



NEWSLETTER

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ADDENDUM

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ADDENDUM TO THE SUMMER, 2003, ESS NEWSLETTER

We received a number of excellent summaries and descriptions of presentations and events at the ESS Meetings in Philadelphia, 2003, written by graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, limitations of space prevented us from including several of these submissions in the printed newsletter. We hope to include these items in future newsletters but, in the meantime, we thought to make them available to interested parties through this posting on the ESS website.

The Editors

Race and Ethnicity: The Sociology of W.E.B. DuBois' "The Souls of Black Folk": Centennial Reflections

By Gniesha Dinwiddie

Presider: **Donald Cunnigen**, University of Rhode Island

Panelists: **Elijah Anderson**, University of Pennsylvania

Howard Winant, University of California,
Santa Barbara

Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, Colby College

Ronald Taylor, University of Connecticut

Participants in this panel all contend DuBois's work is an example of exemplary intellectual achievement. The depth of DuBois' career as sociologist and political activist speaks volumes about his critical role in his contributions toward the discourse on race in America and throughout the modern world. The depth of this work and implications for social research are the topics of this session.

Elijah Anderson, University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Anderson opened with a quote directly from DuBois' first chapter *Of Our Spiritual Strivings*:

"Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, how does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in my town; or, I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil: At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may

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require. To the real question, how does it feel to be a problem: I answer seldom a word."

Dr. Anderson is working on a new book about how people live race in everyday life. By sitting in taxis, restaurants, symphonies, barber shops, universities, and riding trains, his next project attempts to tackle the duality of Black middle class life to observe how this segment of the population internalizes race in social spaces. The book focuses on how middle and upper class blacks make sense of one another, how they deal with lower and middle class blacks, not in abstract ways in which our theories are organized, but through their experiences. A chapter of the book will highlight the dynamics of how Blacks and Whites sort themselves out in public transportation, mainly on trains.

Recently, **Dr. Anderson** wrote a piece on the social stratification of the black executive and connected their experiences to DuBois and the concept of duality-"what it feels like to be a problem" in a corporate setting. Moreover, he elaborates on the implications of Affirmative Action and the stigma of incorporating Blacks into the system. For example, George who works in a fortune 500 corporation and makes more than \$400,000 per year is one of **Dr. Anderson's** subjects. George was asked to join a predominantly white country club and agreed to be a member so that he and his family could become exposed to a different culture. Also, George chose to enroll his children in a predominantly White secondary schools because he wants them to be exposed to Whites. In this sense, "exposure" could be the analog of "double consciousness" coined by DuBois. Although George realizes exposure is a double-edged sword, issues of identity and not knowing their heritage in a white dominated society will be problematic. He is well aware that his kids will run into problems because they are not white but George contends that exposure is a form of human capital that will benefit them later in life. These issues speak volumes about the black middle class that has been privileged historically, but also face similar discrimination throughout their lifetime.

Howard Winant, University of California, Santa Barbara, "Dialectics of the Veil"

The dialectic of the veil needs revisiting in the philosophical sense not as Marxian doctrine as in the past. DuBois' theoretical works on the veil have contained the most powerful theory of race and racism in American society. The dialectic of the veil characterizes the relationship that embodies antagonism and the philosophical definition of macro and micro dimensions of social life that operates on the interpersonal, intrapsychic and institutional levels. The conflict, exclusion and alienation, interdependence and knowledge of the other based on skin color are characteristics of race and racism, which Blacks face

today. DuBois's most famous point, racial dualism, afflicts and transfigures the black soul interjecting racism into the self. At the individual level, the veil has a fully-fledged dialectical which divides the individual self and world. Moreover, it splits the self and world along the colorline and divides the self and defines the social world.

The meaning of *The Souls of Black Folk* changes overtime. When first read as a teenager, the veil was seen as a symbol of barriers that could be lifted. Today the concept is a metaphor of a racial barrier of the color line. In his work, DuBois sought not only to lift the veil but also employ a means to transform the veil by preserving demarcations, complex metaphors for dynamics of race; the veil keeps the races apart and mediates between them.

The concept of the veil is effective in that it links numerous sites that distinguish divisions in the human psyche and at the same time concepts of nation, polity, history, and culture are partitioned by race and racism. In essence, at the macro level, the veil is a metaphor for the profound social structure, which shapes identities and social organizations. Moreover, the weight of the veil exerts on subjects, integration in social structure. DuBois' emphasis on racial politics is best understood in terms of macro-social understanding of the veil. On the macro level the identification of how the social structure undergoes profound reorganization and ruptures are integral to understanding disenfranchisement and ramifications of the veil.

The new agenda is to explain, organize and situate where the veil is ruptured and re-consolidated. The significance of the dialectic of the veil continues today.

**Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, Colby College
"Sorrow Songs as Cultural Theory"**

Sociology would be different if scholars would have taken DuBois more seriously. The discipline would have been different. When he is added in the sociological discourse, we tend to identify the "cannon" of his work; we praise the historical sociology, i.e.-Philadelphia Negro. If we are to appreciate his work in its entirety, we must examine the work that doesn't resemble the "typical" contribution to sociology, particularly the "sorrow songs."

DuBois' sorrow songs are ethnography. He depicts what it was like to walk through a rural south community in Blacks' quest for education. The internal worlds of the people caught in the structure. His work is gender; women's voices are always acknowledged, women and men work together, women's voices are validated. It's historical; he talks about formal organizations and their role in perpetuating racism. DuBois' critique of the structural and social psychology

into the black experience through "stand point" is tantamount. Moreover, DuBois assumes every group caught in imperialism has something to convey about racial oppression- implications are global.

DuBois also articulates how blacks see the world and what messages they have to convey through the sorrow songs-view from within and the veil-view from without. As a "cultural tool kit" this type of proper sociology is done by people who are experiencing turmoil through experience. In *The Dawn of Freedom*, Dubois discusses problems of the color line; *Faith of the Fathers*, the importance of power in mobilizing where blacks gather to engage in visionary retrieval without interruptions; *Sorrow Songs*, the true meaning of the Black experience.

In conclusion, cultural theory by the use of spirituals examines texts from the sorrow songs. The importance of reflexive experience by the researches is important for "good sociology." Moreover, the position of the observer to that of the deserved in terms of thinking about society is essential for effective sociology. DuBois reminds us that we need to take seriously cultural theory to understand what Black folks have for the world and colonial history has a lot to do with current politics.

Ronald Taylor, University of Connecticut

Dubois has had the most influence on examining Black intellectual life and *The Souls of Black Folk* has not lost intellectual power since its development. Had the discipline of sociology given more credence to his work we could have avoided embarrassment in the ways sociology interprets racial crisis. DuBois' writings still conjure debate about society, for example double consciousness appropriated by scholars from different disciplines. His concept of "double consciousness" has been misinterpreted by integrationists who contend DuBois advocated eventual assimilation, Nationalists and Academics.

Industrial Sociology and Labor Markets Thematic Session to honor Ivar Berg By Simone Polillo

The ESS Thematic Session in Industrial Sociology and Labor Markets, honoring the contribution of **Ivar Berg**, was a well-attended, vibrant discussion which celebrated **Prof. Berg's** academic, intellectual and personal achievements in his roles as professor, mentor and past Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. **Jerry Jacobs** provided a brief introduction to the panel of speakers, and **Arne Kallerberg** then moderated the discussion. **Doug Massey** gave the first speech: he located **Ivar Berg's**

most distinguished contribution in his pioneering study of domains historically reserved for economists. The Great Training Robbery was the first sociological response to the tautological reasoning of economists trying to explain the relation between wages and productivity. **Massey** stressed **Berg's** insight about the inflation of educational credentialing and its social determinants; but he equally focused on **Berg's** talent in raising a generation of sociologists at UPenn, as most of the faculty (**Massey** himself) were hired by **Berg** as assistant professors and grew intellectually within the department. Finally, **Massey** defined **Berg** as a role model in his capacity as Chair of the Department, attributing to him such useful strategies as "all problems are soluble in alcohol".

Randall Collins, the second speaker, focused on those aspects of **Berg's** work that are most crucial to the study of stratification and inequality. **Berg's** critique of the technology-driven model of increases in educational standards had important implications for the development of a status-attainment framework. If the relationship between income and education is tautological, then the problem of underutilized or underemployed people becomes salient. **Collins** developed an analogy between credential inflation and monetary inflation: as credentialing increases, the same level of education does not command equal status over time; education becomes less a matter of consumption than one of investment. **Collins** suggested a relationship between education and alien-action, as for people at the bottom income brackets investment in education does not make sense: it would simply push the bar up. Hence, alienation vis-à-vis high school amounts to a perfectly rational move. Finally, he stressed that "minting" education is rather more expensive than printing money, and acknowledged the role of the state as one of hidden educational Keynesianism. To conclude, **Collins** provocatively contended that the problem of the 21st century will likely be that of class conflict over education.

David Livingstone, the third speaker, contextualised **Berg's** work as providing the first empirical measures of productivity just as human capital theory was at its height in the 1970s: the problem of underemployment, first described by **Berg**, is now recognized and measured by the ILO. **Livingstone** categorized the debate in three competing positions: 1. supply-side, whereby increases in education lead to productivity increases, i.e. the standard human capital story; 2. demand-side, whereby the demands of the knowledge-based economy drive educational changes and also create deskilling; 3. interaction, such as credential society theories, which drop the assumption that education and employment structures change simultaneously. Here **Berg's**

contribution is most important: he focused on mismatches and opened up a line of work now applied to various realms where learning occurs. In particular, recent research on lifelong and informal learning is indebted to **Berg**. **Livingstone** further teased out the political implications of this framework: he contended that, since most workers are currently underemployed, it is not further education, but job democratization that would be most promising in addressing inequality.

Adam Litwin, current graduate student at MIT and former student of **Ivar Berg's**, gave a fourth perspective on the contributions of **Ivar Berg**, stressing his theoretical significance, and his methodological applications. **Litwin** teased out the lessons of **Berg's** teaching to his own research as well as to the general field of economic sociology and network analysis on social capital. **Litwin** stressed **Berg's** influence in getting economists to consider ethnographic approaches to their questions, and in opening the debate on deskilling on a multiplicity of dimensions, such as routine vs. non-routine labour, or cognitive versus manual.

Finally, **Arne Kallerberg** read two letters (by **Robert Lenzner** and **Peter Cappelli**, who could not attend) celebrating **Ivar Berg**, and recounted his personal experiences with Prof. Berg. The floor was eventually **Ivar's**, who thanked his colleagues for their kind comments, and told colorful anecdotes about his experience in the academia. He revealed his plans on two new books, on individualism and affirmative action, and suggested that the central phenomenon that he investigated in his research is managerialism, or "creeping technicalism". In particular, he focused on the implications for democracy, made to fit industrialism, and education, a legitimating system for one's own social position. Historically, his work has spanned the emergence of oligopoly and the Pax Americana, and the return of price competition. His attempts will be directed at further teasing out the dynamics behind this historic shift from the Schumpeterian scenario of managed competition to a Marxian one of pure free markets.

Elizabeth Higginbotham Meets Critic

By Rachelle Brunn, University of Pennsylvania

I had an opportunity to attend an author meets critic session on Friday, February 15th at 12:15 p.m. The session was organized by **Cheryl Townsend Gilkes**, Colby College and featured **Elizabeth Higginbotham**, University of Delaware. Critics included **Charley Flint**, William Patterson University; **Judith Lorber**, Brooklyn College and Graduate School, CUNY; **Sandra Susan Smith**, New York University; and **Ronald Taylor**, University of Connecticut. The topic of discussion was

Higginbotham's *Too Much to Ask: Black Women in the Era of Integration*, which was published by the University of North Carolina Press in 2001. The book details the experiences of fifty-six Black women who graduated from predominantly White colleges and universities in the late 1960s.

As **Gilkes** introduced the panelists, she commented that the session would be particularly interesting given its relevance to the current public policy debate about the constitutionality of affirmative action. Her prediction was correct. The session was well attended, lively, and engaging. **Charley Flint** began the discussion by highlighting the severe price that Blacks paid for integration, such as the black schools that were demolished and the "re-segregation" that occurred as the result of ability tracking. Nevertheless, **Flint** called the women of *Too Much to Ask* "racial pioneers." **Judith Lorber** called the book a "how-to-guide" for Black students-relevant from the time of the first Black student to enter a predominantly White institution until the present. She was especially interested in learning more about what the women gave up by conforming to the mainstream climate in these institutions.

Sandra Smith argued that the women's stories were more nuanced than *Too Much to Ask* revealed. She urged sociologists to be careful not to romanticize Black people's experiences in an effort to refute the tendency to demonize them in popular culture and academia. **Smith** was especially interested in learning more about how the Black families and communities might have hindered their daughters' college performances or how some of their White peers may have supported them in their endeavor. **Ronald Taylor** focused on the separation that continues to exist between students of color and Whites on college campuses. He argued that Blacks are negotiating the reality of, at least, two realms of experience- that of being an African American and having to survive and function effectively in mainstream America. **Taylor** was interested in a more in-depth comparison of the experiences of these women and those of present-day Black women attending predominantly White colleges and universities.

Elizabeth Higginbotham ended the discussion by thanking the panelists for reading *Too Much to Ask* and for their helpful criticism. She highlighted the importance of the racial composition of the women's schools and argued that the women were sacrificing their own immediate happiness for the benefit of their race. **Higginbotham** argued that their college experiences undoubtedly helped prepared them to become present day leaders because they learned the ability to negotiate between two worlds. Engaging questions from the audience followed the panel discussion.

Ann Swidler Faces Three Friendly Critics at ESS

By Regina Smardon

Ann Swidler's book, *Talk of Love*, is a cultural analysis of how middle class heterosexual Americans "do love". As **Viviana Zelizer** noted in her comments to the author, *Talk of Love* is an empirical application of **Swidler's** "toolkit theory of culture" (see Swidler 1986). Amidst the many compliments lauding the author's contributions to the sociology of culture there were only two criticisms; one of method and one theoretical. The book was praised by **Zelizer** for avoiding assumptions about maximizing actors, cultural dupes and psychological reductionism and instead positing an active and creative individual. **Robin Wagner-Pacifici** noted that this book develops an identity model of the social actor. **Evitar Zerubavel** noted that *Talk of Love* focuses on the gap between action and institution. According to **Zerubavel** it is when institutions, such as marriage, do not give us direction for resolving our lived contradictions culture takes over. **Swidler** explains how talking about love, as a fairy tale or as a laborious task, can help individuals to negotiate the institution of marriage.

On the more critical side **Zelizer** argued that this book underplays conversational dynamics, the role of third parties and relational aspects of meaning. **Zerubavel** claimed that theories of action are too dynamic. He suggested that a more static model of culture could be found in Emile Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. In response to her critics **Swidler** acknowledged the limits of interview data and proposed that creative methodologies that capture the socialness of the social are necessary for the theoretical advancement of the sociology of culture. In response to **Zerubavel's** Durkheimian suggestion she argued that although moments of ritual transcendence inform the phenomenon of love they might serve as symbolic moments representing the relationship and be rather sparse rather than constituting an ongoing pattern. She warned that we should be careful not to read transcendence into every interaction. **Swidler** also called for more attention to the different levels of cultural analysis in her own work and in others. This author meets critic session elicited many thoughtful audience comments and questions. Many people will find this book valuable, both personally and sociologically, myself included. I expect to see exciting work in the future from **Ann Swidler** and from those scholars who will pick up where she left off in *Talk of Love*.

Swidler, Ann. 1986. *Culture In Action: Symbols and Strategies*. ASR. Vol. 51 (April: 273-286)

A Bus Trip Down Germantown Avenue

By Lindsay Taggart

On the Saturday of the 2003 ESS Annual Meetings, many of us took a break from the hotel and paper sessions to take a bus ride down Germantown Avenue, one of Philadelphia's main thoroughfares. Our guides for the trip were **Elijah Anderson**, who describes a trip down Germantown Avenue in the introduction to *Code of the Street*; **Bilal Qayyum**, a Philadelphia activist involved in Men United for a Better Philadelphia and the Father's Day Rally Committee; and **Robert Alsbrooks**, a young man featured in *Code of the Street*, who formerly sold drugs in North Philadelphia and now is the very successful co-founder of a global organization for youth called Miracle Corners of the World (for more information: www.miraclecorners.com). The guides' extensive knowledge of the area and willingness to share personal experiences made the tour a fascinating and sobering event.

The tour started in Chestnut Hill, a predominantly white, upper-income neighborhood in Northwest Philadelphia, where Germantown Avenue begins, and progressed through Mt. Airy, Germantown, Nicetown, and North Philly. **Dr. Anderson** instructed us to look for the contrast between Chestnut Hill and areas further down "the avenue" and to notice the way people were dressed, their complexions, the expressions on their faces, the types of businesses, and so on. After roughly 10 blocks in Chestnut Hill, we reached Mt. Airy, one of the most racially integrated communities in the country. This middle class neighborhood is home to several historical sites, including the site of the Battle of Germantown and a depot in the Underground Railroad. **Dr. Anderson** drew our attention to bars on windows and businesses with riot doors, which had not appeared in Chestnut Hill. These are a sign of fear, he said, although the fear may not be warranted. Toward the end of Mt. Airy, we passed a playground that **Dr. Anderson** discusses in his book, where middle class Mt. Airy children play basketball with working-class kids from Germantown. As we progressed down the avenue, the neighborhood became increasingly black and working class.

Germantown, which our hosts pointed out, is known as "dogtown" (a gang name from the 1970s) in some areas, was the next neighborhood on the avenue. Here, there were very few white people on the streets and many more bars on windows and riot gates on doors. When we reached the cross-street Cheltenham Avenue, **Dr. Anderson and Mr. Qayyum** told us that this was the "main ghetto drag," where Dr. Anderson spent vast amounts of time doing research for *Code of the Street*.

Continuing down the avenue to Nicetown, the area became poorer and more segregated. Nicetown, a former industrial manufacturing area, is now home to several boarded-up houses and razor wire fences, although **Mr. Qayyum** said that Nicetown residents have formed a community development corporation (CDC) and have been working with the city to restore their neighborhood.

As the bus moved into North Philly, one of the worst parts of Philadelphia, **Mr. Alsbrooks** took the floor. This was an area he used to frequent as a member of a drug gang. He spoke to us about the “215 mentality” or the “code of the street” and assured us that this way of life is still very much a reality in this part of the city. He eloquently and urged us to develop solutions to the problems we had seen in the most depressed neighborhoods and discussed the ways he has worked for change.

When the bus pulled up to the hotel, many of us were disappointed it had to end. My thanks to the organizers and guides for providing ESS members with such an edifying and interesting opportunity.

Economic-Sociology Conference By Steve Ressler

The Third Annual Economic Sociology Conference at Penn was held Saturday, March 1, 2003 at the Loews Hotel in Philadelphia. As expected, it was a provocative and insightful experience, exemplifying the range of topics within economic sociology. The conference was split into three parts, a panel on ethnographic approaches to economic sociology, a keynote by **Carol Heimer**, and a concluding panel on work, family, and economic sociology. Kudos must be given to the excellent planning of **Mauro Guillen** and the other organizers in the Management and Sociology Departments at the University of Pennsylvania.

The morning panel exemplified the emergence of qualitative methods in economic sociology. The audience was blessed with studies on a range of topics from dot coms, the commercial building industry, the Federal Reserve, and financial analysts. While the studies seem to converge on the topic of sense making, the conference took an emotional turn with **David Stark**'s analysis of financial analysts post Sep-11th. His detailed story of employees solving password problems by coming together to tell personal stories of the deceased was a great exemplar of how important the social world is to economic processes. In the question and answers, it was great to see the audience push the scope of economic sociology from just being merely a context for economic transactions.

After a short break for lunch, the audience (an impressive fifty people) returned for the keynote address by **Carol Heimer**. Her talk was entitled “Corporate Canoe Magic: Rhetorical Purity and Real Danger.” Her sociological analysis of insurance, risk management, and investment hedging provided great insight on how these processes emerged. While one audience member was concerned with her seemingly dismissal of actuarial science, **Heimer** did not wish to dismiss the knowledge gained in the disciplines of insurances, risk analysis, and hedging. Her work could be seen in the vein of sociology of science, as attempting to muddy the waters of a perceived objective analysis.

The afternoon session focused on Work, Family, and Economic Sociology. **Lotte Bailyn**, **Amy Wharton**, and **Phyllis Moen** presented pieces describing the complex world of work and family. Subjects described included the employee benefits, workplace investment for married couples, and the role of integration in affecting gender equity. By the end of the session, the audience had experience eight hours of stimulating presentations and dialogue. **Marshall Meyer**'s concluded the conference and sent the scholars and future scholars home with new energy in approaching their research projects.

Conference on Work, Family, and Gender Inequality By Tina Armando

A “Conference on Work, Family, and Gender Inequality” was held in concurrence with the 73rd Eastern Sociological Society meeting this year at the Loews Hotel in Philadelphia. The “mini-conference”, sponsored by The Sloan Foundation, The Cornell Employment and Family Careers Institute, and the Eastern Sociological Society, took place on Friday February 28th and Saturday March 1st, 2003.

Despite expectations for heavy snow in the area, the conference had a very successful turnout. More than fifty people attended the conference including work/family scholars, human resource representatives, clinicians, and non-profit affiliates, as well as undergraduate and graduate students. The varied audience provided a wide range of questions and comments leading to idea building discussions.

Presenters were affiliated with an array of programs, and contributions were focused on key factors within work, family and gender equations, such as time ideologies, individual actions and aspirations, public policy, and life course effects. Some notable contributions included **Cynthia Fuchs Epstein**'s (CUNY) speech on time constraints in the work place

and **Mary Blair-Loy's** (Washington State) description of internalized patterns of devotion and individualized schemas in the work/family/gender mix. **Janet Gornick** (CUNY) focused on cross-national public policy analyses and future possibilities. There was also a lengthy dialogue regarding various methods of data collection and the relatively new method, "The Experience Monitoring Approach," explained by a representative for **Linda Waite** and **Barbara Schneider** (University of Chicago).

While the general focus seemed to be on professional women and work/family struggles, some participants also touched on the importance of variation across the life course. For example, **Annette Lareau** and **Elliot Weininger** (Temple University) found

different activities and variation in family pace across social class lines for young children and their parents. **Demie Kurz** (UPenn) chose to focus on the often-overlooked age cohort of teenagers and care giving options. **Kathleen Gerson** (NYU) presented data collected from a diverse race, class, and gender sample representing the next generation of young adults, ages 18-32, in terms of family structure and gender role perceptions. **Beth Soldo** (UPenn) discussed care-giving concerns for the elderly.

Overall, the conference served as an opportunity to share pieces of original knowledge contributing to the 'work, family, and gender inequality' field as a whole, hold collaborative discussions, and enjoy a professional social experience over a tasty breakfast and lunch.