices even as food shelves strive to be sources of compassion. The institutional matrix in which food shelves operate creates insistences that disseminate disciplinary practices. The old is new. Just like the poorhouse that sought to reform and correct the poor, the food shelf becomes a site for helping poor people learn to be "self-suf-ficient" according to the insidious logic that excludes consideration of the political-economic context in which they must struggle for survival. And food shelves are but one element of the rapidly growing system of privati-zation of public assistance and its reliance on in-kind services provided privately through charitable organizations. With the institutionalization of the food shelf, the soup kitchen, and the homeless shelter, postindustrial North America lives to witness the figurative return of the poorhouse.39

Conclusion

Narrating political economy in terms of a discourse that accounts for the consequences of those on the bottom can help produce situated knowledges resistant to the homogenizing and marginalizing practices of top-down discourses. **Inverted political economy can make central what is taken to be marginal**. Without claiming a monopoly on the capture of authentic or geniune experiences of those on the bottom, bottom-up discourse can help offer alternative understandings that are attentive to how those on the bottom are denied voice, identity, and agency. The needs of those on the bottom can be rearticulated in terms that account for how prevailing structures work to marginalize them. Such a political economy can, for instance, help highlight the not usually visible workings of the increasingly privatized system of public assistance. Such a situated knowledge can provide a counterpoint for welfare policy research that continues to insist on its often implicit presumption that it explains the political economy of welfare from some imagined objective olympian perspective, outside the system, and is ready to offer those in positions of responsibility the managerial advice they need to reform the relationships of welfare and poverty.

ALT: BOTTOM-UP KNOWLEDGE

CRITICISM FROM BELOW ALLOWS FOR THE DISRUPTION OF POWER RELATIONS

VIVYAN C. **ADAIR**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AT HAMILTON COLLEGE, "RECLAIMING CLASS: WOMEN, POVERTY, AND THE PROMISE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA," PG 40-42, **2003**

These representations position welfare mothers' bodies as sites of destruction and as catalysts for a culture of depravity and disobedience; in the process, they produce a reading of the writing on the body of the poor woman that **calls for further punishment and discipline**. In New York City, Workfare programs force "lazy" poor women to take a job—"any job"—including working for the city wearing surplus orange prison uniforms picking up garbage on the highway and in parks for about **$1.10 per hour** (Dreier 1999). Bridefare programs in Wisconsin give added benefits to "licentious" welfare women who marry a man— "any man"—and publish a celebration of their "reform" in local newspapers (Dresang 1996). Tidyfare programs across the nation allow state workers to enter and inspect the homes of "slovenly" poor women so that they can monetarily sanction families whose homes are not deemed to be appropriately tidy.14 Learnfare programs in many states publicly expose and fine "undisciplined" mothers who for any reason have children who do not (or cannot) attend school regularly (Muir 1993). All of these welfare-reform programs are designed to expose and publicly punish the "misfits" whose bodies are read as proof of their refusal or inability to capitulate to androcentric, capitalist, racist, and heterosex-ist values and mores. Theories of class inscription allow us to read the bodily punishment of these women as a single, progressive slate on which the culture has inscribed and reinscribed continuous forces of socialization. In that the poor woman's body was, and continues to be, contextual-ized and given meaning in and through both discourse and public spectacles of punishment, tracing the inscriptions allows us to expose the ways in which she has been systematically marked and mapped, like a geographical terrain that produces knowledge about her human activity and value. The frantic writing of the body of the poor woman reveals the cycle that marks her body as Other and then reads that scarred body through a template that justifies the need for further punishing reform. In the process, this practice cements the allegedly "undeserving" poor woman as an emblem of chaotic and frightening meaning and as the physical and symbolic site of outlaw sexuality, excess, chaos, disorder, and disruption. RESISTING THE TEXT: ON THE LIMITS OF DISCURSIVE CRITIQUE AND THE POWER OF RESISTANCE THROUGH EDUCATION **Despite the rhetoric and policy that mark and mutilate our bodies, poor women survive.** Hundreds of thousands of us are somehow good parents, despite the systems that are designed to prohibit us from being so. We live on the unlivable and teach our children love, strength, and grace. We network, solve irresolvable dilemmas, and support one another and our families. If we somehow manage to find a decent pair of shoes or save our food stamps to buy our children birthday cakes, we are accused of being cheats or "living too high." If our children suffer, it is read as proof of our inferiority and bad mothering; if they succeed, we are suspect for being too pushy, for taking more than our share of free services, or for having too much free time to devote to them. Yet, as Janet Diamond, a former welfare recipient, says in the introduction to For Crying Out Loud: Women and Poverty in the United States (Dujon and Withorn 1998,1): "In spite of public censure, welfare mothers graduate from school, get decent jobs, watch their children achieve, make good lives for themselves. Welfare mothers continue to be my inspiration, not because they survive, but because they dare to dream. Because when you are a welfare recipient, laughter is an act of rebellion." Foucault's later work acknowledges this potential for rebellion inherent in the operation of power. In Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings (1980), he positions discourse as an amalgam of material power and nonmaterial knowledge that fosters just such resistance. As McNay (1992) points out, for Foucault power is a productive and positive force rather than a purely negative, repressive entity. McNay notes that, for Foucault, "in relation to the body power does not simply repress its unruly forces, rather it incites, instills and produces effects in the body" (McNay 1992, 38). She adds: Resistance arises at the points where power relations are at their most rigid and intense. For Foucault, repression and resistance are not onto-logically distinct, rather repression produces its own resistance: "there are no relations of power without resistance; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised." (McNay 1992, 39) **Because power is diffuse, heterogeneous, and contradictory, poor women struggle against the marks of their degradation. Resistance swells in the gaps and interstices of productions of the self**. For Foucault, "discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (Foucault 1978,101). Yet here we also recognize what McNay refers to as the "critical limitations" of Foucault and of poststructural-ism in general. For although bodily inscriptions of poverty are clearly textual, they are also quite physical, immediate, and pressing, devastating the lives of poor women and children in the United States today. Discursive critique is at its most powerful only when it allows us to understand and challenges us to fight together to change the material conditions and bodily humiliations that scar poor women and children in order to keep us all in check.

ALT: STANDPOINT—EMPOWERS CHANGE

DIFFERENT SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES ARE KEY TO EMPOWER THE MASSES AND INSTILL CHANGE

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**

[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.302]

The development of motives, perspectives, and meaning—consciousness—provides room for individuals to maneuver. Thus we find openings in ethnographic narratives of poverty for change and empowerment. Identity is a resource that may create space for action.21 Lucie White writes of a Head Start participant whose identity has many "potentials" that "come in and out of focus as she interacts with different people in different social domains." The woman's experiences at Head Start acted as a catalyst for change that increased her effectiveness in managing her life. White examines the critical events in that stream of change, particularly the woman's discussion of herself and her situation with a mentor and interactions with peers, and attempts to map her subject's course through the process. Similarly, Aixa Cintnin-Velez describes an evolving consciousness of possibility that challenges the presumptions of outsiders about the oppressiveness and bleakness of homeless shelters. The resident who said that a shelter provided her first experience of stability claimed that this experience changed her outlook on life. Her subsequent ability to make changes in her behavior made her hope real, not an illusion.

Identity also is a critical element in narratives of collective change. Participatory research described by Frances Ansley has provided groups of workers experiencing the traumas of economic marginalization in the United States and elsewhere with opportunities to examine, understand, and ultimately organize a collective response. For example, in discussions of their plight with union leaders and academics, American workers in Tennessee who lost their jobs to Mexican maquiladoras were able to derive a new sense of identity—not crafted by outsiders who helped the group get started—that oriented their anger away from the Mexican workers and toward their former employer and the government that provided aid for the move to Mexico (Ansley and Williams 1999).22 The discovery of possibilities for collective participation in efforts to change the balance of power in oppressive social relations may be one important route toward change.

Ethnography that finds hope for change and empowerment is particularly respectful of the perceptions of the poor, Michael Frisch notes (commentary, this volume). Although elites often describe the poor as fatalistic—a characteristic of Oscar Lewis's concept of the culture of poverty—the poor often make realistic assessments of their circumstances, and they make rational choices about their actions, given the knowledge they have 23 Frisch contends that the conditions of poverty create opportunities for perception not available to others: outsiders can learn about those conditions, and about how poor persons use their knowledge of those conditions, only from them. Narratives thus can make room between abstract generalizations about the oppressiveness of poverty and the individual who maneuvers to change his or her circumstances.

ALT: STANDPOINT—EMPATHY SOLVENCY

INCORPORATING MULTIPLE STANDPOINTS IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO RELATE TO OTHER PEOPLE'S CIRCUMSTANCES AND ELIMINATE SUPERIORITY

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**
[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.304]
Ethnographic research harnesses empathy in the service of this project, and it helps us document for other working Americans a fundamental truth: but for the limiting and transforming experiences of poverty, most poor persons are capable of active participation in mainstream institutions. Ethnography makes the barriers to that participation transparent by invoking widely shared experiences of the coercion, humiliation, and insecurity of the labor market. Of course, more is at stake here than the need for an accurate portrayal of the perspectives, capacities, and moral character of the poor. Truly to democratize poverty, we must attempt to change the self-perceptions of the mainstream. To that end we propose a model of moral equivalence between Self and Other, one that justifies the citizenship of the welfare-needing poor by demonstrating that most are low-wage workers at some point in their lives, and that all are potential workers.24 The perception that they are deserving is the key to income supports and other services for the poor.25 So perceived, the poor are seen to share the many risks and oppressions of the labor market with those in the mainstream. In fact, so perceived, their identity is transformed, and the poor are entitled to become members of the mainstream, to enjoy the full benefits of citizenship. (Consider, for instance, employment protection policies that cover other workers: the Fair Labor Standards Act, pension rights, and Social Security and Medicare) During the New Deal, just such a transformation in identity was accomplished for elderly persons with minimum work histories who received a guarantee of federal old-age insurance.
The oral historian Alessandro Portelli (1991) observes that the atrophy of movements for radical social change has left citizens of many Western societies to face social problems alone, as the obsession with self-sufficiency and autonomy in moral, academic, and policy discourses amply demonstrates. The task of oral historians, he argues, is to convey difference as interdependence rather than as a form of hierarchy. Portelli is describing conditions for effective oral history fieldwork, but he understands that fieldwork offers a paradigm for research and, indeed, we also might argue, for policy. Meaningful change requires self-awareness on many levels. Research and policy are not only forms of intervention, but opportunities for mutual enlightenment and increased selfawareness—both for those who need help and for those who want to provide it. Empowerment of the poor in their own lives, as we are empowered in ours, is the most democratic prescription for change, and it is reinforced by our civic culture of self-help. **Whether as members of a voting public, elected decision makers, or academics committed to the production of knowledge, we—the holders of power—can achieve this democratic end only if we recognize similarities in our experiences, goals, values, and moral stature, and accept the equality of our differences of race, gender, and class, which then will cease to matter as sources of enduring inequality.**

ALT: STANDPOINT—KEY TO GOOD RESEARCH/POLICY

THE LOWER CLASS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO TEACH US MORE ABOUT POVERTY THAN WE COULD THROUGH EMPIRICAL RESEARCH. IT'S NECESSARY THAT WE LISTEN TO THEM IN ORDER TO HELP THEM SURVIVE.

SWIGONSKI, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, **1994** [MARY E., THE LOGIC OF FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH. SOCIAL WORK. V. 39 ISSUE 4. EBSCO]

<<<Life experience structures one's understanding of life. Research must begin from concrete experience, rather than abstract concepts. The life experiences of members of marginalized groups have been erroneously devalued as starting points for scientific research and as generators of evidence for or against knowledge claims. Beginning from life experiences grounded in cultural diversity can decrease the partialities and distortions in the picture of nature and social life. For example, beginning research from the lives of women has made visible issues such as childbirth, housework, wife abuse, incest, rape, sexual harassment, pornography, and prostitution. These concerns are simply not visible from the life experiences of most men. For a position to count as a standpoint, an objective location is required, such as beginning with the life experiences within a particular group. The subsequent observations and theory about nature and social relations then examine how the ruling apparatus structures that group's lives. Collins (1989), a black feminist theorist, amplified this requirement. She asserted that individuals who have lived through the experiences on which they claim to be experts are more credible than those who have merely read or thought about such experiences. Further, approaches to knowing must be guided by an ethic of caring and responsibility. People are accountable and responsible for the knowledge they produce and share. Ladner's (1987) work demonstrated the power of this point. Her study of African American urban adolescent mothers began from their life experiences. Ladner's care for and connection to them allowed her to recognize the wealth of strengths and coping skills employed by these women. Traditional research using a deviance model failed to notice the coping abilities these women exercised on a daily basis. Members of the most and the least powerful groups will potentially have opposed understandings of the world. The dominant group's view will be partial and more superficial. It is in the dominant group's interest to maintain, reinforce, and legitimate this dominance and understanding of the world, regardless of how incomplete it may be. Collins (1990) observed that "suppressing the knowledge and viewpoint of any oppressed group makes it easier for dominant groups to rule because the seeming absence of an independent consciousness in the oppressed can be taken to mean that subordinated groups willingly collaborate in their own victimization" (p. 5). In contrast, the perspective from subordinate groups' life has the potential to be more complete. Marginalized populations have fewer interests in maintaining ignorance about how the social order actually works and fewer reasons to invest in maintaining or justifying the status quo than do dominant groups. Because they have less to lose, their perspective can more easily generate fresh, critical analyses and questions (for example, about how the current social and economic systems support capitalism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other oppressions) (Nielsen, 1990). In this context, Rich's (1980) analysis of the exercise of male power to ensure "compulsory heterosexuality" emerged because of the viewpoint available to her as a lesbian, a viewpoint that is more comprehensive than that of the dominant heterosexual group. The less-powerful group's standpoint has to be developed through education. The greater depth and comprehensiveness of the marginalized group's view cannot be taken for granted. Without conscious effort to reinterpret reality, without political consciousness, marginalized populations are likely to accept the dominant worldview. Knowledge emerges for the oppressed through the struggles they wage against their oppressors. Knowledge production is a hands-on procedure (Harding, 1991; Rose, 1983). Researchers can understand hidden aspects of social relations between the marginalized groups and the institutions that structure their lives through their struggles to change those institutions and structures. Through such struggles social workers see the reality of how the social order is constructed and maintained. The perspective of those outside the dominant group develops from their daily activities. These activities require them to bridge the gap between ideological dualisms such as nature versus culture, professional versus manual work, or intellectual versus emotional work. The perspective of the "other" permits various cultural irrationalities or inconsistencies to emerge into clearer view. For example, the domestic work of African American women in the homes of white upper-class families allowed them to develop a standpoint that demystified white power. Sojourner Truth, in her often quoted "Ain't I a Woman?" speech, gave her perspective as other and challenged definitions of woman as passive and frail (Collins, 1990).

ALT: EPISTEMOLOGY SHIFT

SHIFTING OUR EPISTEMOLOGY IS NECESSARY FOR REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL CHANGE—THE ALTERNATIVE IS A SERIES OF NECESSARY, CUMULATIVE EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION

ZUBERI AND BONILLA-SILVA, ZUBERI IS A PROFESSOR AND CHAIRMAN OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, BONILLA-SILVA IS A PREOFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, **2008**
[WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS, PG.331]

But sociology and the social sciences have always had their discontents.4 Women such as Ida B. Wells and Jane Addams, men of color such as W. E. B. Du Bois, and a few White men such as W. I. Thomas (see Bonilla-Silva, Baiocchi, and Horton forthcoming), challenged White supremacist standards early on and offered more nuanced interpretations of inequality (racial and otherwise) in society (Zuberi 2006). And almost all the sociological dissidents of yesteryears as well as those of today (Essed and Gold- berg 2002) have been connected to larger causes and movements.8 Their specific confrontations in sociology derived from the intellectual foundations of the social movements they were part of, such as the antilynching campaigns (Ida B. Wells), the suffragist and feminist movement (Ida B. Wells and Jane Addams), Pan-Africanism (Du Bois), and many other movements in the early part of the twentieth century.

The critique of what has been known as "the sociology of race relations" has thus been intrinsically connected to the politics of resistance and decolonization projects. Whereas mainstream sociology has advocated, since the work of Robert Park, "assimilation" as the solution to America's (and the world's) racial "problems,"7 critical minority sociologists have insisted on fundamental changes to the social order as the only way to eliminate "the color line" (Du Bois 1903; Crenshaw 1988); whereas sociology and the social sciences have offered at best a slow, piecemeal, evolutionary process of racial change, analysts of color have insisted on the need for radical or revolutionary change.8 African and African Diaspora scholars such as W. E. B. Du Bois (1934) and Oliver Cox (1948), for instance, long held that only by understanding decolonization and deracialization could one understand the development of capitalism and modern society. Rather than "civilization" (the language of sociology in the early years), "modernity" (the language of sociology from the 1940s to the 1960s), or "development" (the language of sociology since the 1960s), people of color enduring colonial, neocolonial, or internal colonial domination have historically demanded freedom, equality, and respect as the way out of the bubbling racial cauldron.

Therefore, **we position our efforts as part of the long** (and still woefully incomplete) **march for racial redemption and propose that what is needed to uproot the White logic** that has organized the sociology of race relations is an epistemology of liberation (Moya 1997; Feagin and Vera 2001; De Sousa Santos 2006). We advocate for a new epistemology expressive of the movement to abolish White supremacy and liberate us all- White and non-white- from the racial prison we have inhabited for 500 years. Such epistemology is corrective to the Tarzanic logic that has inspired sociological inquiry into the racial matters that made Whites into heroes and Blacks into primitives, villains, and criminals. Below we provide an outline of such an epistemology fully aware that the precise content of any epistemology of social change will ultimately be shaped by the politic, values, and emotions of the movement it embodies- in this case, the movement to end White supremacy once and for all and, hopefully, achieve in the process “social emancipation”.

ALT: EPISTEMOLOGY SHIFT

WE MUST VIEW RACIAL STRATIFICATION FROM THE VIEW OF THOSE OPPRESSED, BY REJECTING RACIAL IDENTITY AND POWER STRUCTURES, WE CAN AFFIRM SOCIAL EMANCIPATION

ZUBERI AND BONILLA-SILVA, ZUBERI IS A PROFESSOR AND CHAIRMAN OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, BONILLA-SILVA IS A PREOFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, **2008**
[WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS, PG.332]

In the introductory chapter to this volume we defined "white logic" as "the epistemological arm of White supremacy." Rather then leading to a science of objectivity, White logic has fostered an ethnocentric orientation. Most researchers have embraced the assumptions of White supremacy. In fact, many researchers of color are in agreement with White supremacy at the epistemic level; however, scholars of color are potentially much closer to being objective or unbiased in research of racial stratification. This point has been well argued by Iris M. Yong, Paula Moya, and more recently, by Charles W. Mills. According to Mills, expressing a view to which we subscribe wholeheartedly, "hegemonic groups characteristically have experiences that foster illusory perceptions about society's functioning, whereas subordinate groups characteristically have experiences that (at least potentially) give rise to more adequate conceptualizations". Therefore, our claim for the need of an epistemology of racial liberation is not just a claim for another "perspective". WE are not arguing that there is an "ontological symmetry between whiteness and blackness". Instead, we contend that viewing racial stratification from the position of people of color is a privileged perspective.

At the same time, we reject the ontological and fixed existence of racial identity. Racial identity embodies the basis and nature of modern racism and White supremacy. Sociology form this point of view sees the persons of color when they are in conflict with the existence of racism that sustains White supremacy. While we see the confrontation with White supremacy as important, we do not see it as a totalizing experience. Overcoming White supremacy is possible for all people within its realms of domination; however, it would be foolish to act as if we did not live in a society in which the implications of race are all too real.

Second, although the modernity constructed the notion of the subject as "a self-present origin outside of and opposed to objects of knowledge- autonomous, neutral, abstract, and purified of particularity… an abstract idea of formal reason, disembodied and transcendent", we are that all subjects are part of the social process and, therefore, denote epistemologically their place in the power structure- some express domination, feminist, and critical commentators have argued, the modern Cartesian subject is not truly universal, but an idealized White, bourgeois, male, atomistic, heterosexual construct. Hence, an epistemology or racial emancipation makes explicit its foundational nexus to people of color, that is, it is both race conscious and race-affirming.

ALT: EPISTEMOLOGY SHIFT—LINKS MULTIPLE STRUGGLES

SHIFTING EPISTEMOLOGIES ALLOWS US TO LINK UP WITH RESISTANCE TO ALL FORMS OF OPPRESSION—RADICAL DEMOCRATIC PLURALISMN IS KEY TO SOLVE ALL FORMS OF OPPRESSION

ZUBERI AND BONILLA-SILVA, ZUBERI IS A PROFESSOR AND CHAIRMAN OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, BONILLA-SILVA IS A PREOFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, **2008**
[*WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS*, PG.334-335]
Lastly, the epistemology of racial emancipation is global, multicultural, and in conversation and solidarity with all social movements of emancipation. It is global because the world system has been racialized for at least 500 years (Winant 2001; Balibar and Wallerstein 1988) and, therefore, the house race built must be demolished everywhere. It is multicultural because it aspires to learn from, understand, and validate the knowledge produced by the experiences of the many racialized groups in the world system suffering from the various incarnations of White supremacy. And it is in solidarity with the aspirations for social justice of oppressed people everywhere.
Although rooted on the racial problematic, the epistemology of racial liberation is not blind to other forms of oppression and works with and for the liberation of all oppressed people in the world. It works toward racial justice but is mindful that "racial justice is only a part of justice; one could have a society that is racially just, but unjust in other ways" (Mills 2003, 196). People doing research in this tradition work with others in the struggle for human emancipation; they work to demolish the monstrous and complex prison built by systems of racial and class domination, by patriarchy, by heterosexism, and by other forms of domination; and, finally, they hope to learn from—as well as to teach to—other subordinated groups and peoples in struggle. But the epistemology of racial emancipation does not empty itself a priori into universal projects based on human rights, world citizenship, or class, because such projects, and the categories upon which they are based, are still partial and have historically worked to subsume projects of racial liberation (e.g., the case of Cuba [Sawyer 2006] and South Africa [Schutte 1995]). The strategy we favor for coalition building is based on the notion of radical democratic pluralism, a stand that acknowledges and affirms group differences "as a means of ensuring the participation and inclusion of everyone in social and political institutions" (Young 1990, 168. See also Laclau and Mouffe 1985. Our emphasis).)

ALT: EPISTEMOLOGY SHIFT—CHALLENGE POLICY DEBATE

REFORMING CURRENT MODES OF POLICY DEBATES ON POVERTY WILL FAIL—WE NEED TO REJECT THE OLD FORMS AS A FIRST STEP TO SHIFTING THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL COORDINATES OF THE DISCUSSION

O'CONNOR, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT U.C. SANTA BARBARA, **2001** [ALICE, *POVERTY KNOWLEDGE*, PRINCETON UNIVERSIT PRESS, P. 294-295]

A third task is to generate poverty knowledge within a far more diversified set of institutional arrangements, recognizing the limitations of the "research industry" model that continues to thrive on its ability to service government agencies and the existing policy debate. This is not simply a matter, as some would have it, of learning lessons from the far more effective policy think tanks of the Right. It is a matter of finding the institutional structure that can generate a genuinely independent and critical body of knowledge that aims to set rather than follow the agenda for policy debate. Crucial to this process is a willingness to break down the hierarchical relationship between social scientific ways of knowing and other forms of expertise—to recognize, that is, the legitimacy and importance of knowledge that is grounded in practice, in activism, and in the experience not only of material deprivation but of the everyday workings of the economy. This in turn requires a serious commitment from all sides to the difficult, even tedious, work of building long-term, collaborative relationships for setting as well as carrying out poverty research—a model that takes the production of knowledge out of or at least beyond traditional expert or academic venues and into a variety of communities.

Finally, a reconstructed poverty knowledge would acknowledge and embrace rather than deny its inherently political nature, not necessarily by adhering to a single, agreed-upon ideological alignment, but by opening up its usually buried interests and ideological assumptions to scrutiny and debate. For contemporary poverty knowledge in particular, that will require opening itself up to that part of the liberal tradition that has not been the prevailing voice: the part, that is, that has used poverty research **to challenge and open up the ideological boundaries of liberalism rather than adhering to—thereby reaffirming—the preset boundaries of existing policy debates**. It will also require poverty experts to come to terms with the role, and the potential, of knowledge as a political force—to move away from the existing model that relies so exclusively on building links to elite policy makers, and toward one that is willing to build links to social movements and ultimately to a much broader vision of political and economic reform.

Certainly this brief outline implies a significant departure from the current practice of poverty research—not just in substance, language, and organization, but in the way the "professors" relate to the "practitioners" and the "poor." It asks that researchers act as public intellectuals in a way that is neither customary nor rewarded in traditional social scientific venues. It asks, too, that recognized poverty experts relinquish the power and recognition that comes with an exclusive claim to objectivity, by opening knowledge to other forms of learning and experience. And it asks that they be explicit about their own ideological assumptions and interests as a way of improving poverty knowledge. It is worth recalling, then, that a reconstructed poverty knowledge has much in past and contemporary research to build on. Progressive Era poverty knowledge, for all its rudimentary methods and prejudices, offered at least the elements of a broad framework for investigating class, race, and gender inequities as problems of political economy. Additionally, a now significant body of economic research has documented the growing inequality of income and wealth. Community-based and ethnographic research, while eclipsed by the nationally representative survey, continues to offer a model not only for challenging the atomized vision of analytic poverty knowledge but also for making research a more genuinely collaborative enterprise. And a great deal of anthropological and historical research has looked beyond the wall of cultural "pathology" to investigate the wide variety of cultural, political, and community-building strategies in poor and working-class communities. These are the building blocks for a genuinely different kind of poverty knowledge, one that is less devoted to changing poor people than to a genuinely progressive struggle against inequality.

Improbable though it may seem, the late twentieth century may yet prove to be a propitious historical moment for making "the poverty problem" a matter of public and political consciousness without isolating and stigmatizing the poor—thanks, however perversely, to the end of welfare and the growth of inequality. For if welfare repeal makes it more difficult to blame poverty on "dependency," it also lays bare the reality that work is no guarantee out of poverty. So, too, amidst the vast inequities of late twentieth-century prosperity, is there an opening to draw attention to the maldistribution of wealth, power, and opportunity, and to the price of tolerating such yawning social disparities. Recognizing these as core issues in poverty is **the first step** toward the larger project of imagining, organizing, and mobilizing a new poverty knowledge.

ALT: COMMUNITY BUILDING—SINGLE MODEL SOLUTIONS FAIL

SUCCESSFUL AID OF THE IMPOVERISHED IS ACHIEVED THROUGH COMMUNITY EFFORTS, RATHER THAN THE BUREAUCRATIC CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

SCHORR, LECTURER IN SOCIAL MEDICINE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY, AND DIRECTOR OF THE PROJECT ON EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS AND OF ITS PATHWAYS, **1997** [LISBETH B. "COMMON PURPOSES," ANCHOR BOOKS. PG. 360-363]

Successful systematic efforts to change the circumstances of life in the inner city have several common elements that are now widely agreed upon.

The Elements of Successful Community-rebuilding Initiatives

1. Successful initiatives combine action in the economic, service, education, physical development, and community-building domains. The hallmark of the new community initiatives is the determination to go beyond fixing individual problems. They set out "to foster a fundamental transformation of poor neighborhoods, and of the circumstances and opportunities of individuals and families who live there." They reflect the conviction that past efforts have been fundamentally flawed because they attempted to address the many problems clustered among people in poverty just one problem at a time.

Even service agencies were finding that services alone could not respond to many families' most urgent needs. A 1991 survey of member agencies of Family Services of America found that while the problems contributing to family distress overwhelmingly included housing, crime, poverty, and difficulties at school, agencies responded by offering the families psychological counseling nearly 90 percent of the time.

There are signs that more and more communities all over the country are beginning to respond to deteriorating neighborhood conditions by blurring the sharp divisions among prevailing categorical programs and among prevailing ideological divides. Earlier arguments between the adherents of economic versus behavioral explanations, and between service-based or opportunity-based remedies, are beginning to subside as more people come to see these arguments as unproductive and the either/or choices as moot. More recognize that the well-being of children, families, and communities are inseparable. People most concerned about the inadequate economic-opportunity structure, and people most concerned about individual inadequacies that make it impossible for those left behind to take advantage of whatever opportunities are available, are beginning to see it is no more productive to be blind to one as to the other.

More and more initiatives are adopting a broad, noncategorical, nonideological, comprehensive approach. The leaders of these initiatives may argue endlessly about how comprehensive an array of activities an initiative has to be committed to in order to call itself comprehensive, but the crucial common principle seems to be that they all share a comprehensive mind-set.

They distinguish between a comprehensive mind-set and a comprehensive mandate. A comprehensive mandate from the funder, which includes a laundry list of separate programs and activities that the nascent initiative is expected to launch all at once, is not only overwhelming to staffs and boards but makes it impossible to respond to community needs and demands as they emerge. Harold Richman, director of the Chapin Hall Center for Children and co- chair of the Roundtable for Comprehensive Community Initiatives, says that a comprehensive mandate can paralyze an initiative, force it into excessively lengthy planning, or lead it to function at such a superficial level that it is entirely ineffective just so it can say, yes, at least we've picked something from column A, something from column B, and something from column C.

The most promising initiatives all use—and are encouraged by their funders to use—a comprehensive lens as they survey both problems and opportunities. They all understand the necessity and the effectiveness of working simultaneously on economic and physical development, service and educational reform, and community building. But they are strategic in choosing where to begin, in sequencing their activities, and in how much they take on at once.

2. Successful initiatives rely on a community's own resources and strengths as the foundation for designing change initiatives. Successful community-based change initiatives reflect the specific assets, needs, institutional relationships, and power structures of individual communities. There is no one model of neighborhood transformation that could be applied everywhere. Designing the neighborhood change effort to fit individual communities is closely linked to the process of community building.

Community building, which has become such an important element of effective community initiatives, is more an orientation than a technique, more a mission than a program, more an outlook than an activity. It catalyzes a process of change grounded in local life and priorities. Community building addresses the developmental needs of individuals, families, and organizations within the neigh-borhood. It changes the nature of the relationship between the neighborhood and the systems outside its boundaries. A community's own strengths—whether they are found in churches, block clubs, local

(card continues…)

ALT: COMMUNITY BUILDING—SINGLE MODEL SOLUTIONS FAIL

(…card continues)

leadership, or its problem-solving abilities—are seen as central. Community building is based on the belief that inner-city residents and institutions can and must be primary actors in efforts to solve the problems of their neighborhoods.

In her report on community building for the Rockefeller Foundation, Joan Walsh emphasizes that the community building movement is resolutely inclusive and multiracial. She sees it "as much an attempt to complete the business of the civil rights movement as of the War on Poverty."

The meanings of community building are and will continue to be many and varied. They include efforts to create "a political impact on large impersonal forces," as the Empowerment Zones are trying to do to make up for the loss of industrial jobs, and as DSNI was able to do to stop Boston trash haulers from dumping trash in its neighborhood. They also include efforts to enhance "the capacity of individuals to believe that they can change the course of their own lives by their own efforts," as when neighborhood residents make decisions as part of a neighborhood governance entity. They all have in common the recognition that because the problems of individuals and families in the inner city did not arise in isolation from neighborhood conditions, addressing these problems requires strengthening the norms, supports, and problem-solving resources that link individuals to one another and to institutions of their community. They all agree, in the words of one community activist, that "community building is the long-term agenda of building the capacity in these communities to take on whatever agenda pops up."

They seek to increase community effectiveness in securing public and private goods and services allocated from outside the neighborhood on grounds of equity and expanding opportunity, as a means of empowering the community as a whole, and to assure that the neighborhood's residents will be prepared for employment, parenting, and otherwise to function in mainstream society.

Community building activities focus on rebuilding the social fabric of the neighborhood to provide residents with the benefits of community, which John Gardner defines as "security, a sense of identity and belonging, a framework of shared assumptions and values, a network of caring individuals, the experience of being needed . . . and responding to need." The strategies for operationalizing all "aim to increase the density of social interaction and communication in the service of neighborhood improvement."

Efforts to reduce social disorder and physical "incivilities," such as broken windows, trash, public drinking, and prostitution, are also part of community building. They are undertaken in the expectation of improving directly the quality of neighborhood life and of discouraging potential offenders who may be deterred by the knowledge that residents are battling deterioration and are not indifferent to what goes on in the neighborhood.

Effective community building activities often bring the social control and nurturance that can compete with gangs as a basis for social organization for young people. By connecting adults with one another and with youth, community-building activities such as mentoring and organized supervision of afterschool and nighttime educational and recreational programs are able to strengthen informal social controls by building an extensive set of obligations, expectations, and social networks.

ALT: PUBLIC DIALOGUE

THE ALTERNATIVE TURNS PRIVATE TROUBLES INTO PUBLIC ISSUES – THIS DIALOGIC PROCESS IS TRANSFORMATIVE AND OFFERS A METHOD TO LIBERATE OPPRESSED PEOPLES

RIMSTEAD, B.A. AT YORK UNIVERSITY, M.A. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, PH.D. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, **2001**, [ROXANNE, REMNANTS OF NATION ON POVERTY NARRATIVES BY WOMEN, PG. 267-268]

<<<Social critics have long stressed the importance of public dialogue in exposing how poverty is lived in private, especially by women and children, but is shaped by public policy and public images. One critic of the gap between needs and services in Canada writes: 'Articulation of need is important because it serves to legitimize these needs. It helps us acknowledge and recognize our needs as real and important. Collective discussion and recognition of need are key steps in the process of translating "private troubles " into "public issues :" (Torjman 42). As a radical teacher, Paulo Freire theorized the role of public dialogue in more radical terms as a catalyst to the liberation of the poor, a catalyst to demystify both power and powerlessness. Freire' s belief in the phenomenological power of public dialogue relies up on the link between reflection and action which, simplified, suggests that renaming the world from the stand point of the oppressed leads to social critique, empowerment, and transformative action: 'Thus to speak a true word is to transform the world '. But Freire is careful to insist on the communal aspect of transformative dialogue, cautioning that one cannot say a true word alone or *for* another but only in working *with* others towards cultural change.>>>

ALT: SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR

SHOWING SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR WILL ALLOW US TO UNDERSTAND HOW COMMUNITIES OF THE POOR HAVE WORKED TOGETHER TO SURVIVE. THIS WILL BE A STEP TOWARDS ENDING THE SHAME PEOPLE FEEL WHEN ON WELFARE. THIS CAN BE SIMPLE ACTS SUCH AS SHARING YOUR OWN PERSONAL POSSESSIONS WITH THOSE LESS FORTUNE OR A DOCTOR TREATING THE POOR FOR FREE

HOOKS, CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK PROFESSOR, THEN DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, 1995–2004; BEREA COLLEGE, BEREA, KY, DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR-IN-RESIDENCE, BEGINNING 2004. CO-FOUNDER, HAMBONE LITERARY MAGAZINE. **2000** [BELL, WHERE WE STAND: CLASS MATTERS, P. 38-41]

<<< As a child I did not know who the poor were among us. I did not understand that as a family of seven children and two adults living on one working-class income, when it came to the issue of material resources we were at times poor. Sharing resources was commonplace in our world—a direct outcome of a belief in the necessity of claiming the poor as ourselves.

Indeed showing solidarity with the poor was essential spiritual work, **a way to learn the true meaning of community and enact the sharing of resources that would necessarily dismantle hierarchy and difference**.

In the community of my upbringing no one talked about capitalism. We knew the word communism because keeping the world safe for democracy was discussed. And communism was the identified threat. No one talked about the way capitalism worked, the fact that it demanded that there be surplus labor creating conditions for wide-spread unemployment. No one talked about slavery as an institution paving the way for advanced capitalist economic growth.

In his discussion of the-impact of capitalism as a force shaping our basic assumptions about life, "Naming Our Gods," David Hilfiker emphasizes the way in which commitment to, Christian ethics directly challenges allegiance to any economic system that encourages one group to have and hoard material plenty while others do without. Working as a physician caring for the inner city poor he states: "Our work is grounded in the understanding that God calls us to care for and move into solidarity with those who have been—for whatever reason—excluded from society."

Throughout my childhood I saw embodied in our home and in the community as a whole the belief that resources should be shared. When mama would send us to neighbors with food or clothes we complained, just as we complained when she sent us to collect the gifts that were sometimes given to us by caring folks who recognized the material strains of raising a large family on one income, especially since patriarchal heads of households, like our dad, often kept much of their paycheck for their own private use. Women in our community understood this and had the best networks for figuring out ways to give and share with others without causing embarrassment or shame.

There was necessarily a tension between the call to identify with the poor and the recognition that in the secular world of our everyday life, the poor were often subjected to harassments and humiliations that generated shame.

Despite the valorization of the poor in religious life, no one really wanted to be poor. No one wanted to be the object of pity or shame. Writing about the impact of shame on our sense of self in Coming Out of Shame, Gershen Kaufman and Lev Raphael share this insight: "Unexamined shame on either the realization of inner wholeness and true connection with others, because shame reveals us all as lesser, worthless, deficient—in a word, profoundly and unspeakably inferior." On one hand, from a spiritual perspective, we were taught to think of the poor as the chosen ones, closer to the divine, ever worthy in the sight of God, but on the other hand, we knew that in the real world being poor was never considered a blessing. The fact that being poor was seen as a cause for shame prevented it from being an occasion for celebration.

Solidarity with the poor was the gesture that intervened on shame. It was to be expressed not just by treating the poor well and with generosity but by living as simply as one could. If you were well off, choosing to live simply meant you had more to share with those who were not as fortunate. David Hilfiker describes an earlier time in our history as a nation when it was just assumed that a physician would care for the poor. However, in more recent times Hilfiker finds himself regarded almost as a "saint" because he chooses to work with the poor. Yet he shares this insight: "This perception of my extraordinary sacrifice persists even though I've mentioned in my talk that Marja's and my combined income (around $45,000) puts us well above the median income of this county, and I've made clear that we reap the benefits of community and meaningful vocations in ways most people only dream of." The call to live simply is regarded by most people as foolhardy. Most folks think that to play it safe, one must strive to accumulate as much material wealth as possible and hoard it.

In the late fifties and sixties, our nation had not yet become a place where the poor would be regarded solely with contempt. In the growing-up years of my life, my siblings and I were constantly told that it was a sin to place ourselves above others. We were taught that material possessions told you nothing about the inner life of another human being, whether they were loving, a person of courage and integrity. We were told to look past material trappings and find the person inside. It was easy to do this in childhood, in the small com->>>

ALT: SOLVES GOVERNMENT MANIPULATION (BIOPOLITICS)

STANDPOINT STRUGGLES ARE KEY TO CHALLENGE GOVERNMENT MANIPULATION OF THE MASSES, WITHOUT IT, BIOPOLITICS WOULD CONTINUE TO EXIST

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**
[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.260-261]

For many practitioners of participatory research, the commitment to action that challenges and transforms existing relationships of power is at the heart of their theory and practice. Today, when even major international development agencies are rushing to embrace the virtues of participation (World Bank 1995), concerns about cooptation have begun to figure prominently in discussions about how and for whom to pursue this kind of work. Participatory researchers who identify with the insurgent southern strand of the tradition have begun to insist even more sharply than before that a demonstrable link to social change is indispensable to authentic participatory work. At a recent world gathering of participatory researchers, attendees conceived of participation "as a struggle against political and economic exclusion from exercising control over public resources," and rejected definitions that "reduce participation to a simple manipulation of the masses to obtain support for government proposals designed to maintain the status quo" (Fals-Borda 1998a, 161).

As researchers, those of us in academia live and work in a force field deeply structured and influenced by powerful elites. We find that our lives, our research projects, and the audiences we choose to write for are undeniably affected by the systems of power and status within which our lives and work are embedded. That so few of us undertake the intellectually arduous work of translating our theories and knowledge into accessible language that can be understood— then challenged, refined, debunked, debated and acted on—by those most directly affected is scandalous. Further, for those of us who do attempt this kind of work, the lack of collegial discourse about how to do it with excellence prevents us from evaluating and improving our practice in the ways we want.

ALT: CHALLENGE WELFARE REPRESENTATION

ALT- WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WELFARE IS INEXTRICABLY TIED TO A RACIST IDEOLOGY THAT DISPROPORTIONATELY TREATS INDIVIDUALS FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS. WE MUST EXPOSE THESE FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION IF WE EVER PLAN ON CHALLENGING AND IMPROVING THE CURRENT WELFARE STATE

CAHN, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LAW AT GEORGE WASHINGTON LAW UNIVERSITY, **1997** (NAOMI R, SYMPOSIUM: REPRESENTING RACE OUTSIDE OF EXPLICITLY RACIALIZED CONTEXTS, 95 MICH. L. REV. 965)

<<<Race is certainly relevant to advocacy efforts writ large - that is, race affects how welfare is reformed. If only divorced or widowed white women received welfare, we might expect welfare to look quite different. n129 The very term "welfare" has now become associated with race, notwithstanding the many forms of welfare other than AFDC sponsored by the government. It is, consequently, important to use race in advocacy efforts to show how legislation affects blacks disproportionately, and how it reinforces negative images of blacks while using those same negative images to justify new and punitive requirements. There is a need to acknowledge the impact of these negative stereotypes so that they can be confronted in the hope of changing policy.

On the individual representation level, however, the relevance of race appears more questionable. In the child support area, the plaintiff's race does not affect the applicability of the cooperation requirement, even though it may have been highly relevant to the existence of the requirement itself. On the other hand, race may affect the caseworker's perception of her "client," and it certainly affects the income potential of the father. In this area, it is important for advocates to be aware of how race affects the representation process, and for advocates to use race to challenge the legal [*989] requirements placed on their clients. The difficult issues concern the relevance of race and deciding how to use it in the advocacy process.

Thus, fathers' advocates could show that their client's inability to pay child support is based, at least in part, on employment discrimination against blacks; and mothers' advocates could show how the cooperation requirement reinforces negative images of black motherhood. We need to expand the narratives available to both mothers and fathers. When race may be relevant, the advocate has the obligation to think through the implications of making race-based claims a basis for arguments on the client's behalf, and has a corresponding obligation to discuss the utility and consequences of making such claims. >>>

STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY—ANSWERS TO:

*AT: NO ALTERNATIVE/GOVERNMENT ACTION KEY

REAL CHANGE HAS TO BE ROOTED IN EVERYDAY, LOCAL PRACTICES—DESPITE THE APPEARANCE OF FRAGMENTATION, THE ALTERNATIVE CREATES THE CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR POLICY CHANGES TO TAKE EFFECT AND IS COMPARATIVELY BETTER

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**

[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.261-262]

Participatory and community-based projects often seem small and lowly in relation to the scale of the relevant problems.17 Certainly the majority of participatory research efforts are mounted locally, and there is no denying that local research and organizing need a broader horizon of theoretical analysis and a broader field of practical alliances, networks, and institutions if they are to achieve widespread change or build meaningful alternatives. In the United States, the startling disconnect between myriad forms of local organizing now flourishing and the vacuum where an effective and well-rooted national movement for egalitarian social change should be must give any poverty scholar or strategist serious pause.

Yet real shortcuts to power are few. In the current climate, where effective strategies for combating poverty are so unclear**, a multitude of small efforts linked to particular settings, and drawing deeply from local experience, often prove more promising than less rooted, more abstract efforts parachuted in from on high**. Indeed, despite years of effort and rivers of money, more conventional types of research and policy making cannot point to a successful track record of poverty reduction launched from some higher level or enabled by a better-elaborated theory. Participatory researchers around the world continue to struggle with the need to generate theory, create larger networks, and achieve measurable results, but the challenge of achieving effective change is no more severe for them than for others attempting to address problems of poverty and low-wage work.

Accordingly, despite the difficulties confronting them, more scholars of poverty should undertake participatory research projects with organized community collaborators. More of us should share our findings in creative ways with popular audiences. And more of us should work in alliances with practical organizing efforts to achieve the needed changes suggested by our findings.

Participatory projects often produce more useful information than conventional ones. In many instances, research linked to community concerns and community action has a better chance of changing public discourse, because in some important ways it demonstrably comes from the public. Such projects also create social space for education, settings where people can start learning about their ability to define and investigate social problems, where they can cultivate their ability to make persuasive arguments to their fellow community members or to authorities, and where they can gain practice in studying local conditions, participating in local struggles, and analyzing local—and distant— power relations.

Participatory and popular methods make sense on a practical level for those who want to see a more democratic and egalitarian order. **Significant and lasting social change in this direction simply cannot happen unless** people are more educated, organized, and in motion about the issues and players affecting their lives. This approach also makes sense on an ethical level, because participatory methods better comport with avowed commitments to democracy. Further, these methods can better establish relations of mutual respect and recognition between the researcher and researched. Participatory and popular methods enable the return of knowledge gleaned from subordinated people and constructed with their help. Finally, they build bridges across the divide now growing between those (like most academics and policy researchers) who live in relative comfort and security, and those people in "the rest of the world" who do not.

AT: POLICY MAKING—STANDPOINT SOLVES

TAKING MULTIPLE STANDPOINTS THROUGH POLITICAL STRUGGLES IS KEY TO SOLVE OPRRESSION

HAWKSWORTH, PROFESSOR OF WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES AT RUTGER'S UNIVERSITY, **2006**
[MARY, *FEMINIST INQUIRY*, PG. 201-202]

As an analytical tool, feminist standpoint theory encourages researchers to attend to competing accounts of the same phenomenon. But once multiple views have been collected, what is the analyst to do with them? How useful is the comparison of competing standpoints? Can incompatible claims be adjudicated? Are there criteria for determining the comparative merits of alternative accounts? How does comparative analysis of alternative standpoints contribute to feminism's transformative objectives?

Judith Grant has suggested that feminist standpoint theory can be reinterpreted as a "self-consciously derived theoretical tool in service of a politics" (1993, 119). On her view, conceiving feminist standpoints as an analytical tool shifts the focus from epistemological issues to feminist politics. Within this frame, the central question concerning the utility of standpoint analysis is whether it **makes policy debates more intelligible and more actionable**. If comparisons of alternative accounts illuminate the forces fueling debates, such as the debates over affirmative action and welfare "reform" considered in this chapter, then they can help feminists devise political strategies that empower women to resist oppression. Within this context, then, the utility of standpoint analysis can be gauged by answering two basic questions. Does comparative standpoint analysis enable us to comprehend the complexity of the debates over affirmative action and welfare "reform"? Does that heightened comprehension help us to chart emancipatory political interventions in these policy domains?

The criteria Grant identifies for assessing the merits of comparative standpoint analysis are closely tied to her concern to foster democratic politics in an increasingly bureaucratic and technocratic age. Standpoint analysis, valuable because it expands the terms of political discussion, airs claims too frequently silenced in the contemporary political fray. On this view, crucial differences among these views cannot and ought not be resolved at a theoretical level. They must be resolved through an open political struggle in which we as a people decide what kind of a political community we wish to be.

AT: PERMUTATION

THE PERMUTATION DOES THE SAME THING WHILE CHANGING THE LANGUAGE—THIS POLICY OF RENAMING FAILS TO CREATE BROADER STRUCTURAL CHANGES

SCHRAM, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT MACALESTER, **1995** (SANFORD, WORDS OF WELFARE, P 21-24)

The deconstruction of prevailing discursive structures helps politicize the institutionalized practices that inhibit alternative ways of constructing social relations.5 Isolated acts of renaming, however, are unlikely to help promote political change if they are not tied to interrogations of the structures that serve as the interpretive context for making sense of new terms.6 This is especially the case when renamings take the form of euphemisms designed to make what is described appear to be consonant with the existing order. In other words, the problems of a politics of renaming are not confined to the left, but are endemic to what amounts to a classic American practice utilized across the political spectrum.7 Homeless, welfare, and family planning provide three examples of how isolated instances of renaming fail in their efforts to make a politics out of sanitizing language. Renaming can do much to indicate respect and sympathy. It may strategically recast concerns so that they can be articulated in ways that are more appealing and less dismissive. Renaming the objects of political contestation may help promote the basis for articulating latent affinities among disparate political constituencies. The relentless march of renamings can help denaturalize and delegitimate ascendant categories and the constraints they place on political possibility. At the moment of fissure, destabilizing renamings have the potential to encourage reconsideration of how biases embedded in names are tied to power relations.8 Yet isolated acts of renaming do not guarantee that audiences will be any more predisposed to treat things differently than they were before. The problem is not limited to the political reality that dominant groups possess greater resources for influencing discourse. Ascendant political economies, such as liberal postindustrial capitalism, whether understood structurally or discursively, operate as institutionalized systems of interpretation that can subvert the most earnest of renamings.9 It is just as dangerous to suggest that paid employment exhausts possibilities for achieving self-sufficiency as to suggest that political action can be meaningfully confined to isolated renamings.10 Neither the workplace nor a name is the definitive venue for effectuating self-worth or political intervention." Strategies that accept the prevailing work ethos will continue to marginalize those who cannot work, and increasingly so in a post-industrial economy that does not require nearly as large a workforce as its industrial predecessor. Exclusive preoccupation with sanitizing names overlooks the fact that names often do not matter to those who live out their lives according to the institutionalized narratives of the broader political economy, whether it is understood structurally or discursively, whether it is monolithically hegemonic or reproduced through allied, if disparate, practices. What is named is always encoded in some publicly accessible and ascendent discourse.12 Getting the names right will not matter if the names are interpreted according to the institutionalized insistences of organized society.13 Only when those insistences are relaxed does there emerge the possibility for new names to restructure daily practices. Texts, as it now has become notoriously apparent, can be read in many ways, and they are most often read according to how prevailing discursive structures provide an interpretive context for reading them.14 The meanings implied by new names of necessity overflow their categorizations, often to be reinterpreted in terms of available systems of intelligibility (most often tied to existing institutions). Whereas renaming can maneuver change within the interstices of pervasive discursive structures, renaming is limited in reciprocal fashion. Strategies of containment that seek to confine practice to sanitized categories appreciate the discursive character of social life, but insufficiently and wrongheadedly. I do not mean to suggest that discourse is dependent on structure as much as that structures are hegemonic discourses. The operative structures reproduced through a multitude of daily practices and reinforced by the efforts of aligned groups may be nothing more than stabilized ascendent discourses.15 Structure is the alibi for discourse. **We need to destabilize this prevailing interpretive context and the power plays that reinforce it, rather than hope that isolated acts of linguistic sanitization will lead to political change**. Interrogating structures as discourses can politicize the terms used to fix meaning, produce value, and establish identity. Denaturalizing value as the product of nothing more than fixed interpretations can create new possibilities for creating value in other less insistent and injurious ways. The discursively/structurally reproduced reality of liberal capitalism as deployed by power blocs of aligned groups serves to inform the existentially lived experiences of citizens in the contemporary postindustrial order.16 The powerful get to reproduce a broader context that works to reduce the dissonance between new names and established practices. As long as the prevailing discursive structures of liberal capitalism create value from some practices, experiences, and identities over others, no matter how often new names are insisted upon, some people will continue to be seen as inferior simply because they do not engage in the same practices as those who are currently dominant in positions of influence and prestige. Therefore, as much as there is a need to reconsider the terms of debate, to interrogate the embedded biases of discursive practices, and to resist living out the invidious distinctions that hegemonic categories impose, there are real limits to what isolated instances of renaming can accomplish. Renaming points to the profoundly political character of labels. Labels operate as sources of power that serve to frame identities and interests. They

(card continues…)

(…card continues)

predispose actors to treat the subjects in question in certain ways, whether they are street people or social policies. This increasingly common strategy, however, overlooks at least three major pitfalls to the politics of renaming.17 Each reflects a failure to appreciate language's inability to say all that is meant by any act of signification. First, many renamings are part of a politics of euphemisms that conspires to legitimate things in ways consonant with hegemonic discourse. This is done by stressing what is consistent and de-emphasizing what is inconsistent with prevailing discourse. When welfare advocates urge the nation to invest in its most important economic resource, its children, they are seeking to recharacterize efforts on behalf of poor families as critical for the country's international economic success in a way that is entirely consonant with the economistic biases of the dominant order. They are also distracting the economic-minded from the social democratic politics that such policy changes represent.18 This is a slippery politics best pursued with attention to how such renamings may reinforce entrenched institutional practices." Yet Walter Truett Anderson's characterization of what happened to the "cultural revolution" of the 1960s has relevance here: One reason it is so hard to tell when true cultural revolutions have occurred is that societies are terribly good at co-opting their opponents; something that starts out to destroy the prevailing social construction of reality ends up being a part of it. Culture and counterculture overlap and merge in countless ways. And the hostility toward established social constructions of reality that produced strikingly new movements and behaviors in the early decades of this century, and peaked in the 1960s, is now a familiar part of the cultural scene. Destruction itself becomes institutionalized.2" According to Jeffrey Goldfarb, cynicism has lost its critical edge and has become the common denominator of the very society that cynical criticism sought to debunk.21 If this is the case, politically crafted characterizations can easily get co-opted by a cynical society that already anticipates the political character of such selective renamings. **The politics of renaming itself gets interpreted as a form of cynicism that uses renamings in a disingenuous fashion in order to achieve political ends.** >>>

THE PERMUTATION DOES NOT SOLVE – POLICY DESCRIPTIONS ARE SEEPED IN ADMINSTRATIVE AUTHORITY AND WILL CROWD OUT EFFORTS TO UNDERSTAND EXPERIENCES FROM A SITUATED STANDPOINT. PREFER THE ALTERNATIVE ALONE

RIMSTEAD, B.A. AT YORK UNIVERSITY, M.A. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, PH.D. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, **2001** [ROXANNE, REMNANTS OF NATION ON POVERTY NARRATIVES BY WOMEN, PG. 1-6]

<<<One such study of the power of discourse to fix meaning over the lives of the poor is Bryan Green's Knowing the Poor: A Case Study in Textual Reality Construction, in which the power of government to name the reality of the poor in the form of documents is scrutinized as a means of controlling the poor through textuality. Since government documents reproduce selected images of the poor in great number and with great authority, presenting these accounts as valid representations of lived reality, they outweigh the power of more subjective accounts of the lived experiences of poverty by the poor themselves. In other words, the documented reality of official inquiries which are used to diagnose social problems is imposed upon the situated or lived reality of poverty. Moreover, government documents often present this form of reality construction as innocent rather than a form of control, and this is how they use their documented version of reality, as the first step towards rationalizing government intervention into the lives of the poor. Green maintains that we need a more emancipatory form of reading government documents, one which would expose them as constructed rather than transparent windows onto the lives of the poor. >>>

AT: PERMUTATION—MUST CENTER OPPRESSED KNOWLEDGE

WE HAVE TO BEGIN ANY ANALYSIS OF POVERTY BY LOOKING AT THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY. ONLY THEN CAN WE TRULY SOLVE THEIR NEEDS.

SWIGONSKI, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, **1994** [MARY E., THE LOGIC OF FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH. SOCIAL WORK. V. 39 ISSUE 4. EBSCO]

<<<The appropriate perspective for research activities is everyday life. **Beginning** with the everyday lives of marginalized groups reveals the ways in which the public world structures the private, everyday lives of marginalized groups in ways that are not immediately visible as those lives are lived. Such a perspective can reveal the caring and valuing of group members for each other, **the prioritizing of their welfare**, and the possibility of experiencing real intimacy and democratic domestic relations that are invisible to traditional approaches to research. Smith's (1987) work about single parents demonstrated the effect of decisions made by school administrators on the allocation of time in the daily lives of single mothers.

Members of marginalized groups are valuable "strangers" to the social order. Members of marginalized groups have been excluded from the design and direction of both the social order and the production of knowledge. As strangers, they learn to see the social order from the perspective of outsiders. P. H. Collins (1986) summarized three advantages of outsider status: First, outsiders' experiences of nearness and remoteness are valuable for objectivity. Second, natives confide in strangers in ways they do not confide in each other. And finally, it is easier for strangers to see patterns of belief or behavior.

Many others are not just outsiders, but also "outsiders within." An increasing number of members of marginalized groups are achieving positions in the social sciences professions. A significant majority of social work professionals are women; many are also members of other marginalized groups. P. H. Collins (1986) demonstrated that bringing members of these groups, who share an outsider-within status, into the center of analysis may reveal views of reality obscured by more orthodox approaches. When the individual works both inside and outside, it is possible to see the relation between dominant activities and beliefs and those on the outside.>>>

Conclusion

Standpoint theory makes it possible to ask new questions and to see new things about nature and social relations, not from the lives of those who control the ruling apparatus but from the lives of those at the margin. **Centering** the lives of marginalized groups in our research provides a way to identify and control both individual and sociocultural assumptions and biases, strengthening objectivity.

Standpoint theory does not rule out the insights of any group of persons. Each group contributes the distinctive knowledge emerging from its particular social situations and social structures. This theory insists that each group learn to see the world differently in an active and creative way through the theoretical and political lenses that other thinkers originally constructed to produce distinctive insights (Harding, 1991). Members of each group must work to understand the standpoint of others to construct views of our shared reality that are less partial.

Standpoint theory requires that all research specifically identify the intended beneficiaries of any project. Because **social services researchers** take on the role of change agents, using the findings of the research to change the lives of groups who are the study subjects, their work is compatible with the practice interests of social workers. Adaptation of this approach to research could bridge the gap between research and practice, permitting true practitioner-researchers. Research, practice, and social change can become one unified action. Standpoint theory offers social work a means to guide the profession's visions and to experiment with new ways of seeing and understanding the world predicated on transformation, renewal, and empowerment.

AT: PERMUTATION—NEUTRALITY IS DOMINATION

PERM FAILS, A NEUTRAL STANCE KILLS STRUGGLES AND DEFAULTS TO THE STATUS QUO

ZUBERI AND BONILLA-SILVA, ZUBERI IS A PROFESSOR AND CHAIRMAN OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, BONILLA-SILVA IS A PREOFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, **2008**
[WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS, PG.338]

We are extremely aware that in this age where social science data on race has become crucial (maybe even more important than data from the biological sciences) for the reproduction of racialization and racism (Dumm 1993), critical social scientists16 must do whatever they can to be active in the various social movements against White supremacy. Even if our engagement with these movements is only as supporters (but we plead to social scientists so that they become scholar activists in these movements), we should not evade our historic responsibility, 17 **we cannot continue business as usual and act as mere reporters of racial matters**. Our **ethical and political neutrality on these matters**, given the herrevolk moral terrain of America and the world (Mills 1998), leaves our folks trapped in "el laberinto de la soledad" (the labyrinth of solitude).

Critical social scientists on race matters can provide data, arguments, countemarratives, and all sorts of intellectual ammunition against dominant representations about racial groups and racial inequality. And to provide better ammunition for the movements against White supremacy, the sociological and social scientific efforts in this field must be race conscious and engaged in a systematic analysis of racial stratification and its effects. **A neutral, or even liberal, sociology will not do the trick**, as neutrality on race matters usually means "support of the racial status quo" **and** liberal sociology **fosters at best charitable views** about people of color **and reformist policies on behalf of the "problem people**" (Du Bois 1903). If the social sciences are going to assist in the emancipation of people of color, their efforts, therefore, **must be clearly on the side of the racially oppressed** for "[i]f there is a hell for social scientists, it is precisely that they only manage to be objective if they are directly involved in a struggle, and that they have no way of escaping even through wishful thinking (Casanova 1981, 3). Our committed practice for people of color and for the elimination of White supremacy in the social sciences (the need for outing the institutionally dominant White, male, heterosexual homo academicus is still desperately urgent)" and elsewhere will help lift the veil that has prevented Whites (and some people of color) from truly seeing and understanding how racial stratification affects the life chances of people of color. Only then will the tale of the hunt reflect what truly happened in the hunt.

AT: PERMUTATION—MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE

THE AFFIRMATIVE AND THE NEGATIVE METHODS ARE INCOMPATIBLE – THE PERMUTATION ONLY LETS ACADEMIC OFF THE HOOK AND FULLY PARTICIPATES IN A POLITICS THAT SEEK TO ERASE EXPERIENCE, NOT DEEPEN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY.

RIMSTEAD, B.A. AT YORK UNIVERSITY, M.A. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, PH.D. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, **2001**, [ROXANNE, REMNANTS OF NATION ON POVERTY NARRATIVES BY WOMEN, PG. 1-6]

<<<As critics and teachers, we can help empower the lesser-known versions of poverty by drawing them into public view and out of obscurity, by locating them culturally among the 'noisy' polyphony of diverse representations, by formulating and teaching oppositional reading strategies which will illuminate or at least help us to reflect on the meaning of these disempowered versions, and by interrogating canonical works, popular works, and recovered voices on the issue of power and cultural reproduction. **There is a significant difference** in strategy and methodology between those critics who make their object of study the idea , the image, the discourse, or the material causes of poverty in the text and those who resist making poverty a pure, abstract, or fixed object of study and try, instead, to understand the voices of the poor as subjects of their own stories, producers of knowledge, and agents of political change. I recently sat through two days of an international academic conference on the subject of writing poverty and was stunned by the intellectuals' **unwitting complicity in the politics of erasure**. With the exception of a very few, the papers I heard over two days unanimously agreed with the point that poverty could not be represented, or at least not narrated (this without considering any autobiographies or oral histories by the poor), and that the clothing of the poor could be read as transparent, meaning transparent markers of their status (this without considering what clothing meant to the people in it rather than the distanced observer _ for example, as protection from the cold, as a commodity with a price, or as a symbolic means of signaling or masking poverty). The speakers also agreed that utterances on poverty were tied to the seventeenth-century liberal construction of the good and bad poor (this without considering oppositional accounts or protests by the poor which contest these liberal or literary discourses and construct themselves otherwise). Few challenges were made to these academics' use of 'the poor' as an oversimplified, monolithic term unrelated to geopolitical realities, to their lack of research on the historically and socially specific lived experiences of poverty in local contexts, or to their exclusion of the voices of the poor - in short, to the type of micro-research from the top down that produces a form of myopia towards the poor. I do not mean to suggest that the exchange of research was without value; to the contrary, it produced a rare and provocative volume on the textual inscription of poverty that is a welcome addition to the small body of scholarship on poverty and literature. My argument is with the politics, not the scholarship, of research whose very frame is complicit in a politics of erasure which keeps the poor outside the field of academic perception except as an object of study and abstraction. When we reverse this exclusionary policy, it becomes clear that the voices which have escaped academic attention are often voices quite capable of challenging academic views of the world epistemologically and certainly ideologically, and voices which are also capable of generating their Own oppositional forms of discourse and radical knowledge. I return to the discussion of the limits and radical potential of academic discourse in the construction of the poor in the final chapter of this book, but at this point I would like to probe further how social critique, academic or otherwise, may perform a socially therapeutic function.>>>

AT: NARRATIVES = DISTANCING

WE MUST EXAMINE THE EXISTENTIAL SITUATION OF THE POOR IN ORDER TO TRULY GIVE THEM AN IDENTITY AND AN EQUAL OPORTUNITY IN SOCIETY—THOUGH IT MAY BE UNCOMFORTABLE AT FIRST, IT IS NECESSARY

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**
[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.4-6]

So we must begin our research anew and "strive first for a phenomenologically valid account both of the inner reality of personal life and of the social exchanges that constitute the pattern of social life of the disinherited. We must learn to become much more precise about how this inner reality and way of life came into being historically, and about how they are sustained by the larger social system in which they are embedded" (Rainwater 1970, 27). As we seek this precision, we put ourselves at some risk.

We will discover that a phenomenologically accurate account of the condition of the disinherited will make us and those who read us even more nervous

because the more accurate the account, the more it will heighten, at least initially, the deeply human perception that "they cannot live like that because I could not live like that." . . . Yet if we are to provide a satisfactory intellectual grounding for systematic policy making in this area, we must somehow achieve such a complex, accurate diagnosis rather than merely a satisfying and anxiety- reducing one. (Rainwater 1970, 27)

The more accurate the account of the condition of the disinherited, the more nervous it makes us, the more discomfort or cognitive strain it causes, and the more strongly we resist it. What kinds of phenomenologically accurate information about poverty will help us overcome such resistance, in ourselves and in others? How will that research address the principal barrier to public acceptance of greater support for the poor, namely, the perceived moral identity of the poor themselves?

In a contemporaneous essay, Herbert Gans (1969, 203) praises Rainwater's insight into the polar formulation (deserving–undeserving) of social support policies for middle-class and poor Americans.

Some feel that the poor share the values and aspirations of the affluent society, and if they can be provided with decent jobs and other resources, they will cease to suffer from the pathological and related deprivational consequences of poverty. . . . [M]any more social scientists share'the feeling that the poor are deficient. Yet, others . . . suggest that poverty and the lowly position of the poor have resulted in the creation of a separate lower-class culture or a culture of poverty.

Gans concludes that all such judgments are based on oversimplifications of the kind Rainwater describes.4

The debate, however conceptualized, [is] irrelevant and undesirable. . . . Enough is now known about the economic and social determinants of pathology to reject explanations of pathology as a moral lapse . . . one cannot know whether the poor are as law-abiding or moral as the middle class until they have achieved the same opportunities—and then the issue will be irrelevant.

Gans understands that research also must address the critical moral issue that underlies welfare policy, namely, can the poor behave like the middle classes? Scholars who agree that they can, and who hope to influence the development of policies that will help the poor climb out of poverty must, he argues, convey their capacity to secure and hold jobs—passports to participation in mainstream life. To test this capacity, we must look not only at the sometimes maladaptive behavior of poor people, but also at their values and aspirations.

His reformulation of Rainwater's prescription is important because Gans acknowledges the interplay between research and the moral politics of welfare. Like Rainwater, he also recognizes the value of contextualized ethnographic research for exploring the relationship between aspirations and actions. To understand this relationship, Gans observes, scholars must examine the individual's own interpretations of the "existential situation" through which character, identity, and motivation are formed.

AT: NARRATIVES = COOPTION

SIMPLY BECAUSE COOPTION CAN OCCUR MUST NOT MEAN WE ABANDON THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPPRESSED—INSTEAD, WE SHOULD LINK NARRATIVES TO CRITIQUES OF STRUCTURAL OPPRESSION LIKE THE NEGATIVE

EUBANKS, PROFESSOR AT THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, **2009** (VIRGINIA, *FRONTIERS: A JOURNAL OF WOMEN STUDIES.* P. 108)

<<<We should be deeply suspicious of participatory practices that displace macrosocial analysis, neglect the extra-local, eviscerate the state's commitment to social welfare, or heighten emphasis on personal or individual responsibility under the guise of "empowerment." Though the participatory practices I discuss here, like popular education and participatory action research, arose from radical social movements the world over, in recent years, the libratory potential of participation has often been unrealized or rerouted. States and supranational organizations such as the World Bank have co-opted the strategies—or at least appropriated the rhetoric—of social justice movements themselves. An apt name for this co-optation process has been suggested by Margaret Ledwith: "hijacking the language of liberation." The co-optation of participation dovetails with the individualization of social welfare, "transforming rights into responsibilities by transferring the collective responsibility of the welfare state to the individual, the family and community as moral responsibility."3

And yet grassroots participation should be a feature of any genuine democracy and is vital to the democratic production of knowledge. In my own studies at the intersection of Women's Studies and Science and Technology Studies, examples abound of how those most affected by scientific and technological innovations are least consulted about their construction and deployment. This is so much the case that a number of social movements spawned in the US in the past fifteen years—including environmental justice, community supported agriculture, fair trade, reproductive justice and independent media—have arisen with the specific goal of challenging technocratic decision-making in areas as important to human life as clean water, breathable air, safe food, human rights to communication, and ability to self-determine one's reproductive destiny. Although participation can become its own form of extractive "tyranny,"4 many participatory fora feel empowering, develop valid and timely sociostructural critique, and counter forms of domination by providing alternatives to hierarchical forms of intellectual production. [End Page 108]

This situation leaves reflective practitioners double-bound. How do we acknowledge the selective uptake, and internal flaws, of participatory methods without abandoning their libratory potential? How do we acknowledge the irreducible power relationships embedded in our collaborative work without abandoning hope for solidarity and alliance? How do we develop "good enough" knowledge to move on issues-of-the-moment without succumbing to epistemological relativism? And finally, how do we do collaborative work in institutions that neither encourage nor reward developing the skills that make participatory methods practicable? The personal and professional impact of facing these dilemmas, in combination with the co-optation of participatory practice by repressive government agencies and NGOs and the professionalization of the interdisciplines (Women's Studies, Science and Technology Studies, etc.), has resulted in a recent retraction from participatory practices in academia. I hope in this article to counter the prevailing trends by offering evidence that, despite its contradictions and limitations, participatory research and action is still possible—indeed vital—in the academy.

One possible solution to the participation dilemma lies in returning the practice to its feminist and libratory roots. As participation (as a concept) has been integrated into the discussions of professionalized scholarship, it has too often obscured or marginalized the key contributions that feminism and other social movements offered about participation (as a practice). In addition, as the debate about participation moves into the academy, the central goal of addressing and overcoming both material and epistemological domination and exploitation too often vanishes. This minimizes our ability to undertake structural analyses and actions grounded in the reality of oppressed social groups. Shedding the insights of social movement practice, the debate has ignored much of the sweep and specificity, and therefore the promise, of participation.

We must take participation seriously. Participation is a form of power, one that certainly can be exercised tyrannically. Participation is both threatening and potentially liberating because it makes it impossible to ignore imbalances of power in research relationships, and requires thinking creatively and reflexively about redistributing the intellectual and material risks and benefits of research. Participation can offer strategic

(card continues…)

AT: NARRATIVES = COOPTION

(…card continues)

opportunities to resist, outflank, and even overcome more domineering forms of power.5 Broad-based, diverse, and meaningful participation in research and development of scientific, technological and social, policy can help us struggle through these double-binds with both eyes open. As Sandra Harding argues in her recent book, Science and Social Inequality, keeping "both eyes open" means being accountable to both the practices of Western science and its standards [End Page 109] of validity and objectivity, and to the realities of historical and contemporary structural violence, which routinely silence and devalue certain voices and forms of knowing. Harding argues,

Maximizing objectivity requires not just that we accurately represent the way we see ourselves, others, and the world around us but also that we take seriously how others see us, themselves, and the world. Indeed, such a principle has been institutionalized in modern Western scientific practice in the directive that scientific observations must be repeatable by other observers.6

Maximizing objectivity in science, she argues, means multiplying the standpoints, points of view, and social locations that are integrated into our research and analysis, and seeing ourselves as an inextricable part of the research site. Maximizing objectivity in science, then, entails analyzing research sites as places where power operates. For that reason, good intentions, self-reflection, or progressive politics cannot replace soundly considered methodology. Simply put, participation is a form of power, and therefore, changing structures of participation is hard.

So how do we bring the analysis of power back to participation? Bringing the power back to participation means both considering power in the research process from an intersectional viewpoint attuned to the formation of social groups (including "researchers" and "researched") through race, gender, class, nation, sexuality, and ability—processes of subject formation largely out of any individual's control—while maintaining a steadfast commitment to the fact that people are basically smart, understand their own problems, and have agency in their own lives. In what follows, I illustrate some lessons I have learned about surviving the double-binds of participatory research while developing and using a "popular technology" methodology in participatory projects with women and families struggling to meet their basic needs in the Capital Region of upstate New York. I argue that, by reconsidering who is "inside" and who is "outside" of the research and development process, maximizing accountability and transparency, nurturing democratic decision-making, and acknowledging and encouraging the transformative co-constitution of researchers and researched, we can bring the power back to participation.>>>

AT: NARRATIVES = BAD

YOUR OFFENSIVE ARGUMENTS DO NOT APPLY - THE GOAL OF OUR ALTERNATIVE IS NOT TO ADVANCE ONE WAY OF THINKING ABOUT POVERTY, BUT TO CHALLENGE THE ERASURE OF NARRATIVES ENTIRELY FROM ACADEMIC AND GOVERNMENT CONSIDERATION

RIMSTEAD, B.A. AT YORK UNIVERSITY, M.A. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, PH.D. AT U. DE MONTRÉAL, **2001**, [ROXANNE, REMNANTS OF NATION ON POVERTY NARRATIVES BY WOMEN, PG.44-45]

<<< It is crucial to remember when claiming that all narrative versions are somehow true or merely representations, however, that among the concrete subjects who actually live these conditions, many have little notion and little means of constructing their lives otherwise, materially or imaginatively. This is nowhere more evident than in testimonials of the poor to feelings of entrapment and powerlessness in the face of received stereotypes, official labels, and other negative constructions of the poor (Baxter, Green, Sand, Campbell, Holmes). Academic study can be complicit in the muting of these lives and their political possibilities if it concludes abstractly that the subaltern cannot speak or that the truth of representations can be assessed only through absolute relativism. For some of us, poverty is not experienced from a distance or from the position of an audience member or critic, but as the most pressing truth of our existence, past or present, and our core sense of identity. Out of a desire for coalition with the concrete subjects who live poverty daily and are entrapped in its material grip and its symbolic stigma, we need to understand the real limitations of academic exercises which assume that all versions are equally fictional or which deny the many possibilities for political agency among the poor. Academic studies of poverty that claim oppositional goals should train their attention on **the recovery of muted voices**: the memories, stories, and meanings which might otherwise remain obscured or forgotten after having lost the struggle over meaning. To return to Green's hypothesis about the overpowering discourse of poverty contained in government documents, most notably the Poor Laws of Britain and Canadian official inquiries into poverty, we might note that, just as these discourses comprise an official and dominant way of knowing the poor, so might diverse poverty narratives and oppositional acts of reading these narratives comprise a counter-cultural way of knowing the poor. This is largely because the former set out to make an object of knowledge of the poor for the purpose of controlling a social problem, whereas the latter se t out to make a more complex object of knowledge of the poor for analysis, with no goal to contain or control these subjects based on the knowledge produced.>>>

AT: FRAMEWORK—OPPRESSION/EDUCATION

TRADITIONAL ATTEMPTS FAIL TO PRODUCE SIGNIFICANT CHANGE AND REINFORCE EXISTING PROBLEMS

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**
[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.246-247]
Worldwide, there is a growing recognition of the need to develop research capacity and to carry on research activity beyond the bounds of the academy and outside of traditional academic disciplines and folkways. Adherents of participatory research have criticized traditional approaches for failure to produce practical, useful results and for a tendency to reinforce existing power relations and social structures. They also point out that traditional research seldom does anything to increase the capacity of oppressed communities to engage in political or economic self-help. Along with advocates for the closely allied and overlapping practice of "community-based research" (Sclove et al. 1998; Murphy et al. 1997; Nyden et al. 1997a), these critics have attempted to invent, refine, and promote other ways of producing and disseminating knowledge?
The emerging participatory research tradition has some of its most important roots in social conflict in the global south among scholars and community leaders who believe that **the research enterprise properly understood includes not only the production of knowledge**, **but also two further imperatives: education and social action**.3 For instance, the Colombian sociologist and activist Orlando Fals-Borda (1991), a leading theoretician and practitioner of participatory methods, has observed, "It is useful to recall from the beginning that [participatory research] is not exclusively research oriented, that it is not only adult education or only sociopolitical action. It encompasses all these aspects together as three stages or three emphases." John Gaventa (1991), a northern researcher deeply influenced by the practice and theory of southern colleagues, similarly observes,
Participatory research attempts to break down the distinction between the researchers and the researched, the subjects and objects of knowledge production, by participation of the people-for-themselves in the process of gaining and creating knowledge. In the process, research is seen not only as a process of creating knowledge, but simultaneously, as education and development of consciousness, and mobilization for action.

AT: ONE SIDED EDUCATION/BIAS

EXAMINING WHITE SUPREMACY AND ITS EFFECTS ON SOCIETY IS THE ONLY WAY TO SOLVE

ZUBERI AND BONILLA-SILVA, ZUBERI IS A PROFESSOR AND CHAIRMAN OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, BONILLA-SILVA IS A PREOFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, **2008**
[WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS, PG.334]
Once again, to avoid easy criticisms, by "political" we do not mean doing politicized, one-sided, sloppy research. We mean that, like feminist and Marxist scholarship, research based on the epistemology of racial emancipation examines the practices of White supremacy and their effects and, more significantly, works toward the elimination of both.

STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY—NARRATIVES

NARRATIVE: BETTE—TANF

ALBERT & SKOLNIK, PROFESSORS IN THE MASTERS AND DOCTORAL PROGRAMS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AT THE SOCIAL SERVICE EDUCATIONAL FACILITY IN WASHINGTON, 2006 [RAYMOND, LUISE, "NARRATIVES FROM HARD TIMES," THOMPSON BROOKS/COLE, PG 70-79]

I live with my husband and my son, and I also live with my mother and my brother. I have been married for 26 years. My husband, he works as a clerk. And my son, he's a police officer. My brother, he works for the transit, and my mother, well she's retired, and she's sick and I take care of her at this time.

As far as me working, right now I work for a community development program that is part of a Baptist church as the intake worker for the Weatherization Assistance Program. This program basically deals with assisting homeowners or tenants in receiving free services for their home, which entails heating system replacement of grading insulation and door replacement. It is a pleasure doing this program. And also I'm the registrar at a university off-site campus, which is located at the church. We offer an associate in religious studies, and business administration bachelor studies, master of divinity. And I'm a member of the church. And basically, you know, I just believe in the Lord and try to do the right thing and take care of my mother, who I have been taking care of approximately 15 years. I find that also rewarding because I also know that if it was me that she would take care of me, and I just feel it's the right thing, not only as a human being, but as a daughter to take care of parents.

My mother, she suffers from depression. She has arthritis. She has a home attendant, but also I try to be a great support system for my mother. I just don't trust the home attendant. I make sure that I fix her meals, make sure that she goes to the doctors, make sure that I do her shopping, make sure there's food in the house. I try to take care of every need, even down to her pound cakes and her candy bars. I make sure that she has that. I try to do whatever I can to make it comfortable for my mother. Even though she's sick, she's still my mother, and I love her and that's why I do what I'm supposed to do, and I want to do.

I can do all of this. I guess it's a Taurus thing, they say that we're systematic. I set myself with a system. I get up in the morning, I know what time I have to get up, for instance to cook dinner before I leave to come to work. I also try to schedule my day. I am not going to overtax myself. I'm not going to give myself high blood pressure. I know what time I have to leave to get to work. I stick to that schedule. When I get to work, I map my day out. What I can't do, there's another day. And this is the way I operate.

I work 4 days a week. I work from 1 o'clock in the afternoon to approximately 9 o'clock at night, and then when I go home I spend some time with my husband, give myself some time. Because I believe in giving myself some time. This is the time I sit and think by myself and nobody bothers me, and this is a help to me. This is my time, my shut down time, my soul's time, and also my time to pray. That's a big part of my life, too. God is a big part of my life. And I say this because as I look over my life I know that right now, if it wasn't for Him, I wouldn't even be talking to you. I would be six feet under. So, He's a big part of my life, and He's the one who gives me my strength and helps me to do what I'm supposed to do in my life. Without Him, I know I couldn't do it.

I was born in an urban area. I was raised with my parents. I had a great upbringing.

It was me, my brother, and my parents in the home. My father was a ship fitter. My mother was a homemaker. After I graduated from junior high school then my mother decided to go work in a school, serving lunches to school kids. My brother, when he graduated from high school he went into the Navy. My brother is younger than me, but sometimes he acts like he's older than me.

My mother and father's whole intent was for me to get a good education, and at the time, they felt Catholic schools provided the better education than the public school. Ironically, when I had to take the entrance exam for a Catholic high school, I literally sat at this test and tried to mark wrong answers. I was totally surprised when they called me and told me that I had passed and got into one of the best Catholic schools. I said, "How did this happen? I'm not supposed to be in this school," because I really wanted to go to public school with my friends and everything. But it worked out, because I made new friends. The reason why I say that is because I was predominantly raised in a black neighborhood. In elementary school I went to school with mostly all blacks, even though it was a Catholic school. When I got into high school it was like a whole new world for me. I was going to school now with all these Caucasians. At the time I was coming up it was time when there was a lot of violence going on, the civil rights movement was going on, and hangings were going on. When I walking into this high school, and I saw all these white people I literally was afraid to go to this school, because the perception I had. I thought I was going to be lynched, and I was afraid. I literally tried to fail all my courses in the freshman year, hoping I could get out of this school, because that's how scared I was. But then, as time went on, the ones that I tended to be afraid of became my best friends. I went to their homes. Their parents treated me well. They're still my friends and we keep in contact.

I was raised as a Catholic. First I was christened as African Orthodox, and then I became a Catholic because that was one of the requirements to go to Catholic school, and that's how I became a Catholic.

All my life I had wanted to be a phys ed teacher, so my favorite course was gym. My ambition was to go to either Howard University or Temple, because I knew they had a great physical education course, but at the time my parents couldn't afford to send me to college. I didn't have the scholastic skills to get a scholarship. I applied to get in colleges, but, you know, because of the finances I could not afford to go myself. I never made it to become a physical education teacher. That was my sole ambition. In fact, today, I still

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NARRATIVE: BETTE—TANF

(…card continues)

ave that desire to be a physical education teacher.

My favorite sport was handball. I was pretty good at it. I got a couple of trophies there. When I was in high school I was on the bowling team. I got some trophies in that. I loved track. I loved basketball. You name the sport, I loved it. At my age, I still get out there and I bowl. Sometimes during the summer time I get out there and I play handball, play a little baseball. I still enjoy sports. I was a tomboy, and maybe I still have a little of that in me. I think there's nothing wrong with that. I think you need to have a little tomboy in you in order to cope with some of the problems in the world today. That's the way I feel.

After I graduated from high school I went to work for an insurance company, as a clerk, basically filing, and then I worked my way up to doing paid-up insurance claims. During that time I enrolled in a business school, in which I took a business course, and a little bit of computer programming. Then, after that I didn't enjoy the insurance company any more because I didn't care for the supervisor. Then after that I went to work for a bank. Then I met someone in my life who in a sense now I'm sorry I ever met that person because what that person did was introduce me to something that I never should have gotten involved in. That took a hold of my life. I stopped working. I'm talking about substance abuse. Before I got involved in substance abuse, I had a virus, and the virus had attacked my liver, and I had got viral hepatitis. At that time, I was so sick that literally I was given the last rites, and they really had expected me not to live. During recovery, like I said, I wasn't working at the time and I got involved. I did it for stupid reasons. Because, I had something stupid in my mind, for some reason I thought that my mother loved my brother more than me and it bothered me. For some stupid reason I felt as though, well if I get involved with this substance abuse, then maybe I will get some type of attention or I'll hurt them or whatever, but not realizing that I was hurting myself. So I got involved in that. I did not want to go back to work. I started doing other things to support my abuse. I don't mean robbing or anything like that. At the time I was using heroin. First I started snorting it. Then I started skin popping, and then I was introduced to mainlining.

At first, when you meet somebody they acquire it for you. They give it to you, and then after a while you learn where to go purchase it yourself. So, that's what I did.

I stopped working, because I had no desire to work, because your main focus is that high, and you're not thinking about working.

It's not your life any more. I didn't feel as though I had my life anymore. There wasn't a day when I could just get up, go to work, feel free, have fun. I couldn't do that. My day was, first of all, I went to bed that night thinking about getting up in the morning, getting that high, getting out in the street, selling the drugs for the high, and I felt like I was a prisoner within myself, and I didn't know how to get out. I had to have my fix. If you've never taken drugs before, you have to understand that if you don't have the drug you go through a period of withdrawal, you start feeling weak, you start sweating. The reason why you're going through withdrawal is because the drugs are trying to leave your system, and you need to have that fix to keep you going. You get some heroin where the comfort would only last for maybe two hours. Then you would have to go and you would have to have another fix. And you know some people have bigger habits, but basically I had to shoot up about two bags at one time. That's the reason why I had to go out there and get this money.

Getting back to the way I was brought up, one thing I knew I wasn't going to do was I wasn't going to rob, and I wasn't going to sell my body and become a prostitute for drugs. That just was not me. I would rather, you know, just sell it than to do those two instances I just mentioned. I stayed on drugs for maybe a year and a half, and then during that process I met my husband-to-be. In fact my best friend is the one who introduced me to her uncle, who became my husband. So now, my best friend is my niece also. I met him at his birthday party. That was the first time I met him. After we met, we had a relationship, and I became pregnant. When I became pregnant, I said, "Well you know I can't be on drugs and be pregnant at the same time. I can't do this." Also, my husband was a great support system for me because when he met me I was thinking about going on the methadone program, and he encouraged me to go on the methadone program. He also encouraged me and literally came with me to find jobs. I got a job working at the New York City Board of Education, which was provisional at the time, not permanent, but it was a job. Plus I had gotten to the point where I was just tired of taking drugs, of shooting up, because I had no life then. It's hard, you know, when you can't even go to family functions, you can't even go out to enjoy yourself because you're worrying about this. I was like embarrassed. If I was going to go out to a function I was afraid of people looking at me because they could automati- cally tell if you're high or not, and my eyes just gave everything away. I didn't want that. I didn't want to maybe have to leave a function or whatever, go into a bathroom, afraid I might get caught trying to get my fix. I started looking at other people. I started saying, "I want to be like this again. I want to be able to get up and go to work. I want to be able to enjoy my life. I'm tired of being a hostage for drugs." Everything just started coming into place, and I was like I'm tired of doing this. I've got to get my life back. Plus I was having a child. That was the biggest thing, to do right by my baby. So I got on the methadone program.

It happened I met a doctor who eventually became my son's pediatrician, and he was working with the methadone program. My whole fear was when my baby was born that he could be drug addicted or he could be addicted to the methadone or whatever, and that I didn't want. When I had my son I was at the time down to 5mg of the methadone. I looked at my baby and I saw my baby having tremors. That just tore my heart apart to see my baby like that. They had told me, "If you stop taking methadone just like this you're going to have problems forever." I prayed, I said, "God, I'm just going to stop this methadone, and I want you to help me, because if

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NARRATIVE: BETTE—TANF

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my baby could go through withdrawal, I can, too." I stopped. I give God the glory. I had no withdrawal symptoms. I had no problems coming off, and I was able to take care of my child. Again, I say God played an important part. The social worker at the hospital came to visit me and said that they probably wouldn't let me bring my baby home, because I was a drug-addicted mother. God stepped in. The doctor who was taking care of me during the methadone program spoke to the social worker, and I was able to bring my baby home. He was going through withdrawal, so they had to keep him in the hospital for about 3 weeks. They were also telling me that I needed to stay home and rest. No way. I got up every single morning, made sure I was there to feed my child every day. I don't know. I think they maybe took notice of that, that I was trying to be a sincere mother and how much I loved my child. I was able to bring him home. I started doing fine.

I was living in the family home. It was me, my husband, and of course my baby and my brother, and my mother. She was in the hospital at that time because that was when she had first suffered her bout of depression. When my son was about 3 months old we moved out of the house and we moved to Staten Island. During that time also, on top of my mother being sick, my father passed, and being married, a new baby, being out in a new part of the world that I was not accustomed to living in, I just became bored. Problems came down. As a comfort, I started drinking. I didn't realize how bad it was until I started having blackouts while I was drinking and not realizing sometimes that I was attacking my husband physically, and did not even remember I was doing this. At one point I got angry at my son. He was merely crying. I went in the room and I remember I just picked him up and threw him in the crib. I saw that and I was like, "Wait a minute here. What am I doing?" The drinking had taken such a toll on me. I would get up in the morning, I would have to drink about an 8-ounce glass of rum and Coke before I even got started for the day. I drank all day. It got to a point where I had to wake up every 3 hours it seemed during the night to get a drink. I couldn't even sleep during the night. This went on for maybe about a year and a half. I was on the verge of losing my job, losing my husband, losing my child. I didn't even feel like being a mother because this alcohol was taking such a toll on me. Then one day I just went to work and I sat at my desk. I said, "I'm tired of this." We had an alcohol abuse man who worked on our job. I went to see him that day, and I told him I want to stop drinking. That afternoon they put me in the hospital. They called my husband. He was like, "I don't know how I'm going to pay for this." But, again, God stepped in. My job paid for the entire bill. They paid for the hospital stay, and then I had to go to a rehab, where I was for 5 weeks. My job picked up the tab for that. To this day I could say that I have 26 years of sobriety. Still, I take a day at a time. After rehab, then I worked at a large advertising agency. I was there for almost 20 years. One day I came back from lunch and they told me my job was gone. For some reason I thought about drinking, but at the time also I had God in my life. So, what I did, instead of reaching for the bottle, I reached for the telephone to call my pastor. We sat down and we talked, and I got through that. After I lost the job, I went on unemployment. My unemployment ran out. Then I said, "What am I going to do?" I couldn't find a job because at the time inflation was rampant. Unemployment was high. This was in 1990. I had to make that dreadful move of going down to apply for public assistance.

My husband was working, but we were having problems. Just because you're with somebody doesn't mean that they're doing what they're supposed to be doing financially. One of the main reasons I had to make that move is because of the fact that I was not being supported financially, me or his son. So, this is something that I had to do.

The way the system is, if you have a husband or whatever, they do not want to assist you. So I had to do what I had to do. I had to go down to the public assistance and tell them that I was a single parent, which I did. I told them that my husband just left, we were separated, and I did not know where he was. Going to apply for public assistance for me was one of the most degrading things I had to do in my life, because first of all I felt as if I was treated, like I was a lazy individual who never worked in my life. The way they talk to you, they treat you like cattle. They literally have no respect for you. They talk down to you, and they have you fill out these enormous applications, all these pages. They ask you all these questions. They make you feel as though you're sitting on a witness stand for murder. I kept telling them I really don't want public assistance; I want a job. Of course, they could not find me a job. What I did is during that time I went to an adult learning center because I wanted to advance my skills. I took a computer course. Once I graduated from computer school they had promised they were going to find us a job. They did not. So, I was still on this public assistance. You know you hear people talk about how people on public assistance they're doing great and everything. Let me tell you how much a public assistance recipient receives to clear up any notion. First of all, for a family of two, you receive $125 a month for food stamps. That's to feed two people. I also received I think it was $250 for rent. In this day and time what apartments are you going to find for $250? Again, I said it was a good thing I had a roof over my head. I had to do this to survive. So, I stayed on the public assistance.

I was afraid for them to find out that I had lied. The reason why I had to do that was because as I stated previously, my husband did not support us. I needed to do something to help make ends meet.

I'll be honest with you. In a sense I felt as though I worked many years. I paid my taxes, I did my dues, I paid into the so-called system. I felt I was also deserving of something back. So, I did what I had to do for my family, basically not so much for me but for my son.

If I hadn't received public assistance we wouldn't have been able to eat like we were supposed to eat. I wouldn't have been able to take

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NARRATIVE: BETTE—TANF

(…card continues)

care of my son like I was supposed to take care of him. I wasn't too much of a factor. It was him. In public assistance they only give you but so much, but it's not enough. They put you through all these changes like they're going to give you the world, and they really don't, so it's a shame in a sense you had to get to a point where you could not tell them the truth. If you told them the truth, the least little income, they would start deducting from you. I could not afford that. Basically, I had to live a lie. I'm not proud that I had to live that lie, but it's what I had to do to survive. I think that's what life is about, surviving. It seemed like every time you went there, their motive was always trying to catch you up to find a reason to close your case. I dreaded that. Then it got to the point where they started a program where you had to work for your money. At the time when I went down to the appointment for the welfare work, the reason why I was excused is because I was also taking care of my mother. I had to bring letters from her doctors. They gave me forms that had to be filled out. They even wanted to come to the house to interview my mother. All this just to be excused from the welfare work program. Another thing I hated about this program is the workers used to come to your house. I hated the fact that they had to come looking through my house to see if I had somebody other than what I was stating living in the house, or what I had in the house. I just felt so degraded, them having to come checking me out like that. Then I was offered a job, and I said well it wasn't that much, but I was tired of going through this system. I was tired of having to go down for the recertification. I was tired of having the workers come to the home, asking the same things they asked you when you went down to be recertified.

What I had to do (about my husband) is I had to take everything like his clothes and hide them. Even the clock radio had to be hidden. Anything he had in the house that belonged to him I had to hide. I had to show no evidence that I had a male or another person in the house. I had to make it appear that it was just me and my son living in the home. My son was aware of this. Well I tried not to tell him so much, but basically when they came he was in school, which was good. I used to have to tell him that sometimes there are certain things not to say, which I tried to keep him a distance from what I was doing, because in all honesty I was not proud of what I was doing. I didn't care for the lying. I really didn't like the idea that I was on public assistance, because it was something at the time that I needed. The reason I'm saying this is because before I got on public assistance I remember I used to always look down on people who were on public assistance. I would even talk about them. Talk about, oh, they could do better than this. They just don't want to work, just want to be taking people's tax money, this, that and the other. Now, when I had to get on public assistance. I realize that I was so wrong; that there were a lot of people on there who could not help being on there, and who needed the support from the government. So my whole attitude changed towards people on public assistance, because now I was one.

After I was on public assistance I was offered a job. I said well, it wasn't that much money, but it was a door opening up where I could finally kiss public assistance good-bye. I told them good-bye in 1999.

Now that I'm not on public assistance it's like a heavy burden that's off me. I used to actually dread to get the mail because I was afraid I was going to see something. They always sent you some notice of intent to change, to come down for this appointment. There was always something. Now I don't mind getting the mail. It's just different things that were done to me. Now I feel independent again.

In 1999 I moved to this job. Ironically, when I was on public assistance and the way we were treated, I said, "God I want to be in a position one day when I can take and help people who are on public assistance, help them get a job, help work with them to make them feel as though they are somebody." When I went down there I felt like I was nobody, and that's the way they treated you. I felt as though every person deserves to be treated with respect and dignity and humanity. That's why when I got the opportunity to work with the Weatherization Program, helping people get their homes weatherized, or whatever, I make it a point that when they come in here the first thing I do is to try to make them comfortable, make them feel as though they are not coming into a Department of Social Service agency. They come in here sometimes nervous and frantic, with a lot of papers and stuff. My thing is to calm them down, let them know that I'm here to help you. That's where I'm at now. I basically want to help people now, to give them a sense of comfort and that every agency you go to, social agency or whatever, you're not always going to be treated like a leper. That's as basic as I could put it.

Right now my son is in the police academy. He's graduating in May. I'm proud and nervous. He's made the whole family very proud, especially his parents. Through it all, me and my husband are beginning to have a little better relationship. We're talking more. He's trying to do better financially, and I appreciate that. My mother, well, I still take care of Mom. I'm working right now like I said in the school and the weatherization. Also, now I help with the senior program, which I enjoy also. The golden age program at church is a very important part of my life. God is a very important part of my life. I'm a Baptist right now. I joined the Baptist faith in 1971, so I'm comfortable being a Baptist. I'm just enjoying life now, doing what I'm doing now. I just feel that those shackles of the substance abuse, I'm glad they're behind me. I just look back some time where I come from. I'm not trying to sound like I'm a religious fanatic, because I'm not, but I just appreciate what God has done for me. When I look back over my life and the many times that He has literally saved me to be here for a purpose, I don't know yet, but whatever it is, maybe it's doing what I'm doing.

The biggest thing I want is to be a grandmother. I'm waiting for that. So that I could have a couple of grandchildren and spoil them, send them back home to my son. I'm looking for that, basically just trying to live a good life and try to help people. I think that's my dream, just be happy, content, peaceful.

NARRATIVE: LETICIA—BUREAUCRACY

SCHORR, LECTURER IN SOCIAL MEDICINE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY, AND DIRECTOR OF THE PROJECT ON EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS AND OF ITS PATHWAYS, **1997** [LISBETH B. "COMMON PURPOSES," ANCHOR BOOKS. PG. 65-67]

Leticia was here at the apartment for a few days, even though legally I'm not supposed to let her stay. [The Bureau of Child Welfare has allowed Leticia's grandmother to care for Hazela, Leticia's daughter, but only on condition that Leticia would not live there.] But Leticia said she wanted to go to Beth Israel Hospital for detoxification, so I thought it would be better if she stayed here until we went. We had gone there this past Saturday, and they said they did have a bed for her. But she didn't have her Medicaid card.

We went to the Medicaid office to get an emergency card, but they wouldn't give it to her because she didn't have proof of where she lives.

A rent receipt, a telephone bill. The problem is, she doesn't have an address. I can't let her use mine because then I could lose Hazela. So we put down she was staying with her great grandmother. But they checked with her, and she didn't want to sign anything. Leticia's mother couldn't provide an address because she lives in a project and she'd have to get a letter of permission from management to let anyone stay with her officially.

The people at the Medicaid office finally did give us a temporary card, and the woman told us that if Leticia goes into the hospital she would be able to use it. The woman told us to be at the hospital at 7 a.m. sharp. So we left home at 5:45. When we got there, we found out the clinic didn't open until 9. They had a bed, but they said she had to have more than a temporary Medicaid card and that she had to have an address. When we explained that Leticia couldn't get any documentation of an address, she told her to go to a shelter and use that as her address.

Meanwhile, Leticia was suffering with these pains in her stomach, so we went to the emergency room. The doctor told her she had a bad vaginal infection and gave her a prescription to be filled. But they wouldn't give her the medicine because I didn't have enough money with me, and they said we didn't have the right card. "The other office made a mistake in giving it to you. You'll have to come back with the proper one."

Next day, Leticia called from the shelter. "Gramma, I can't get a letter for the hospital before 7 a.m. tomorrow morning. Beth Israel said I had to be there before 6 tonight or they'd give up the bed." And she said she was afraid to spend any more time at the shelter. "If I'm laying there, maybe somebody would kill me." She left the shelter without the letter.

When I next saw Leticia, ten days later, she was becoming more and more desperate. She had gone to Harlem Hospital to see if she could apply for a Medicaid card there. The woman at the hospital gave her a form to fill out and told her she needed a lease or a telephone bill for proof of address. She had just been through all that! So Leticia went out on a binge. She got high. I didn't see her again until the next Monday.

When she came here, I could tell she had been using drugs. She couldn't sit down. She kept jumping up, and she was swaying hack and forth. It was difficult to understand her, but she said she had been sexually assaulted. Then she left. That night at three in the morning there was this loud bang on the door. It was Leticia. She was mumbling and crying. "My stomach is hurting me. My feet are all swollen up. I can't walk. Can't you let me in?" I told her, "No."

When she left, I looked outside and saw her go over to one of the benches outside. I was up the rest of the night, thinking about her. I said to myself, if she's really trying to get help, this is not helping her. In the morning she was still on the bench. I went downstairs and told her to come up. "We'll try to call one more place and get you into a program." And she said, "Gramma, that's what I want to do. I can't control myself anymore."

I'll tell you, if Leticia really wants to get into a drug program, if there was anything I could do to help her, I'd be the first one, because she would be helping herself. I know Leticia's scared to death. But I'm also upset with her. It's her own fault she doesn't have all these papers. I said to her, "I guess you're too much into crack." And she said, "Gramma, you're right." But then, even so, when a person is down like that, how do they get up? I personally feel if someone is doing something detrimental to themselves and they seek help, they should be given it.

So we called another place, and they told us they had a long waiting list. That she should sign up but that it would take weeks, possibly months, before there would be a place for her. That night she was back on the street again.

NARRATIVE: RITA—MEDICAID

ALBERT & SKOLNIK, PROFESSORS IN THE MASTERS AND DOCTORAL PROGRAMS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AT THE SOCIAL SERVICE EDUCATIONAL FACILITY IN WASHINGTON, 2006 [RAYMOND, LUISE, "NARRATIVES FROM HARD TIMES," THOMPSON BROOKS/COLE, PG 262-269]

I currently live with my significant other and with my daughter, whom I have full custody of. Her father lives in another state. I just got my master's degree in social work, and I'm employed by the federal government, and my life is good. I just bought a new car, which I'll be picking up tomorrow night, so that's exciting. But it wasn't like this a few years ago.

My significant other owns a home, and he basically supports the household. We have four bedrooms, and it's a very nice home in a Leave It to Beaver kind of neighborhood. All the houses are basically the same, but it has a decent school district, and it was a great place for my daughter to go to school and make her friends and connect to the community. For me it was the best move I made in my life.

I was born in Coney Island. My parents were working people. They both came out of ghettos, neighborhoods that we wouldn't want to walk in today if we could avoid them. They were poor, very impoverished people. My father was on public assistance when he was a young boy. They are both Jewish, and they know each other since they are 13 and 15 I believe. My mother insisted my father go to hairdressing school when he came out of the Army. He was a musician and didn't know what to do. So she said come be a hairdresser with me. So they became hairdressers. They had one business in Brooklyn on Mermaid Avenue. Then they had another business when we moved out here to the Island. They kept moving up houses as the business grew. Life got a little easier, but my father was always a very insecure man. I think when you are on public assistance, at a point in your life it creates a tremendous insecurity that takes a long time to overcome and feel comfortable with.

I have an older sister, 2 years older, who was basically the perfect child, the good one. She did everything that she was supposed to at the time, very bright, all those things. We hated each other as kids. Now we are incredibly close.

My family moved from the city; we kept moving. Eventually, we moved to a town where my parents ran a shop for 20 years. We went to school. I had two kindergartens, or two first grades and two second grades, it seemed like for a couple of years running. That was very unsettling. I always felt like the new kid, and I hated that. It was not a good time, and I think it made some bad formations there. I guess by the time I was 16 I knew that I had to get away from that house. I couldn't do it. So, I ran away and married the first guy who came along, and he was very mentally abusive and very bizarre. That marriage was annulled, thank God.

When I had come home after I ran away my father said, "You can't just sit around the house. If you're not going to school, you've got to go to hairdressing school and get your license and at least work in my shop." So, I went to hairdressing school, with my eyes closed, sailed through it, and passed. I started to work in the shop with my parents. I was extremely proficient, extremely talented, if I do say so myself. I had a clientele in no time. It was a competitive thing. When my father got sick, he took to his bed and I had to run the shop with my mom, which was no problem. It was a natural thing for me.

I met my second husband, a nice Jewish boy. My parents were thrilled. A customer's son, very cozy situation. I married him, didn't want to marry him, but again I married someone I didn't want to marry. The second wedding was in a temple yet. It was unbelievably beautiful. We had our daughter, and life was good for the first few years. But I was still working for my parents and I got to the point where I told my parents, "I can't work for you guys anymore." I didn't enjoy it. My father would still pull rank. He would scream at me. We would have horrible fights, and I couldn't stand it. I'm not saying I'm that easy to get along with. So, I told them I was going to look for a job somewhere else. That was a Saturday night.

The next week I came into work, and they said to me, "We've made a decision. We're going to sell the house and sell the business. We've decided we want to move to Florida." Eventually my decision was to buy the shop from them and to run it myself. I bought it from them and I renovated it. I gutted it. The man I was married to was a custom cabinetmaker. People would stop in just to see it. And most people knew me since I was 9, when I first went into the shop. So there was like a lot of community feeling about the shop. It was a family place, and we did incredibly well. That went on for 7 years. My daughter was in day care from the time she was a month old because I always managed to find husbands who don't make a lot of money. Which is fine. So I did what I had to do.

So what happened was I started in with a therapist who was wonderful, and all this memory came up, but at the point that it came up I would not get into it with her. I left therapy instead. Then I divorced my second husband. My daughter was 5, and that was horrible. That was when it really started to spiral down. I had to work 7 days a week at that point in order to pay the bills.

When I went to sign up for Medicaid, I had a growth, a lump, in my personal area. I knew I had to get this looked at immediately. I didn't have medical care for years. My daughter was covered under her father. Then for some reason he decided that he was moving or whatever he was doing, and he took her off the insurance. I started to educate myself: Child Health Plus, different things. She was settled with the Child Health Plus, which was a wonderful program for people who are struggling. Then I went to public assistance. I have to say that after I got through the initial horrible experience of waiting on the line, the phone calls that I had to make, they took me right away to a doctor.

How did I know where to go? I think I looked it up in the phone book. How did I know there was such a program? I don't know. I just knew I guess from my years in the shop. The thing about it is that it was something that was for other people. That wasn't for me.

According to my dad, losers, lowlifes, those are the kind of people who are on PA [public assistance]. Well, hey, Dad, self-fulfilling

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NARRATIVE: RITA—MEDICAID

(…card continues)

prophesy, here I am. So, I'm not sure how I knew, but I called. I guess I called information, got the Department of Social Services. I knew that's what it was called. I may have looked it up online. I told them what my problem was, that I had a growth that needed to be looked at, and that I had no insurance. They said to come down and fill out the papers. So, of course, going through the door was horrible and to stand on line. There were all those years that I went without medical care . Sometimes I went to a doctor and never paid the money and did what I had to do. If I had a toothache I would wait until it was excruciating and have the tooth pulled, which was stupid, of course, but that's what I did. Regular check-ups didn't happen until the last 2 years. My daughter did go. She always had whatever she needed.

So, walking into Welfare that first time: first of all, I was immediately struck by the fact of this huge building. You have to walk down about 30 steps. All I could think was, "This is the bowels of the world here. This is where I am." So, I had a bad attitude about it. Walked in, stood there, the tears, it was a mob scene. The line snaked around. If I tell you, you waited 3 hours until you got to the window. They tell you to come at 9:30, you're lucky if they saw you by 11:30-12 o'clock. It was insane. I finally got to the window. First I went to one window, a quick line. They asked me, "Do you have any assets?" Yeah, I had a Jeep, it was already 6-7 years old. "Well, that's an asset. That put you over the limit. You're not entitled to public assistance." That's what the guy told me. I said, "All right, but what about Medicaid?" He said, "That you might be entitled to. Go to the next line."

I didn't know what I was going to apply for. I was going to go for the full tilt at that time, seeing what I was eligible for, but I ended up with just Medicaid. When I finally got on the line and got to the window, the woman said to me, "Take your daughter off the insurance that she's on. The two of you will get benefit money, and you'll have benefit cards." I looked at her and said, "I don't want that. I just want Medicaid. That's already really bad." They gave me the Medicaid. The application process was pretty quick because they knew it was a medical emergency, so it was less than 30 days that the card came in the mail. Of course if I was bleeding I would have bled to death in those days, but I figured I could live 30 days with a growth. In the meantime I set up all the appointments so I was ready to go.

Then, of course, going back and getting recertified every 6 months, once a year, whatever it was in those years. What you couldn't help but notice at that point was that the decline of people on the lines. I wasn't a social worker then. I was in community college studying English to be a writer or sociology. That always interested me and does link to what I do now. You couldn't help but notice there were less and less people. It was while I was sitting in a sociology class that I started to talk about my experience on the line and how I felt. The teacher was drawing it out and being encouraging. There were other young women in the class who needed assistance in terms of Child Health Plus, and they didn't know what to do with young kids. I suggested you could do this and that.

At DSS the first woman was very nice, and I couldn't help but think that she's treating me nicely because I'm white. That's what I thought, because she was white and she spoke perfect English. She was definitely a native of America. However, then I got stuck with a caseworker from hell. I don't even remember her name. She was a nightmare. She smelled of liquor sometimes. She was dirty. I was mortified that I had to deal with her. and she was as nasty as they came. The thing about that, though, I went through other things. I would go to the doctor's office and wonder. The first time I found out I was a diabetic and had to see the doctor, I was sitting in the office thinking, "Does it say Medicaid on my file?" I wanted to know. He walked in. His mother and father are my parents' best friends. He didn't remember me because he hadn't seen me in 40 years. He didn't connect the name at first. I broke a sweat and said, "Let me ask you something. Do you know who is Medicaid and who is not?" I started asking him all these questions. He was looking at me like, "Who are you?" He answered, "I never know." I asked, "Well, how do you end up with a Medicaid patient?" He answered it goes into a pool. "Whatever companies I work with insurance-wise, I get a certain percentage of people who are Medicaid. That's how it works. Do you feel better now?" I answered I was just curious, and by the way I am, and introduced myself. The color ran out of his face. We have since become very good friends. But there's that paranoia that goes on when you're on Medicaid. Am I going to be treated differently?

Then I had to fix my teeth. That was the worst part of Medicaid. Medicaid will pull your teeth, but they won't pay to replace them. So I had to have a bridge made, seven teeth later, in the back. The dentist there was not nice. He was horrible. That was not my imagination. I mean your teeth are hurting like that, you know the way they did things, it was like meatball surgery.

Even when they removed the growth, when I had to go the clinic at the medical center, I could not believe it. I felt like cattle, like one of the herd. Thank God I got a nice doctor. She was a young woman. The first doctor who looked at me said, "Well, there's nothing we can do for her." It was blocking the passage. This young girl said, "Well, I'm sorry there is something we can do for her, and we're going to figure it out." She just went and got the top gyne cologist in the hospital, brought her—another woman, of course— to where I was, showed her what the problem was. She told her what to do and how to do it. It could be done locally in the office. I went back and had it done. I was scared to death that I was going to die of a staph infection. Because if you would see the amount of people, the amount of traffic that a place like that got. So that was an ordeal, and I felt horrible. That was like a real low point. Then it just started to build up again. I hated once a year going. I would still cry every time I had to go into that building.

The waiting room was horrible. First of all, it's a little dirty, scuzzy to say the least. Interviews were held at DSS in the cubicles, very rote. You sit across. There's a grimy stanchion, and you're sitting opposite her. There's like a plastic glass between us, and it's filthy.

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NARRATIVE: RITA—MEDICAID

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That's a very good analogy and very good point, and it may set up how you feel. Because you feel on the other side. You're on the other side. You're over there; I'm over here. There's grimy glass between us, and I need something, benefits from you. My hand is out. So, yes, it feeds into that whole feeling of down, depressed, desperate. It's a very routine interview. They ask you questions, very unemotionally. They don't give a s about how you're feeling, if you're crying, whatever. They tell you, this, that.

Of course, I was a master at keeping the records straight. I had everything organized in folders. They wanted to see that I was in school and this and that. It got to the point that the third time I went back to recertify, the woman just opened it and said, "It's all here, right?" I said, "Everything in duplicate." She said good-bye, and that was it. For me it became a business almost. The last time I went to see her, I knew that I had to see her to close out my case. Of course, she was late, as usual. I was fit to be tied. I said I have to get back to work, and I told you that on the phone. Very degrading. Full of shame. Five years of feeling that way.

People aren't educated about choice as a Medicaid recipient. They don't know. You could get managed care. When you're standing on line, the girls with the clipboards come around from the different insurance companies. They ask you if, instead of going to the clinic at the hospital, would you like to have a private practitioner, a family doctor. Who wouldn't say yes to that? So you do have choices. You can be treated like a regular patient. But most of the people there didn't know that.

Let me tell you about filling out that form. You need a college degree. It's a good thing I was in school, because you need it to fill it out. It's very complicated. The questions are not clear. They could really revamp that form. They need to. The information they want to gather could be much better stated than it is.

I think what happens is that a lot of people don't fill it out properly and are sanctioned for that reason. I think that's what happened. That sent a message that there were just no benefits available, which is part of the reason today I believe why you don't see masses of people there. People just don't think it's available any more. And then to ask a worker—forget that. They're not going to take time to help you, because they have hundreds of people behind you.

What they need to do when people come in and pick up the forms, there should be some type of orientation program at that point. However they want to set it up. I think it should also be more user friendly. Why can't it be set up like Motor Vehicle, with the numbers and the timing? They need an orientation program where it's bilingual. Those who don't speak English, if we're going to have these people come into this country, we have to help them the best we can to get what they need. They would tell them, this is what you are entitled to; this is how you are eligible; this would make you ineligible. Set it up for them. There should be people on the lines that if somebody has a question—the way they walk around asking which health care is wanted—then they should also ask, "Do you need any help? Can I help you with this?" Of course, that's very idealistic. They don't want you to get comfortable there.

What did I learn about Medicaid? You can get eyeglasses, which I never got. I was afraid I would be blind. I didn't go for the eyeglasses after the tooth experience. The tooth experience was the worst. There are certain dental services they won't do, such as tooth replacement, which means that if you are fortunate enough to get off the system, you're going to go for your job interview minus seven or eight teeth. The dental was an area that required pamphlets, whatever. Of course, by the time I read about that my few teeth were already missing, and it was too late. Thank goodness they have dental implants now. Someday I could do that. The thing about the prescription drugs. You are only allowed under Medicaid x amount of pills. I couldn't go in and buy 3 months at a time. They want you to come in once a month and buy your pills monthly. That runs through all insurance companies, so that's not just a Medicaid thing. Another thing was the treatment of the pharmacist when they see you are with Medicaid. They were terrible offenders. It got so bad at one point. And every time I went in there the guy would say, "Oh, you're a Medicaid," and he would scream it out. It's like when you were a kid and had to buy tampons for somebody, and you didn't want anyone to know. There, he's screaming out at the top of his lungs. I resented it tremendously. There was no need to announce that. Give me my medicine. Here's my card. I'm entitled to this, and good-bye. That was an ordeal. It got so bad. I forgot which but I ran out of pills or left them somewhere, and I needed more. I didn't have a new prescription, and the doctor was away, a whole series of events. I called him up like a person and said, "These are the circumstances and I

need more pills." "But you're on Medicaid," he says to me. "I don't know if I can help you out. You have to have the prescription."

I didn't go to any specialists on Medicaid, and I don't think I would have felt comfortable at all. For my diabetes, I was with the family friend doctor, so I felt in good hands. For my gynecological problem, I went back because my gynecologist, who delivered my daughter, was on the plan. When I called up and walked in, he asked, "Where have you been for the last few years?" I said, "Don't ask. Meatball surgery at the medical center." He said, "Well, welcome home." I said, "Thank you." They used to ask, how come there's no copay on your card. I used to say, "Just lucky I guess." I didn't want to tell them. I would feel awkward. I feel like this guy is working for free. So I wouldn't say anything. That was nice when I got to go back to him.

I was glad the program was there, now that I'm looking back on it and have learned about the safety net. Yes, that's what those programs are there for. Not to use and abuse, as a habitual thing, that some of these people unfortunately do, for whatever their reasons are, but for people who sometimes just fall through the cracks, for whatever the reasons are. That that program was there to help me, I'm very grateful for that. Yes, it needs improvement.

NARRATIVE: SALLY—WELFARE

SALLY WAS FORCED TO TAKE OF HER THREE BROTHER AND SISTERS WHEN HER MOTHER DIED. SHE TRIED WORKING HARD, BUT COULD NOT HANDLE IT. SHE WENT TO APPLY FOR WELFARE. SHE WAS MISTREATED AND DISBELIEVED. SHE BLAMED HERSELF BECAUSE OF HER LOW SELF-ESTEEM BROUGHT UPON BECAUSE OF ABUSE FORM HER STEP-FATHER. THE AFFIRMATIVE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES WHY PEOPLE GET PLACED IN POVERTY AND THEY TREAT PEOPLE LIKE STATISTICS. THEY DO NOT NOTICE THAT NOT EVERYONE WHO DESERVES WELFARE GETS IT.

GRAY, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA [KAREN GRAY, FAMILIES LIVES IN AND OUT OF POVERTY, P.107] **2001**

They didn't believe Sally either. When her mother-in-law died, Sally. who was only a teenager, took custody of her three sister/brothers-in-law. She was working, but the pay was not enough to support four children, so she applied for assistance. That she had taken on such a huge responsibility at such a young age and that the children would have otherwise gone into foster care, was not acknowledged, let alone applauded. Instead,

> They treated me really bad. They, they weren't nice to me at all. They treated me like I was a statistic. Especially when I had the other 3 kids that weren't mine when their mother died. They gave me such a hard time. "Well how do you know she really died?" And I said, "You look at these 3 kids and you tell me that the most important woman in their life just didn't die." I had death certificates. I had all this stuff. And they treated me really bad. But, but in the other state and this state, I had, mine were nothing but supportive. Maybe they, maybe in the first state they were real negative towards me because maybe I did give them a negative persona about myself.

This 'negative persona,' Sally explained, was her low self-esteem that resulted from years of sexual abuse by her stepfather and her subsequent 'unhealthy' relationship with men. Victims of sexual abuse sometimes blame themselves (unrealistically) for treatment they receive from others; they may also become victims again, as adults in abusive relationships (Briere, 1992). In several ways, Sally's life reflects this phenomena.

NARRATIVE: CHRISTINE—PREGNANCY

HANCOCK, TEACHES AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, 2003 (LYNNELL, *HANDS TO WORK: THREE WOMEN NAVIGATE THE NEW WORLD OF WELFARE DEADLINES AND WORK RULES*, P. 58-63, STORY OF CHRISTINE MARIE)

<<< Kristopher Luis Rivera was very nearly born in the city's welfare bureau on November 5, 1997. A biting wind snapped through the North Bronx the day his mother set out to make this appointment in Brooklyn. Christine Marie felt the baby's heavy impatience pressing hard. This child was the reason she had to quit her job as a medical assistant. She knew it was risky to travel on this day. But the irascible thirty three year old believed if she canceled this date to plead her case with the Eligibility Verification Review office, she wouldn't get another.

Christine had had no money of her own for months. She was desperate. She got her back up when she was desperate.

For seven months in a row she had been turned away from her Bronx welfare office. The city believed she had her grandmother's inheritance money in the bank, worth at least fifty thousand dollars. Christine kept insisting that the money had long ago been stolen,

"smoked up," and otherwise squandered by her ex, herself, and others. It was a tangled story, scarred by misfortune and naive generosity. She could have been living off the interest. But for better or mostly worse, the money was gone.

The seventh time Christine heard the words "benefits denied," welfare workers had to call the police to drag her out of the Crotona Tremont Center. Christine said she "bugged out," hollering tearful threats. "They kept telling me to shut up and sit down," she said. "I knew I'd be waiting there forever if I did. So I kept yelling, 'There's no money! There's no money!'"

By November, Christine was completely broke and feeding her three kids with occasional cash from the baby's father. She was crazy in love with Luis Lopez, a burly stickball champion with an elegant way about him. But he was feeling squeezed too. He had three kids of his own to care for. She was walking on eggshells around Luis. "I always figured I was one fight away from being in the streets with my kids," she said.

Now, finally, Christine hoped the curse was lifting. The Eligibility Verification Review office was supposed to be the last step before approval for benefits. The mayor had set up this special bureau four years earlier to order up fingerprints of applicants and to run duplicate checks of their personal records. Advocates complained that the office was just an expensive nuisance designed to find more ways to trap people and bounce them from the rolls. The office went over the same documents already reviewed by the welfare office. The city claimed it was necessary to double check in order to ensure that only the neediest applied.

Amid the vast constellation of din city welfare offices, the EVR was one of the least appealing. It was an unpleasant place for paper pushing, let alone birthing. On any given day garbage bags were piled high outside its unmarked doors on Jay Street in downtown Brooklyn.

Steel window bars separated applicants from the city's fraud workers, leaving most clients with the impression that they had just narrowly escaped a jail sentence.

Christine wasn't thinking about any of that when she decided to take the long train ride from the northeast Bronx to downtown Brooklyn. She toted a bag of documents, waiting for her name to be called. Waves of labor pains sucked at her breath. Christine felt a warm trickle, and then a river of water rushing between her legs onto the plastic chair, onto the cracked linoleum floor. The woman next to her began to yelp. Christine panicked. Christine grabbed her bag and tried to flee. All she could think of was to get herself to Albert Einstein Hospital, at least two hours north in the Bronx. She needed her doctor. Only her doctor blew what to do. Christine's was a high risk pregnancy. The fetus was surrounded by potentially lethal strands that used to be its amniotic sac protecting it from the placenta. The sac had ruptured weeks before, forming bands that could cut file baby, maybe even sever a limb or two.

Police tried to stop her from leaving the welfare office.

"You're not going to make it. We'll call an ambulance," the officer said.

"I can make it. I have to make it," Christine replied. She hobbled off to file F train at Borough Hall, officers at her side, trying to talk her out of this foolish venture.

"Don't do this. The pains are coming once a minute," the police officer pleaded.

"I need to get to the Bronx," Christine repeated, between contractions.

Finally, on file sidewalk at the top of the subway stairs, the Puerto Rican mother gave in to the pain. She heaved herself

(card continues…)

NARRATIVE: CHRISTINE—PREGNANCY

(…card continues)

into the patrol car. It sped off to the nearest hospital. Kristopher was born a half hour later at Long Island College Hospital, scarred not by the amniotic bands but by his mother's heroin habit.

When Kristopher was an eighteen month old toddler, Christine bundled into the consulting room at the Jackson Avenue Family Shelter one May afternoon, limping from a lunge down the hail to grab the baby. The stroller was draped with plastic bags, diaper bags, shoulder bags. The mother nudged its wheels once, hooked, twice, hooked, three times, free through the door.

She navigated a table leg as if in a hypnotic haze, her curly hair stuck with sweat to her back. A heart shaped locket flipped open, the photos it once held long gone. She glanced up with a bright smile. The charismatic woman behind a life of distractions emerged briefly to greet a newcomer. Then, back to the business of chaos. Kristopher whipped out of the stroller. The toddler promptly climbed on top of the table in his miniature work boots and bounded from one end to the other, until he collapsed in her arms for a voluntary time out. Seven year old Dyanna, another of her four children, skipped in to ask whether she could play with a friend, her braids sticking out playfully in three directions. She threw her lithe arms around her mom's neck for an impromptu hug, then danced out file door.

Christine's defiance was spirited, jarring, in a pleasant way. She was rough hewn, but not angry. It was the same stubborn trait that had caused her to leave file house that day in labor. In spite of a string of questionable decisions along the way, she had charged pell mell through life, getting along by her wits and her warmth. She was a bright chatterbox, innately trusting. She didn't fight her circumstances so much as try to climb out of them, as if all she needed was the right ladder. "I'm going to get out of this," Christine said, with conviction, while Kristopber used her lap as a jungle gym, his little fingers yanking on her nose. "I'm going to get an apartment. I'm going to go to school. I'm going to get off welfare. I'm going to get my job back." Step by step. "I'm clean almost every day now." It was her survival mantra. She would repeat it often in the months to come.

If Christine were to succeed in putting all these life puzzle pieces together before her welfare deadline ran out, she would be defying boxes of national statistics. Mothers in Christine's situation posed the most exasperating challenge for those who promised to end welfare by the millennium. Hank Orenstein saw hundreds of women walk in and out of his shelter who faced a numbing array of barriers to work. They were single mothers who tended to have minimal education, on and off work experience, and more than two children. For reasons experts were still debating, a disproportionate number were Hispanic an ethnic group left behind in the great welfare exodus. Social scientists had identified specific risk factors for women, conditions that would sabotage any economic progress: depression, drugs, violence at home. Most of those left on the rolls were damaged in soul and body, people for whom public sympathy grew dimmer by the year. Christine could check off all three risk factors. She had grown up in a South Bronx fractured by seventies' drugs, eighties' violence, and nineties' poverty. Her alcoholic mother died violently when Christine was a teenager. From the age of three until she was thirteen, Christine said she was sexually molested by the man she then believed was a close relative. The odds of success, as academics calculated them, were stacked against her.

Caseworkers had long recognized that a large percentage of the homeless and welfare population were abused as children, sexually or physically. About one quarter were traditionally believed to be vulnerable to some form of mental illness or substance abuse, according to the federal Department of Health. Now the percentage was much higher as the hard core and hard to place were left on the rolls and the more easily employable left welfare for work

Christine hoped she would be the one to buck the odds. She'd always managed to keep her own family together in her own way.

In recent years it had looked as if her life was veering safely away from the endless ordeals toward hints of serenity. But then two inevitabilities collided: her drug addiction and welfare reform. It was impossible to sort out which caused what. Did the public policy trigger her weakness for drugs? Did the addiction overwhelm everything in her life? The only clear thing was that Christine's drug habits spiraled out of control and her family was tom apart shortly after she entered the system of strict welfare regulations and shelter rules. Deadlines, work rules, curfews, forms, orders ... Christine didn't do well with any of these. She didn't think in those terms. She balked. She scheduled conflicting appointments. She lost questionnaires. The new welfare rules no longer forgave her these trespasses.

"I have everything to live for;" she said at one point, in a heartfelt narrative of her predicament, "and not much to live it with. I was gonna say I don't know how it happened like this, but I guess I do. Some of it is my fault. But not all of it."<<<

NARRATIVE: ALMA—WELFARE OFFICE

HANCOCK, TEACHES AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, 2003 (LYNNELL, *HANDS TO WORK: THREE WOMEN NAVIGATE THE NEW WORLD OF WELFARE DEADLINES AND WORK RULES*, P. 97-98,)

<<< After about an hour, Alma was beckoned into a small room. A hearing officer spoke into a battered tape recorder in legalese while Alma waited. James Ellerby, Esq., lifted his head to ask Alma her name, then returned to his dictation. "You won your case," ML Ellerby said after a few moments. "Do you understand?" Alma nodded. She understood the English, but not necessarily the meaning. His quick dismissal made her nervous. The officer asked her no questions, offered no explanations. Did the city have plans to send her to work on a garbage crew somewhere? Was that what she won? Most hearing officers had been rude to her before. Rudeness she understood. But this one was neither kind nor mean. He was nothing. Instead of tempting fate, Alma decided to flee without answers to her questions and to wait for the next hoop to appear.

Months passed. Alma received word to report to the Parks Department. She sat through the orientation sessions, learning about all the WEP rules how to show up to work on time, how to properly spear trash in the parks. When it was time to get her assignment, the WEP director of Bronx parks glanced at her sideways, perhaps wondering whether she was old enough to have her own welfare case, and told her to go home and wait for a call. The pixie like Alma, with her transparent skin, looked as if she could blow away with the raked leaves at the first strong gust. "Tie took a look at me and said he would find me some job inside," Alma said, laughing. He never did.

Close to Christmas, Alma was summoned down to East Sixteenth Street once again. She was just one or two exams away from the end of the semester. She still wasn't working for her benefits. She would have been working, of course, if her time card hadn't been lost, if the Bronx supervisor had found her a job. But all that seemed well beyond anyone's institutional memory. She now stood personally accused of collecting benefits and not working for them in return. Today she would discover her long term fate, not just her temporary one. Alma took a scat with four dozen other welfare recipients on the plastic chairs and rehearsed her argument. "Okay, I have experience with the Department of Aging. That's what Sue Tozzi's office is. It's where I can be most useful. I have only a few credits left to graduate. I hear they give some kind of leniency to students who are almost done. They know we'll be off the rolls soon. We'll finally be earning a real living."

After an hour, a robust woman with a Jamaican accent called out an approximation of Alma's name from the corner of the room. Alma followed her to a desk, set among dozens of others in a large room. As Alma explained it, the interview seemed to turn sour before she even sat down.

"So why aren't you working?" the caseworker asked Alma as she riffled through some papers.

"I'm waiting for an assignment. I've been working for the Department of Aging, and then they bumped me off. This is the fifth time I've been here. No one can find a place for me," Alma answered, in her crispest English.

"I will ask you again, why aren't you working? What are your future plans?"

"I will go to medical school," Alma said meekly.

"I didn't ask you about school, I am talking about work. What are your plans for your life?" the caseworker retorted, her melodious voice rising in anger.

"I told you, my future plans are, I am going to medical school. I will become a doctor," Alma answered, trying to hold her own.

The caseworker fumed and sent Alma back to the waiting area. Two hours later she summoned her back. Still angry, the caseworker lectured Alma on the work ethic and the art of being a successful physician. "You need a serious attitude adjustment," she said, enunciating the t's in at- ti-tude and adjustment. "You need to give in order to receive. If you want to be a doctor, you have to be more polite.">>>

NARRATIVE: CHRSITINE—CPS

HANCOCK, TEACHES AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, 2003 (LYNNELL, *HANDS TO WORK: THREE WOMEN NAVIGATE THE NEW WORLD OF WELFARE DEADLINES AND WORK RULES*, P. 151-152)

"I felt sorry for Christine," said Wanda. "There was all kind of crazy stuff in her case, and nothing was done about it. I worked for three weeks to get her welfare case reopened. There she was going around in all the weather, with the baby, making these appointments."

A few weeks after Mother's Day 1999, Christine took Kristopher and Dyanna outside to 138th Street after supper to talk to friends. A rhododendron curled up from thirst in the gated garden out front. Tempers and baby cries competed in the thick city night with the rap and reggae music streaming from open windows. Christine had just seen an apartment that aftemoon a walk through near Lincoln Hospital. There was a church on either end of the street, like bookends. It felt right. She was telling her friends about it.

After awhile Dyanna got bored and ran back inside, from the sidewalk up the stairs and into the shelter. "I knew where she was," Christine said. "I knew she was okay." When Christine returned to the shelter an hour later, the security guard said she had left her daughter alone and asleep in the visiting room. He reported her. It wasn't Christine's most serious offense. Still, it turned out to be her last the final consequence for ending up in this South Bronx fishbowl. Joseph called child welfare.

The next morning the Administration for Children's Services caseworkers came to Dyanna's school to take her into their custody. ACS workers ordered Monica to come to their Bronx office when she returned from junior high. Saiimie CaLm, Christine's main child welfare caseworker, came to Jackson herself to take Kristopher, now two years old. Christine was oddly grateful for Sahmie's gentleness. She didn't take kindness for granted. "She could have come with police, and she didn't. That scares the kids more," Christine said. Christine put her son in Salimie's car, strapping him in the car seat. "I was crying and crying. Kristopher saw me crying, and he got tears in his eyes. It was almost like he knew what was going on. He couldn't know. But he seemed to. I was a mess."

Salimie hated that part of her job. She dispatched these often unpleasant duties with a sense of sad inevitability. "I had no choice," Salimie said, with a distracted shrug. She mentioned the bus incident, the dirty urines, the chronically messy room, the unsupervised children. Eleven rules breached and two curfew violations added up, in the final incident report, to "child abuse with removal of children, but no arrest."

Christine had children around her for half her life. Now they were all gone. The boys were with Luis. The girls were in foster care. Dyanna, seven, would be all right, she thought, as long as the adults were kind to her, and as long as she had her dolls. Monica, twelve, was more of a worry. She was angiy. She had a temper. For now, this room in the shelter felt hollow, the empty nest of a mother bird with failed wings. There was no one fighting over anything. No one grabbing on to her leg. There was no one to scream at: "Pick this up, pick that up." Just silence. She felt unhinged.

NARRATIVE: BRENDA—CHAOS

HANCOCK, TEACHES AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, 2003 (LYNNELL, *HANDS TO WORK: THREE WOMEN NAVIGATE THE NEW WORLD OF WELFARE DEADLINES AND WORK RULES*, P. 28-29, NARRATIVE ABOUT BRENDA LEE FIELDS)

<<<If she hadn't fought so hard to get here, perhaps she would have noticed its more ragged edges, its infantilizing touches. Brenda didn't really see the midnight curfew warning for adults on the front door, or the younger woman crying as security guards forced her to dump out the contents of her purse onto the front desk. After a few days Brenda would clamor for air in her tiny room, just big enough for two single beds one for Brenda, one for Ty and his older sister to share. Someone told her a previous tenant had operated a hooker business through their first floor window. Ty would spend hours leaping from one bed to the next. There was no floor space to play. Residents banged on doors all day and night.

Disorder seemed inevitable. Brenda found herself embroiled in sometimes violent neighboring dramas. A wife threatened to stab another resident for carrying on a blatant affair with her husband. A mother fought trumped up child abuse charges. A building janitor was running a loan shark business that ensnared the child care staff. But on this first day Ty broke loose from her hand and bounded down the hail, trying to find a way outside to climb on the brightly colored plastic playset.

Loreal got busy unpacking, happy at least to be closer to school. Graduation was just three months away. She'd missed a good chunk of coursework with all this nomadic living. She wanted to walk across the school stage with her class to get her diploma. If she made it to all her exams and finished all her credits, her mother would never stop bragging about it. Loreal might not be able to buy a prom dress or pay for senior trips. She might not be able to attend her high school dances with the kids' curfew at 10:00 P.M. At least this tiny room had to be better than the decrepit conditions in Brooklyn. >>>

NARRATIVE: BRENDA—SOCIAL WORKERS/INTEGRITY TESTS

HANCOCK, TEACHES AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, 2003 (LYNNELL, *HANDS TO WORK: THREE WOMEN NAVIGATE THE NEW WORLD OF WELFARE DEADLINES AND WORK RULES*, P. 127-131,)

<<<The sight of Ty brought Brenda whirling back to the Bronx. He was playing by himself in the hallway outside Deborah's apartment when she arrived, dressed only in his underwear. He seemed deflated, not his rambunctious self. "I'm hungry" were his first words. "Didn't you eat the lunch I gave you?" Brenda asked him. "I had to share," he said, looking downcast. Brenda promised Deborah she would pay her when she got some money together. Then she asked, reluctantly, whether she could leave Ty again soon. Brenda couldn't imagine that Deborah would let any harm come to Ty. She was her friend. They both knew about each other's financial straits. They shared memories in the Jackson Avenue Family Shelter.

A few days later Brenda stood in front of the unmarked building on West Thirty first across from Madison Square Garden in Manhattan, checking and rechecking the address. This was the right place, Sterling Testing. She was supposed to take her test here for the Paul Stuart job. Once on the elevator, Brenda turned her thoughts from Ty to the upcoming test. She figured it was a math exam, to see whether she could make change and do quick calculations. "Math I can do. But if there's any algebra on it, you can forget it," she thought to herself. The waiting room resembled a doctor's office. The dozen clients were hunched over clipboards and forms. A clerk behind a clear partition handed Brenda a written test and waved her back to her seat. She glanced through the booklet and saw true false questions. None of them asked her how to add tax to a one thousand dollar bill. Instead, it was called an "integrity test." These questions were supposed to do nothing less than measure her moral judgment. She started filling in the answers, becoming increasingly uneasy. What was this for? Did Paul Stuart's executives assume she was dishonest just because she was poor? She had no idea.

Some of the questions were easy to figure out: "It's okay to drink alcohol on the job as long as it doesn't impair your ability to function." Or, "Anyone who has the opportunity to steal and doesn't is stupid." What idiot would get tripped up on those? Others posed philosophical dilemmas: "My personal freedom comes before any law." Were they screening for libertarians? Then there were the general statements that pitched Brenda into an ideological minefield: "Too many people are sent to prison," or, "No one can get rich without being dishonest in some way." Was it a moral failure to believe that prisons were overcrowded, or that the rich were sin free? There was one question that seemed like an unavoidable trap: 'What was the value of the last thing you stole? $1 to $10; $10 to $50, etc." There was no option for $0. She left it blank.

Next, she was called into a separate room for an interview. A pleasant enough man with a bushy mustache didn't reveal her score. Instead, he asked her whether she ever did drugs. Brenda said she tried marijuana a long time ago but didn't like it. He wrote "Marijuana" in big letters on the back of his sheet. He left it there, even after he discovered that Brenda was not supposed to take a drug test. Then he asked whether she'd ever been before a judge. A custody case, she answered, once when Ty's father tried to claim their son. "I mean, have you ever been accused of anything?" he asked. Brenda told him about an assault charge once lodged against her by a "trifling" neighbor. It was years ago. The charges were eventually thrown out for lack of evidence. He nodded, and made some notes.

Brenda left Sterling Testing feeling as if she had just backed into barbed wire. "I really messed that up," she said. "He threw me with those questions." She was angry at herself for telling the tester about that court case. It was sealed. She was acquitted. But it probably made her seem like a high risk. She couldn't get that big "Marijuana" scrawl out of her mind. One look at that, and the people at Paul Stuart would never let her cross its plush threshold. And that test. She felt like a criminal just by taking it.

Meanwhile, Brenda picked up Ty for the last time at Deborah's. She had a bad feeling as soon as she entered the apartment. She handed Deborah five dollars. Deborah turned the bill over in her hand and asked her if she could spare any more. Vince motioned Brenda to come talk to him in a separate room. He started telling Brenda that her lack of money was becoming a problem in the house. Brenda could hear Ty crying. She opened the door and couldn't see him. 'Where's Ty?" she asked. The girls laughed and said, "Oh, he's outside." Brenda opened up the door to see Ty sniffling in the hallway. She let him in, and the young teen told him to "stop crying" and whacked him

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NARRATIVE: BRENDA—SOCIAL WORKERS/INTEGRITY TESTS

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on the back of his head. Brenda lunged for the youngster and pushed her backward. "That girl has no business putting her hands on my son. He's a baby," Brenda bellowed. Cursing and screaming spilled out into the hall. Brenda called the police. She and Vince gathered up Ty's things and bolted out of the building.

Tensions escalated as the evening progressed. Brenda called Deborah to ask her why their friendship ended like this. Deborah's daughters called to berate Brenda for manhandling their thirteen year old sister. The phone rang all night. Ty tossed and turned with nightmares. He sat up and screamed in his sleep for his mommy. With his eyes wide open, he kept calling and calling. "Don't! Stop it!" It took her hours to calm him.

In the ensuing days, the accusations crescendoed into hysteria. Vincent accused another sister of threatening him with a handgun. An anonymous caller left a message on the America Works phone, saying they "had a thief in their midst. Brenda Fields. She watched my

daughter and took my VCR and my TV You'd better get rid of her." The staff ignored it. Brenda requested an unlisted phone number. She took out an order of protection against the family, charging aggravated harassment.

A week later Brenda was frying chicken in her apartment when a surprise visitor showed up at her door. It was a caseworker from the Administration for Children's Services, the city's child welfare agency. Ty was playing with his train set in his room. Loreal was listening to hip hop music in her room.

Brenda asked the agent whether he wanted to inspect her refrigerator. She knew that was routine for child welfare agents, to see whether the mother was providing food for her children. Brenda had received her food stamps that morning. She spent all day stretching $207 into groceries for a month, going from store to store to get the best buys with her coupons. A fresh watermelon was sitting on the table. Her freezer was full. "The agent said it was okay, but I opened it up for him to see anyway." She showed the caseworker the chicken she bought for thirty nine cents a pound and the pork shoulders she bought for fifty nine cents at Western Beef. Under the sink, she showed him a ten pound bag of rice for $4.99 and an industrial sized jug of Mazola Oil from Pioneer Grocery Cans of corned beef hash, jars of applesauce, and a twelve pack of generic soda for $2.99 were still waiting on the counter to be put away.

Brenda kept cooking while the caseworker told her the reason for his unannounced appearance. Someone had left an anonymous complaint with ACS about Brenda, Vincent, and Loreal. The caller said all three adults did drugs every night in front of Ty, and that Brenda sexually abused her son. The caller also said Vincent beat the four year old. Brenda was unusually calm as she listened to the string of horrors. "I knew right away why he was here," Brenda said. "Ghetto people are famous for doing stuff like this calling BCW (Bureau of Child Wel¬

fare, the old name for ACS) to harass one another." She figured this was another volley from the Johnsons.

The investigator asked Ty to show him his toys. Ty took the man into his room and showed him his favorite train. 'What's your favorite TV show?" he asked Ty. Power Rangers. "Favorite food?" Raviolis. "Did anyone ever touch your private parts?" No. "Did anyone beat you?" No. "Do you want to stay with your mommy?" By this time Ty was sitting on his mother's lap. He hammed it up with a big smile. "I looove my mommy," he said, giving Brenda a wet kiss on the cheek. The caseworker left, saying he was required to make one more visit. After that, he would close the case. "He told me the moment he stepped in the door he could see what's what."

After a failed attempt later to settle their scores in mediation court, the dispute between Brenda's family and Deborah's finally subsided, leaving a friendship in tatters and a four year old boy haunted by night terrors. "I should have known better than to get involved with them. I don't like to say I was desperate, but I was desperate," Brenda said. "I had no one to depend on for baby sitting except Deborah. I thought she was my friend." Another miscalculation.

In the midst of the trauma the director at America Works told Brenda she didn't get the Paul Stuart job. The personnel manager insisted it had nothing to do with the integrity test. They just found someone more qualified.

NARRATIVE: BRENDA—FAMILY COURT

HANCOCK, TEACHES AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, 2003 (LYNNELL, *HANDS TO WORK: THREE WOMEN NAVIGATE THE NEW WORLD OF WELFARE DEADLINES AND WORK RULES*, P. 191-194,)

<<<Dyanna spotted her mom and ran to her, leaping into her.Christine chattered excitedly with the foster mother, with Salimie Calim, the ACS caseworker. She kissed Dyanna on her forehead between sentences. Kristopher flipped up his hands to be picked up. Monica stood a little apart, looking wounded, and likely scared. "You're late," Luis pointed out. "What else is new?" Stung, Christine tried to ignore his rebuke.

Just then, a soft spoken man wandered by rote through the benches, calling out "Christine Rivera." Philip Francis, an elderly gentleman with gray flecked hair and four grown children of his own, was one of the city's three hundred private attorneys hired on the cheap to represent indigent parents. In many ways the parents got what the city paid very little for. These "18 B" attorneys, named after the section of law that created their line of work, earned only forty dollars an hour for court work and twenty five dollars an hour for out of court time, fees that had remained unchanged by state law since 1986. Like most 18 B attorneys, Philip had more than one hundred parents in his caseload at all times too many, he acknowledged, to do them all justice. On average, his fellow attorneys won their neglect hearings less than 2 percent of the time. One reason was that judges had only to decide on the "preponderance of the evidence," not beyond a reasonable doubt. Another reason was simply that 18 B attorneys did trial preparation on the fly. With no staff, no team of social workers to help their clients, they had little time to track down witnesses and build the strongest case. Many spoke to their clients for the first time in a whisper before the judge. Others carved out five or ten minutes in the waiting area. All this led to an inevitable sense of futility. "I tell my clients, yes, we can go to trial," said Philip Francis. "But we will probably lose. That's just how it goes."

Federal law had made the court's job even more onerous. A new adoption act imposed a deadline on the courts to decide a family's fate. The intent was to make certain children did not languish in the impermanence of foster care for years while the bureaucracy lumbered and delayed. Judges now moved to terminate parents' rights if the child had spent fifteen of the past twenty two months in a foster home. The fate of parents like Christine, who might require a cure that extended beyond the deadline, was unclear. "This is a sad, sad court," said Philip, glancing at the foot of casework on his lap. "It's even sadder now than it has been in years"

Christine gently dislodged Dyanna from her leg before meeting with Philip. Dyanna scuffled toward her seat, dejected, throwing her head down on the back of the bench in convulsive sobs. In another room, Christine told Philip that she knew about all the charges in the ACS complaint. Yes, she did skip her rehab program on occasion. Yes, her urines were dirty a couple of times, but not always. Yes, she sometimes left Monica and Dyanna alone in the shelter, but only briefly. She always knew where they were. She gave him a letter from the shelter doctor explaining that some of her absences were due to Kristopher's illnesses. Still, Philip decided not to contest any of the city's points. He had neither the evidence nor the time to build a case. Besides, Christine's drug lapses doomed her chances of getting her children returned in the near future. The best he could do amounted to damage control. He would try to gain visitation rights for Chri(sfe. to make sure the court followed the law. Their conversation took eight minutes.

When Christine emerged, the foster mother was packing up the baby's things to leave. No one was waiting for the judge's decision. It all seemed preordained. Christine bent down to kiss Dyanna one last time, whispering to her, "I love you. You'll be safe there. I'll see you soon." Dyanna's sobs grew frantic. She wrapped her legs and arms around her mom, as if to anchor her in place. Monica inched forward, blinking tears from her eyes. She gave her mom a reluctant hug, and then hot tears streaked her face. Christine reached to pick up Kristopher, who wanted in on all the commotion. All three children surrounded her, clinging, frozen in a moment.

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NARRATIVE: BRENDA—FAMILY COURT

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Two adults gently worked to unravel Dyanna's limbs from her mother. Kristopher wailed as someone unglued his grasp. The foster mother moved toward the elevator with the three sobbing kids, Kristopher in his stroller.

Then Christine's children disappeared from sight.

A spontaneous quiet rushed across the benches. The scene was unusually bitter, even for family court. People embroiled in their own private catastrophes stopped to grieve for a moment at the sight of this unknown mother losing her children, and her children losing her. It was everyone's worst fear to have your own kids pried from your arms, wailing, sobbing, then handed over to a stranger.

Christine shuddered, trying to suppress her sobs. The crowd's attention made her uneasy. No one was there to comfort her. Talk helped her stop the tears. So she talked to her neighbor of the moment. Would the girls be safe? When would she be able to see them? She knew that losing her kids was largely her own fault, but she never anticipated this. She brought out a scrap of paper with handwriting on it from her purse. It was from Graham Wyndham, the citycontracted private foster care agency now in charge of her kids. There was a contact name and phone number, and her kids' names and ages. It looked like a handwritten receipt for her children.

Luis stiffened at the room's opposite end. He was a knot of anger, staring at the ceiling. In all his years working as an interpreter in criminal court, he had never witnessed such heartbreak as this. "This is a zoo," he said, and walked away.

By the time she was called into judge Roberts's chambers nearly two hours later, Christine was numb. The hearing seemed little more than a poignant afterthought. Everything appeared to be moving along someone else's well oiled rails. Her attorney was treating her case as more or less routine. Christine stood before the judge, her hands behind her back. She gave her name and pledged to tell the truth. That was all. After that, she felt herself disappearing. No one asked her questions. Judge Roberts barely acknowledged her. There was talk of visitation rights. Luis would get Icristophen The girls would register for another school. One detail faded into the next. The next court date was September 23, 1999, an entire summer away. The only thing anchoring her to a life worth living was slipping away. She felt invisible.>>>

NARRATIVE: GETTING TURNED AWAY

HANCOCK, TEACHES AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, 2003 (LYNNELL, *HANDS TO WORK: THREE WOMEN NAVIGATE THE NEW WORLD OF WELFARE DEADLINES AND WORK RULES*, P. 151-152,)

<<<April Smiley, a seventeen year old mother of one, testified that she asked for emergency help at the Jamaica Job Center in Queens just before Thanksgiving in 1998. She'd been bouncing from one home to another after her mother kicked her out because of the pregnancy, and her father in Florida stopped sending aid. She had no permanent home, no income. Her one year old, Anaysha, had no milk, no winter coat, and only one pair of shoes. "I only have one diaper left," April said,.. and am worried about how I am going to be able to get more for my child." The caseworker told April she was too young to apply for any assistance and sent her home.

Thirty nine year old Lue Garlick said she was homeless and four months into a high risk pregnancy with twins when she sought help at the Hamilton Job Center in Manhattan in late November 1998. The receptionist told her this was "not a welfare center. It was a job center," Lue testified. The financial planner scheduled Lue for fifty days of job search duty before she could receive food stamps or Medicaid. Sick and dizzy with anemia, Lue said that she kept telling the workers she needed to eat. The caseworker referred her to a local food pantry, which was always closed by the time she finished her job center duties. In the meantime, Lue lost her rented room. She had no money. Her grandfather was too ill to house her. So she had to sleep in the park on 146th Street and Lenox Avenue. She would go days without eating, weeks without the medicine she needed. "I am desperate and have no place to stay from day to day," Lue said in her affidavit. "I am pregnant and feel sick all of the time. During the day I have to wander around.

The little food 1 get from my friends is not enough, and I often go hungry... I do not know what to do anymore."

Four others recounted similar experiences for the same class action suit against the city. A pregnant nineteen year old who was trying to finish high school was denied health insurance or food. "A friend lends me one dollar each day for lunch," said jenny Cuevas, "with which I buy a roll." A twenty four year old woman who was nine months pregnant was told she could not get food stamps because she was not a citizen. A forty year old homeless man who was hit by a car spent his last $1.50 on the subway trying to get the documents required by a Harlem job center. After more than a month he still had no food stamps. "When I got to the food pantry on my own," said Elston Richards, "all they had was some old red bananas." All six applicants were told, erroneously, that emergency assistance no longer existed. All were sent to job searches hungry or sent home empty handed.

The city lawyers argued that these cases represented isolated, anecdotal, and tragic errors that should not be used to condemn an entire system. HRA was attempting a grand scale overhaul of a monumentally flawed system. Mistakes and setbacks would inevitably occur. The city agency would do its best to make sure these errors would not happen again. But Federal District Court Judge William Pauley III warned of a deeper problem. The judge noted that the vast majority of people were turned away from all thirteen job centers without receiving help. "Work first," he wrote, had become "divert first" without mercy. The judge cited city statistics that of the first 5,300 people to go through the new job search program, only 256 were placed, an employment record of just under 5 percent.>>>

NARRATIVE: WELFARE

GRAY, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA [KAREN GRAY, FAMILIES LIVES IN AND OUT OF POVERTY, P.107-113] **2001**

Linda, too, has worked most of her life, and started receiving welfare after separating from her husband. She was still breast-feeding plus caring for ill, elderly neighbors and her parents, and felt that work was out of the question at that time. Like the other women, it was painful for Linda to have to tell her story to an unsympathetic stranger who did not validate Linda's efforts at being a good mother, good daughter, and good neighbor. Caseworkers have the power to deny eligibility and this power allows the caseworker to ask any question he/she wants to ask, forcing women like Linda to "tell all" if they want assistance. The language Linda used made the process sound as if she were in a police squad room, suspected of wrong-doing by a detective who felt Linda was guilty until proven innocent:

> AFDC came in and it helped me so much. But that, that was something that I never hope to be back on to again. It was so degrading.... it, it's just having to, to go down there and do the initial application. All of us that applied for public assistance have to be , have to be interrogated. It's more like a (laughed) an interrogation by somebody that's, that's in charge of doing that. Whether, and it's whether the they approve or disapprove on whether you qualify for it. But I remember being interviewed and, and, and I remember the person asking me questions and, and asking me why I wouldn't go out and get a job at the time. Well I had Fredo. He was, he was small. And , and I was breastfeeding him. And I just didn't want to leave him. And I figured I needed the assistance at the time and Fredo wasn't ready to let me go and I wasn't ready to let him go either. And I was having myself a really, a really horrible time with this separation...And I didn't, I didn't think I was mentally able to handle a job and then put (youngest son) into a daycare center at the time. And I really needed the assistance. And to have to come down and give a total stranger that information. I just couldn't sort things out at the time I was applying for assistance. And that's when they would throw things at me like you look fit. You could go out and get a job, and, and why don't you make applications here and make applications there....I felt like the added responsibility that I had to take care of (her elderly neighbor) here. She had already had her accident with the lawn mower. She couldn't take care of things on her own. Her husband was elderly. He needed help. And I wanted to be here for them. So I had so many things, so many places that I wanted to be at the same time. That I , I just come right out and explain certain things to a person that worked here at the welfare office. But eventually yeah, yeah, she did approve that I did qualify for public assistance, and I just felt very, very degraded by that.

Diane only did it for her children, which helped keep some of her pride intact, at least until she walked into the public assistance office. She, too, felt that who she was as a person just disappeared:

> Just to get the courage to go up in there and start doing all that, you know you've hit rock bottom....It was humiliating just for me to walk in there (laughed). They, they treat you like you're nothing, to go in there just to try and get food for your kids. I didn't get it for me, I got it for my kids. My mom saidfeed you but I can't afford to feed your kids, but I'll feed you. So we did (laughed).

Five of the women felt the system was designed to humiliate them and thwart their efforts at obtaining assistance. The welfare office rules and often the caseworkers assumed that since women on public assistance often don't have paying jobs, they should work for the assistance; that they lie around the house all day, so asking them to expend some effort once in awhile is reasonable. They were perceived as receiving a free lunch, and caseworkers felt the women should earn their welfare checks. This meant that the women were given no choices in appointment times and they were expected to wait patiently, sometimes for hours, if the caseworker was running late. Once again, these women's circumstances did not matter in the application process; they were relegated to the faceless caseload of clients. Issues like day care or transportation, both needed to keep such appointments, were ignored by the rules. For Joan, "it was really the system itself that kind of kicked me out, because I didn't like the treatment that was there."

Donna described how difficult it was, both emotionally and physically, to get assistance in California. Once a month she spent an entire day cashing her food stamps and AFDC check. This did not include the application process, another time-intensive activity. Such labor would make holding a full-time job difficult. She described the process :

....you had to stand in this long line like and just wait. Everybody was cashing their stamps on the same day. Then here they had several different places you could do it. See in CA where I lived at you only had this one place that you

(card continues…)

NARRATIVE: WELFARE

(…card continues)

went and sometimes the line would be out the door. And they'd close for your lunch and you'd have to go outside and wait until they opened at 1:00. Well for people that didn't have a car, what were we going to do? Stand there and wait. And they knew that. And here they had, well I guess now they use cards. We didn't have the cards when I was, they had the stamps, actual stamps. And you could go and pick it up at several different places. And it was a little bit better but still when you go to the check cashing place and they say O.K. if you're getting food stamps or cashing your AFDC checks to the left, payroll checks to the right, it was like ugh (laughed).

After living in California a few years, Donna decided to return to San Antonio. It was no less difficult in Texas. She called SA to tell them that I was trying to see if I could get my welfare benefits still and they were like, they were just like, dissed me all the way (laughed). I mean they're telling me well you're not going to get that kind of welfare here. And I was like (humph) I'm not coming there to get on welfare. I'm coming to go to school but I have to have some kind of way to support my family. They just gave me a really hard time, but I came anyway. And anytime you apply for welfare, you have to, "Well who's the dad?"...you have to apply for child support and.... I mean they, that's just their way of stressing you and making you not want to be on the program because you have to go through so much and they just. I don't think it helps you at all. I mean yes, financially, but there's a lot of other things that go with it. That's pretty bad....

Sylvia became agitated when describing her experience of the long wait in the welfare office to apply. For years she made nine dollars per hour as a maid, which was enough to support herself and her children. But then Sylvia started partying, and drugs and alcohol led her into crime, then prison. She hit bottom when she was in prison, long before she first applied for public assistance. Her efforts to leave poverty---enrollment in college---were also not commended. So instead of feeling humiliated, she felt angry at the treatment she received:

I don't let people shame. Because there ain't no shame in my game. I cannot be shamed. I've been through everything. There's no reason, there's no way you can put me down. You know what I'm saying? There's no way you can do anything to hurt me. I have been hurt in so many ways there's no way anybody can hurt me. Or I'll just turn right back and say oh you're something else. Like people that do that right there, the ones that do that like when they're in the line or something, the ones that work for the stamps, like I had gone, I think I went to renew them about 2 weeks ago and I went and they said, I went there and I asked him and I went and did that all this stuff and they O.K. you'll be called. And it was 15 until 5 and they hadn't called me. I saw people leaving and people that got there after me. Excuse me they haven't called my name. Well it's probably because they haven't gotten to you. I go well you know what? There's other people that have came here, O.K.. And they like gone and I'm not. And they're like O.K. let me see. Well it's not 5:00 yet. Alright, O.K. fine. I went back and sat down. 5:00. Excuse me, it's 5:00 now and they still haven't called me. Oh I'm so sorry the lady that had you she already went. Well what's your problem? I mean it's not my fault you're working here for minimum. See that's why I'm not getting a job just like ya'll. That's why I'm getting my education. O.K. because I want to get paid salary. Because then I'm going to have this kind of attitude towards people like the way y'all do. I told you the first time.

You want to be sarcastic. Well ma'am please. I go no. You need to apologize. And I told him that. You can be rude, sarcastic. You don't have to resort to violence, but sometimes you don't have to keep quiet because they're not giving you anything. Simple as that.

Rochelle didn't like being under a magnifying glass. It irritated her, too, that her years of being a tax-payer were ignored when she finally had to apply for assistance. She explained,

I know when you get assistance you have to give so much information, I was the type of person I just felt like they were just, I wanted to get off because I just didn't like people being into my business that much. And that's just me. If there's something I want to volunteer and tell you that's one thing but they get so deep into your life. It's almost like your whole life, every, everybody, it's just there for everyone to see. I'm like well you know what? I paid taxes, too. It's not like I was in this situation always. And that's what it's there for. For people who are in situations that need help.

Rhea was incensed about many aspects of the application process. Like the other women, her personal efforts to escape poverty via college and her years as a tax-paying citizen were discounted. She was forced to skip a day of class so that she could apply for assistance.

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NARRATIVE: WELFARE

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> It's like you've worked so many years, you've paid taxes to cover things like this. You've paid into the system, so now the system is just giving you back a little, actually a little of what you put in, because you put in so much. So why, so why should we feel like 2nd class citizens? But when you go to an assistance office, you're made to wait forever, they act like they're doing you a favor. It's like, O.K., "I don't care whatever other appointments you have, here's your appointment, there's no way we're going to schedule it around what you need to be here at." Like if you're going to school, well, O.K. you're going to miss a day of school to go get your food stamps thing done because they say come such and such day and you're going to be there for god only knows how many hours, you don't know.

Rhea also felt that while waiting to be seen by a caseworker, other applicants were trying to figure out each other's story by looking at each other. A theme of empathy emerges here (this theme will discussed in depth in a later section).

> Yeah, (my daughter) used to get upset. She didn't want to go with me when we had to go apply for food stamps or whatever because even sitting in the waiting room, you're sitting there staring at everybody. And everybody's sizing each other up going, O.K., "You've got holes in your pants and how can you afford those Nikes and still be able to apply for assistance?" And I always said, "Well you can't tell somebody dresses nice when they go to one of these appointments, that doesn't mean that they're defrauding. That means that maybe they just got on it. Maybe they had a nice job and everything and they suddenly lost everything."
>
> But yeah she didn't used to want to go with me.

For ten of the women, the applicaation process proved to be very humiliating. It would have been difficult enouigh if all they had to do was apply for assistance, which was akin to admitting failure in being able to support their families. But then, on top of this, caseworkers did not recognize their clients' successes and their honesty was questioned. which compounded the humiliation. It was bewildering to many of the women that they were treated this way when caseworkers didn't know the women's personal stories. Many of the women had been taxpayers for years and felt that those tamces were for emergency situations such as this. But instead they were treated like deadbeats and just another number. This humiliation seemed to be a deliberate attempt to make the women feel shame.

There were other problems in the application process besides humiliation. Because no one took the time to learn their stories and they were believed to be without responsibilities like a job, their circumstances were not taken into account. Welfare office rules and employees Forced them to sit in the office or stand in line for food stamps all day, sometimes without ever being seen. Several of the women felt the rules were made to discourage them from applying.

Caseworkers were mentioned in general in the preceding stories. The following stories are about particular caseworkers. These interactions and relationships were remembered by the womean long after the interactions or relationships were over.

NARRATIVE: POVERTY—MARKED ON THE BODY

VIVYAN C. **ADAIR**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AT HAMILTON COLLEGE, "RECLAIMING CLASS: WOMEN, POVERTY, AND THE PROMISE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA," PG 31-32, **2003**

<<<As children, our disheveled and broken bodies were produced and read as signs of our inferiority and undeservedness. As adults, our mutilated bodies are read as signs of inner chaos, immaturity, and indecency as we are punished and then read as proof of need for further discipline and punishment. When my already bad teeth started to rot and I was out of my head with pain, my choices as an adult welfare recipient were either to let my teeth fall out or to have them pulled. In either case, the culture would then read me as a toothless illiterate, as a fearful joke. To pay my rent and put shoes on my daughter's feet, I sold blood at two or three different clinics on a monthly basis until I became so anemic that they refused to buy it from me. A neighbor of mine went back to the man who continued to beat her and her scarred children after being denied welfare benefits when she realized that she could not adequately feed, clothe, and house her family on her own minimum-wage income. My good friend sold her ovum to a fertility clinic in a painful and potentially damaging process. Other friends exposed themselves to all manner of danger and disease by selling their bodies for sex to feed and clothe their babies.

Poverty becomes a vicious cycle that is written on our bodies and intimately connected with our value in the world. Our children need healthy food so that we can continue working; yet working at minimum-wage jobs we have no money for wholesome food and very little time to care for our families. So our children get sick; we lose our jobs to take care of them; we fall more and more deeply into debt before our next unbearable job; and then we really cannot afford medical care. Starting that next minimum-wage job with unpaid bills and ill children puts us farther and farther behind, so that we are even less able to afford good food, adequate child care and health care, or emotional healing. The food banks we gratefully drag our exhausted children to on the weekends hand out bags of rancid candy bars, past-pull-date hot dogs, stale and broken pasta, and occasionally a bag of wrinkled apples. We are either fat or skinny, and we seem always irreparably ill. Our emaciated or bloated bodies are then read as a sign of lack of discipline and as proof that we have failed to care as we should.10

Exhaustion also marks the bodies of poor women in indelible script. Rest becomes a privilege we simply cannot afford. After working full shifts each day, poor mothers who are trying to support themselves at minimum-wage jobs continue to work to a point of exhaustion that is inscribed on their faces, their bodies, their posture, and their diminishing sense of self and value in the world. My former neighbor recently recalled:

I had to take connecting buses to bring and pick up my daughters at child care after working on my feet all day. As soon as we arrived at home, we would head out again by bus to do laundry. Pick up groceries. Try to get to the food bank. Beg the electric company to not turn off our lights and heat again. Find free winter clothing. I would be home late at night all the time. I was loaded down with one baby asleep and one crying. Carrying lots of heavy bags and ready to drop on my feet. I had bags under my eyes and no shampoo to wash my hair, so I used soap. Anyway I had to stay up to wash diapers in the sink. Otherwise they wouldn't be dry when I left the house in the dark the next morning with my girls. (Adair 1998)

This bruised and lifeless body, hauling sniffling babies and bags of dirty laundry on the bus, was then read as a sign that she was a bad mother and a threat that needed to be disciplined and made to work even harder for her own good. Those who need the respite less go away for weekends, take drives in the woods, take their kids to the beach. Poor women without education are pushed into minimum-wage jobs and have no money, no car, no time, no energy, and little support as their bodies are made to display marks of their material deprivation as a socializing and patrolling force.

Ultimately, we come to recognize that our bodies are not our own; that they are, rather, public property. State-mandated blood tests, interrogation about the most private aspects of our lives, the public humiliation of having to beg officials for food and medicine, and the loss of all right to privacy teach us that our bodies are useful only

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NARRATIVE: POVERTY—MARKED ON THE BODY

(…card continues)

as lessons, warnings, and signs of degradation that everyone loves to hate. A poor, white single mother of three recognized her family's value as a sign at a welfare-rights rally in 1998 when she reflected:

My kids and I been chopped up and spit out just like when I was a kid. My rotten teeth, my kids' twisted feet. My son's dull skin and blank stare. My oldest girl's stooped posture and the way she can't look no one in the eye no more. This all says we got nothing and we deserve what we got. On the street good families look at us and see right away what they'd be if they don't follow the rules. They're scared, too, real scared. (Adair 1999

Although officially this woman has only a tenth-grade education, she expertly reads and articulates a complex theory of power, bodily inscription, and socialization that arises directly from the material conditions of her own life. She sees what many far more "educated" scholars and citizens fail to recognize: that the bodies of poor women and children are produced and positioned as texts that facilitate the mandates of a didactic, profoundly brutal, and mean-spirited political regime. The clarity of this woman's vision challenges feminists to consider and critique our commitment to both textualizing displays of heavy-handed social inscription and to de-textualizing them, working to put an end to these bodily experiences of pain, humiliation, and suffering.

NARRATIVE: POVERTY—MARKED ON THE BODY

VIVYAN C. **ADAIR**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF WOMEN'S STUDIES AT HAMILTON COLLEGE, "RECLAIMING CLASS: WOMEN, POVERTY, AND THE PROMISES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA," PG 30-31, **2003**

<<<Indeed, poor children are often marked with bodily signs that cannot be forgotten or erased. Their bodies are physically inscribed as Other and then read as pathological, dangerous, and undeserving. What I recall most vividly about being a child in a profoundly poor family was that we were constantly hurt and ill, and because we could not afford medical care, small illnesses and accidents spiraled into more dangerous illnesses and complications that became both a part of who we were and written proof that we were of no value in the world.

In spite of my mother's heroic efforts, at an early age my brothers and sister and I were stooped, bore scars that never healed properly, and limped with feet mangled by ill-fitting used Salvation Army shoes. When my sister's forehead was split open by a door slammed in frustration, my mother "pasted" the angry wound together on her own, leaving a mark of our inability to afford medical attention, of our lack, on my sister's very forehead. When I suffered from a concussion, my mother simply put borrowed ice on my head and tried to keep me awake for a night. And when, throughout elementary school, we were sent to the office for mandatory and very public yearly checkups, the school nurse sucked air through her teeth as she donned surgical gloves to check only the hair of poor children for lice.

We were read as unworthy, laughable, and often dangerous. Poor children in our school were laughed at for their "ugly shoes," their crooked and ill-serviced teeth, and the way they "stank," as teachers excoriated them for their inability to concentrate in school, their "refusal" to come to class prepared with proper supplies, and their unethical behavior when they tried to take more than their allocated share of "free lunch."7 One of my former classmates recently recalled:

Whenever backpacks or library books came up missing, we were publicly interrogated and sent home to "think about" our offenses, often accompanied by notes that reminded my mother that as a poor, single parent she should be working twice as hard to make up for the discipline that allegedly walked out the door with my father. When we sat glued to our seats, afraid to stand in front of the class in ragged and ill-fitting hand-me-downs, we were held up as examples of unprepared and uncooperative children. And when our grades reflected our inferiority, they were used to justify even more elaborate punishment.

Other friends who were poor as children, and respondents to a survey I conducted in 1998, tell similar stories of the branding they received at the hands of teachers, administrators, and peers.9 An African American woman raised in Yesler Terrace, a public-housing complex in Seattle, writes:

Poor was all over our faces. My glasses were taped and too weak. My big brother had missing teeth. My mom was dull and ashy. It was like a story of how poor we were that anyone could see. My sister Evie's lip was bit by a dog and we just had dime store stuff to put on it. Her lip was a big scar. Then she never smiled and no one smiled at her 'cause she never smiled. Kids call her "scarface." Teachers never smiled at her. The principle put her in detention all the time because she was mean and bad (they said). (Adair 1998)

And a white woman in the Utica, New York, area remembers:

We lived in dilapidated and unsafe housing that had fleas no matter how clean my mom tried to be. We had bites all over us. Living in our car between evictions was even worse. Then we didn't have a bathroom so I got kidney problems that I never had doctor's help for. When my teachers wouldn't let me go to the bathroom every hour or so, I would wet my pants in class. You can imagine what the kids did to me about that. And the teachers would refuse to let me go to the bathroom because they said I was willful. (Adair 1999)

Material deprivation is publicly written on the bodies of poor children in the world. In the United States, poor families experience violent crime, hunger, lack of medical and dental care, utility shutoffs, the effects of living in unsafe housing or of being homeless, chronic illness and insufficient winter clothing (Edin and Lein 1997, 224-31). According to Jody Raphael of the Taylor Institute, poor women and their children are also at five times the risk of experiencing domestic violence (Raphael 2000).

STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY—AFFIRMATIVE ANSWERS

AFF: PERMUTATION—MULTIPLE STANDPOINTS

COMBINING STANDPOINTS INCREASES THE EFFICACY OF THE METHOD AND GENERATES MORE DIALOGUE

LISSOVOY, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS, **2008** [NOAH, POWER, CRISIS, AND EDUCATION FOR LIBERATION, PG. 55]

The original understanding of a revolutionary standpoint (whether in the Marxist or feminist conception) yields to its own inevitable complexities. While Hartsock (1983) makes the case for sexual difference and oppression as fundamental in organizing social life, once the distinct social positioning of women can be seen to allow for the development of a specifically feminist standpoint, there is no reason why other social locations cannot be recognized as capable of producing their own epistemologies and political philosophies. As Harding (1993) points out, once we see that there is no universal man, we must see that women too are never homogeneous but always differ in terms of class, race, and other factors. Each distinct social position, to the extent that it is involved both in different material activities and different opportunities for struggle, can (potentially) be productive of a standpoint. And in fact, feminist theorists have proposed standpoints that respond to the experiences of specific groups of women more usefully than an undifferentiated (and "universal") feminist standpoint. Collins (2000), for example, has proposed an epistemology of Black feminist thought proceeding from the unique experiences of Black women. Likewise, educational theories grounded in the histories and struggles of different groups of students can differently afford and constrain possibilities for understanding and action. A refusal to pronounce upon the nature of truth for everyone is implicit in this conception. However, **where there is difference there is also the possibility of combination: bringing together different standpoints can potentially increase their power as well as allowing for the possibility of reciprocal critique**, as I describe in this chapter.

AFF: PERMUTATION—POLICY + THEORY

MANAGERIAL THINKING IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF COMPLEX POLICY ISSUES – COMBINING THE QUALITATIVE SUGGESTIONS OFFERED BY THE NEGATIVE WITH THE PRAGMATIC APPROACH OF THE AFF WILL PRODUCE THE BEST POLICY

SCHARPF, GERMAN PROFESSOR FOR SOCIOLOGY, **2000** [FRITZ W., INSTITUTIONS IN COMPARATIVE POLICY, SAGE PUBLICATIONS, P 4]

To a greater degree than is otherwise true in the social sciences**, policy research aspires to pragmatic usefulness in the sense that it** should be able to provide information that (if heeded by policy makers—which is another question altogether) **could contribute to the design of effective and feasible policy responses to given societal problems.** At the practical end of a continuum, this calls for in-depth analyses of specific policy problems and interaction constellations that may best be done by consultants or the in-house staffs of ministerial departments and other policy-making organizations rather than by theory-oriented academic research. At the same time, however, **such applied work would greatly benefit from being able to draw on empirically validated theoretical propositions specifying general causal mechanisms affecting the feasibility and effectiveness of policy options. Given the multidimensionality and variety of real-world policy problems**, however, **any general theoretical proposition can at best only cover partial aspects that need to be integrated with other partial theories in the development of effective policy designs**—just as the solution of any complex engineering problem will draw on a wide range of distinct natural-science theories. However, in policy research, even the search for partial theories is affected by the real complexity of its subject matter. **Whereas the natural sciences can often rely on experimental designs** to isolate the causal effect of a single factor**, this is not usually possible in the social sciences.** Here the comparative empirical study of real-world phenomena is generally our only way to discover causal relationships. However, regardless of whether the comparison is intertemporal, cross-sectional, or cross-national (which will be my focus here), if institutional conditions are thought to matter, then they are in themselves very complex factors with a high degree of variability across time and space. Moreover, if the dependent variable is to be policy responses, interaction-oriented policy research must also consider at least two additional sets of factors that are likely to have causal influence—the characteristics of the policy problems faced and the characteristics of the policy actors involved. These conditions constrain the design of theory-oriented and empirical policy research (Scharpf, 1997, chapter 3). The standardway of dealing with complex factor constellations in empirical research is through multivariate statistical analyses that seek to identify the causal effect of specific variables while trying to control for the influence of other factors. Because internationally comparative policy studies are inevitably plagued with the small-n problem of too many variables and too few cases, it has become common practice to multiply the number of available observations by relying on cross-country, pooled time-series data (Beck & Katz, 1995). Their usefulness is limited, however, by the fact that some of the factors that influence outcomes may be both country-specific and relatively stable over time so that the multiplication of observations does not increase the available information to nearly the same degree. The same is true if exogenous shocks (like the oil price crises of 1973 to 1975 and of 1979 to 1981) affect all countries at the same time. If these fixed effects are then accounted for by the introduction of country and year dummies in the regression equations, then what is left is statistical information about relationships between variables that are cleaned of all influences that are specific for a given country or a given time period.

AFF: STANDPOINT BAD—NO LINK

GENERAL EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRITIQUES LACK UTILITY – THERE ARE ALWAYS RISKS IN RESEARCH. A FOCUS ON THE SPECIFIC POLICY IS PREFERABLE IN THIS INSTANCE

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**
[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.262]
None of the foregoing discussion means that no role exists for expert-led research. Participatory research is hardly the only tool or approach that might prove useful to a scholar who wants to reach out to nonelite audiences, nor is it the only approach that allows adherence to ethical principles of democratic respect and care. Many groups of poor people and low-wage workers will be interested in knowledge produced by traditional research protocols if researchers take the trouble to develop better methods of dissemination. Moreover, a project that involves nonparticipatory modes of research design or data gathering can do a perfectly fine job of taking results back to informants for review and can include them in decision making about next steps. In even the most traditional project, the "human subjects" play a key role by contributing information to the endeavor. Even the purest participatory undertaking entails some degree of role differentiation between people with different sorts of training, skill, personality, and perspective.
Neither should the foregoing discussion be taken to deny that participatory research can be carried out in ways that are corrupt and cooptational. Technical methods and processes can be used for diverse ends, and high aspirations can founder on many kinds of weaknesses (Gaventa 1998; Chambers 1997, 211-14 and passim). The point is not that one method or approach is always better than another. Nevertheless, both the push and the pull toward elite audiences are so great for most professional researchers that even the strongest counterpressure in another direction, the most impassioned calls, and the most elaborate preparations and reinforcements will not be disproportionate or unwarranted.

AFF: STANDPOINT BAD—MATERIAL FOCUS BETTER

STANDPOINTS FAIL DUE TO THEIR LACK OF UNIVERSAL REACH, EACH GROUP IS LIMITED TO A CERTAIN DEGREE. PREFER THE AFFIRMATIVES FOCUS ON MATERIAL CHANGE

LISSOVOY, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS, **2008**
[NOAH, POWER, CRISIS, AND EDUCATION FOR LIBERATION, PG. 53]
Traditional standpoint theory confronts certain **intractable obstacles**, however. Since a standpoint is thought of as emerging from the experience of a particular social group, each standpoint is ultimately inadequate for understanding social life outside of the characteristic experience of that group. In addition, the assumed constituency of a standpoint can seem to be falsely universalized (e.g., in assuming "women" as an undifferentiated and unproblematic category). Also, in its focus on consciousness and knowledge as the starting point for politics, standpoint theory risks obscuring the necessary materiality both of domination and liberation as concrete historical processes. For these reasons, in order to bring together the insights of different oppositional paradigms toward a synthetic or "compound" standpoint, an expanded materialist grounding is necessary that attends to the complex historical determination of oppression in concrete processes of conquest and domination. The work of anticolonial theorist Frantz Fanon (1963, 1965, 1967a, 1967b) provides crucial resources in this regard, since his analysis demonstrates the way that economic, political, cultural, and psychical registers are complexly interwoven and even identified in the historical problematic of colonialism. Like standpoint theory, Fanon's work emphasizes the importance of consciousness; however, the conception of decolonization that Fanon proposes never separates consciousness from the dynamic historical context in which it finds its meaning. This expanded materialist approach makes it possible to step out of the apparently mutually exclusive epistemological worlds of different standpoints and to combine their most useful insights with reference to a common, if complex, historical process of conquest and struggle against it. This perspective is especially useful for understanding education, in which economic, cultural, and ideological forces interpenetrate and determine each other.

AFF: STANDPOINT BAD—POLICY SOLVES BETTER

THE ALTERATIVE WILL NOT GENERATE SOCIAL CHANGE – ONLY THE AFFIRMATIVE CHALLENGES THE STRUCTURES THAT PROMOTE DISCURSIVE VIOLENCE

MUNGER, EDITOR, PROFESSOR OF LAW AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, **2002**

[FRANK, LABORING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, PG.6]

The call by Gans and Rainwater for more phenomenologically accurate research sets a different agenda but nevertheless leaves perplexing questions unresolved. Exploration of the aspirations and values of the poor—the stuff of their identity—ought to undermine the negative stereotypes that hobble effective policy making; but how to organize such research? What kinds of information should ethnographers gather? Are words enough? Can the voices of the poor, direct and unmediated, persuade scholars, journalists, politicians, policy makers, and middle-class Americans that they are enough like us to deserve generous social supports? Or must they muster deeds, jobs they have held, classes they have taken, sacrifices they have made for their children, to win approval and access to resources that many of us take for granted? Rainwater and Gans don't explain how we are to develop a fairer discourse about poverty without constructing simplified counterimages of the poor or making them accountable to idealized aspirations and values that are rarely realized even by those who are wealthier.

What does it mean to hold a single mother with small children to the standards of the middle class? How do we expect her to enact her values under conditions of deprivation, and how could our understanding of the interplay between her actions and her aspirations be enriched? An idealized middle-class standard for self-sufficiency includes a steady job, trust that work will lead to betterment, rational micromanagement of income and work opportunities, instrumental use of social support to achieve some degree of autonomy, and belief in the value of formal education. Standards shaped by middle-class experience and embedded in the language of microeconomics and policy studies structure our public discourse about poverty. Qualitative research must foreground these standards and question their provenance if it hopes to uncover the many layers of impulse and action that feed the apparent deviance of the poor.

AFF: STANDPOINT BAD—NEW ORTHODOXY

THE AFFIRMATIVE SUPPLANTS ONE ORTHODOXY WITH ANOTHER – THIS IS A MORE SUBTLE FORM OF COLONIZATION

HILFER, PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, **2003** [TONY, THE NEW HEGEMONY IN LITERARY STUDIES: CONTRADICTIONS IN THEORY, P. 40-41]

Messer Davidow's ideas are not only inadequate but coercive. The coercive aspect of standpoint is front and center in Dale M. Bauer's College English essay, "The Other 'F' Word: The Feminist in the Classroom" This essay draws from Bauer's adaptation to feminism of Bakhtin's idea of the dialogic novel in Feminist Dialogics, the introduction to which is excerpted in Warhol and Herndl's influential anthology Feminisms. Here, Bauer posits that "we acquire 'ourselves' by engaging in our dialogue with others, and especially with texts that challenge our own beliefs. In the act of reading, we divest ourselves of the illusion of monolithic selfhood" (676). If this is what Bauer means by dialogism, the more of it the better. Unfortunately, it is not.What Bauer really means by the dialogical is clearly expressed in her College English essay, "The Other 'F' Word: The Feminist in the Classroom," where it functions as a way of using "one kind of mastery, feminist and dialogic in practice, against another, monologic and authoritarian." There is not a dialogue between the feminist professor and retrograde student since the dialogic is already embodied in the professor's self evidently true standpoint. Rather the professor practices "a kind of counter indoctrination, a debriefing" of the ideology that has presumably been implanted in the student (387). Bauer's rhetorical strategy is two pronged: "to break down resistances and offer identifications" (389). The identification is provided by the preexistent goals of the feminist agenda: "The feminist agenda offers a goal towards our students' conversions to emancipatory critical action" (389).

The obvious question here is what happened to dialogue in the dialogic since the only model here presented is that between the politically correct feminist professor and the politically incorrect resistant student. Conversion requires stern measures: "In teaching identification and teaching feminism, I overcome a vehement insistence on pluralistic relativism or on individualism" ("The Other 'F' Word," 391), "my feminist pedagogy serves to break down their will to believe in pedagogy's neutral agenda" ("Bauer Responds," 103). It may be that the students' minds have been colonized by the dominant culture but, far from teaching students "how to resist" ("The Other? Word," 391), Bauer intends to colonize their voice with her voice, the voice of orthodox academic progressive discourse. She says, "We ask them to recognize identity and politics as social constructions" (391) but does not so relativize feminist identity or feminist politics. Certainly her students are not invited to identify with the literary tricksters that Bakhtin so admired, figures who affirm, "the right to be 'other' in this world, the right not to make common cause with any single one of the existing categories that life makes available, none of these categories quite suits them, they see the underside and the falseness of every situation" (Bakhtin, 159). In sum, a more accurate term for Bauer's pedagogy might be feminist mono logic.

Bauer's confidence in the correctness of her monologic is clearly one of the fruits of feminist standpoint epistemology. It is instructive to see how enabling her feminist standpoint proves on a work that exemplifies Bakhtin's "dialogic imagination," Edith Wharton's Summer.

AFF: STANDPOINT BAD—FETISHIZATION

IDENTITY IS THE WRONG GROUNDING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE – IT CULTIVATES AN OBSESSION WITH DIFFERENCE THAT FORCLOSES POSSIBILITIES OF TRANSFORMATION

HILFER, PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, **2003** [TONY, THE NEW HEGEMONY IN LITERARY STUDIES: CONTRADICTIONS IN THEORY, P. 48-49]

Standpoint theory, however, does not derive rights from extending the general conception of freedom to those historically but illogically excluded but fetishizes certain privileged identities as ideal. In so doing it runs counter to the American tradition of privileging the accomplishments of individuals over their ascriptive group identity Basing one's politics on ascriptive characteristics is unlikely to convince those outside the ideal group identities. The problem of arguments validated not by argument but as assertions of ideal identity is that whatever one arrives at is fixed and nonnegotiable, disagreement is taken not as difference over a possibility or position but as difference over difference, an attack on one's being:

"Persons are to be judged not by what they do or they say but by what they are.

What you are is what your racial or sexual identity dictates. Your identity becomes the sole ground of politics, the sole determinant of political good and evil. Those who disagree with my 'politics,' then, are the enemies of my identity" (Elshtain, 53). Another problem is that identity, so conceived, tends to be fissionable, thus problematic for a critical mass of influence, not to mention alliance. There are not just women but women of color and not just women of color but lesbian women of color and all presumably have somewhat different positions among MesserDavidows "perspectivities." Thus Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl follow feminist fashion in their anthology Feminisms, by identifying themselves as "white middle class heterosexual American feminist academics in our early thirties (to cover a number of the categories feminist criticism has lately been emphasizing as significant to one's reading and speaking positions" (ix). But how well do such identity assortments add up to a coherent position? Do Warhol and Herndl speak as one and for all others who occupy the designated positions? Would differences between them (if any) be solely the result of yet other subject positions they occupy but not the result of being free thinking individuals?

Nina Baym objects more to such proliferation of subject positions than their claims to automatic authenticity: "The number of qualifiers needed to hyphenate the material 'woman' as she exists in time, space, and culture is uncountable. Hyphenated women are allegories" ("Agony of Feminism," 115). Elsewhere she acutely observes: "My point would not be that there are no differences, but that when you start with a theory of difference, you can't see anything but" ("The Madwoman," 159). The problem, after all, with the illusoriness of identity is that it goes all the way up as well as all the way down. In disposing of integral selves Theory substitutes an infinity of subject positions each of which is as predetermined and monolithic as Theory supposes the integral self to be. The difference Theory declares itself to value comes in curiously fixed forms. Does a woman of color, embodying the virtue of "Difference" have no differences from another woman of color? Problems indeed proliferate: What about those others who are other than the Other with whom Theory groups them? Who are too diverse to accept the latest party line on diversity? Should they be proscribed as not black or not female enough? And what about some Other who is oppressed by some other Other?

AFF: STANDPOINT BAD—BLOCKS POLITICAL COALTIONS

STANDPOINT THEORY DEVOLVES INTO A STATIC SOLIPSISM THAT TOKENIZES MINORITIES AND BLOCKS EFFECTIVE POLITICAL COLATIONS

HILFER, PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, **2003** [TONY, THE NEW HEGEMONY IN LITERARY STUDIES: CONTRADICTIONS IN THEORY, P. 51-52]

Moreover, can it be good for any group to think quite so well of itself as orthodox feminists do? Standpoint epistemology can become, to borrow Hilary Putnam's apothegm for Richard Rorty's relativism, "just solipsism with a 'we' instead of an I" (ix), a form of group narcissism. Moreover, feminist sainthood can be problematic even for the saints. Feminists convincingly analyzed the Victorian "angel in the house" as an ideal that stifled women who attempted to live up to it and stigmatized those who did not. The rebels were not "real women." Now it is feminists who are casting women in idealized and stigmatized positions. Self idealization necessitates repression, but there may be return of the repressed in those without the useful academic capacity for infinite abstraction. Rita Mae Brown, author of the celebrated lesbian novel, Rubyfruit Jungle, reflects that "out of that outburst [of anger at homophobia] on my part developed the whole ideology of the lesbian as the ultimate feminist and superior human being which I would like to say, many years later, is pure horseshit" (quoted in Echols, 69).

Some women of color, pressed into service as ascriptive visible saints by white American feminists, are growing restive: Anthony Appiah cites Sara Suleri as declaring herself "heartily sick of being treated as an Otherness machine" (157). Being a woman of color may prove as ultimately limiting as was the nineteenthcentury ideal for (middle class) women of the Angel in the Household. As a black historian declares, "Black people in the New Social History occupy a sacrosanct position, their actions cannot be queried. The intellectual position denies black people the freedom to be wrong" (C. Walker, xv). Perhaps, though certainly not consciously, **the intellectual class needs the oppressed to stay in place so as to continue to serve as objects of exemplary discourse**. But as Thomas Wentworth Higginson observed of Uncle Tom 's Cabin, "If it be the normal tendency of bondage to produce saints like Uncle Tom, let us all offer ourselves at auction immediately" (cited by Fox Genovese, 225).

Of course, the idealization of women, blacks, the "third world," etc., clearly has certain advantages for those groups "trading on the margin" (Green, 124-32) by way of "leveraged victimhood" (Falcoff, 15). It is no wonder that almost everyone in literary studies wants to be seen as marginal; the "margin" is, in fact, the center. Marginality is, in fact, the major form of academic capital leading to literal capital in English departments today. Thus it is understandable that the last thing women in the humanities want to interrogate is that they have recently become part of the hegemony in many leading edge English departments. But since academic credit depends on the subject position of rebel or at least victim, their situation necessitates an elaborate game of Let's Pretend.

Identity politics, however, while it may yield local advantage, is in the long run an oxymoron. **Theory disables the kinds of coalitions by which normal politics works, substituting their own utopian and ultimately totalist vision**. It fantasizes bringing about revolutionary change by way of a cadre of English professors, a somewhat limited base, further narrowed to include only the most orthodox among feminists, Marxists, gays and lesbians, and persons of color. It is evident that a radical political coalition should include those who identify themselves in these terms[1] it is equally evident that a coalition limiting itself to them has little chance of bringing about even minor, much less utopian, change. But the Theory speaking feminist cannot expand beyond her core constituency because, like Sylvia Plath's persona in 'Fever 103," she can only reiterate, "I am too pure for you or anyone' (54).

AFF: STANDPOINT BAD—PURIFICATION

STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY REGULATES CONSCIOUSNESS UNDER THE DISGUISE OF DIFFERENCE MAKING THE SPEAKER THE GATEWAY FOR LISTENING TO THE SPEECH DEMANDS EVER-GREATER LEVELS OF PURIFICATION AND ESCALATING RHETORIC OF OPPRESSIVE HISTORY AS THE SOURCE FOR AUTHORITY

CAMBRIDGE & MULLER, UNIVERSITY OF CAPETOWN, **1999** [ROB MOORE AND JOHAN, "THE DISCOURSE OF VOICE AND THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITY IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION," BRITISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION P. 199-200]

The pedagogic device (Bernstein, 1990) of voice discourse promotes a methodology in which the explication of a method's social location precludes the need to examine the content of its data as grounds for valid explanation. Who says This approach favours an ethnography that claims to reveal the cultural specificity of the category—the 'voice' of membership it is what counts, not what is said.. What is held to be the facts, to be the case, is only so—and can only be so—from a particular perspective. The world thus viewed is a patchwork of incommensurable and exclusive voices or standpoints. Through the process of sub-division, increasingly more particularised identity categories come into being, each claiming the unique specificity of its distinctive experience and the knowledge authorised by it.

The consequence of the abolition of the knowledge boundary that follows from the epistemological theses of postmodernism is the increasing specialisation of social categories (see Maton, 1998). Maton describes this process of proliferation in terms of the way such 'knower' discourses,

… base their legitimation upon the privileged insight of a knower, and work at maintaining strong boundaries around their definition of this knower—they celebrate difference where 'truth' is defined by the 'knower' or 'voice'. As each voice is brought into the choir, the category of the privileged 'knower' becomes smaller, each strongly bounded from one another, for each 'voice' has its own privileged and specialised knowledge. The client 'knower' group thus fragments, each fragment with its own representative … The procession of the excluded thus becomes, in terms of the privileged 'knower', an accretion of adjectives, the 'hyphenation' which knower modes often proclaim as progress. 200 *R. Moore & J. Muller*

In summary, with the emergence of each new category of knower, the categories of knowers become smaller, leading to proliferation and fragmentation within the knowledge formation. (*ibid.*, p. 17)

As Maton argues, this move promotes a fundamental change in the principle of legitimation—from what is known (and how) to who knows it.

The device that welds knowledge to standpoint, voice and experience, produces a result that is inherently unstable, because the anchor for the voice is an interior authenticity that can never be demonstrated, only claimed (Taylor, 1992; Siegel, 1997; Fuss, 1990, 1995). Since all such claims are power claims, the authenticity of the voice is constantly prone to a purifying challenge, 'If you do not believe it you are not one of us' (Hammersly & Gomm, 1997, para. 3.3) that gears down to ever more rare. Ed specialisations or iterations of the voice category; an unstoppable spiral that Bernstein (1997, p. 176) has referred to as the 'shrinking of the moral imagination [10].

As Bernstein puts it, 'The voice of a social category (academic discourse, gender subject, occupational subject) is constructed by the degree of specialisation of the discursive rules regulating and legitimising the form of communication' (1990, p.23).

If categories of either agents or discourse are specialised, then each category necessarily has its own specific identity and its own specific boundaries. The speciality of each category is created, maintained and reproduced only if the relations between the categories of which a given category is a member are preserved. What is to be preserved? The insulation between the categories. It is the strength of the insulation that creates a space in which a category can become specific. If a category wishes to increase its specificity, it has to appropriate the means to produce the necessary insulation that is the prior condition to its appropriating specificity. (*ibid.*)

Collection codes employ an organization of knowledge to specialise categories of person, integrated codes employ an organisation of persons to specialise categories of knowledge (Bernstein, 1977, pp. 106–111). The instability of the

(card continues…)

AFF: STANDPOINT BAD—PURIFICATION

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social categories associated with voice discourse reflects the fact that there is no stable and agreed-upon way of constructing such categories. By their nature, they are always open to contestation and further fragmentation. In principle, there is no terminal point where 'identities' can finally come to rest. It is for this reason that this position can reappear so frequently across time and space within the intellectual field—the same move can be repeated endlessly under the disguise of 'difference'.

In Bernstein's terms, the organisation of knowledge is, most significantly, a device for the regulation of consciousness. The pedagogic device is thus a symbolic ruler of consciousness in its selective creation, positioning and oppositioning of pedagogic subjects. It is the condition for the production, reproduction, and transformation of culture. The question is: whose ruler, what consciousness? (1990, p. 189)

The relativistic challenge to epistemologically grounded strong classifications of knowledge removes the means whereby social categories and their relations can be strongly theorised and effectively researched in a form that is other than arbitrary and can be challenged by anyone choosing to assert an alternative perspective or standpoint.

AFF: STANDPOINT BAD—FRAGMENTATION

THEIR USE OF THE EXPERIENCE OF OPPRESSION AS THE STATUS THAT DEFINES THOSE WHO SHOULD GUIDE POLITICS HARMS PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL STRATEGIES

IRELAND, AMERICAN CULTURE AT BILKENT, **2002** [CRAIG, "THE APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES," CULTURAL CRITIQUE 52 FALL 2002. PG. 87-89]

Once an arcane philosophical term, experience over the last three decades has become a general buzzword. By the 1970s, experience spilled over into the streets, so to speak, and it has since then become the stuff of programmatic manifestos and has been enlisted as the ground from which microstrategies of resistance and subaltern counterhistories can be erected. But for all the blows and counterblows that have carried on for over three decades between those who appeal to the counterhegemonic potential of experience and those who see such appeals as naive voluntarism, such debates show no signs of abating. On the contrary, they have become yet more strident, as can be seen by Michael Pickering's recent attempt to rehabilitate the viability of the term "experience" for subaltern historiography by turning to E. P. Thompson and Dilthey and, more recently still, by Sonia Kruks's polemical defense of experience for subaltern inquiry by way of a reminder that poststructuralist critics of experience owe much to those very thinkers, from Sartre to Merleau-Ponty, whom they have debunked as if in oedipal rebellion against their begetters. Such debates over experience have so far gravitated around issues of epistemology and agency, pitting those who debunk experience as the stuff of an antiquated philosophy of consciousness against those who argue that subaltern experience provides an en- clave against strong structural determination. Lost in such debates, however, have been the potential consequences of appeals to immediate experience as a ground for subaltern agency and specificity. And it is just such potential consequences that will be examined here. These indeed demand our attention, for more is at stake in the appeal to experience than some epistemological faux pas. By so **wagering on the perceived immediacy of experience as the evidence for subaltern specificity and counterhegemonic action**, appeals to immediate experience, however laudable their goal, **end up unwittingly naturalizing what is in fact historical, and, in so doing, they leave the door as wide-open to a progressive politics of identity as to a retreat to neoethnic tribalism. Most alarming about such appeals to experience is** not some failure of epistemological nerve-it is instead **their ambiguous political and social ramifications.** And these have reverberated beyond academia and found an echo in para-academia- so much so that experience has increasingly become the core concept or key word of subaltern groups and the rallying call for what Craig Calhoun calls the "new social movements" in which "experience is made the pure ground of knowledge, the basis of an essentialized standpoint of critical awareness" (468 n.64). The consequences of such appeals to experience can best be addressed not by individually considering disparate currents, but by seeking their common denominator. And in this regard, E. P. Thompson will occupy the foreground. It is safe to say that what started as an altercation between Thompson and Althusser has since spawned academic and para-academic "histories from below" and subaltern cultural inquiries that, for all their differences, share the idea that the identities and counterhistories of the disenfranchised can be buttressed by the specificity of a group's concrete experiences. Much theorizing on experience by certain cultural and historiographical trends, as many have already pointed out, has been but a variation on a persistent Thompsonian theme in which Thompson's "kind of use of experience has the same foundational status if we substitute 'women's' or 'black' or 'lesbian' or 'homosexual' for 'working class'" (Scott, 786). To retrace the steps in Thompson's formulation of his influential notion of experience is to clarify some of the common presuppositions behind current subaltern appeals to experience. It is also to bring to the fore the potential sociopolitical consequences of such appeals. More important still, such a reexamination of Thompsonian experience lays the groundwork for raising a question that has yet to be addressed, namely, why the term "experience," notoriously beset as it is by semantic ambiguity and political ambivalence, continues to this day to appeal to various disciplines in the humanities.

AFF: NARRATIVES BAD—GENERAL

NARRATIVES SHOULD NOT BE THE STARTING POINT FOR POLITICAL DEBATE – THEY CLOUD DECISION-MAKING IN UNPRODUCTIVE CONFUSION

BROWN, PROFESSOR OF ORGANIZATION STUDIES AT UNIVERSITY OF BATH, **2006** [ANDREW D., JUNE, "A NARRATIVE APPROACH TO COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES", JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES, P. 747-748]

[Not everyone has found these arguments entirely convincing. It has been argued that the terms story and narrative are so contested that some dispute whether it is in fact possible to construct a general narrative approach at all (Currie, 1998). Sarbin's (1986) suggestion that narrative might become a root metaphor for psychology has met with more scepticism than acceptance. Most theorists argue that narrative qualities do not inhere to human events but are transferred from art to life, and some maintain that nominally explanatory narratives constitute an escape or diversion from reality (Mink, 1978). There is also a widespread recognition that, in organizations, the hegemony of narratives is challenged by lists and statistical data, and that due regard needs to be paid to the role of metaphors (Tsoukas, 1991), argumentation repertoires (Sillince, 1999), and rhetorical devices (Golden- Biddle and Locke, 1993) in processes of social construction. In literary theory it is widely agreed that there are 'many kinds of stories, little agreement about which ones are best, and less agreement about what they mean' (Martin, 1986, p. 27). In personality psychology, '. . . despite years of research . . . surprisingly little is actually known about the origin, nature, or function of life stories' (McCrae, 1996, p. 355). Frequently, the study of narrative 'has been criticized as being more art than research' (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 1). As Sarbin (1986, p. 11) has observed: Because storytelling is commonly associated with fiction, fantasy, and pretending, some critics are sceptical about the use of the narrative as a model for thought and action. For the serious scientist storytelling is related to immaturity and playfulness. Some of these disputes symptomize irreconcilable paradigmatic assumptions while others may be resolved through empirical research. Rather than an indication of the flaws in a narrative perspective on organizations, I regard these differences in emphasis and opinion as signs of the vital debates that currently centre on the utility of narratology in the social sciences and humanities. Nevertheless it is important to recognize the limitations of a narrative approach to understanding and theorizing collective identity. For example, its emphasis on identity as a discursive construct and power effect is likely to limit its appeal to a particular scholarly community. For many academics, the fact that a narrative approach makes it all but impossible to measure collective identity using survey methods makes it extremely unattractive. Moreover, while its embrace of considerable complexity and unlimited plurivocity is, in some respects, admirable, it is also potentially confusing. This complexity, and its associated scope for confusion, can to some extent be resolved by choosing to privilege the narratives of, for instance, leaders, but this begs the question: why then adopt a narrative approach? It should also be noted that this perspective has little to offer psychologists interested in identity episodes such as identity crises, splits and moratoria, and says nothing about the psychodynamics of narrative production or the motivations for selfesteem, self-knowledge and self-improvement that may underpin such language work.]

AFF: NARRATIVES BAD—CHOICE

THE NEGATIVE'S POLITICS ARE IMPORTANT, BUT NOT FOR POLICY MAKING – WE SHOULD FOCUS ON CRAFTING COLLECTIVE POLITICAL REALITIES NOT STANDPOINT FICTIONS

SHENHAV, PH.D. IN POLITICAL SCIENCE, THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM, **2006** [SHAUL R., "POLITICAL NARRATIVES AND POLITICAL REALITY", INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW, VOL. 29, NO. 3, P. 248-249]

Political narratives do not just spring into being; they are created in the course of political action, a process that can be followed in both public forums and closed ones (Shenhav, 2003). The fact that political narratives are constructed and shaped, however, still does not determine how capable they are of representing particular aspects of "political reality." In other words, even if it is clear that narrative cannot capture the whole of "political reality," this does not mean that all narratives are equally true or equally false. While it is, admittedly, hard to find a consensual definition of "political reality," the political perspective (especially in democracies) includes as one of its central functions the representation of elements that exist outside the political narrative. Since politicians, at least to some extent, "have their words and actions owned by those whom they represent" (Hobbes, 1960: 105, Ch. 16), they must refer to the same framework that their constituents see as the "political reality," even if this is not an objective reality. Moreover, the fact that any political narrative is locked in competition with other narratives naturally raises the question of their respective adherence to "reality." Even if we assume that "political reality" is a construct made up of various representations, it still remains to be determined how compatible a particular narrative is with this amalgam. Because political discourse is often defined by a predominant "referential function" (Jakobson, 1960) privileging the (usually contextual) informational content of an utterance, the relationship between a political narrative and its context is of special importance for evaluating the fidelity of representation in political narratives. It is therefore difficult to rely only on internal criteria, which can presumably help gauge a narrative's credibility based on such standards as coherence and consistency. Because a political narrative addresses a context shared by both speakers and addressees, and because it performs this function under conditions of competition and struggle with other narratives, such criteria cannot adequately measure a narrative's reliability in reflecting "political reality."] 248-249

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POLICY ORIENTED DEBATES ARE KEY TO ESTABLISH SUBSTANCE BASED DISCUSSION WITH RELEVANT AND RECOGNIZABLE ARGUMENTATION.

MCCLEAN, PH.D. PHILOSOPHY: THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH, **2001** [DAVID E, "THE CULTURAL LEFT AND THE LIMITS OF SOCIAL HOPE," ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY. 2001 CONFERENCE]

There is a lot of philosophical prose on the general subject of social justice. Some of this is quite good, and some of it is quite bad. What distinguishes the good from the bad is not merely the level of erudition. Displays of high erudition are gratuitously reflected in much of the writing by those, for example, still clinging to Marxian ontology and is often just a **useful smokescreen which shrouds a near total disconnect from empirical reality**. This kind of political writing likes to make a lot of references to other obscure, jargon-laden essays and tedious books written by other true believers - the crowd that takes the fusion of Marxian and Freudian private fantasies *seriously*. Nor is it the lack of scholarship that makes this prose bad. Much of it is well "supported" by footnotes referencing a lode of other works, some of which are actually quite good. Rather, what makes this prose bad is its utter lack of relevance to extant and critical policy debates, the passage of actual laws, and the amendment of existing regulations that might actually do some good for someone else. The writers of this bad prose are too interested in our arrival at some social place wherein we will finally emerge from our "inauthentic" state into something called "reality." Most of this stuff, of course, comes from those steeped in the Continental tradition (particularly post-Kant). While that tradition has much to offer and has helped shape my own philosophical sensibilities, it is anything but useful when it comes to truly relevant philosophical analysis, and no self-respecting Pragmatist can really take seriously the strong poetry of formations like "authenticity looming on the ever remote horizons of fetishization." What Pragmatists see instead is the hope that we can fix some of the social ills that face us if we treat policy and reform as more important than Spirit and Utopia.

Like light rain released from pretty clouds too high in the atmosphere, the substance of this prose dissipates before it can reach the ground and be a useful component in a discussion of medicare reform or how to better regulate a pharmaceutical industry that bankrupts senior citizens and condemns to death HIV patients unfortunate enough to have been born in Burkina Faso - and a regulatory regime that permits this. It is often too drenched in abstractions and references to a narrow and not so merry band of *other* intellectuals (Nietzsche, Bataille, Foucault, Lukács, Benjamin) to be of much use to those who are the supposed subject matter of this preternatural social justice literature. Since I have no particular allegiance to these other intellectuals, no particular impulse to carry their water or defend their reputations, I try and forget as much as I can about their writings in order to make space for some new approaches and fresh thinking about that important question that always faces us - "What is to be done?" I am, I think, lucky to have taken this decision before it had become too late.

One might argue with me that these other intellectuals are not looking to be taken seriously in the construction of solutions to *specific* socio-political problems. They are, after all, philosophers engaged in something called philosophizing. They are, after all, just trying to be good culture critics. Of course, that isn't quite true, for they often write with specific reference to social issues and social justice in mind, even when they are fluttering about in the ether of high theory (Lukács, for example, was a government officer, albeit a minister of culture, which to me says a lot), and social justice is not a Platonic form but parses into the specific quotidian acts of institutions and individuals. Social justice is but the genus heading which may be described better with reference to its species iterations- the various conditions of cruelty and sadism which we wittingly or unwittingly permit. If we wanted to, we *could* reconcile the grand general theories of these thinkers to specific bureaucracies or social problems and so try to increase their relevance. We *could* construct an account which acts as a bridge to relevant policy considerations. But such attempts, usually performed in the reams of secondary literature generated by their devotees, usually make things even more bizarre. In any event, I don't think we owe them that amount of effort. After all, if they wanted to be relevant they could have said so by writing in such a way that made it clear that relevance was a high priority. For Marxians in general, everything tends to get reduced to class. For Lukács everything tends to get reduced to "reification." But society and its social ills are far too intricate to gloss in these ways, and the engines that drive competing interests are much more easily explained with reference to animal drives and fears than by Absolute Spirit. That is to say, they are not *easily* explained at all.

Take Habermas, whose writings are admittedly the most relevant of the group. I cannot find in Habermas's lengthy narratives regarding communicative action, discourse ethics, democracy and ideal speech situations very much more than I have found in the *Federalist Papers*, or in Paine's *Common Sense*, or in Emerson's *Self Reliance* or *Circles*. I simply don't find the concept of uncoerced and fully informed communication between peers in a democratic polity all that difficult to understand, and I don't much see the need to theorize to death such a simple concept, particularly where the only persons that are apt to take such narratives seriously are already sold, at least in a general sense. Of course, when you are trying to justify yourself in the face of the other members of your chosen club (in Habermas's case, the Frankfurt School) the intricacy of your explication may have less to do with simple concepts than it has to do with parrying for respectability in the eyes of your intellectual brethren. But I don't see why the rest of us need to partake in an insular debate that has little to do with anyone that is not very much interested in the work of early critical theorists such as Horkheimer or Adorno, and who might see their insights as only modestly relevant at best. Not many self-respecting engaged political scientists in this country actually still take these thinkers seriously, if they ever did at all.

Or we might take Foucault who, at best, has provided us with what may reasonably be described as a very long and eccentric footnote to Nietzsche (I have once been accused, by a Foucaltian true believer, of "gelding" Foucault with other similar remarks). Foucault, who has provided the Left of the late 1960s through the present with such notions as "governmentality," "Limit," "archeology," "discourse" "power" and "ethics," creating or redefining their meanings, has made it overabundantly clear that all of our moralities and practices are the successors of previous ones which derive from certain configurations of *savoir* and *connaisance* arising from or created by, respectively, the discourses of the various scientific schools. But I have not yet found in anything Foucault wrote or said how such observations may be translated into a political movement or hammered into a political document or theory (let alone public policies) that can be justified or founded on more than an arbitrary aesthetic experimentalism. In fact, Foucault would have shuddered if any one ever did, since he thought that anything as grand as a movement went far beyond what he thought appropriate. This leads me to mildly rehabilitate Habermas, for at least he has been useful in exposing Foucault's shortcomings in this regard, just as he has been useful in exposing the shortcomings of others enamored with the abstractions of various Marxian-Freudian social critiques.

Yet for some reason, at least partially explicated in Richard Rorty's *Achieving Our Country*, a book that I think is long overdue, leftist critics continue to cite and refer to the eccentric and often *a priori* ruminations of people like those just mentioned, and a litany of others including Derrida, Deleuze, Lyotard, Jameson, and Lacan, who are to me hugely more irrelevant than Habermas *in their narrative attempts to suggest policy prescriptions*

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(when they actually do suggest them) aimed at curing the ills of homelessness, poverty, market greed, national belligerence and racism. I would like to suggest that it is time for American social critics who are enamored with this group, those who actually *want* to be relevant, to recognize that they have a disease, and a disease regarding which I myself must remember to stay faithful to my own twelve step program of recovery. The disease is the need for elaborate theoretical "remedies" wrapped in neological and multi-syllabic jargon. These elaborate theoretical remedies are more "interesting," to be sure, than the pragmatically settled questions about what shape democracy should take in various contexts, or whether private property should be protected by the state, or regarding our basic human nature (described, if not defined (heaven forbid!), in such statements as "We don't like to starve" and "We like to speak our minds without fear of death" and "We like to keep our children safe from poverty"). As Rorty puts it, "When one of today's academic leftists says that some topic has been 'inadequately theorized,' you can be pretty certain that he or she is going to drag in either philosophy of language, or Lacanian psychoanalysis, or some neo-Marxist version of economic determinism. . . . These futile attempts to philosophize one's way into political relevance are a symptom of what happens when a Left retreats from activism and adopts a spectatorial approach to the problems of *its country*. Disengagement from practice produces *theoretical hallucinations*"(italics mine).[1] Or as John Dewey put it in his *The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy*, "I believe that philosophy in America will be lost between chewing a historical cud long since reduced to woody fiber, or an apologetics for lost causes, ... or a scholastic, schematic formalism, unless it can somehow bring to consciousness America's own needs and its own implicit principle of successful action."

Those who suffer or have suffered from this disease Rorty refers to as the *Cultural* Left, which left is juxtaposed to the *Political* Left that Rorty prefers and prefers for good reason. Another attribute of the Cultural Left is that its members fancy themselves pure culture critics who view the successes of America and the West, rather than some of the barbarous methods for achieving those successes, as mostly evil, and who view anything like national pride as equally evil even when that pride is tempered with the knowledge and admission of the nation's shortcomings. In other words, the Cultural Left, in this country, too often dismiss American society as beyond reform and redemption. And Rorty correctly argues that this is a disastrous conclusion, i.e. disastrous for the *Cultural Left*. I think it may also be disastrous for our social hopes, as I will explain.

Leftist American culture critics might put their considerable talents to better use if they bury some of their cynicism about America's social and political prospects and help forge public and political *possibilities* in a spirit of determination to, indeed, achieve ***our*** country - the country of Jefferson and King; the country of John Dewey and Malcom X; the country of Franklin Roosevelt and Bayard Rustin, and of the later George Wallace and the later Barry Goldwater. To invoke the words of King, and with reference to the *American* society, the time is always ripe to seize the opportunity to help create the "beloved community," one woven with the thread of *agape* into a conceptually single yet diverse tapestry that shoots for nothing less than a true intra-American cosmopolitan ethos, one wherein both same sex unions and faith-based initiatives will be able to be part of the same social reality, one wherein business interests and the university are not seen as belonging to two separate galaxies but as part of the same answer to the threat of social and ethical nihilism. We who fancy ourselves philosophers would do well to create from within ourselves and from within our ranks a new kind of public intellectual who has both a hungry theoretical mind and who is yet capable of seeing the need to move past high theory to other important questions that are less bedazzling and "interesting" but more important to the prospect of our flourishing - questions such as "How is it possible to develop a citizenry that cherishes a certain *hexis*, one which prizes the **character** of the Samaritan on the road to Jericho almost more than any other?" or "How can we square the political dogma that undergirds the fantasy of a missile defense system with the need to treat America as but one member in a community of nations under a "law of peoples?"

The new public philosopher might seek to understand labor law and military and trade theory and doctrine as much as theories of surplus value; the logic of international markets and trade agreements as much as critiques of commodification, and the politics of complexity as much as the politics of power (all of which can still be done from our arm chairs.) **This means going down deep into the guts of our quotidian social institutions, into the grimy pragmatic details where intellectuals are loathe to dwell but where the officers and bureaucrats of those institutions take difficult and often unpleasant, imperfect decisions that affect other peoples' lives, and it means making honest attempts to truly understand how those institutions *actually* function in the *actual* world before howling for their overthrow commences. This might help keep us from being slapped down in debates by true policy pros who actually know what they are talking about but who lack awareness of the dogmatic assumptions from which they proceed, and who have not yet found a good reason to listen to jargon-riddled lectures from philosophers and culture critics with their snobish disrespect for the so-called "managerial class."**

AFF: SPEAKING FOR OTHERS

SPEAKING OF THE MARGINALIZED PEOPLE THROUGH A PRIVILGED PERSON REINFORCES THE OPPRESSION ON THE MARGINALIZED

LENZ, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, **2004** (BROOKE, "POSTCOLONIAL FICTION AND THE OUTSIDER WITHIN: TOWARD A LITERARY PRACTICE OF FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY" NWSA JOURNAL, 2004, PP. 98-120)

Feminist projects that seek to explore the oppression of "Third World" women have generally been motivated by the best of intentions. Nevertheless, "the practice of privileged persons speaking for or on behalf of less privileged persons," Linda Alcoff notes, "**has actually resulted (in many cases) in increasing or reinforcing the oppression of the group spoken for**" (1992, 7). This result proceeds from an inability and/or unwillingness to shift the terms of the exploration, an incapacity to actually begin within the conceptual framework of the less privileged, proceeding instead from misconceptions or misapplications of supposedly "universal" realities, similar to Mariah's applications of liberal feminism to Lucy's maternal conflicts. In fact, the assumption that recognizable oppression exists is in itself a refusal to shift the focus, and often results in projects that seek to situate oppression after the fact in relation to social structures that may or may not actually be oppressive.16

A question thus arises about the methodology through which feminist standpoint theory can be applied most appropriately and responsibly. As Alcoff continues, academic feminists "are authorized by virtue of our academic positions to develop theories that express and encompass the ideas, needs, and goals of others. However, we must begin to ask ourselves whether this is a legitimate authority" (1992, 7).