CLASSISM, ABLEISM, AND THE RISE OF EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE AGAINST
WHITE, WORKING-CLASS MEN

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY
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ABSTRACT

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In this thesis, I set out to illustrate how epistemic injustice functions in this divide between white working-class men and the educated elite. I do this by discussing the discursive ways in which working-class knowledge and experience are devalued as legitimate sources of knowledge. I demonstrate this by using critical discourse analysis to interpret the underlying attitudes and ideologies in comments made by Clinton and Trump during their 2016 presidential campaigns. I also discuss how these ideologies are positively or negatively perceived by Trump's working-class base. Using feminist standpoint theory and phenomenology as a lens of interpretation, I argue that white working-class men are increasingly alienated from progressive politics through classist and ableist rhetoric. If progressives wish to win over white working-class men, they will need to ameliorate this division, otherwise this gap will continue to grow. Finally, I suggest class-sensitive approaches for moving forward and bridging this gap.

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CHAPTER 1:

THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL GAP

Entry to university ushers a break with the fabric of the world, and we are invited, if we are to hope for success to beckon with its elegant fingers, to come to feel a repulsion to the politics of the poor. Reality gets lost in the race for the hyper-coherence of politically correct opinion and the games of good-conscience that are the dominant motif of the conversations of radical intellectuals . . . The embodied ethics of a silent group, unrepresented in the spaces of delicate discussion, are never recognized, nor are the racism and intolerance, the deep processes of abjection and uglification that are the very condition of the experience of elite university-space that the bourgeois across the world are willing to pay so much for. There is little that one can say . . . of the petty grand-narratives that pass so much muster among the radical intelligentsia . . . gaining huge symbolic rewards for what amounts to a social parody obscuring the grounds of their own privilege . . . [Too] much of their radical agenda . . . amounts to a stigmatizing of some of the most powerless sections of society and ends in the . . . exclusion of those already excluded. (Charlesworth 154-155)

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this opening chapter is to join the conversation on the cultural and

political gap between the educated elite and the white working-class. This chapter has

three major goals. The first is to introduce the topic, the premise to my argument, and the

concepts I use to support my argument. The second is to provide a literature review that

gives the reader a sufficient background for the topic. The third is to describe the format

that this paper will follow.

INTRODUCTION

Leading up to and following the 2016 presidential election cycle in the United States, interest in the working-class emerged with questions concerning the demographic's political leanings. Traditionally depicted as heavily white and male, and more broadly, without a college education, campaign pundits and news commentators, liberal professionals in their educated enclaves, and others pondered how Republican candidate Donald Trump won the support of working-class people. How could the white working-class support a rich businessman like Donald Trump? Some ponderings, like those of National Review correspondent Kevin Williamson, were critical:

> The [American underclass] may sing hymns to Trump the destroyer and whisper darkly about "globalists" and – odious, stupid term — "the Establishment," but nobody did this to them. They failed themselves . . . The truth about these dysfunctional, downscale communities is that they deserve to die. Economically, they are negative assets . . . The white American underclass is in thrall to a vicious, selfish culture whose main products are misery and used heroin needles. Donald Trump's speeches make them feel good. So does OxyContin.

The sea of embittered white faces donning the infamous red "Make America Great Again" ballcaps on their heads at Trump's campaign rallies, through Rust Belt cities and across the nation, helped solidify a general impression of who Trump's constituents were, and for many other frustrated Americans, this also helped identify who was responsible and deserving of blame for a Trump presidency. One major culprit was white working-

class men.

The popular narrative became that the disenfranchised white working-class were disenchanted with a seemingly out-of-touch Democratic Party, thereby flocking to support Donald Trump, the candidate who tapped into a slew of anxieties ranging from their anger toward immigrants, far removed politicians, an inefficient government, job loss, and economic shifts (Francis). However, this characterization of the typical Trump voter is only part of the story. Despite substantial support from the white working-class, the support of middle-class and upper-class white voters also made a significant impact in the electorate. Many of Trump's voters had household incomes above the median of $56,000, in fact, the median household income of Trump primary voters was $72,000 (Silver).

While a multitude of studies have considered the demographics of voters, this project is not another attempt to determine who is responsible for Trump's presidency. While these statistics can be a place for beginning to understand the Trump-supporting demographics, they may be referred to by those confused or disappointed with election results as an attempt to place blame. Many are trying to understand this specific political moment we are in, but in order to achieve this understanding we must move beyond identifying who voted for whom and focus on the how and why. This is why I am more concerned with the cultural divide such figures point to and the ways in which responses to these figures further demonstrate, and in fact reify, this exact divide. Rather than being empirical, this project is conceptual. Through this conceptual endeavor, I hope to tear down "empathy walls" and construct "empathy bridges," concepts sociologist Arlie Hochschild frequently returns to in *Strangers in their own Land: Anger and Mourning on*

the American Right, a valuable and compelling account of the gulf between conservative, white, working-class Tea Party members in Louisiana and those in liberal academic enclaves.

In this work, I set out to illustrate how epistemic injustice functions in the divide between white working-class men and the educated elite. I do this by discussing the discursive ways in which working-class knowledge and experience are devalued as legitimate sources of knowledge. I demonstrate this by using critical discourse analysis as a method for interpreting the underlying attitudes and ideologies in comments made by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump during their 2016 presidential campaigns. I also discuss how these ideologies are positively or negatively perceived by Trump's working-class base. In this chapter, I articulate these arguments further. Using feminist standpoint theory and phenomenology as a lens of interpretation, I argue that white working-class men are increasingly alienated from progressive politics through classist and ableist rhetoric and that if progressives wish to win over white working-class men, they will need to ameliorate this division, otherwise this gap will continue to grow.

This thesis is organized into four chapters. This first chapter provides a literature review noting the historical and persisting association between class and intelligence, and literature on anti-intellectualism, identity, intersectionality, and masculinity. It also introduces the topic of epistemic injustice and the cultural divide between white, working-class men and the educated elite, specifically grounded in the moment of the 2016 presidential election. The next chapter is on methodology, which addresses the conceptual frameworks I touch on in this first chapter, such as standpoint theory, phenomenology, and class identity, but in greater detail. It also explains my method of

analysis, critical discourse analysis. In the third chapter, I provide a critical discourse analysis of Hillary Clinton calling half of Trump's supporters a "basket of deplorables," Donald Trump's television advertisement responding to Clinton's remarks, and his responding comments. These instances illustrate a divide between the white working-class and the educated elite, epistemic injustice, and the resulting logic of working-class disdain for those with epistemic authority. In the fourth chapter, I discuss the broader political and social implications for my analysis and I conclude this thesis by summarizing my key points and discussing directions for future research and class-sensitive praxis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

After reviewing the literature, which includes political writings, popular media, and academic scholarship, I have identified a notable gap in work criticizing or even acknowledging the Left's engagement with classist or ableist rhetoric in their assessments of both Trump and his supporters. Andrew Harnish's article, "Ableism and the Trump Phenomenon," primarily assesses the ableism of Trump's rhetoric which includes "repeated use of metaphors equating bodily difference with weakness and failure" and the embedded ableism of rural, white, working-class infrastructure and culture, but only peripherally touches on the Left's hypocritical mocking of Trump's bodily difference (423). Even Harnish's criticism of the Left's alarming willingness to engage in ableist mockery of Trump neglects to acknowledge the cognitive aspect of difference which includes the routine engagement in insulting the intellectual capacity of Trump and his supporters, which are highly perceived as rural, white, and working-class.

A gap in the literature is certainly, at least in part, due to Trump's election still being fairly recent, but the cultural gap between the educated elite and white working-class voters has been growing for at least the last decade, when white working-class voters became a significant concern for Republican candidates seeking the presidency (for example, Sarah Palin's Joe the Plumber references, and Mitt Romney's struggle to appeal to the working-class). While literature addressing the educated elite's usage of ableist rhetoric when referring to white working-class voters is absent, there is work, such as Mark Proudman's "'The Stupid Party': Intellectual Repute as a Category of Ideological Analysis," that addresses the historical, cultural, and political divide between Conservatives and Progressives, and the attribution of intelligence to some thoughts and ideas while denying it to others. There is also expansive scholarship on historical perceptions and constructions of rural, working-class, and poor whites as stupid, immoral, dirty, and lazy (Wray). I am suggesting that these older discourses have shaped present-day perceptions of the white working-class and are manifesting in the ways Trump and his white working-class base are perceived (as "deplorable" or stupid).

Stereotypes associating class with intelligence have deep historical roots. In her book *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold Story of Class in America*, Nancy Isenberg explains that these historical roots stretch through eugenicist thinking in the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and even further back, tracing to European origins prior to expansions West. In the sixteenth century, Britain was becoming increasingly stratified, and the poor were seen as inferior to the wealthy, and more educated, aristocracy (Isenberg). Therefore, they were thought of as disposable "trash people," or even a separate degenerate human breed (Isenberg). Beginning in the

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early 1600s, these "trash people" were shipped off to the New World, or what Isenberg describes as a dumping ground for undesirables. Once relocated, these undesirables provided exploitable labor in Jamestown and what would later become established colonies (Isenberg). Their survival in those early years was ultimately insignificant to their country of origin because they were viewed as abundant and expendable (Isenberg). Isenberg writes that those who survived reproduced, providing more bodies for "an expendable class of laborers who made colonization possible . . . fertilizing the soil with their labor while finding it impossible to harvest any social mobility" themselves (42).

The poor were viewed as human waste and were imported by the Virginia Company as indentured servants and laborers, auctioned off to the privileged, wealthy, landowning few (Isenberg). In 1618, land was allotted based on a head count, so there was incentive to "import laborers, dead or alive" (Isenberg 26). Many of these imported laborers were orphans and adolescent boys who, under brutal conditions, were "literally worked to death" (Isenberg 28). By 1630, there was a mass migration to the Bay Colony (Isenberg 28). Isenberg writes that 21,000 settlers arrived, 40 percent of which were from areas with high percentages of Puritan converts. However, there was an equal number of "commercially driven emigrant[s] from . . . England . . . accompanied by their servants" (Isenberg 29). Approximately "60 percent of the arrivals were under the age of twenty-four—one-third of them unattached males" (29).

Belief in the degeneracy of these poor, white, laborers, in the coming centuries would fester, and discourse would evolve to bolster eugenicist thinking and the further association of class with intelligence. By the 1800s, poor whites in the South were viewed as utterly worthless and inherently ignorant. Isenberg explains,

No longer were white trash simply freaks of nature on the fringe of society; they

were now congenitally delinquent, a withered branch of the American family tree.

As a "fungus growth," they could weaken the entire stock of southern society.

More than tallow-colored skin, it was the permanent mark of intellectual

stagnation, the "inert" minds, the "fumbling" speech, and the "stupid, moony

glare, like that of the idiot." They were, it was said, of the "homo genus without

the sapien." (180)

The question, then, that was pondered by elite observers was "if poor white men were

dragging down the rest of the nation" (Isenberg 198).

With the increasing popularity of statistical measurements of the human body,

mind, and ability, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, IQ (intelligence

quotient) tests emerged to classify individuals by their intellect (Isenberg; Davis).

Findings gathered from the administering of these tests were used to justify prejudiced

views of both poor white and black people in the South (Isenberg). Many of the

historically contextualized negative perceptions of and prejudices against poor whites in

the South were eventually extended to rural whites in general. Matt Wray, in his seminal

work, *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness*, traces the

historical significance of words and phrases like "redneck," "dirt-eater," and "white

trash," and likewise contends that such methods of eugenics successfully shaped

collective representations of and general discourse regarding lower-class whites *vis à vis*

the professional middle-classes through the spreading of regionally-specific terms and

perceptions of "white trash." In time, and through discursive chains of association, "poor

white trash" no longer referred exclusively to "a stigmatized and despised social group in

the South" (95), but to poor whites in other rural places as well, thereby extending the stigmatypes of "immoral, lazy, dirty, criminal, filthy, and perverse" more generally to include poor rural whites elsewhere (95).

Similar perceptions linger into the present. Working-class activist and writer Elliott identifies multiple definitions of the term "redneck" ranging from the denotative "member of the white rural laboring class" (277), to the connotative "person who advocates a provincial, conservative, often bigoted sociopolitical attitude characteristic of a redneck" (278), and finally to its usage by progressives, "Any person who is racist, violent, uneducated, and stupid (as if they are the same thing)," or "a synonym for every type of oppressive belief except classism" (280). Conservatism and bigotry or narrow-mindedness has often been associated with archetypes of stupidity, while Progressivism has been associated with archetypes of intelligence and sophistication, argues Mark Proudman. He elaborates more on this cultural and political divide:

> Leftists . . . frequently claim superior knowledge, intellectual competence, and cultural sophistication . . . often based upon the universally explanatory power of revered texts correctly interpreted . . . [and] reinforced by signifying terminology . . . Rightist[s] . . . by contrast are less likely to appeal to such intellectualized kinds of theory, and more likely to appeal to established morality, to patriotism, to other group loyalties, to familiar customs, or . . . 'common- sense.' This . . . is a direct invocation of intellectual disrepute, . . . often combined with an attack on the [Leftist's] unpatriotic, unmanly, overly fancy, or theoretical character. (201)

Proudman goes on to claim that these differences correlate to class, with the Progressive intelligentsia having the power and influence to base their self-image on claims to superior intelligence.

The rigid and hierarchical divide between the rich and working-class individuals continues to function as an indication of intelligence. In part, this is due to the institutional role of education in immersing students in neoliberal discourses of a hierarchical social and economic world, "grounded in ideals of individual responsibility, autonomous transformation, deregulation of markets, and the diminished role of society," as opposed to working for a collective good or finding happiness and fulfillment through one's own internal sense of worth (Jones and Vagle 132). Such neoliberal discourses thus construct "hierarchies of desire, entitlement, intelligence, and worth as reflected in the stratified winners and losers of materialism and capitalism" (132). Through these discourses, privilege and exploitation are produced and upheld, individuals are socialized to believe in a limitless capacity to change their living conditions, and attention is steered away from criticizing government and economic policy responsible for shaping inequitable social and economic outcomes that limit an individual's capacity to transform oneself in accordance to a neoliberal doctrine of self-development (Jones and Vagle).

In *Thinking Class: Sketches from a Cultural Worker,* Jo Kadi argues that "stupid" has become more than a description of someone's intellectual ability, but rather that it is "a cultural concept with a particular code and set of signifiers that describe working-class people as the middle and upper classes perceive and construct [them]" (48-49). He describes his experience in academia as a working-class student, dealing with internalized feelings of class inferiority, and grappling with feeling as if privileged people belonged in

higher education and he did not. He often struggled to feel welcome with the prevailing

attitudes, held by others and internalized, that working-class people were "too stupid to

study, learn, think, analyze, [or] critique" (41). According to Kadi, the capitalist system

depends on those "bred for stupid and/or dangerous work" believing they are less

intelligent than those in charge (43). To explain the reasoning for this, Kadi suggests that

the false perception that working-class people are intellectually inferior functions to

justify class divisions, and ultimately, class oppression.

Kadi's account is especially valuable for its deconstruction of the term "stupid,"

often defined as "slow of mind, obtuse, brutish" (48). Despite "rationally" knowing that it

was a lie, Kadi recounts internalizing the belief that intelligence and class are related,

believing in his own stupidity as a working-class person, and the stupidity of the

working-class (40). Kadi describes the "cultural baggage" of stupidity as an embodied

experience which he "learned in his bones before [he] could talk" (48). This account is

filled with language that acknowledges a pre-reflective knowledge, or a "infraconscious

competence that is a result of their immersion within the realm of the social"

(Charlesworth 29). Kadi's description of stupidity as "cultural baggage" also brings to

light the ableist connotations and history of the term "stupid," including systemic abuses

against the neuro-divergent, non-consensual experimental medical procedures, and forced

sterilizations (Stern). A hierarchy of the moral goodness, worth, or value of intelligence is

in itself ableist.

Additionally, Kadi challenges how intelligence and knowledge is defined and

brings recognition to a variety of forms of knowledge by highlighting the fact that many

top paying jobs do not require intelligence or creativity while many working-class jobs

do. Kelly Bradbury makes a similar argument in her book *Reimagining Popular Notions of American Intellectualism: Literacy, Education, and Class,* by proposing a broader and more democratic definition of intellectualism through her research of sites that are not normally considered to be intellectual. Bradbury argues that people outside the typical realms of intellectualism *do* engage in intellectual work and are intellectual, maintaining that her research

> work[s] to contest assumptions that the study of useful knowledge, education for a
> practical purpose, basic literacy education, adult education in general, and
> education at non-elite institutions have not fostered—or cannot foster—
> intellectualism among the American public. (28)

Gramsci, too, claims that "technical education, closely bound to industrial labor, even at the most primitive and unqualified level, must form the basis of the new type of intellectual," expressing the intellectual value of the working-class and of practical, experiential knowledge (9-10). In this sense, I am rejecting intellectualism in its elitist, classist, and ableist form that attempts to invalidate other types of knowing, and proposing, like Bradbury, that what is considered valid intellectually should be broadened so that other forms of knowing can "count." Even then, intellectualism should not deny an individual the right or legitimacy to having valued experiences and perspectives on matters in their life.

Perpetuating ideas that class and intelligence are correlated serves a hegemonic purpose. It is important to note that one of the most critical aspects to maintaining the present class structure is working-class people internalizing the belief that they are intellectually inferior in many respects, and that it is intellect that is responsible for

greater economic success. This diverts attention away from systemic oppression and centers it on meritocratic understandings of success (Kadi). Fostering this divide, and even encouraging anti-intellectual or anti-elite sentiment among the working-class may in fact reinforce this class structure, especially in the case that these sentiments also serve to inform an understanding that higher education is a place for only a certain kind of individual, namely, an individual with class privilege.

Both Kelly Bradbury and Daniel Rigney discuss this concept of anti-intellectualism at length, each referring primarily to the most popular work on the topic, Richard Hofstadter's 1963 book, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life.* In his Pulitzer Prize winning work, Hofstadter defines anti-intellectualism as "resentment and suspicion of the life of the mind and of those who are considered to represent it; and a disposition constantly to minimize the value of that life" (7). Hofstadter's work, in addition to *The Closing of the American Mind,* by Allan Bloom in 1987, and *The Dumbest Generation,* by Mark Bauerlein in 2008, portray anti-intellectualism as a resentment of intellectuals and intellectual life[1]. While Lemann notes that Hofstadter does not depict "American life as a struggle between the superior, enlightened few and the mass of yobs,[2]" Bradbury argues that, collectively, these authors have contributed to a public discourse that only certain kinds of people can be intellectuals or engage in intellectual life. This rhetoric has contributed to understandings of who qualifies as an intellectual and who does not, and in the same vein, whose knowledge is legitimate and whose is not (Rigney; Bradbury).

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[1] To clarify, throughout this thesis I use "intellectuals" and the "educated elite" interchangeably, but it is worth noting that I am not negatively referring to intelligent people or intelligence, but rather the culture of elitism that is associated with privileged access to education and intellectual life. "Intellectual life" refers to institutionalized and legitimized forms of knowledge often associated with the academy.
[2] A "yob" is a slang term used in the UK that refers to an uncultured or unsophisticated person, usually working-class and male.

Consequently, these understandings of who is and who is not an intellectual function to hegemonically reinforce a hierarchy of knowledge, and as hegemony typically functions, maintain the present ideologies, norms, values, institutions, and structures that benefit the dominant class (Gramsci).

Together, Bradbury alleges, these authors depict American society as having descended from intelligence to apathy and ignorance, and that technology is dumbing down society. It may be heavy-handed to include Hofstadter in such a claim, however, due to his argument being that anti-intellectualism has been an unavoidable part of American democracy from the beginning (Lemann). Nevertheless, Bradbury's point stands that these three primary texts are responsible for shaping much of the conversation of anti-intellectualism in the United States.

Rigney discusses anti-elitism as one facet of anti-intellectualism, connecting to class. Others, such as working-class people, interpret some intellectual values as elitist which can illicit "mistrust of claims to superior knowledge . . . on the part of an educated elite, especially when such claims are suspected to be instruments in the service of class privilege" (Rigney 441). These thoughts among working-class people and others marginalized by their socioeconomic status have historically contributed to the development of populist movements, as they are seen to be more representative of "common people," devaluing "theoretic learning" as evidence of privilege. This leads to the working-class idealized image of "the rough and ready man of action . . . unencumbered by the weight of too much book learning" (Rigney 441). So, it is apparent that the debates of intellectualism and elitism also carry a gendered element, depicting a man ready for action, rather than an "unmanly" or "effeminate" intellectual male, as the

stereotype goes (Rigney 442). In what follows, I will elaborate on the construction of masculinity, as well as its variations as it intersects with class and race.

David Roediger notes that multiple axes of identity are invoked simply in the word "worker," presuming both whiteness and maleness, despite the fact that average workers are increasingly people of color and women. The phrase "working man" denotes both a gender and class identity, but also a racial identity, "an identification of whiteness and work so strong that it need not even be spoken" (Roediger 19). Although the naturalness of the category of the white worker or the working man is problematic in its exclusion of people of color and women, it is crucial to understand the historic weight of invoking and claiming the identity of "working man" for all of the gendered, classed, and raced undertones contained within it. Since Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" in 1989, intersectional approaches to scholarly work on identity have become popular across disciplines (Hancock). Intersectionality helps to account for the multiple and overlapping identities that people hold, including: race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, class, and ability. Intersectionality is important for thinking about the ways in which systems of oppression intersect and even constitute one another. I include intersectionality in this project because it is crucial for thinking about white working-class men and the nuances of their positioning within society. Because they are white and men, identity politics tends to leave them out[3], but recognizing how their gender, race, and class intersect can allow us to be more aware of both their privilege and class marginalization, helping us to build bridges of inclusion.

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[3] This is in part due to the prevailing discourse that the status of "man" or "white" are the default and that gender or race must refer to any deviation from that default (Beauvoir; Crenshaw).

In this work, I understand gender not as a stable identity that one holds, but rather a repeated set of external acts and gestures that, through their performance, socially construct the gender they are said to embody (Butler). This repetition of the performative construction of gender through time allows for a fluid conceptualization of gender, as it is socially constructed and varies by social context, time, and place (Butler). Gender requires repeated performativity and repeated proof, as total and perfect acquisition or performance of gender is always elusive and never possible (Butler; West and Zimmerman). Still, some may inevitably live up to the standards better than others and come quite close to embodying aspects of the fluctuating standards at times, resulting in the development of gender hierarchies (Connell and Messerschmidt). It is because gender is unstable and constructed through time that these standards and expectations vary (Butler). These variances result in multiple masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt).

In local contexts, with the developing of dominant and subordinate masculinities in relation to one another, "protest masculinities" can emerge (Connell and Messerschmidt). Protest masculinities demonstrate how subordinate masculinities can develop to help "recognize the agency of . . . marginalized groups" (847). One such example of a protest masculinity develops among working-class men, enabling a "claim to power typical of regional hegemonic masculinities in Western countries . . . [despite] lack[ing] the economic resources and institutional authority that underpins the regional global patterns" of hegemonic masculinity (848). This type of protest masculinity is a construction of a version of masculinity that identifies with another specific group characteristic or identity, such as being working-class, disabled, or queer (Connell and Messerschmidt; Coston and Kimmel).

Bethany Coston and Michael Kimmel elaborate on what can be understood as protest masculinities in their article "Seeing Privilege Where it isn't: Marginalized Masculinities and the Intersectionality of Privilege." They discuss the marginalized status of gay men, men with disabilities, and working-class men, noting that, despite being privileged in their male status, these men still experience marginalization in other facets of their identity. Working-class men are both othered by dominant masculinities and by themselves through insisting that they are different from upper and middle-class men (Coston and Kimmel). However, some may take it further to suggest that the physical requirements of their manual labor, or the risk inherent to their occupations, render their masculinity superior to middle-class men working office jobs, which are thought to be more leisurely and less requiring of hard work (Coston and Kimmel; Morris). The working-class claim to masculinity is attacked due to their marginalized class status. In some cases, they may respond to this with the absolute refusal to "'upper-class' imperatives," such as "social mobility, knowledge and skill acquisition," and thus, they may instead choose to "reproduce themselves as working class, despite the social and financial consequences" (Coston and Kimmel 109).

Employing Goffman's strategies for stigma management, Coston and Kimmel suggest that men with marginalized masculinities may respond to their marginalization by seeking to emphasize their differences from the dominant group, trying to emphasize their similarities to a dominant group, or emphasizing their differences and claiming that they are in fact superior to the dominant group. The distancing that occurs through emphasizing differences between the dominant and marginalized groups can explain the

distancing that occurs when working-class people differentiate themselves from elite intellectuals (Coston and Kimmel).

I include the intersectionality of privilege and Coston and Kimmel's work on marginalized men's strategies for responding to their marginalization because this work is crucial for understanding epistemic injustice and the nuanced experiences and perspectives that white, working-class men have, especially in the context of the 2016 presidential election. I will explain this further in the following section.

THE GAP BETWEEN WHITE WORKING-CLASS MEN
AND THE EDUCATED ELITE

In this current political milieu, a sharp distinction between members of the white working-class and the intellectual educated elite is gaining momentum. Such a divide further perpetuates the exclusion and self-exclusion of working-class people. Considering legitimated and delegitimated forms of knowledge, perception, status, disposition, and speech in his influential book, *A Phenomenology of Working Class Experience*, Simon Charlesworth contends that because working-class people are denied the economic and cultural resources to found lives of self-value through the primary institutions of legitimacy, they "elect to exclude themselves in an attempt to exercise symbolically a volition effectively denied them" (235). However, this "assertion of cultural identity . . . emerges out of an implicit sense of oneself as devalued, as fractured and damaged, as 'not clever' and thus condemned to a life of insecurity and hardship" (235). During the 2016 presidential election, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton described Trump's supporters as falling into two baskets, one of which being those who feel the government

has failed them and simply want change, and the other being a "basket of deplorables" who are "racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, [and] islamaphobic [sic]" (Reilly). Following Clinton's comments came both Far-Right backlash and the reclaiming of the term "deplorable" among Trump's supporters. This instance notably illustrates a divide between the educated elite and the working-classes; especially because the term "deplorable" itself is not reflective of working-class speech, although it was reclaimed in spite and taken up as a badge of honor. This reveals a potential "implicit sense of oneself as devalued," but it also illustrates a simultaneous exclusion and self-exclusion (Charlesworth 235).

Specifically, this project is concerned with exclusion and the class cultural divide Joan C. Williams identifies in her book *White Working Class: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America.* My work is different from previous work on the topic of white working-class men because I build on Williams's idea of a class-cultural divide, made most visible in US politics in the last decade, and I introduce Miranda Fricker's concept of epistemic injustice, which she defines as "[being] wronged in one's capacity as a knower" (44), to the discussion of white working-class men and politics in the United States. Indeed, white working-class men are often victims of class marginalization, and their situated knowledges are rendered unheard and unacknowledged through a process of epistemic injustice. Through strategies of epistemic injustice, white working-class men are increasingly alienated from progressive politics. Thus, I argue, by way of feminist standpoint theory and phenomenology, that white working-class men are situated in a particular embodied and social position that provides access to a horizon of knowledge useful for understanding intersecting systems of oppression, particularly along the axes of

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class, gender, race, and ability. Often in critiquing working-class discourses that are (overly) characterized by elements of racism and sexism, progressives, academics, and intellectuals invoke classist and ableist rhetoric, ultimately reinscribing a cultural divide between the working-classes and the educated elite. Such rhetoric further alienates and stigmatizes white working-class men, reinforces the association of class with intelligence, obscures the intersectionality of privilege, and strengthens responding disdain among white working-class men for those in positions of high status, whom they understand to be the elite, generally considered to be gatekeepers of legitimated knowledge and have epistemic authority.

In addition to arguing for an understanding of the epistemic positioning of white working-class men via phenomenology and standpoint, I also utilize critical discourse analysis as a reflexive methodological tool in order to help illustrate my claims. I apply critical discourse analysis to specific instances including Hillary Clinton calling half of Trump's supporters a "basket of deplorables," Donald Trump's response through a thirty second television advertisement, and his responding comments given at a rally in Asheville, North Carolina a few days after Clinton's initial remarks. I analyze these textual examples because they are "critical discourse moments," such moments that, according to Anabela Carvalho, challenge established discursive positions and are defined through political activity and socially relevant events (166).

By delving into the situated knowledge and social positioning of white working-class men, I want to better understand the nuanced concept of epistemic credibility and the injustice that occurs when such credibility is denied. Fricker best articulates the epistemic consequences that occur through both testimonial injustice—the diminished

credibility of the speaker due to the hearer's prejudices—and hermeneutical injustice—the diminished intelligibility of a marginalized person's experiences due to a community's lack in hermeneutical resources. These concepts are crucial for recognizing the connections between identity and material conditions, and further, how such identities and material conditions are organized by the inclusion and exclusion of particular voices (Kokushkin).

Fricker argues that the consequences of epistemic injustice include both an ethical and a political dimension that enables further domination. She further contends that "to be wronged in one's capacity as a knower is to be wronged in a capacity essential to human value . . . [bearing] a social meaning to the effect that the subject is less than fully human" (44). Fricker acknowledges the identity prejudice that associates working-class people, among other historically powerless groups such as women or people of color, with "attribute[s] inversely related to competence or sincerity"; however, she does not exclusively focus her attention on the lived, material, and situated experiences of white working-class people (32). Her assessment of epistemic injustice is of oppressed groups in general.

Central to such conversations of knowledge and credibility are the concepts of identity, situated knowledge, and lived experience. Thinking through epistemic injustice alongside embodied notions of identity and perception is helpful for providing a more nuanced conception of epistemic injustice. I use standpoint epistemology and phenomenology in order to consider these concepts in their full complexity. Helping to articulate what is known and from what position within society, standpoint epistemology asserts that lived experience and situated knowledge provides a position of epistemic

privilege (Harstock; P.H. Collins). In other words, lived experience is a legitimate and valuable source of knowledge. While phenomenology differs from standpoint in some ways, I find its emphasis on embodiment, perception, and the unification of the mind and body, and thus, the equal valuing of cognitive and physical forms of knowledge acquisition, to be complementary to standpoint's focus on lived experience and situated knowledge (Harstock; Merleau-Ponty; P.H. Collins).

Because identity and social positioning are often interconnected, I consider Alcoff's contention that there is indeed a correlation between social identity and epistemic credibility. Likewise, Mohanty argues that "social locations facilitate or inhibit knowledge by predisposing us to register and interpret information in certain ways. Our relation to social power produces "forms of blindness," just as it enables "degrees of lucidity" (234). Alcoff's understanding of this is that "identities operate as horizons from which certain aspects or layers of reality can be made visible," thereby asserting that "social identity operates then as a rough and fallible but useful indicator of differences in perceptual access" (82). Thus, I take inspiration from Alcoff's existential, phenomenological, and hermeneutic conception of identity as horizon, "a site from which one is open to the world, a site from which one must engage in the process of meaning-making" (Alcoff 43).

A knowledge claim developed through access to perceptual facts, Alcoff contends, "needs to be supported by a theory of perception" (83). Such a theory of perception is found in the work of phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty who posits that knowledge is based in perception and the situated, concrete, and dynamic bodily experience. Complementing notions of perceptual access, I turn to phenomenological

concepts of reflective and pre-reflective knowledge which are acquired through embodied experience (Moran and Mooney). Phenomenology functions as a methodological conception focused not on the "what" but on the "how" of embodied perception and situated knowledge (Moran and Mooney). Charlesworth writes of this crucial situatedness claiming that

> [one] is touched by one's environment, such that one comes to recognize the solicitations of the world, and respond through the primary bodily rhythms of fear and insecurity, the primary affective sense, through which locality and self-hood emerge from the flow of perceptual and practical sense that root us in a particular world. (129)

According to Charlesworth, working-class people experience the world in a less mediated way than those with greater access to symbolic capital. A greater proximity to need impacts bodily hexis, comportment, and gestures, as well as speech habits, and ways of relating to language in general. In contrast, the dominant class is likely to invest "its relation to language with the same distancing intention it engages in its relation to the body" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 149). These claims are similar to Marx's, with which he asserts that capitalists are disembodied or have access to a surrogate body, with more layers of capital between themselves and the material conditions of life in comparison to the working-classes whose bodies are exposed to the harsh conditions of labor and necessity. This might be especially true for those in physically demanding jobs where injury is more likely to occur, such as logging and coal or steel mining, jobs which tend to be male-dominated, especially in rural areas ("Those Who Work" Sherman).

The assertion of the validity of knowledge acquired through embodiment parallels

standpoint's similar privileging of situated knowledge. These ideas also counter the historical devaluing of experiential and pre-reflective knowledge in comparison to the knowledge of reason and reflection, and work to subvert the Cartesian mind/body duality by insisting that all knowledge and consciousness is necessarily embodied, a cornerstone to phenomenological thought (Merleau-Ponty; P.H. Collins). Recognizing the delegitimation of working-class knowledge and experience through the delegitimation of the body, I will explore the continued discursive association of class with intelligence: the stereotype that working-class people are intellectually inferior functions to justify class divisions, and ultimately, class oppression (Kadi). This rhetoric has also contributed to understandings of who qualifies as an intellectual and who does not, and in the same vein, whose knowledge is legitimate and whose is not (Bradbury; Rigney). Consequently, these understandings of who is and who is not an intellectual function to hegemonically reinforce a hierarchy of knowledge, and maintain the present ideologies, norms, values, institutions, and structures that benefit the dominant classes (Gramsci). This hierarchy of knowledge stems from the aforementioned Cartesian mind/body duality that posits that intelligence is a characteristic of the mind and is associated with reason. It is by this access to reason that humans are thought to be superior to other animals. Reason being the distinctive feature suggests that the mind is superior to the body and this belief has been absorbed into the fabric of Western thought for centuries.

Being denied the legitimacy of the life of the mind, working-class people are reduced to their bodies (Charlesworth). Due to the gendered pressures of "breadwinning," the expectation for men to work to provide an income intended to fully support their wife and children, this emphasis on a bodily capacity to labor may also be especially gendered

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to men (Kimmel and Ferber). Connell notes that "[t]rue masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men's bodies—to be inherent in a male body or to express something about a male body" (44). Such a bodily focus translates to labor, constituting an intrinsic aspect of working-class identity (Charlesworth).

A working-class emphasis on the body is apparent in a conversation Charlesworth describes having with a young working-class adolescent who believes his teachers direct him in ways that make him feel as if there are things he is unable to do. Thus, he struggles in school and does not feel like education is the route for him. The fifteen-year-old explains that this impacts how he views the future for possible work and concludes that because he does not have "much of a brain," he might as well use his body since he has that (Charlesworth 240). This conversation highlights the nominating power of the institution of education and for those in positions of epistemic authority (in this case, the teachers), and how working-class people are relegated to a realm of the physical where they are destined to work with their bodies, and "find expertise in the realm of the competence they are constituted as possessing" (Charlesworth 241). This dualism leaves working-class people, specifically working-class men, with their material bodies whose only devalued legitimacy comes from the labor or technical skills they are able to perform.

Finally, I will discuss the implications of denying white working-class men epistemic credibility, one major trend being a disdain for educated people in positions of high status, generally considered to have epistemic authority. Some examples of figures with epistemic authority are academics, politicians, and reporters/the news media. One important caveat is that although Trump is a politician, he has portrayed himself as an

outsider to politics, and therefore, by his supporters, he is understood not as a representative of epistemic authority, but as a successful and self-made businessman who represents the interests of others who have felt like an outsider to politics. Additionally, there is a persistent, and perhaps contradictory, belief among working-class people that there is some correlation between intelligence and wealth (Lamont). So, while some of the wealthy are viewed positively, there is also a disdain for those intellectuals who are associated with elitism and legitimized, institutionalized forms of knowledge. This trend of disdain for epistemic authority as a response to epistemic injustice points to a larger, pre-existing cultural divide between the (white) working-class as "common people" and the "silent majority," versus the intellectual, educated elite.

CHAPTER 2:

METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW:

This chapter details the methodological basis of this project by expanding on the theoretical and conceptual foundations and the method of analysis I am using. I explain the concepts of the intersectionality of privilege, multiple axes of identity, epistemic injustice, and how I determine class identity. I incorporate theories of phenomenology and standpoint epistemology with these concepts. Finally, I describe how I understand critical discourse analysis as a method, and how I plan to apply these concepts to the discussion of white working-class men and epistemic injustice.

PRIVILEGE AS INTERSECTIONAL

Understanding privilege as multifaceted and intersectional, involving the multiple identities each individual holds, is important for understanding the experiences of white working-class men. Privilege, the special rights or advantages granted to certain individuals or groups, is typically associated with whiteness and maleness. However, in terms of their class positioning, white working-class men are marginalized.

Nell Painter describes the intersectionality of privilege, as it pertains to whiteness, suggesting that,

> The degree to which white identity alone confers privilege is mediated more so than in the past by the significance of other variables—class, gender, region, age, able-bodiedness, sexuality, and so on. (388)

Indeed, with stagnating wages since the 1970s, job losses in industrial occupations, and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, many members of the white working-class are now in economically precarious positions (Sherman). Linda Martín Alcoff asserts that this increase in economic instability among white working-class people is not due to being targeted because they are white, but rather, as economist Richard Wolff argues, evidences that their whiteness does not protect them from the economic damages of imperial capitalism.

The intersectionality of privilege also relates to a larger understanding of subjects and their intermeshedness within multiple systems of power. Lugones, for example, does not accept a simple oppressor/oppressed binary and instead proposes subjects as oppressing, being oppressed, and resisting depending on the context. Nodding to Lugones, Mariana Ortega writes,

> There is not a simple dichotomy between marginalized/nonmarginalized or oppressed/oppressor. Selves need to be understood in their complexity and in terms of the different roles they play in the matrix of power relations such that each of us can be understood variously as oppressors, oppressed, or resisting. (51)

Including the intersectionality of privilege in this project and frequently returning to it is significant because the attitude that white working-class men are not oppressed in any way has contributed to their alienation. Thus, it is worth remembering that just as identities and systems of oppression are complex, varied, and intersecting, so too is the notion of privilege.

DETERMINING CLASS IDENTITY

To discuss issues pertaining to the working-class, it is essential to be clear with what is meant by the term "working-class" and how it is used in this project. The term is used extensively and frequently, but precise definitions are hard to come by and often disputed. Class itself becomes a blurred category, with most Americans tending to refer to themselves as middle-class, a flaw Joan Williams identifies as "class cluelessness." For example, Williams cites that it is not uncommon for individuals making incomes as disparate as $22,000 or $200,000 to both identify themselves as middle-class. Determining an objective definition of social class and socioeconomic status, in general, is a contentious process. A Marxian definition of working-class includes anyone who does not own the means of production and therefore must sell their labor power; however, this definition is rather broad and could extend from manual laborers or factory workers, who are more traditionally thought of as working-class, to individuals with skills more often associated with those belonging to the middle or even upper-class. More generally, working-class can be understood as being comprised of those without a college education, who must rely on performing physical labor for an hourly wage (Edsall). Typically, working-class occupations have been broken down into four main categories:

unskilled laborers, artisans, outworkers, and factory workers (Doob). This includes service work and pink collar jobs (Arnold). If defined in terms of income, individuals falling into the categories of working-class, middle-class, or upper-class often have differential access to economic and cultural resources, or education, goods, and other services (Linkon).

Not only are objective measures of social class and socioeconomic status difficult to establish, they are also not always the best indicators of an individual's actual standard of living (Rubin et al.). There are many complications associated with categorizing class and status in such a way. For example, how many categories should be included? How should cut off points for each category of class be determined? Answers to these critical questions are debated and often vary. These are the primary reasons why clear definitions of working-class, middle-class, or social class, in general, are so hard to delineate (Bourdieu, "What Makes a Social Class"; Rubin et al.). Furthermore, Bourdieu explains that "clear-cut discontinuities" are "impossible to find in the real world" to demonstrate such distinct, objective, and empirical instances of class (2). Other limitations include restricted generalizability of data due to the fact that findings can only be interpreted relative to the populations from which they are taken, meaning that the measures are limited to a specific context and period of time (Rubin et al.). Because populations and economies can vary quite rapidly, it is likely that objective measures will quickly become outdated (Rubin et al.). Additionally, and most importantly for the purpose of this thesis, objective measures do not necessarily assess one's subjective understanding of their social class or identity (Rubin et al.).

As Williams, among other scholars, notes, class, in the colloquial sense of the

term, is often about more than just income or money. An amalgamation of traditions, behaviors, and ways of life help shape what we then identify as social class or socioeconomic status. To clarify, there is a distinction between social class and socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status can be understood as "one's current social and economic situation" and can vary over time (Rubin et al. 196). Social class, on the other hand, tends to be more stable over time, and "refers to one's sociocultural *background*" (Rubin et al. 196).

Objective measures of a one's social class are typically figured by referring to their level of education, income, occupation, and material possessions (Rubin et al.). Like Rubin et al., Honneth also differentiates between class and status, but defines them differently. According to Honneth, class relates to distributive dimensions and economic modes of social ordering typically institutionalized through markets, while status corresponds to dimensions of social recognition derived from institutionalized patterns of cultural values and norms. Honneth goes further to contextualize class and status within systems of power and subordination. Despite Honneth's distinction between class and status, he is careful to emphasize that there are points of overlap and even mutual constitution between the two at times, although one cannot directly infer the other. However, Honneth maintains that it is essential to refer to both the dimension of status and class to better understand social life. Both Rubin et al.'s and Honneth's understandings are useful here because they help to provide a fuller view of class and status.

Thus, while objective measures of social class can provide fruitful data for empirical research, in many respects they are limited, especially in the realm of

qualitative research assessing identity. With this being said, it is also clear that we are considering the working-class as having to do with more than simply a category of income. By integrating a subjective definition of social class, we can help ensure a more accurate depiction of an individual's perceived identity, and compensate for what objective measures might be unable to ascertain (Bourdieu "What Makes a Social Class"; Rubin et al.). Subjective measures of social class can better assess multiple factors in constructing class identity that objective measures might overlook. These factors include economic, cultural, informational, social, and symbolic forms of capital (Bourdieu "What Makes a Social Class"). Subjective measures are more contextually flexible, allowing for intersectional analyses of social class with other demographical categories like gender, ethnicity, or age (Rubin et al.). For those concerned with the validity of a subjective measure, inaccuracies (e.g. someone describing themselves as working-class despite having an income of $200,000 that indicates they are likely not working-class) can be controlled for by more objective measures—another crucial reason for integrating both measures (Rubin et al.).

For this discussion, a subjective measure is particularly relevant because an individual's perceived identity is influential in their perception of if they belong in a social space (Bourdieu "What Makes a Social Class"). Therefore, by "working-class," I am primarily referring to people that self-identify as or associate themselves with the working-class. Bourdieu writes, "agents are both classified and classifiers, but they classify according to (or depending upon) that position within classifications" ("What Makes a Social Class" 2). In other words, individuals can be identified or placed within a social class by objective measures or by others, *and* they can place themselves within or

identify *with* a social class, but the identification with a social class is also according to or depending upon their subject positioning, which determines how individuals are perceived and how individuals perceive themselves. These perceptions influence and are influenced by one's habitus, which is a simultaneous process of perceiving and reacting, both a reflecting and reproducing of social structure (Bourdieu "What Makes a Social Class"). Thus, subjects within a similar social structure, under similar conditions begin to "resemble one another . . . [and] come together as a practical group . . . to reinforce their points of resemblance" (Bourdieu "What Makes a Social Class" 6). Put differently, habitus is the exposure to similar conditions of existence and conditioning factors that tend to produce individuals with similar dispositions, practices, and identities (Bourdieu "What Makes a Social Class" 6). Subjective identities of social class, or the social groups with which one relates to or associates with, develop within a habitus. This understanding of identity and environment as co-constitutive reveals "the similar objective conditions, or *habitus*, in which people from different social classes live, including their different access to social, cultural, economic, and symbolic capital" (Rubin et al. 198).

Thinking through the overlapping of class/status and socioeconomic status/social class alongside Bourdieu's understanding of habitus, we can consider class and status as lived-in categories of self-identification, developed over time, and situated within systems of power. This conceptualization of class and status, as mutually imbricated aspects of identity and lived-reality, situated within systems of power, is important for considering the impacts of economic downturn, the precarity of unemployment/underemployment, and rural poverty on white working-class men's identities.

INTERSECTING AXES OF IDENTITY AND THE "WORKING MAN"

The identity of a "working man" is deceptively complex, invoking a lot more than simply a man who works. Embedded in this term are also implicit understandings of class, masculinity, ability, morality, and whiteness (Roediger; Sherman). The notion of the white working-class is a recent phenomenon, emerging in the nineteenth century with efforts to distinguish the non-slave labor force from "the bondage of Blacks [which] served as a touchstone by which dependence and degradation were measured" (Roediger 20). Prior to the nineteenth century, there were no definitive connections between whiteness and "the defense of one's independence as a worker" (Roediger 20-21). According to Roediger, the formation of the identity of the working-class in America coincided with the development of a systematic consciousness of whiteness, and so the two are intertwined (8). Despite an increasingly large presence of people of color and women in the working-class, a "worker" continues to imply male and white (Arnold; Roediger).

Embedded in the term "working man" are also deeply gendered meanings and standards of morality. "Manly dignity" is important to white working-class men (Williams 91). This dignity is often found in the ability to financially provide for a family, a value that is similar for men from the middle and even upper-class (Williams). However, in recent decades, the traditionally masculine role of "breadwinner" has been challenged by economic shifts that have resulted in job losses in male-dominated occupations (Sherman; Smith). This has been particularly devastating for rural communities whose economies relied primarily on a single industry such as coal, steel, textiles, or logging (Sherman). These changes in the economy have forced many families

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to renegotiate gender roles, as women have entered the workforce to contribute to family finances, or in some cases, to become the family's sole breadwinner (Sherman; Smith). Men have especially struggled to reconfigure their identities and self-worth outside of the breadwinning status (Charlesworth; Sherman). Sherman explains that the myth of traditional masculinity is still present, but to navigate these challenges, "the requirements of masculinity have changed to focus more directly on work ethics than on breadwinning itself" (125). This shift in focus introduced a stronger emphasis on moral capital, a kind of social or symbolic capital (Sherman). In working-class contexts, such moral capital might be attainable through focus on work ethic and family life (Pini and Conway; Sherman).

The term "working man" implies a certain level of ability or physicality. A capacity for endurance is expected and injury or the wearing down of the body is understood as an expected outcome of a life of labor and struggle (Puar). In the event of an injury that prohibits work, Sherman identifies government assistance as a "last resort" for those living in economic precarity in rural communities, acceptable only under the pretense of a "dangerous hardworking past" ("Coping With Rural Poverty" 898-899). These men with acquired disabilities, Sherman deduces, would continue working if work were available, so it might be inferred that disability is something reluctantly claimed, and that moral capital is only found in it if the disability is claimed as a result of job-related injuries.

However, for the most part, disability is conceptualized as running counter to hegemonic masculinity, especially in social settings that place such an emphasis on physicality and labor capacity (Shuttleworth et al.). For many, disability is associated

with helplessness and dependency, traits which do not meld with working-class masculine values such as self-sufficiency and reliability (Shuttleworth et al.). With the emphasis on alternative forms of capital that stress morality, disability might contradict such standards, if not explicitly, at least implicitly, especially given the historical discursive association of disability with immorality and sin, much like the moral worth assigned to markers associated with the status of "healthy" or "unhealthy" (Petersen).

Finally, Charlesworth claims that the body is the "seat" of working-class identity (238). According to Charlesworth, working-class people are "condemned to dexterity rather than intelligence," contributing to this identification with the body (239). Working-class articulation stems from this relation to the body, revealing much about working-class identity (Charlesworth). Such an articulatory style reflects straightforwardness, strength, and avoidance of censorship or formalities in order to show one's self as reliable and trustworthy (Charlesworth).

Thus, we can see that the identity of a "working man" is more complex than it might initially appear. These intersections and embedded meanings will be important when considering the standpoint and phenomenology of working-class experience. They will also be important to my use of critical discourse analysis that seeks to make clear embedded meanings and ideologies.

STANDPOINT AND PHENOMENOLOGY

Standpoint theory is broad and varied, but in general, it can be understood as "a set of theoretical and epistemological propositions designed to produce alternative knowledge" (Kokushkin 10). Dominant forms of knowledge tend to be produced by those

with privilege, typically reflecting androcentric and Western interests rather than being truly objective (Harding). Dominant knowledge is granted its legitimacy through social institutions of power, rendering it legitimated knowledge, and all others subjugated knowledge (P.H. Collins). The alternative knowledge standpoint suggests comes from "multiple knower-positions . . . [and is] culturally and discursively grounded in experience" (10). Alternative knowledge and the concept of multiple knowers allows for standpoint to function in opposition to dominant forms of knowledge and to serve the less privileged of society (Kokushkin).

This alternative knowledge is generated through different points of perceptual access (Alcoff; P.H. Collins). In other words, a black woman might have access knowledge that a white women does not have access to, or a working-class person might have access to knowledge that an upper-class person does not. To some extent, a person's position in society impacts what knowledge they have since knowledge is generated through experience. This idea is called epistemic privilege. Alcoff understands social positioning as being intertwined with social identity and influential to which knowledge is accessible, writing that "identities operate as horizons from which certain aspects or layers of reality can be made visible," making social identity "a rough and fallible but useful indicator of differences in perceptual access" (82). Standpoint theory is crucial to the topic of the cultural and political divide between white working-class men and the educated elite because it holds that experiential knowledge is a legitimate and credible source of knowledge.

Like standpoint theory, phenomenology emphasizes the importance of situated knowledge. I use phenomenology in conjunction with standpoint because

phenomenology asserts that knowledge and experience is necessarily embodied

(Merleau-Ponty). Considering the bodily emphasis of working-class experience,

phenomenology is especially significant in its focus on a deeper, pre-reflective type of

knowledge. As Charlesworth explains, "the body thus involves a primordial, pre-

reflective orientation" that is passed on through what Merleau-Ponty refers to as a

"postural impregnation" (18). It is "a way of feeling the world which is an aspect of the

body projecting itself into the world, apprehending significances" (Charlesworth 18). We

are so much more than vehicles of cognitive experience. Charlesworth maintains that

> we inhabit the world not merely as perceptual subjects but also as affective
>
> beings. For our perceptions are always inhabited by an excess of meaning,
>
> originating in the primordial grounds of sense, which is more than sensation and
>
> which reveals the world of perception for what it is: the achievement of a body-
>
> subject which has a temporal structure enabling it to carry this primitive
>
> acquisition of horizons which allows a more determinate world of objects and
>
> projects to exist. (18)

I do not want to get lost in discursive trends and lose sight of the bodily and material

experiences such discourse attempts to reflect. Kept in focus is the understanding that

language and the body are so deeply intertwined, and a relation to language and the body

is at the heart of this cultural and political rift, a rift in which some bodily and linguistic

comportments and competencies are legitimated while others are not. Bourdieu and

Wacquant write of this intimate relation and how it pertains to social class:

> Language is a technique of the body, and linguistic . . . competency is a
>
> dimension of bodily *hexis* in which the whole relation to the social world

expresses itself . . . [This] suggests . . . that the bodily schema characteristic of a

social class determines the system of phonological traits that characterize a class

pronunciation, via . . . the 'articulatory style' . . . a lifestyle that has become

embodied . . . (149)

Thus, I rely on phenomenology and standpoint theory for their material and situated

focus, and their epistemological positions that consider lived experience and embodiment

as valid sources of legitimate knowledge and perception.

EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE

One of the most important concepts I am using in this thesis comes from Miranda

Fricker's work on epistemic injustice. She defines epistemic injustice as "a wrong done to

someone specifically in their capacity as a knower" (1). The two main forms of epistemic

injustice that she identifies are testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice.

According to Fricker, testimonial injustice is caused by prejudices the hearer might hold

against the speaker resulting in a credibility deficit. In other words, the hearer may have

conscious or unconscious prejudices against the speaker, usually relating to identity,

causing them to perceive the speaker as having less credibility. Hermeneutical injustice,

on the other hand, involves a lack in interpretive resources available for making sense of

one's social experiences. Both forms of epistemic injustice, testimonial and

hermeneutical, are relevant to the topic of the cultural and political gap between the

working-class and the educated elite.

In this project, I am primarily asserting that the educated elite hold prejudices

against working-class people, specifically working-class white men, causing them to

disregard their experiences as lacking credibility despite the very real class oppression they face. Of course, this is contextually dependent, and this disregard is reciprocated in some ways in instances when a working-class person assumes someone with class privilege has no idea what they are talking about. However, this reciprocation does not amount to the alienation of an entire group of people; those with class privilege still have more social power and influence over collective forms of social understanding. Again, I want to be clear, I am not suggesting white working-class men are oppressed due to their whiteness or maleness, however, it is not uncommon for critiques of white working-class men to verge on being thinly-veiled classism. Disregarding the knowledge and experiences of white working-class men in many regards is due to prejudices rooted in class and this is an example of testimonial injustice.

Hermeneutic injustice is also relevant here. Some groups, according to Fricker, experience a disadvantage in making sense of their own social experiences (146). Fricker explains that those with "material power . . . will tend to have an influence in those practices by which social meaning are generated" (147), meaning that those without social and material power also might not have access to the interpretive resources for making their social experiences legible. Following the reasoning of hermeneutic injustice, this means that working-class people have less influence over collective social meaning and less access to interpretive resources for their own social meaning. An example of one type of interpretive resource is a legitimated form of speech. For instance, working-class people might be rendered silent when faced with a formal linguistic market

> like the one constituted by a linguistic survey or investigation ... [Popular
>
> competence] ... is, as it were, annihilated. The reality of linguistic legitimacy

consists precisely in the fact that dominated individuals are always under the

potential jurisdiction of formal law, even when they spend all their lives . . .

beyond its reach, so that when placed in a formal situation they are doomed to

silence or to the broken discourse which linguistic investigation also often

records. (Bourdieu*, Language and Symbolic Power* 71)

Charlesworth argues that language-use and speech are products of one's social position or

condition, and that working-class people speak a delegitimated or devalued form of

language recognized as slang, which is a "dominated linguistic competence"

(Charlesworth 139). Charlesworth adds that this relates to a difficulty in political

representation as well because "the dominant language and . . . the institutions that

inscribe in bodies the dispositions to speak and perform it . . . conversely, [influence] the

dispositions to feel its legitimacy and authority" (213). Dominant language is more than

discursively powerful, it literally shapes bodily dispositions to *feel* its legitimacy and this

legitimacy is reified again and again.

　　With this being said, I want to trouble Fricker's idea of hermeneutic injustice

slightly. While recognizing the merit of her work on hermeneutic injustice, I am weary of

any charge of marginalized people being unable to understand their own experiences

because I am coming from the perspective that lived experience is a legitimate source of

knowledge and that marginalized people are very capable of understanding their

experiences. In fact, as Patricia Hill Collins explains, "subordinate groups have long had

to use alternative ways to create independent self-definitions and self-valuations," which

involves "using alternative ways of producing and validating knowledge" (252).

However, they may struggle to communicate in a way that renders their experiences

legible to those not marginalized in the same way. Working-class people are generally at least implicitly aware of "the objective hierarchy of habitus and linguistic competence," and that their language is not legitimated by educated bourgeois speech habits (Charlesworth 139). So, I differ from Fricker's understanding of hermeneutic injustice in that I believe marginalized people understand their experiences even without the same access to interpretive resources, they just lack the legitimated knowledge and speech to legibly articulate their experiences to those outside their habitus[4]. Even with my deviation from Fricker's understanding of hermeneutic injustice, it is still a type of epistemic injustice committed against a marginalized group because they are denied the legitimacy and tools needed to be legible to dominant classes and institutions, rendering it "a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower" (1).

METHODS FOR ANALYSIS

I am employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) because my goal is to first analyze the texts themselves (Clinton's speech, Trump's response ad, Trump's comments, etc.), and then go beyond the texts to consider their institutional and sociocultural contexts (Carvalho). Using this method of analysis aids in "expos[ing] the causes and consequences of specific discourses and . . . denounce[s] the social, cultural or political wrongs which they sustain" (Carvalho 162). CDA's central claim is that

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[4] This does not deny the importance of having access to hermeneutic resources. Instead, I am acknowledging that there are versions of hermeneutic resources useful for understanding one's own experiences that are either legitimated or subjugated by dominant classes and institutions. Access to hermeneutic resources to understand one's position in the world is important, but in order to be taken as having epistemic credibility to those outside their own habitus, there is a certain amount of legibility needed. Expanding the types of knowledge and knowers that are valued seeks to grant this legibility and epistemic credibility.

ideologies are embedded in all discourse, which both constitutes and reifies existing institutions of power (Carvalho; Fairclough). CDA as a method is particularly appropriate for understanding the political and cultural gap between the working-class and the educated elite because it is a method that recognizes that "language is both a site of and a stake in class struggle" (Fairclough 35). Thus, paying close attention to the textual evidence of the underlying ideologies present in political discourse can be especially fruitful for illustrating epistemic injustice, and both recognizing and understanding this political and cultural gap.

CDA can be approached through a three-tiered method involving description, interpretation, and explanation of a given text (Fairclough). Description is used to identify the linguistic associations, interpretation involves the pragmatic and intertextual elements, and explanation relates to broader socio-cultural conditions (Fairclough). The framework for analyzing media discourse with CDA is broken down into two main components: textual analysis and contextual analysis (Carvalho). I will elaborate on what makes up these two components below.

Textual analysis includes a text's layout and structural organization, objects, actors, language, grammar and rhetoric, discursive strategies, and ideological standpoints (Carvalho). A text's layout and structural organization is important for which elements will be noticed based off of the organization, impacting how the audience might perceive or interpret the issue (Carvalho). Objects are the themes or topics constructed by the text, which emphasize the notion that "discourse *constitutes* rather than just 'refers to' the realities at stake" (Carvalho 167). Actors are the social agents present or referenced in the text. They may be individuals or institutions (Carvalho). Language, grammar and rhetoric

refers to word choice or vocabulary, and the writing style (Carvalho). Discursive strategies relate to how a text is manipulated or framed to impact audience perception, which includes which elements are included and excluded, and how those elements are arranged (Carvalho). Finally, ideological standpoints are the implicit and explicit social and political values or stances present in a text (Carvalho).

Contextual analysis includes comparative-synchronic analysis and historical-diachronic analysis (Carvalho). Comparative-synchronic analysis involves comparing a text to other texts from around the same time that cover the same issue (Carvalho). Historical-diachronic analysis, on the other hand, examines the broader political, social, and economic context of a text (Carvalho). It also considers the evolution of discourse over a period of time (Carvalho). Understanding the historical context for how an issue developed over time is valuable for better understanding the present (Carvalho).

I will return to these concepts in the following chapter where I apply CDA to Hillary Clinton calling half of Trump's supporters a "basket of deplorables," Donald Trump's television advertisement responding to Clinton's comments, and Trump's responding comments in a speech given in Asheville, North Carolina. I have chosen these textual examples because they are "critical discourse moments" (Carvalho 173). According to Carvalho, such moments challenge established discursive positions and are defined through political activity and socially relevant events (166). For now, I emphasize my understanding of discourse as "a site of struggle, where forces of social (re)production and contestation are played out" (Lazar 4). By analyzing these texts and their relation to the cultural and political divide between the working-class and the

educated elite, I hope to make clear the overt and subtle presence of the "renderings of

ideological assumptions and power relations" (13).

CHAPTER 3:

DEPLORABLE, "HARD WORKING PEOPLE LIKE YOU"

OVERVIEW

In this chapter, I use critical discourse analysis to provide a reading of 2016 Presidential Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton's comments describing half of Donald Trump's supporters as being a "basket of deplorables," Trump's responding comments, and Trump's responding television advertisement. Following Clinton's comments came both Far-Right backlash and the reclaiming of the term "deplorable" among Trump's supporters. I analyze these textual examples because they are "critical discourse moments" of larger discursive chains that help illustrate the concepts and claims I have detailed in the previous chapters. The goals of this chapter are to first, summarize the texts, and second, critically analyze and discuss them.

THE TEXTS

CLINTON'S REMARKS

On September 9, 2016, at a private fundraiser, the LGBT for Hillary Gala, Democratic Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton committed a large gaffe that potentially could have cost her the presidency. Before the crowd, standing at a podium with the words "Stronger Together" stretching across the front, Clinton made the infamously unpopular remark. "We are living in a volatile political environment," she explained to nodding heads in the crowd. She continued, "You know, to just be grossly generalistic, you could put half of Trump's supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables. Right?" She paused as the room filled with laughter and applause. She continued again:

> The racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamaphobic (sic)— you name it. And unfortunately there are people like that. And he has lifted them up . . . Now, some of those folks — they are irredeemable, but thankfully they are not America. But the other basket . . . of people are people who feel that the government has let them down, the economy has let them down, nobody cares about them, nobody worries about what happens to their lives and their futures, and they're just desperate for change. It doesn't really even matter where it comes from. They don't buy everything he says, but he seems to hold out some hope that their lives will be different. They won't wake up and see their jobs disappear, lose

a kid to heroine (sic), feel like they're in a dead-end. Those are people we have to understand and empathize with as well.[5]

The second half of Clinton's statement perhaps does not get enough attention, but enough damage had been done by the first half. She committed the fatal mistake of criticizing the voters rather than the opponent. Aside from this error in judgment, what in particular makes this statement sting? Further, what discourses do Clinton's comments derive from or refer to that render them so worthy of being recognized as a misstep deserving of the label "a political gift," as Clinton later referred to it in her memoir *What Happened* (413)?

Some of Clinton's supporters might have speculated that the statement was received so poorly because it was so perfectly accurate. Or in the very least, it was guilt by association; if someone supported a candidate who has demonstrated himself to be a racist, sexist, Islamophobic, and xenophobic person, then by extension they would be as well. Perhaps it was emphasis on *half* of Trump's supporters being deplorable. If almost sixty-three million people ended up voting for Trump (Federal Elections Commission), did that mean that roughly thirty million Americans would qualify as deplorable in Clinton's mind?

The most damaging fact of Clinton's statement is that it identified individuals as deplorable rather than the beliefs or stances that they hold as deplorable. Worse, she was not simply describing individuals as "deplorable" by using it as an adjective to describe one particular characteristic of a person or group; rather, she used it in the form of a noun, suggesting that it is the essence of what these people are (Merriam-Webster).

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[5] For a full transcript of Clinton's speech, see Appendix A.

Further, she identified them as "irredeemable." Did Clinton mean to invoke such an image of Trump's supporters? One could only speculate, but what her gaffe certainly does is capture the sentiment held by many of the "class blind" educated elite (Charlesworth).

TRUMP'S RESPONSE AD

The Trump campaign quickly realized the opportunity and seized it with a 30 second response ad airing in Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Florida (E. Collins). Choosing to air the ad in these states specifically is important considering the economic demographics of each state, the presence of a rural population, and finally that these states are recognized as swing states with an ability to determine the outcome of the presidential election.

The ad opens with Clinton standing at the podium, arms stretched outwards while a female narrator sets the tone of the ad as emphasizing class, beginning with "speaking to wealthy donors . . . " In an effort to demonstrate the sheer number of people Clinton allegedly saw as deplorable, a wide shot of a large crowd at a Trump rally is pictured behind the word "deplorable" while the narrator states that "Hillary Clinton called tens of millions of Americans deplorable." In several of the following short frames, diverse groups of individuals are shown as Clinton lists off the adjectives "sexist," "homophobic," "xenophobic," and "Islamophobic." The first close shot is of two white men in hard hats at a rally, immediately invoking the association of white working-class men with the term "deplorable." A succession of clips feature white women, women of color, and veterans respectively while the narrator says "people like you, you, and you—

deplorable." The ad concludes with the narrator asking "you know what's deplorable?" as the words appear before an image of Clinton, and the narrator answers "Hillary Clinton viciously demonizing hard-working people like you."

TRUMP'S RESPONDING COMMENTS

On September 13, 2016, a couple of days after Clinton made her initial comments, during a rally in Asheville, North Carolina, Trump responded to Clinton's remarks.

While my opponent slanders you as deplorable and irredeemable, I call you hard-working American patriots who love your country and want a better future for all of our people. You are mothers and fathers, soldiers and sailors, carpenters and welders. You are Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Above all else, you are Americans – and you are entitled to leadership that honors you, cherishes you, and defends you. Every American is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect in our country . . . [Our supporters are] united by their deep and sophisticated understanding of how our political system has abandoned the people . . . Hillary Clinton spoke with hatred in her heart for these working class Americans. She looks down on them . . . on all the people who make her life possible . . . the carpenters, plumbers, electricians, lawyers and accountants . . . the police officers, soldiers, and firefighters supporting our campaign . . . people who cook her meals, drive her cars, and dig the coal that powers her electricity. She called these Americans every name in the book -- racist, sexist, xenophobic, Islamophobic -- she said they were not even American.[6]

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[6] For Donald Trump's full speech in response, please refer to Appendix B

Trump's response seized the opportunity to further cement the association of Clinton's "basket of deplorables" comment with the working-class.

ANALYSIS

Referring back to the major tenets of critical discourse analysis, I would like to analyze Hillary Clinton's words alongside the Trump response ad and his responding comments. To do so, I turn my attention to the features of textual analysis, which include a text's layout and structural organization, objects, actors, language, grammar and rhetoric, discursive strategies, and ideological standpoints, and contextual analysis, which includes comparative-synchronic analysis and historical-diachronic analysis (Carvalho).

LAYOUT, OBJECTS, AND ACTORS

The three texts can be described according to general elements such as the layout, objects, and actors. A text's layout and structural organization is concerned with which elements will be noticed based off of the organization, thus impacting how the audience might perceive or interpret the issues at hand (Carvalho). Objects are themes or topics constructed by the text, emphasizing the idea that "discourse *constitutes* rather than just 'refers to' the realities at stake" (Carvalho 167). Objects are constructed by Clinton's statement, Trump's responding comments, and his response ad. Actors are the social agents, including individuals or institutions, that are presented or referenced in the text (Carvalho).

Clinton's speech at the LGBT for Hillary Gala is primarily organized to compare and contrast herself to her opponent. She does this through the theme of LGBT rights and discussing issues that she considers most pressing to the LGBT community. Another theme is that of urgency and perseverance, repeating phrases like "we know what we are up against" or "there are only 60 days left to make our case." There is also the theme of caution for the future if she is not elected president, with her hyperbolically claiming that she is "all that stands between us and the apocalypse." The themes and social agents most remembered from this speech, however, are the two "baskets" that Trump's supporters can be divided into; the "basket of deplorables," and those who feel let down by the economy and government. Thus, a final notable theme is of the dangers Trump's supporters present for the future of the country.

Trump's responding comments are similarly organized in a manner that compares and contrasts him to his opponent. Although he focuses on themes relating to the moral dignity, honor, and respect that all Americans are deserving of. He does this by appealing to institutions such as the family and military, as well as the working-class, saying "[you] are mothers and fathers, soldiers and sailors, carpenters and welders." He also does this by empathizing with the those who have lost their jobs and by recognizing individuals in a number of occupations, particularly those with blue-collar jobs. A major theme he relies on is the interests of "the people," ordinary people. In fact, in his short speech, he refers to "the people" in this way six times. While referring to "the people" he also makes a firm distinction between the interests of common people and the interests of the wealthy and corrupt elite of Washington, the group he depicts Clinton as belonging to. He simultaneously appeals to the moral dignity of the working-class, claiming that he "will

be their champion," while stressing that Clinton "looks down" on all of the working-class people "who make her life possible." Through doing this, he is intentionally initiating himself, marking himself as one of them, and Clinton as the opposite, an aloof and clueless elite insider.

Finally, multiple elements in Trump's response ad are organized in such a way so as to emphasize key ideas to influence the audience's perception of Hillary Clinton and her initial statement. Important to the layout of the ad is that it begins by establishing a class-related tone and theme in acknowledging that Clinton's words were spoken to "wealthy donors" at a fundraiser, and it concludes with the words "Hillary Clinton viciously demonizing hard working people like you," both appearing and being spoken aloud. The use of a wide shot with a large crowd and the word "DEPLORABLE" appearing and stretching across the frame, followed by multiple close shots of different groups, changing with each critical epithet Clinton uses, is intended to convince the audience that Clinton has insulted a wide array of people, and importantly, morally good people. The ad references Hillary Clinton and wealthy people, but also women, working-class men, veterans, and to some extent, people of color. Thus, a theme of diversity is arguably present or at least implied.

LANGUAGE, GRAMMAR, RHETORIC, AND DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES

I am combining the categories of language, grammar, and rhetoric with discursive strategies because it is difficult to separate these interconnected concepts that are so deeply interpellated with one another. Language, grammar, and rhetoric refers to the vocabulary and writing style present in a text (Carvalho). Discursive strategies refer to

manipulation or framing of the text which involves not only what is included, but also what is excluded (Carvalho).

The rhetorical choices in language and vocabulary are particularly interesting between Clinton's statement and Trump's responding comments and ad. The two campaigns demonstrate through these texts a clear difference in the intended audience by resting on distinct variations in the relation to language. For example, like previously mentioned, the word "deplorable" is itself important in that it is not an example of typical working-class speech, especially in the peculiar noun form in which Clinton used it (Merriam-Webster). It was not uncommon for liberals and progressives to actually joke about how a number of people for whom the term was intended probably had to first look it up. Online searches for the meaning of the word "deplorable," an adjective meaning "lamentable" or "deserving of censure or contempt," did in fact spike considerably following Clinton's use of it (Merriam-Webster). Likewise, Clinton resorts to a laundry-list of terms, "racist," "sexist," "homophobic," "xenophobic," and "Islamophobic," recognized as "political correctness" on the Right, and emblematic of a Leftist relation to language in the reliance upon sophisticated, intellectual, and theoretical "signifying terminology" (Proudman 201). Such terminology, Proudman states, allows for groups to recognize one another through the signifying act of mutual intellectual belonging,

> by implying a shared intelligence, by dropping the name of a textual authority, or
> by deploying thick, intellectually laden, heavily allusive terminology . . . at once
> to signal allies that 'we' really understand what is going on and to exclude and
> stigmatize opponents who do not know or do not accept the ideological
> implications of the language in use. The use of such . . . terminology designates as

respectable, and thus inside the group in question, those able to participate in the

discussion, while simultaneously excluding those outside the cognoscenti. (203)

This sense of belonging is further demonstrated in Clinton's informal use of "you name

it" following the list of condemning epithets. It might also suggest that, as the in-group

discussing all of these negative traits, she is speaking to those who are on the same page

as her, that this terminology is common between them, and none of these terms apply to

anyone within this group, only to those outside of it.

The terms that she uses to describe the "basket of deplorables" are also important

in that they take on the form of a list. According to Norman Fairclough, in his

monumental work *Language and Power,* lists are important in that they set up an

association between each of the items listed, but do not necessarily explicitly state how

they are associated. Additionally, what is not included in a list is significant because it

constructs a notion of what is to be disassociated. Listing pulls in the audience and

requires work on their part to follow the speaker's line of reasoning. Notably, what is

missing from Clinton's list is any term referencing class, despite having listed terms that

are easily understood to be in reference to race, gender, sexuality, national origin, and

religion (specifically Islam). Implicitly, this inclusion and exclusion of terms listed might

account for why it was perceived that Clinton was denigrating working-class people

specifically as a "basket of deplorables." Trump similarly uses lists in his responding

comments, but ones that are more blatantly associated with the working-class—through

the naming of working-class occupations:

Hillary Clinton spoke with hatred in her heart for these working class Americans.

She looks down on . . . the people who make her life possible . . . the carpenters,

plumbers, electricians, lawyers and accountants. . . the police officers, soldiers, and firefighters . . . the people who cook her meals, drive her cars, and dig the coal that powers her electricity.

Although lawyers and even some accountants might not be generally thought of as working-class, every other profession he names in this speech is coded as stereotypically working-class.

While Trump's response ad relies on a different relationship to language, it is similar to Clinton's speech in its attempts to articulate relationality and belonging, particularly emphasizing the invocation of the pronoun "you." Fairclough identifies the significance and prominence of the direct address of individuals through the use of the pronoun "you" in its ability to convey relational intimacy and connection with the intended audience. "You" is "used to register solidarity and commonality of experience in working-class speech" (Fairclough 180). According to Fairclough, because of the "diverse . . . composition of mass-media audiences, the speaker . . . has to postulate, and set up a subject position for . . . a typified 'ideal' hearer" (178). In his analysis of another authoritarian populist, Margaret Thatcher, he determines her ideal hearer to be an "ordinary person" or a member of "the people" (179). Thus, Thatcher's use of the pronoun "you," in speaking to the experiences, beliefs, and aspirations of "the people," establishes a relationship which places herself in with "the ordinary person" as well (179). Similarly, the use of "you" in Trump's response ad attempts to establish solidarity and a relationship between Trump himself and the ideal hearer whom Clinton has insulted, serving the double function of presenting Trump as "one of the people" and, conversely, Clinton as a member of the wealthy elite. Interestingly, in one of the final

frames of the consecutive deployment of "you" in Trump's ad, he is himself featured distributing supplies to flood victims alongside Mike Pence, as fellow members of "the people," whom, it is suggested, Clinton has called "deplorable."

In addition to bringing attention to a collective solidarity among those who are presumably "deplorable," "you" may also function in the singular form, drawing in individual viewers. Fairclough refers to this quality as "synthetic personalization," or a "compensatory tendency to give the impression of treating each of the people 'handled' *en masse* as an individual" (52). This is especially significant in this context because it tugs on the very personal issue of feeling disempowered politically. Charlesworth explains that oftentimes working-class people feel alienated from politics, because they "cannot recognize their plight in the discourses supplied by politicians" (212). Working-class people may feel that their experiential knowledge does not qualify as "politics" because, to them, their experiences are just ordinary life (Charlesworth). Because they lack the legitimated linguistics and articulatory comportment associated with expression in the political domain, and because they have internalized the feelings of incompetence, they might ignore the political realm all together (Charlesworth). But for political representation to materialize, their "corporeal sense of the world" depends upon a "self-conscious representation of their interests" (212). This invocation of the individualizing "you," paired with the corporeal "hard working people" in the ad's clause "hard working people like you," provides this transition from a working-class corporeal sense of the world to a literal self-conscious representation of their interests. Thus, such an invocation of "you" provides the political efficacy that working-class people have historically felt they have lacked or been denied by dominant institutions and the dominant class.

Trump's responding comments also play on the usage of "you" and specifically rely on the invocation of "the people," like previously mentioned. Comparing his responding comments to Clinton's initial speech, his delivery is more direct in that he more frequently directly addresses the audience as "you," while Clinton is more likely to say "I" or "we." In several cases where she does use "you," it could easily be replaced with the impersonal "one," whose relational value can be a euphemistic way of saying "I," which can be interpreted as "a delicate way of stating a self-centered perception of interests" (for example, "you could put half of his supporters into . . . the basket of deplorables" easily can be "*one* could put . . . " or "I could put . . . ") (Fairclough 180). Trump's comments on the other hand are more direct; "I want to tell you what I am going to do to make your life better," or "I call you hardworking American patriots who love your country." In the same speech, he says that Clinton "talks about people like they're objects, not human beings." In the sense that her language, in comparison to his, can more easily be read as hypothetical rather than personal and direct, this claim is not unfounded.

Lastly, what is worth noting are the portions of Clinton's initial statement which are included in Trump's response ad in comparison to which portions are excluded. What should be immediately obvious for anyone who has read or listened to Clinton's full statement is that a large portion of it is excluded from the response ad put out by Trump's campaign. After all, she refers to Trump's supporters fitting into *two* baskets. The "basket of deplorables" has received plenty of attention, but its counterpart, "the other basket," including those who feel alienated and forgotten by their government, who have legitimate concerns, and are deserving of empathy—that basket has not received the same

attention. This other portion was also rarely acknowledged by media coverage and political commentary on the incident. This is a very deliberate example of framing by what is included and what is excluded. While Trump does acknowledge both "baskets" in his responding comments in Asheville, North Carolina, the content to be shared in multiple commercial airings across Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Florida included only the "basket of deplorables," not the other basket of people whom Clinton called on her supporters to empathize with (E. Collins).

IDEOLOGICAL STANDPOINTS

Multiple ideological standpoints are present in Clinton's speech, Trump's responding comments, and his response ad. Some are quite overt while others are more subtle. In discussing the ideological standpoints, I will jump between the three texts I am analyzing because they are contextually tied to one another. According to Carvalho, ideological standpoints are the implicit and explicit social and political values or stances present in a text. Ideological standpoints take on the quality of an assumption which functions as "a means of legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power . . . through the recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving which take these relations and power differences for granted" (Fairclough 2). This is not an exhaustive account of every ideology present in these texts because not every ideology readily pertains to the topic of this thesis. What I do provide is an overview of several of the primary ideologies present which are at the heart of the issue of epistemic injustice. These important ideologies include, on one hand, a neoliberal and meritocratic emphasis on hard work,

morality, dignity, and honor, traits we will see coded as white and masculine, and on the other, elitism and the idea that working-class people are ignorant.

First, some general ideologies present in Clinton's initial comments: Clinton's speech emphasizes rights-based ideologies for LGBT people and social justice ideologies interested in women's rights, civil rights, racial equality, multi-culturalism, pro-immigration, and even to a lesser degree, support for the military. While her critique of those who would belong in "the basket of deplorables" was probably directed towards white-supremacists and the alt-right who have been emboldened by Trump's rhetoric, its intertextual reference to negative discourse regarding the stereotypically ignorant, bigoted, racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic, white working-class man is implicitly present.

Trump does attempt to shed the racist label in his response ad and in his responding comments. In his ad, diverse groups of people are shown including Latinx people, a black man, an Orthodox Jewish man, and otherwise racially ambiguous people, suggesting that more than just "racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic," white, working-class men support him. In his responding comments in Asheville, North Carolina, he talks about people of color, specifically referring to a statistic on African-American poverty rates. Although he does so immediately after mentioning his plans for reforming "inner cities." Then he follows up with a statistic on gun violence in Chicago. His general message to black Americans is that, in urban areas, Democrats have been in power for decades and that their lives are not necessarily any better for it. Because they have nothing to lose, they should vote for Trump.

Clearly, there are some issues here with conflating inner cities with blackness, poverty, and violence, associations Trump has been criticized for invoking multiple times, both during his campaign and continuing into his presidency (Ye Hee Lee). However, the placement of his appeal to black Americans is interesting in its implicit embedding of gendered and raced ideas. The phrase "hard working people" is used in both Trump's response ad and responding comments. To refer back to the intersecting axes of identity and "the working man," Roediger argues that the term "working man" invokes an implicit whiteness and sense of masculinity. Keeping this in mind, the repeated phrase "hard working people" in Trump's responding ad and comments could be coded as white and masculine, implicitly subscribing to an ideology of white people working hard and people of color being lazy. It is curious that throughout Trump's speech on the dignity of hard working Americans, he partitions his statements to the black community, imploring them to "Give Donald J. Trump a chance," off in a short section near the end of his speech, separate from talk of dignity and hard work. Nowhere else in his speech does he mention people of color. This type of distancing, while implicit, furthers an ideological standpoint that understands morality, goodness, and forms of respectable masculinity as being traits associated with whiteness, and if read through Roediger's point, this whiteness implies maleness.

Trump's response ad and responding comments contain a heavy reliance on the narrative of being hard working, which is a powerful ideological standpoint that influences Trump's appeal to working-class people. Sociologists have suggested that working-class people develop their self-worth in moral terms (Lamont; Sherman). With obstacles preventing upward mobility, working-class people find value in moral order

derived from hard work, paying bills and taxes, caring for their children, and caring for others (Lamont et al.; Pini and Conway; Sherman). These duties are traits of the "disciplined self," embraced by white working-class men and many working-class men of color (Lamont). Through the lens of the "disciplined self," value is manifested through meritocratic ideals of "hard work and commitment, upholding family responsibilities, and performing the role of the provider and protector" (Lamont et al. S162). Of particular salience is the association of hard working people with moral dignity, an association rooted in discourses of meritocracy. For example, after surveying seventy-three of Trump's formal speeches on the 2016 campaign trail, Lamont, Yun Park, and Ayala-Hurtado identified that Trump appealed to the white working-class by raising their moral status through repeatedly describing them as hardworking, and acknowledging their concerns about professionals, the elite, and politicians, among a number of things. We can see that Trump's response ad is in alignment with their assessment, as are his responding comments to Clinton's initial statement.

Different categories of individuals representing moral goodness are depicted throughout the ad including veterans, working-class people, and Trump, as he is seen helping victims of a natural disaster. It is clear that invoking an ideology of morality is important to this ad and perceived as important to the intended audience of the ad. This point is made even more explicit by Trump's responding comments made in Asheville, North Carolina. In this brief speech, Trump says the words "respect," "dignity," or "honor" eight times, he says "jobs" ten times, and he says "work" or "working" five times, including the phrase "hard working" or "working hard." The prominence and frequency of these words effectively establish the perspective that Clinton's comment

was in reference to hardworking members of the working-class. With the association of hard work with virtue and dignity, one can only wonder where this leaves those who are physically disabled or unable to work for other reasons.

For those that belong in Clinton's proverbial "other basket," those who feel let down and forgotten by the government and by the economy, and as Trump summarized in his responding comments, as "having run out of options," they are deserving of empathy according to Clinton. However, as William's articulates, empathy is often perceived as condescension. This attempt of showing a kinder sentiment towards those in "the other basket" could be interpreted not as empathy, but as pity and insulting the intelligence of the white working-class individuals supporting Trump. White working-class people are not privy to pity, and Trump capitalized on this fact by returning to the rhetoric of hard work, dignity, and honor. Between pity and being irredeemably deplorable, there is no difference except in that rejecting pity is more dignified.

In Trump's responding comments, he acknowledges the knowledge and understanding that the working-class has of the country's political workings. He even flatters them, calling their understanding "sophisticated":

Whether our supporters have lost a job to a factory moved to another country, or whether they're a captain in the police department, or a teacher at a local school, they are united by their deep and sophisticated understanding of how our political system has abandoned the people.

By calling the understanding of individuals in these professions "sophisticated," and repeatedly claiming that Clinton "looks down on them," he is deliberately playing right into the narrative, made even more opportunistically accessible by Clinton's ill-advised

comments, that the educated elite think that working-class people are ignorant, a narrative which feeds the process of epistemic injustice. When the white working-class see themselves through the eyes of the dominant class; when their perceptual horizon is expanded and they have access to the hermeneutic resources to see themselves as an object[7], to see themselves as deplorable, and to face the condescension and derision, they come to imbue

> a sense of themselves that they must live up against: a fracturing, damaging sense of self learnt through . . . the institutions . . . [and] interactions of everyday life' . . . [inscribing] a . . . sense of the social order that makes visible the extent to which: 'Social divisions become principles of division, organizing the image of the social world' . . . 'Objective limits acquired by experience of objective limits' amount to a 'sense of one's place' . . . [leading one] to exclude *themselves* from [that] . . . which they are excluded. (Charlesworth 248)

Put simply, after seeing themselves the way the educated elite see them, they elect to exclude themselves from a domain which, by their interpretation, they are already excluded. If Clinton did not want their vote, then she would not get their vote, essentially. The action of excluding themselves from what they have already been excluded from is an example of how the social and political division between the white working-class and the educated elite actually reifies itself. While Trump appealed to the white working-class by appearing to raise up their situated knowledge as legitimate, Clinton either saw them

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[7] Here, I am referring to Linda Martín Alcoff's notion of identity as horizon and a matter of perceptual access, which I think complements Miranda Fricker's understanding of hermeneutic epistemic injustice, in which the knower does not have full access to or a contextualizing understanding of one's social positioning due to a lack in hermeneutical resources. My use of "object" is in the Heideggerian sense, to objectify one's self and attempt to reflexively make sense of things, to "'throw themselves against' a pure discovering - that is, that they can become 'objects'" (414).

as deplorable or to be pitied, as far as they were concerned. This was the dignity in embracing the title "deplorable."

DISCUSSION

It is important to consider the target audiences and contexts for both of the candidates. Clinton was speaking to private donors who were presumably liberal. Trump, on the other hand, was speaking directly to working-class people because it was that demographic who was perceived to be targeted by Clinton's remarks. Rhetorical strategies that are effective for one audience are not necessarily effective for the other. One example of this is Trump's use of extensive boundary work (Lamont et al.). Boundary work "feeds hierarchies of worth and status as individuals create categorizations and distinctions between people" (S161). These symbolic boundaries contribute to the construction of social boundaries (Lamont et al.). Trump employs boundary work through his rhetoric, associating himself with working-class people and separating himself from the establishment, which he has described as corrupt (Lamont et al.). By focusing on the working-class, attributing working-class downward mobility to structural factors, and drawing distinct boundaries between both those above and those below, Trump effectively catered to what resonates most with the white working-class (Lamont et al.). In fact, his boundary work actually mirrored that of white working-class men, who develop what Lamont calls a "moral matrix," to help "maximize their worth in relation to 'people above' and 'people below'" (Lamont et al. S162). Thus, Trump's boundary work symbolically bridged the gap between a wealthy businessman like himself and white working-class people (Lamont et al.).

Jonathan Haidt presents an interesting assessment in the differences between liberal and conservative politics through the use of political psychology and moral foundations theory. Moral foundations theory claims that people think and make decisions that are based in ideas of morality rather than reason (Haidt). So, with that being said, Haidt argues that people make political decisions based on intuition. People do reason, but often times they reach a conclusion first, and then develop the arguments to justify that conclusion after the fact (Haidt). Haidt considers how morality varies across cultures, but there are some themes that tend to recur. These themes of morality include care, fairness, loyalty, authority, sanctity, and liberty[8] (Haidt). Haidt argues that Liberals tend to construct morality with only three of these foundational themes, mainly the theme of care, and also the themes of fairness and liberty. In comparison, Conservatives derive their morality from all six themes (Haidt).

I mention Lamont's research on the boundary work in Trump's speeches and Haidt's work on the foundations of conservative and liberal morality to suggest that Trump and Clinton's audiences, in the contexts I have analyzed, differ, and the candidate's rhetorical approaches that are successful with each audience also differ. Trump could afford to mirror the boundary work of white working-class men, and this approach was beneficial for attracting the support of his intended audience. Clinton's engagement in distinguishing between good and evil baskets of Trump supporters, on the other hand, was perceived as "divisive." Furthermore, the gap that Clinton had to bridge

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[8] Haidt elaborates on each of these recurrent themes, explaining that care, and its opposite, harm, are associated with virtues like kindness or nurturance. Fairness and its opposite, cheating, relate to reciprocal altruism and proportionality. Loyalty, and its opposite, betrayal, are associated with patriotism or self-sacrifice for the group. Authority, and its opposite, subversion, are associated with leadership, followership, deference to legitimate authority, and respect for tradition. Sanctity, and its opposite, degradation refer to efforts to live in a noble way and protect the body and mind from perceived contaminants. Liberty, and its opposite, oppression, involve how people resent or react to those who oppress them or limit their liberty.

in her rhetoric, in order to appeal to white working-class men, was much larger than for Trump if we consider Haidt's moral foundations. Were Clinton's remarks successful in any way? Most likely, no. Because Clinton's remarks influenced a larger shift in undecided voters to support Trump in the final stretch, it is clear that her comments were not well received outside of her own intended audience of liberal, LGBT private donors (Hessan). While the comment might have had some mobilizing potential for the Democratic Party, it ultimately deterred undecided voters and solidified white working-class support for Trump.

Why are Trump's words received as genuine rather than condescending by his intended audience of working-class people? In some cases, calling someone's understanding of something "sophisticated" could be perceived as condescending. Describing something in relation to the working-class as "sophisticated" could in itself seem ingenuine due to that kind of language rarely being used to describe the working-class. The reason for this difference in the way Trump's words are received compared to Clinton's again can be traced back to a classed difference in relation to language, so deeply imbedded in working-class comportment that it influences the affective senses[9] that interpret things such as honesty; interpretations shaped through their habitus and socialization, shaping the mind and body that is perceiving, and thus shaping their surrounding social environments as well (*Distinction,* Bourdieu; Charlesworth). More specifically, these learned dispositions emphasize the association of honesty, sincerity, and trustworthiness with outspokenness, bluntness, the refusal to euphemism-laden

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[9] This is a phenomenological idea, if we recall that "Language is a technique of the body, and linguistic . . . competency is a dimension of bodily hexis in which the whole relation to the social world expresses itself" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 149).

speech, and the eschewal of proper etiquette as defined by the dominant classes and institutions (Charlesworth). Bourdieu explains it well, stating that

> it is the free-speech and language of the heart which make the true 'nice guy', blunt, straightforward, unbending, honest, genuine, 'straight down the line,' . . . as opposed to everything that is pure form, done only for form's sake; it is freedom and the refusal of complications, as opposed to respect for all the forms and formalities spontaneously perceived as instruments of distinction and power. On . . . these world views, there is no neutral view-point; what for some is shameless and slovenly, for others is straightforward, unpretentious; familiarity is for some the most absolute form of recognition, . . . a trusting openness, a relation of equal to equal. (*Distinction* 199)

These improper qualities suggest that Trump is "one who can be known and thus relied upon to take a certain stance" (234). Because he had already established himself as the outspoken candidate who was not afraid to offend, his words were received by working-class people as genuine and therefore not condescending.

Clinton, on the other hand, represents the image that the Democratic Party has attempted to procure for itself: progressive and inclusive to those marginalized due to their race, gender, or sexuality. Regardless of how accurately this image depicts reality, it is an image that does not include white working-class men (Reich). The Democratic Party that was once recognized as the party of working-class people has eroded along with the labor unions that helped sustain it over the last three decades, with both Democrat and Republican leaders embracing neoliberal policies (Reich). Thus, Clinton came to symbolize the increasingly villainized "political correctness," whose "hyper-correction"

was read by many white working-class men as untrustworthy (Charlesworth 226).

Charlesworth mentions that working-class people "tellingly equate" these bodily and linguistic comportments of propriety with teachers, librarians, city council members, government employees, state officials, and politicians (216). These occupations are all associated with epistemic authority granted through the nominating power of government and education, the social institutions of legitimate knowledge (P.H. Collins). They are also associated with the public sector, which has lost favor with the conservative movement through what Cramer calls a "rural resentment of public employees," due to the prevailing myths that associate public employees with urban areas or urban concerns, and suggest that public employees make more money than they deserve (127). Of course, regardless of the accuracy of this assessment of public employees, these negative beliefs about the public sector serve a political purpose, promoting privatization (Cramer). Cramer also notes an aversion to "university types," because of the belief that they are not hard working people, as well as the rural perception that university employees, especially professors, are associated with what is urban and, thus, must look down on rural people (131).

Cramer acknowledges that these rural and conservative perceptions are, in part, due to "an aversion to elitism" (131). However, while Cramer identifies these political divisions as primarily being due to the urban and rural divide, I think they can also be

linked to an epistemic divide[10]. Continued subjugation of working-class knowledge is a

contributing factor in the backlash of what some can only see as "anti-intellectualism,"

but to call it that misses the point. It is a reaction to having one's experiences and

knowledge rendered irrelevant, having one's thoughts "suppressed by prevailing

knowledge validation processes," and the determining that one's knowledge is not

legitimate, but rather, subjugated knowledge (P.H. Collins 254). Recourse to insulting the

intelligence of white working-class men functions to reify institutional powers with the

authority to determine a hierarchy of knowledge, and a hierarchy of whose standpoints

count as valid. The implications stretch so far as to even call into question one's human

worth, a fundamental consequence of epistemic injustice[11] (Fricker).

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[10] This is in reference to Miranda Fricker's notion of epistemic injustice, and as I further explain, Patricia Hill Collins's concepts of legitimated and subjugated knowledges, intrinsic to her construction of a new kind of epistemology, one she identifies as a black feminist standpoint, that includes valuing the meaning derived from concrete experience, the ethics of care, and the ethics of personal accountability. It is an epistemology that challenges the dominant epistemology (created by elite white men) that renders the experiential knowledge of marginalized groups illegitimate. This standpoint epistemology proposes that there are multiple standpoints formed from multiple points of situated knowledge, each acknowledging their access to a partial truth, and the importance of recognizing the partial perspectives in others which are necessary for piecing together the whole (P.H. Collins 270).

[11] Fricker describes epistemic injustice as being "wronged in one's capacity as a knower [which] is to be wronged in a capacity essential to human value . . . [bearing] a social meaning to the effect that the subject is less than fully human" (44).

CHAPTER 4:

CONCLUSION: A WAY FORWARD?

OVERVIEW

In this final chapter, I discuss the broader implications of epistemic injustice and the gap between the white working-class and the educated elite, as well as what is at stake in the present political moment as it pertains to the epistemic injustice of white working-class men. I suggest some strategies for moving forward and addressing this political and cultural rift, and I discuss ideas for future research on this topic.

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

In the current political milieu, society is even more stratified and divided than ever before. With growing income inequality, the gap between the rich and the poor (and the working poor and working-class) is growing ever wider. Likewise, political stances at this time feel more polarized than ever—grid locks, government shutdowns, and failures to make progress on important legislature and policy confirms this (Thomsen). The carnage of the 2016 presidential election cycle does as well.

Donald Trump capitalized on a slew of anxieties made from an amalgamation of economic problems, worries over immigration, racial tension, and more, but he also tapped into a wound inflicted by a history of class domination manifesting through classism and elitism. It is a classism that utilizes ableist rhetoric to suggest that white working-class men are too stupid to know what they are talking about. Betsy Leondar-Wright reminds progressives that if they want to understand Trump voters and, more importantly, if they want to change them, the first place to start is by acknowledging that they are "sane people of normal intelligence who hold a different ideology." Pathologizing and insulting the intelligence of those with whom one disagrees is not a recipe for progress. There will be people who will not change, confirmation bias is hard to avoid. There will be people filled with hate, and for some it is not safe to try and change the mind of a Trump voter. This is understandable. But for those in positions of epistemic authority, those with class privilege or white privilege, these positions of institutional power must be used in a class-sensitive manner to reach individuals who have been alienated from progressive politics, that is, if progressives want to see a change in today's political climate.

Hochschild voices the need to tear down empathy walls and create empathy bridges, and Williams, recognizing that empathy might be felt as condescension, maintains that we still need to try. This involves academics and intellectuals recognizing the class-biases that their work as academics and actions as people help to uphold. It involves making a conscious effort to be critical of one's self. This involves academics and intellectuals taking inventory of their political and academic beliefs and asking themselves if they are demonstrating a stance based off of obligation for the sake of a

professional identity, or if they whole-heartedly care about inclusion. They will need to

think about who they are still excluding. This requires recognizing that people are all at

different places in their learning and that so many people are not "irredeemable."

If progressives truly do want to bring about social justice for everyone, regardless

of their gender, sex, sexuality, race, country of origin, ability, religion, or class, then this

requires class-sensitive approaches in their social, political, and personal lives, as well as

class-sensitive pedagogies in the classroom. This also requires valuing concrete

experiences and recognizing the importance in developing an ethics of care and personal

accountability (P.H. Collins). In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss some of

these class-sensitive approaches, the ethics of care and personal accountability, and future

directions for research in this area of study.

A WAY FORWARD?

To be "class-sensitive" is to take part in "thought and action grounded in the goal

of eliminating classism and class bias of all kinds" (Jones and Vagle 130). Describing

class-sensitive pedagogy, Stephanie Jones and Mark Vagle explain that it is

> not necessarily about taking up a *particular* orientation toward the world, but
>
> more about acquiring bodied habits of "judging" our judgments so they do not
>
> continually take hold of us . . . and lead us to making classed reactionary
>
> comments—*and* speaking out with urgency in solidarity (not sympathy or pity or
>
> hatred) with working-class and poor students. It is about acquiring and sharing
>
> ever-widening knowledge about history and contemporary issues facing families

struggling to survive *and* acting with great humility to hear a personal story that

may contradict all of the knowledge learned in books. (138)

What is interesting about this description of class-sensitive pedagogy is its emphasis on *bodied* knowledge and ultimately being about acquiring *bodied* habits of being critical of our own judgments. This description acknowledges both the validity of the knowledge of personal, embodied experience, and "the knowledge learned in books," as well as how both of these knowledges are simultaneously constitutive of and constituted by social life (138). These bodied habits help in the development of "class-sensitive perceptivity" (135). Class-sensitive perceptivity is important for both pedagogues and people in general. Jones and Vagle explain that this perceptivity involves continually developing an attunement to moment-to-moment interactions, noting the ways in which spaces are classed, and recognizing how our bodies exist within these classed spaces in order to transform "perceived, embodied classism" (135).

For intellectuals and academics, particularly those in gender and sexuality studies or who espouse feminist stances in their work, classroom, or institutions, it is particularly imperative to consider how one conceives of those with whom they disagree or how one interacts with those who do not know the nuanced ways of navigating politically correct speech. This involves recognizing, as Rosalind Coward asserts, that not every critique of masculinity is necessarily progressive, noting that, so often, working-class men disproportionately shoulder the burden of every negative masculine trait or behavior, while men from the middle and upper-classes, who also benefit from male dominance, and are often just as guilty of similar behaviors, are able to escape the same level of criticism. One reason for this is that men with class privilege are more likely to have

access to euphemistic forms of language that render their speech more socially acceptable, and their sexism more covert (Charlesworth). However, this double standard is ultimately classist in nature and, as Coward argues, perpetuated by a "quasi-feminist critique of masculinity" (Quoted in Charlesworth 156). While many aspects of masculinity are worthy of disparagement, Coward maintains, it becomes problematic when paired with hostility towards the underclasses and underprivileged, or in other words, when "the disparagement of all things male is linked to the poor" (Quoted in Charlesworth 156).

This quasi-feminist critique of masculinity has penetrated academic culture (Charlesworth 161). Thus, while the increased role feminism has played in academic culture is not entirely responsible for a "demand for the highly euphemized, hyper-coherent discourse of political correctness," it is an important influencing aspect that has been contorted to foster attitudes that are "often thinly veiled justifications of class[ism]"(300). Ann Curhoys, identifying the error in speaking of men and women in ways undifferentiated by class, compellingly critiques this under-acknowledged position of class privilege:

> How had [women who are highly privileged academics] come to identify the relative privilege and power of the middle-class men they combated in their working lives with the position of all men? . . . As long as middle class women identify themselves as the oppressed, they have a theoretical basis for continuing to exert class privilege. . . And for Socialists, Marxists, this just won't do . . . to focus on sexism out of context, to remain willfully blind to the realities of class

privilege and exploitation in this way, we must locate a class-blind feminism as

politically reactionary. (157)

Intellectuals and academics must be aware of the diverse classed relations to education,

and how the internalized shame working-class people generally experience with

education has helped foster a sense of resentment towards those who symbolically

represent epistemic privilege. Neoliberal discourses of perpetual self-improvement that

preach continued upward mobility in status and income are a part of schools today, but

this type of discourse constructs classist hierarchies and suggests that some workers are

worthy of much less than others (Jones and Vagle). Such discourses often result in

internalized shame for working-class and poor students (Jones and Vagle).

Finally, class-sensitivity is necessary outside of the academic setting as well.

Especially since I have argued that intelligence is a part of everyday life and comes in

many forms other than what is generally already socially and institutionally legitimized.

The process of being self-critical, admitting privilege, and acknowledging the ways in

which practices might be exclusionary to some groups, or might even be perceived as

hostile to some groups is a difficult, but necessary undertaking. Paulo Freire recommends

a collaborative process, between members of the dominant and non-dominant classes, to

examine how class oppression functions. This approach is challenging because it begins

the process of renegotiating the distribution of status, power, and resources, but this is an

important stage in the process towards social justice (Freire; Newton).

Taking inspiration from Patricia Hill Collins, a path forward might be found in the

primary dimensions of Black Feminist Standpoint Theory[12]. These dimensions include valuing the meaning derived from concrete experience and developing both an ethics of care and of personal accountability (P.H. Collins). An ethics of care involves an emphasis on the value of each individual, the interconnectedness of emotion and reason, and the developing of a capacity for empathy and compassion (P.H. Collins). However, with this ethic of care comes the ethic of personal accountability, the idea that one must be accountable for the knowledge claims that they make (P.H. Collins). There is a level of accountability that all people must have and answer for, regardless of their class or other facets of personal identity, especially when one espouses destructive and otherwise problematic claims regarding others. Perhaps a greater emphasis on class-sensitivity, an ethic of care, and an ethic of personal accountability could help to foster a greater empathy that would branch outward to other facets of social and political life, promoting systemic change towards social justice for other marginalized groups. Most important is each individual's active-participation in dialogue, an intrinsic aspect of coalition building (P.H. Collins). Through dialogue and the context of community, "people become more human and empowered" (261). By seeing the human in others, even those with whom one disagrees with politically or differs from entirely in terms of identity, the "scaffolding of an empathy bridge" might begin to take form (Hochschild vi).

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[12] I understand the potential implications of using Black Feminist thought to explain the value of white working class men's experiences, however, I believe that the contours of Black Feminist thought can be adapted across race and incorporated into work with other marginalized groups. In fact, Patricia Hill Collins states that "the significance of a Black feminist epistemology may lie in its ability to enrich our understanding of how subordinate groups create knowledge that fosters both their empowerment and social justice" (269). Therefore, I think it is possible to work with these ideas, even if they are used in application to white working class men, and still give the Black Feminist origins of these thoughts the respect they deserve.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have illustrated how epistemic injustice functions in the divide between white working-class men and the educated elite by discussing the discursive ways in which working-class knowledge and experience are devalued as legitimate sources of knowledge. I demonstrated this by using critical discourse analysis to interpret the underlying attitudes and ideologies in comments made by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump during their 2016 presidential campaigns. I also discussed how these ideologies are perceived positively or negatively by Trump's working-class base—whether they appealed to the working-class or reinforced epistemic injustice by insulting their intelligence. Using feminist standpoint theory and phenomenology as a foundation of thought, I claimed that white working-class men are increasingly alienated from progressive politics through classist and ableist rhetoric and that if progressives wish to win over white working-class men, they will need to ameliorate this division, otherwise this gap will continue to grow.

In this final chapter, I have provided a reflection for considering a path forward using class-sensitive approaches, both in and out of academic settings, and have considered the applicability of adapting dimensions of Black Feminist thought, put forward by Patricia Hill Collins, to the experiences of white working-class men. I believe this is the most feasible route for ameliorating a divide between white working-class men and the educated elite, a divide which has proven difficult to bridge for the Democratic Party and progressive politics in general. The three primary dimensions of Black Feminist Standpoint Epistemology, valuing concrete experience, the ethic of care, and the ethic of personal accountability, is promising for seeking to bridge this gap because it

challenges the established methods of knowledge validation that have been used to deny the validity of the experiences and knowledge of marginalized groups (P.H. Collins). It calls into question the perspectives of the educated elite and the factors they use for determining the validity of knowledge. This requires reflexivity in the Bourdieusian sense, involving "a turning back upon the position of the knowing subject, a looking back at one's own knowing practice," from both the dominant classes and the white working-class (Charlesworth 31).

The ethic of care and personal accountability are also particularly appropriate for the issues addressed here (P.H. Collins). The ethic of personal accountability holds both the dominant classes and the white working-class responsible for the knowledge claims they make. This is crucial because it acknowledges that this argument for valuing the knowledge and experience of white working-class men is not in any way ignoring or excusing racist, sexist, and homophobic rhetoric. This accountability also holds elite educated people responsible for their classist and ableist rhetoric that occurs in resorting to calling into question the intelligence of white working-class men. But with this accountability comes the balance of empathy and care, the value of emotion, dialogue, and connection. These compassionate connections work to validate knowledge claims and lead us collectively to truth (P.H. Collins).

These ideas are not far from the "empathy bridges" Hochschild urges the educated elite to build, nor the culture of the "disciplined self" Lamont identified among working-class men. Working-class ideals value the responsibility to care for others, to be honest, to recognize the dignity and respect owed to each individual (Lamont et al.). Translating

these ideals to an ethics of care and personal accountability is possible, and it will take work, but it is work both working-class people and the dominant classes are capable of.

Future research might consider interviewing white working-class men to gain insight on their perspectives regarding knowledge, intelligence, and how they see themselves either fitting or not fitting in to progressive politics. It would be interesting to inquire about how they understand intelligence and who they consider intelligent, or if they have traits or skills that they believe should be characterized as intelligent. This could be helpful for understanding the extent to which they have internalized classist beliefs of epistemic credibility and it could help generate conversation for expanding what is conceived of as intelligence. Hearing their own accounts could be very fruitful terrain for conducting a critical discourse analysis. Of course, it takes an experienced and perceptive researcher to conduct this type of fieldwork. Other research might include a look into Democratic strategies for appealing to the white working-class demographic in future presidential elections. This could include analyzing the speech patterns of candidates who are more successful with the demographic to understand which discursive trends resonate most.

Studying white working-class men as individuals and as a demographic, through a lens of empathy and awareness of the ways in which privilege is intersectional, recognizing individuals in their multi-faceted identities, and understanding how these identities relate to systems of power to simultaneously privilege and marginalize people in different ways is critical for feminist research. Honest and careful effort to bridge the gap between white working-class men and the educated elite is of great importance in this political moment. We need a class-sensitive feminism just as much as we need a feminist

movement that takes into consideration race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, and so forth. My

hope is that in this thesis I have demonstrated the significance of these points and

continued a discussion that we should be having so we can understand and see the worth

in one another.

APPENDIX A

FULL TRANSCRIPT OF CLINTON'S SPEECH AT THE LGBT FOR HILLARY

GALA ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2016 (Reilly)

Thank you all so much. Wow. Thank you. Thank you. It's sort of like the seventh inning stretch. Thank you all. You know, I've been saying at events like this lately, I am all that stands between you and the apocalypse. Tonight, I'm all that stands between a much better outcome! I want to thank Laverne for being here at her first political event. Her endorsement, her strong words, her passion, her example, her advocacy on behalf of the transgender community, particularly transgender women of color, is just so extraordinary, and I love the way she wove in so many of the issues that are up for grabs in this election. I think we know what we're up against. We do, don't we?

[Crowd chants: Yes!]

Donald Trump has pledged for appoint Supreme Court justices who will overturn marriage equality—

[boos]

And if you have read about the ones he says he's likely to support, he's not kidding. In fact, if you look at his running mate, his running-mate signed a law that would have allowed businesses to discriminate against LGBT Americans. And there's so much more than I find deplorable in his campaign: the way that he cozies up to white supremacist, makes racist attacks, calls women pigs, mocks people with disabilities — you can't make this up. He wants to round up and deport 16 million people, calls our military a disaster. And every day he says something else which I find so personally offensive, but also dangerous. You know, the idea of our country is so rooted in continuing progress that we

make together. Our campaign slogan is not just words. We really do believe that we are stronger together. We really do believe that showing respect and appreciation for one another lifts us all up.

And it's a special commitment that I feel to continuing to fight alongside the LGBT community. Because this is one of the continuing struggles. We're filled in this great hall in Cipriani tonight with successful people, raising your glow sticks, thank you so much for contributing a little bit more to get the campaign over the finish line. But somewhere right now in this city is a kid has been kicked out of his house. Somewhere not far from here, maybe a suburb or across state lines, is a young girl who is just not sure what her future holds because she just doesn't feel like she's herself and no one understands that. Some kid getting off the bus at the Port Authority and somebody's waiting to take advantage of that scared but brave kid looking for a different life and a future that actually belongs to him or her.

We still have a lot of work to do. And if you think of the work we have to do in our own country, it pales in comparison to the work we have to do around the world. And I'm grateful that in this room are so many people who have broken down barriers, stood up to discrimination and bigotry, fought for the rights of everyone. I was in North Carolina just yesterday and I told them, it's not only that discrimination is wrong. It's bad for business. That state which was led down a pathway of discrimination is seeing the results — losing jobs, losing the NBA all-star game. Who wants to be associated with a governor and a legislation who set out to hurt the people they're supported to be representing and protecting?

[Cheers]

In too many places still, LGBT Americans are singled out for harassment and violence. You can get married on Saturday, post your pictures on Sunday, and get fired on Monday. That's why we've got to continue the forward march of progress. And we cannot do it alone. I cannot do it alone. I'm not like Donald Trump who says 'I alone can fix it.' I've never quite figure out what it is he alone can fix.

[Laughter/cheers]

But that's not what you'll hear from me. I think we have to do this together. So, together we're gonna pass the Equality Act to guarantee full equality. We're going to put comprehensive quality affordable health care within reach for more people, including for mental health and addiction. We're gonna take on youth homelessness, and as my wonderful, extraordinary, great daughter said, we are going to end the cruel and dangerous practice of conversion therapy. We're going to keep working toward an AIDS-free generation, a goal that I set as secretary of state, and with your help we're going to pass comprehensive gun laws…

[HILL-A-RY chants]

I know there are only 60 days left to make our case — and don't get complacent, don't see the latest outrageous, offensive, inappropriate comment and think well he's done this time. We are living in a volatile political environment. You know, to just be grossly generalistic, you could put half of Trump's supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables. Right?

[Laughter/applause]

The racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamaphobic — you name it. And unfortunately there are people like that. And he has lifted them up. He has given voice to

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their websites that used to only have 11,000 people — now have 11 million. He tweets and retweets their offensive hateful mean-spirited rhetoric. Now, some of those folks — they are irredeemable, but thankfully they are not America. But the other basket — and I know this because I see friends from all over America here — I see friends from Florida and Georgia and South Carolina and Texas — as well as, you know, New York and California — but that other basket of people are people who feel that the government has let them down, the economy has let them down, nobody cares about them, nobody worries about what happens to their lives and their futures, and they're just desperate for change. It doesn't really even matter where it comes from. They don't buy everything he says, but he seems to hold out some hope that their lives will be different. They won't wake up and see their jobs disappear, lose a kid to heroine, feel like they're in a dead-end. Those are people we have to understand and empathize with as well.

[Applause]

And what I hope is that in addition to your extraordinary generosity, you will go to our website, hillaryclinton.com, or text join to JOIN at 47246 to see how else you can get involved. And I want to echo what Chelsea said. We are trying to register 3 million more voters and get those voters to commit to vote. We will win if people turn out to vote. There is no doubt in my mind that we will win.

[Cheers]

But we can't take anyone or any place for granted. And therefore I am asking you to volunteer for a phone bank, for a canvas — at the very least if you know anybody who's even thinking about voting for Trump, stage an intervention! That may be one conversion therapy I endorse.

[Cheers]

Just remember: Friends don't let friends vote for Trump.

So we're going to have a great night tonight because we are so blessed. You know, we all love this woman either from afar or luckily enough up close — and for my family, it's been up close. We know she's the great talent of our time. We know that remarkably she's had a number one album in each of the last six decades. We know that. But we also feel and see her heart and her passion. And she's of course been a great ally and supporter of the LGBT community — but of progressive causes and candidates, she's been on the front lines repeatedly, bravely, never giving up or giving in to all of the incoming criticism that any of us who stick our necks out often attract. So we're in for a great treat tonight. I could not be happier, more grateful, or excited, than to introduce a woman of such extraordinary presence, that really just her first name — spelled correctly — is more than enough. Please welcome, Barbra Streisand!

DONALD TRUMP'S FULL RESPONSE ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2016 IN

ASHVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA (C-SPAN)

Thank you. I am so thrilled to be back in the great state of North Carolina. In 56 days, we are going to win this state -- and we are going to win the White House. But to do that you must get out and vote, and that means early voting which begins on October 20th.

This is our chance -- our one chance -- to fix our rigged system and create prosperity for each and every American. Our vision of hope stands in stark contrast to my opponent's campaign of hate. Hillary Clinton has been running a hate-filled and negative campaign with no policy, no solutions, and no new ideas. By contrast, I've been going around the country offering detailed plans for reform. All of these reform plans are available on our website.

While my opponent slanders you as deplorable and irredeemable, I call you hardworking American patriots who love your country and want a better future for all of our people. You are Democrats, Independents and Republicans. Above all else, you are Americans -- and you are entitled to leadership that honors you, cherishes you and defends you. Every American is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect in our country. Whether you vote for me, or whether you vote for someone else, I will be your champion in the White House.

Hillary Clinton represents only the insiders, the donors and the special interests. I will be speaking more about Hillary Clinton's disqualifying remarks in a minute, but first

let me invite onto the stage some people who can tell you themselves what they think of her spiteful comments.

I have some more thoughts on Clinton's remarks I will be sharing momentarily, but first I want to tell you what I am going to do to make your life better. We've outlined a detailed plan on trade, on immigration, on rebuilding the military, on changing our foreign policy. I've delivered a plan on defeating Islamic terrorism, on reforming our tax code, on unleashing American energy, and on providing school choice to every disadvantaged child in America. We've released policy after policy, solution after solution. Every day, we are putting forward new ideas to make your life better. The change will start right away, the moment I take my oath of office.

On my first day, we are going to immediately terminate every single unconstitutional executive order signed by President Obama. Then, I am going to order a review of every single regulation issued over the last eight years. All needless, job-killing regulations will be cancelled. Millions of new jobs will come pouring in. We are going to lift the restriction on American energy -- this will create another half a million new jobs a year. That's just the beginning. On my first day in office, I am going to ask Congress to send me a bill to immediately repeal and replace disastrous Obamacare -- this will instantly save another 2 million jobs. I am also going to propose a massive tax reduction to unleash prosperity in every city and state in our country. On that first day, I am also going to instruct the Department of Commerce to immediately begin a review of all foreign trade practices that unfairly hurt American manufacturing. I will use every lawful Presidential power to achieve relief for our workers. You can read the full 7-point trade plan on my website, DonaldJTrump.com.

North Carolina has lost more than 4 in 10 manufacturing jobs since NAFTA. Bill Clinton signed it, and Hillary Clinton supported it. Right here in Ashville, you've lost 1 in 5 manufacturing jobs since China joined the World Trade Organization -- another Hillary-backed deal. Hillary Clinton owes all of you an apology. And I think you'll get that apology right around the same time Hillary Clinton hands over the 33,000 emails she deleted. By the way, Hillary Clinton destroyed her emails after she received a congressional subpoena. They used a special software called bleach bit. She even made her 13 different phones disappear -- some of them were even destroyed with a hammer. Hillary Clinton obviously had a whole lot to hide, including her pay-for-play scandals at Secretary of State. Pay-for-play with UBS, with Russian Uranium, with contracts for her friends and family in Haiti. Nothing is so dangerous to American Democracy as when a public official puts their federal office up for sale. Hillary Clinton believes she is above the law.

She also believes that she is above all of you. After months of hiding from the press, Hillary Clinton came out and finally told the world how she feels about the people of this country. She said tens of millions of patriotic Americans belong in a "basket of deplorables." She talks about people like they're objects, not human beings. She said half of our supporters are not even real Americans, and describes the other half as having run out of options -- what she can't understand or accept is that the great majority of this country now sees right through the lies and deceptions of a failed political establishment. They want change, they want justice, and they want a government that puts the American people first.

Whether our supporters have lost a job to a factory moved to another country, or

whether they're a captain in the police department, or a teacher at a local school, they are united by their deep and sophisticated understanding of how our political system has abandoned the people. For those who have been hit by hard times, they understand better than anyone that it's Hillary Clinton's Wall Street agenda that has crushed the middle class of this country.

Hillary Clinton spoke with hatred in her heart for these working class Americans. She looks down on them -- she looks down on all the people who make her life possible. She looks down on the carpenters, plumbers, electricians, lawyers and accountants. She looks down on the police officers, soldiers, and firefighters supporting our campaign. She looks down on the people who cook her meals, drive her cars, and dig the coal that powers her electricity. She called these Americans every name in the book -- racist, sexist, xenophobic, Islamophobic -- she said they were not even American.

Never in history has a major-party presidential candidate so viciously demonized the American voter. She was attacking millions of moms and dads who love their children and want a better future for all Americans. What should these parents tell their children about Hillary Clinton's attacks? To every kid in America tonight, I want you to know: your parents are working so hard to make your life better, and to make your country better -- and if I get the chance, I will fight right alongside them to deliver a better future for everyone. Clinton made her remarks at a high-dollar fundraiser in Wall Street. Her goal is simple: to bully the American voter out of voting for change. The people who rigged the system want to keep things exactly as they are. They want to keep our terrible trade deals. They want to trap children in failing government schools. They want massive regulation to keep small businesses from being able to compete. Hillary

Clinton can never be President of this country. No one who has such a low opinion of the American people can ever be elected as their President.

Earlier today I had a chance to spend some time with some more of our most amazing Americans. I spent the afternoon with the National Guard Association of the United States. These are the heroes who rescue our people in disasters, and who fight our wars. These heroes are a permanent testament to the courage and character of our nation. We also honor and remember the lives of the service members who have made the ultimate sacrifice. There is no greater love than the love shown by the men and women who have laid down their lives for this country and its people. Our debt to them is eternal and everlasting. One thing that we must do is to ensure that our men and women in uniform have the best equipment, resources and tools in the world. We must provide them the best medical care while they serve, and the best medical care when they return home to civilian life. The Veterans scandals that have occurred under this Administration -- and that have been dismissed by my opponent -- are a permanent stain on this government. It's just one more way Hillary Clinton only looks out for herself.

We must take care of our Veterans. That includes giving Veterans the right to choose treatment at either a public VA facility, or the private doctor of their choice. Just today we learned that the VA has violated a federal law by failing to make its performance records available to consumers. The scandals never seem to end -- but they will, when I'm elected President.

Nothing makes me more proud than to have the support of the men and women who hear the uniform. We've received endorsements from 120 generals and admirals, these are the people who know how to keep our country safe. Just today, I was

profoundly humbled to gain the endorsement of 14 Medal of Honor recipients. I can't even begin to say how much it means to me to have the support of these intrepid heroes. Also, today, I was thrilled to announce that Ambassador R. James Woolsey, former head of the CIA, is now a senior advisor to our campaign.

We are on a mission of change. That includes a new agenda for our inner cities. The Democratic Party has run the inner cities for fifty, sixty, seventy years and more. 4 in 10 African-American children live in poverty, including 45% of those under the age of six. 2,900 people have been shot in Chicago since the beginning of the year. For those suffering and hurting, I say: give Donald J. Trump a chance. I will fix it. What do you have to lose? Let me also tell you what you have to gain: millions of new jobs, higher wages, and amazing schools. I will fight for Detroit, for Chicago, for Baltimore, and for every neglected part of this nation -- and I will fight to bring us all together as One American People. Imagine what our country could accomplish if we started working together as One People, under One God, saluting One American Flag.

It is time to break with the bitter failures of the past, and to embrace a New American Future. In this future, we will respect the dignity of all Americans -- and that means great jobs, great schools, and great neighborhoods. We will keep our children safe -- which includes steadfast support for American law enforcement. Jobs will return, prosperity will rise, and new factories will come rushing back to our shores. Government corruption will end. Honesty will be restored. Republicans are the Party of Abraham Lincoln and, come November 8th, we will once again have a government of, by and for the people. We Will Make America Prosperous Again. We Will Make America Safe Again. And Will Make America Great Again. Thank you, and God Bless!

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