Contributors & Abstracts

Deborah D'Isabel, is a student majoring in Sociology at UMass Boston. She enrolled in Soc. 341-2, "Elements of Sociological Theory" instructed by Mohammad Tamdgidi during the Fall 2004 semester.

1   **The "Difference" A Red Face Makes: A Critical Sociology of Bullying in Capitalist Society**

Abstract: This paper is part of the journey that I have already begun to traverse in deciding to accept my own difference, acknowledge the reaction it causes in people, and, like Morrie Schwartz, refuse to be silenced because of it. Morrie spoke of meeting Krishnamurti, an Indian philosopher, who told him to "question all your presuppositions about life and living—about… your society, yourself, and what you expect and accept. The world is not a given" (Schwartz 113). My questioning of why I felt my face was different led me to examine the role that Mr. Grady played in my understanding of myself—and then, most importantly, to reject that view.

Claudia Contreras, is an undergraduate student at UMass Boston majoring in Spanish Literature and Sociology with a concentration in Latin American Studies. She enrolled in Soc. 341-3, "Elements of Sociological Theory" instructed by Mohammad Tamdgidi during the Spring 2005 semester.

11   **The Tension of Opposites: Issues of Ethnicity, Class, and Gender in My Identity Formation**

Abstract: Being a Salvadorian-American woman living in the United States, it was often difficult to preserve my own values and beliefs in a country where power and money seem to matter the most. Having grown up low- income household with immigrant parents, I was once determined to isolate myself from the "primitive" collective conscience of my family and achieve an identity that would make me a true "American" in a modern society. Along my journey, I discovered a "reality" that was full of biases against women, and minorities, along with an empty feeling of who I was. It was a challenge to break the norms of my patriarchal family and society and come to consider myself an independent woman. Now, as I embark on another journey, all these issues that seem so divided, play a great role as I pursue a career that will truly make me happy.

Katherine Heller, received her B.A. in Social Psychology from UMass Boston. She enrolled in Soc. 341-3, "Elements of Sociological Theory" instructed by Mohammad Tamdgidi during the Fall 2004 semester.

21   **My Choice of a Lifetime: "Finding True Love" in a Sociological Imagination**

Abstract: It was not until writing some of these words that I was able to realize that C. Wright Mills' idea of the sociological imagination can be applied to a variety of personal conflicts. Being able to understand personal problems by looking at larger

issues in society seemed to be irrelevant in my situation. However, I see now that some of my dilemma has come about due to the fact that society has been feeding me information about love and relationships that may be totally unrealistic but that I have come to internalize nonetheless. There is a definite link between micro and macro sociological theories and by examining all of them bits and pieces can be extracted that have led me to have a better understanding of myself—something I did not think I would ever find in theories published in textbooks.

Rebecca Tink, is an undergraduate student at UMass Boston double-majoring in Sociology and Psychology. She enrolled in Soc. 341-2, "Elements of Sociological Theory" instructed by Mohammad Tamdgidi during the Fall 2004 semester.

33   Beyond Bifurcation: Femininity and Professional Success in a Changing World

Abstract: Throughout history, women have continually held a subservient role to their male counterparts. Women have always been regarded as the caregivers while men are free to focus on their own lives and personal successes in the working world. Women are socialized to be sweet, kind, and gentle, while men are socialized to be dominant and aggressive. Only recently in our history have these roles been questioned. Although, through the efforts of the women's movement, women have become more prevalent in the professional sphere, it is much more difficult for women to be successful. Women are forced to find success by adopting the values of their male counterparts, and, in doing so, lose aspects of their own femininity. The purpose of this paper is to question this fact and whether it will be possible for further change to allow women to succeed in business without losing their womanhood.

Caitlin Farren, is an undergraduate student at UMass Boston double-majoring in Sociology and Psychology. She enrolled in Soc. 240, "The Self in Society: Studies of Autobiographies" instructed by Mohammad Tamdgidi during the Fall 2004 semester.

41   A Different Voice, A Different Autobiography: Letting My Authentic Voice Speak

Abstract: Applying the knowledge I have gained through various readings on the relationship between self and society, viewing several films within the context of sociology, and learning from other students in classroom discussions, I have begun to understand the complexity of human behavior. My many I's, the different aspects of my personality/personalities that emerge at various times, are illustrated in the fact that I communicate differently depending on the social situation. My voice is the product of countless influences, inner and outer, micro and macro, explorable and mysterious. It has been fascinating to explore my voice within the framework of *inner forces*, which Diane Bjorklund describes as instincts, drives, and traits, and outer forces, or society. From birth, my society, community, and genes have helped to form what I now refer to as my personal voice. In this way, it is not entirely personal, but instead a mirror of the world. As Mills explains, it is important to gain "an understanding of the realities of ourselves in connection with larger social realities."

Haing Kao, is an undergraduate student at UMass Boston majoring in Sociology with a minor in History. He enrolled in Soc. 341-3, "Elements of Sociological Theory" instructed by Mohammad Tamdgidi during the Spring 2005 semester.

49   The Overdose of Shame: A Sociological and Historical Self-Exploration

Abstract: In this paper, I have explored shame in the midst of different social orders that have intersected and as a result, "overdosed" the amount of shame experienced. Different types of shames are instituted in these social orders for different reasons. I've examined the causation of shame from different sources and moments in which they are collaborative or conflicting. The result of shame is documented, most particularly with that of familial social order and ideals. A close look is taken into race and class, as well as historical events, as a source and reinforcement of shame. I argue that shame is a means of internal and external conflict, but also positive if administered properly by others and the self.

Harold Muriaty (pen name), received his B.A. from UMass Boston, majoring in English. He enrolled in Soc. 240, "The Self in Society: Studies of Autobiographies" instructed by MohammadTamdgidi during the Fall 2004 semester.

59   My Life So Far: A "Work" in Progress

Abstract: Work is not the only thing I have focused on in this paper. In addition, I've looked at the other aspects of my life: specifically, my role as a husband and as a practicing Buddhist. My wife and I have had to put many of our goals aside while I pursue my Bachelor's degree, namely the buying of our first house and having children. When the final week in January rolls around and I am not attending classes here at UMass, I will be well on my way to making these dreams a reality. Part of being the best husband I can be involves my getting back into Buddhism. I used to meditate on a daily basis: once in the morning after I woke up and once in the evening after the day was done. I intend to make a solemn dedication to practicing mindfulness, along with daily meditation, and the studying of Buddhist texts as a part of my daily life from here on out. Buddhism has always given me a clearer perspective on myself, my life, and the world around me, causing me to both look inside myself and the world around me without the selfish "I" of the ego in my way.

Rachel A. DeFilippis, is an undergraduate student double-majoring in Sociology and Psychology at UMass Boston with a minor in Women's Studies. She enrolled in Soc. 341-2, "Elements of Sociological Theory" instructed by Mohammad Tamdgidi during the Fall 2004 semester.

67   Intersections of My Lesbian, Feminist, and Activist Identities: Problems and Strategies in Everyday Impression Management

Abstract: The purpose of this research was to recognize issues present in my life, uncover the source of the issues and imagine possible solutions. This research used concepts and theories from assigned readings as well as films shown in class. Through introspective self-exploration I was able to locate a possible source of the issues discussed in the research, namely sexuality and social construction. I then used this source to explore my social self within the context of sociological theories and concepts used in class. The result of this research was a better understanding of why certain issues have arisen in my life as well as a deeper clarity forming my future social self.

Lee Kang Woon (pen name), is an undergraduate student majoring in Sociology at UMass Boston. He enrolled in Soc. 310, "Socialization" instructed by Anna Beckwith during the Spring 2005 semester.

79 Socialization of Transnationally Adopted Korean Americans: A Self Analysis

Abstract: At the beginning of this paper, I posed the question how has adoption affected my socialization into American society. I can now say that it has affected my socialization in many ways. To say that it hasn't affected my socialization would be a failure of critical self analysis. The main aspect of my socialization that adoption has affected has been in my identity formation and sense of self. It has been and continues to be a confusing and emotional process. Despite all the changes, I still feel like I'm "white" on the inside and "yellow" on the outside, a Twinkie, to use the term common among Asians. Socialization is a life-long process, and I doubt if I will ever completely come to terms and accept who I am. I can only deal with what I have.

N.I.B. is an undergraduate student majoring in Sociology at UMass Boston. She enrolled in Soc. 341, "Elements of Sociological Theory" instructed by Anna Beckwith during the Spring 2005 semester.

85 "Housing Project" In Comparative Perspective: Opportunity or Stigma?

Abstract: Even after I realized the problems surrounding public housing in this the U.S. compared to Japan, I still believe that it is an important function and it can have a positive effect in society. Before actually helping low-income people, however, their stigmatizing and stereotyping about pubic housing have to be eliminated. Numerous studies have shown that "living in a high-poverty neighborhood can undermine the well-being of families and children, and that affordable housing alone cannot revitalize a distressed neighborhood" (Brookings Institution 4). Although internalized ideas are difficult to change, when more researches and their findings are exposed, stereotypes about the project may be erased eventually. In addition, because of lack of affordable housing and descent jobs more people face the reality, and hopefully realize that subsidized housings are important and practical to everyone. I feel fortunate to have grown up in Japanese housing development. I know first hand how society as a whole can benefit from such a social policy when it is applied properly.

Sharon Brown, is an undergraduate student majoring in Social Psychologty and Spanish at UMass Boston. She enrolled in Soc. 310, "Socialization" instructed by Anna Beckwith during the Spring 2005 semester.

93 Religion, Gender, and Patriarchy: Awakening to My Self-Conscious Resocialization

Abstract: This paper examines some of the different factors that affect a person's religious identification. It focuses upon how different family roles and relationships are influential factors inthe personal beliefs and convictions of the individual. The family studied consisted of 4 members—mothers, father, and two daughters. Initially the family was integrated and shared the same Protestant Christian faith, but after a series of life-altering events, religious differences started forming as each member began to re-evaluate their beliefs. Sociological readings and class films were employed to analyze how one daughter's religious views were altered by the changing lifesyles of her family, hence supporting the theory that familial ties are correlated to the socialization and internationalization of religion. Through this daughter's re-evaluation of her faith, the process of socialization is illuminated and analyzed.

Jennifer Lambert, is an undergraduate student majoring in Sociology at UMass Boston. She enrolled in Soc. 341, "Elements of Sociological Theory" instructed by Anna Beckwith during the Spring 2005 semester.

103   Beyond the "Goods Life": Mass Consumerism, Conflict, and the Latchkey-Kid

Abstract: Consumerism is one of everyday scripts we play in our lives. It is defined as the "effects of equating personal happiness with purchasing material possessions and consumption" (Consumerism, 1). Consumption is defined as the "selection, adoption, use, disposal and recycling of goods and services" (Consumption, 1). Consumerism, for the most part, has become an affliction of sorts, and it promotes a materialistic lifestyle. This materialistic lifestyle is part of our stage. It is made up of our clothes, food (yes, food can fall into this category, for we have food markets that are *cool* to go to), homes, cars, gadgets, vacations choices—the list can go on and on. Consumerism affects everyone, no matter how much someone may deny it; however, the extent of its effect depend on the individual. Like many of my friends and acquaintances, I was a victim early in life.

Anonymous, is an undergraduate student majoring in Sociology at UMass Boston. He enrolled in Soc. 341, "Elements of Sociological Theory" instructed by Anna Beckwith during the Spring 2005 semester.

109   Hooped Dreams: Internal Growth, External Stagnation, and One Man's Search for Work

Abstract: For as long as I can remember, I wanted to play professional basketball for a living. I still do to this day in fact. Watching ten guys throw a ball through a hoop looks easy enough on television. I figured that I could do the same thing. However, there was one major problem. I was too short, slow, unskilled, undisciplined, so on and so forth, to reach that goal. As I grew older, I played less and less to the point where I was a bit embarrassed whenever I stepped onto the court. But whenever anyone asks the question, "So what do you want to do when you grow up?" the answer remains the same. "Play in the NBA." I say this with a look that tells people how serious I am. This is not so much a story of my failed hoop dreams. The world has seen and heard enough of young African-American men not making it to the pros. It is the story of an individual searching for a career choice and a place in today's society. It involves fits and starts, some times takes two steps forward, other times three steps back.

Jorge Capetillo-Ponce, is Assistant Professor of Sociology at UMass Boston.

117   Contrasting Simmel's and Marx's Ideas on Alienation

Abstract: Aside from their many affinities, the fundamental difference between these two thinkers is that they address the problem of alienation from two very different standpoints and with very different moral preoccupations. Marx's moral vision is that of a revolutionary thinker who seeks to guide the masses toward the fulfillment of an impossible task: "the solution of the riddle of history," the construction of a totally new society, free of alienation, on the ruins of the existent one. What chiefly inspires Simmel is a concern for individualistic values. Simmel thus is more "micro" and Marx more "macro" in their respective sociological analyses. Simmel is particularly concerned with those values implicit in the idea of "cultivation": scholarly or scientific attainment, intellectual integrity, and above all, aesthetic sensitivity. What

he sees as being above all at stake in modern life, is the individual capacity to reflect on, understand, appreciate, and evaluate the events that impinge upon direct experiences, whether through participation in ordinary life or, better yet, through cultured and creative pursuits.

Mohammad Tamdgidi, is Assistant Professor of Sociology at UMass Boston.

123   Working Outlines for the Sociology of Self-Knowledge

Abstract: In this working paper I present an outline for a sociology of self-knowledge concerned with the study of how the investigator's own self-knowledges and world-historical social structures constitute one another. The outline is built upon critical assimilation of contributions made in three seemingly independent traditions in sociology: 1-Sociology of Knowledge; 2-Social Psychology (broadly defined); and 3-World-Systems/Historical Studies. The sociology of self-knowledge as a sub-field of inquiry in the sociology of knowledge extends the exercise of the sociological imagination in both directions in terms of the study of how the investigator's own self-knowledges and world-historical social structures constitute one another. In the process, adopting a postdeterminist dialectical method, it also abandons a prior and reductivist approaches to the dialectics of self and society, knowledge and social existence, individual and social context.

Ellen Corrigan, received her B.A. in Sociology from Macalester College. She enrolled in Soc. 480, "Senior Seminar: Sociology of Self-Knowledge" instructed by Khaldoun Samman during the Spring 2005 semester.

141   The "Out" Crowd: Resisting the Stereotypes of High School and Teen Culture

Abstract: My group of high school friends sought out the experience of high school from a vantage point of resistance against the high school as an institution, as well as the institution of teen culture. Our group interactions were a result of the disgust we felt for how greatly these two institutions shape teenage experiences. We were able to rebel because we had a strong group identity with a safe space that we fought to protect. Further, we were able to get away with this rebellion without consequences because our protests still observed societal rules. As far as I can tell, we were the only group in my high school that practiced this form of resistance. Because this is the only experience of high school that I have had, I do not know if my experience is a common one. Perhaps my group was prone to this form of resistance identity because of the way our group formed. Because many of us had childhood connections from growing up together, perhaps it was easier to form a close bond that facilitated the kind of reaction we had to stereotypical teen culture. Maybe suburbanization plays a role as well, as it provided me with numerous playmates my age with whom I went to school and with whom I shared experiences from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Or perhaps it was just coincidence and we all developed the identity as a result of some experience that we all had together. Possibly there is a larger societal pattern based on race, class, or geographic location as to why my group of friends all came together under this one identity of resistance. Regardless of how we formed this identity, I am glad that we did, because it demonstrates that there is an alternative to conforming to institutional hegemony, in which individuals have the opportunity to choose for themselves how they experience high school.

Jeremy Cover, received his B.A. in Sociology from Macalester College. He enrolled in Soc. 480, "Senior Seminar: Sociology of Self-Knowledge" instructed by Khaldoun Samman during the Spring 2005 semester.

153 My Performed Identity

Abstract: Goffman argues that there is no essential self or identity, saying "The self, then, as performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented" (Goffman). In addition, he holds that "he and his body merely provide a peg on which something of collaborative manufacture will be hung for a time. And the means for producing and maintaining selves do not reside in the peg; in fact these means are often bolted down by society" (Goffman). Here is where I begin to have problems with Goffman's conceptions of personal agency. While recognizing the importance of situational factors, I can also remember the purposeful construction and maintenance of various identities that I imagine most people engage in during adolescence. This paper is a half-narrative, half- analysis of my adolescence, focusing on the aspects of agency and situational constraints in my identity performances.

Jesse Mortenson, received his B.A. in Sociology from Macalester College. He enrolled in Soc. 480, "Senior Seminar: Sociology of Self-Knowledge" instructed by Khaldoun Samman during the Spring 2005 semester.

159 Identity Resistance and Market-based Political Culture at a Small Liberal Arts School

Abstract: In this essay, I tell the story of my encounter as a student with the dominant political culture at Macalester College, a small liberal arts undergraduate college in St. Paul, Minnesota. I argue that market strategies employed by the administration significantly contribute to the shape of that political culture by producing and reproducing the student body as a bundle of social locations and collective political self-identities. As a process deeply implicated in identity formation, both prior to and during the experience of arrival, this constitution of political culture through market strategies was susceptible to my efforts at critical interpretation using identity-based resources.

Khaldoun Samman, is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Macalester College.

183 Go West Young Turk: Personal Encounters with Kemalism

Abstract: My research can be described as a comparative-historical analysis of what I define as three modes of identities found in the Middle East: *Occidentalizing, Modernizing,* and *Orientalizing* nationalist identities. My main concern is this overlapping question: How did Palestinians and Arabs come to be seen as distinct from the Jews, Greeks, and Turks of this once symbiotic civilization, all presumed to be in need of separate national "homes" (i.e., the containers called nation-states)? Here I focus on the impacts that modernity has had on the identities of this world and myself.

Jessica Sawyer, received her B.A. in Sociology from Macalester College. She enrolled in Soc. 480, "Senior Seminar: Sociology of Self-Knowledge" instructed by Khaldoun Samman during the Spring 2005 semester.

193 **Confessions of a Maine-iac: The Family, Academia, and Modernity**

Abstract: This essay seeks to explore the truth behind the "naturalness" of adolescent/young adult independence from the family, the importance (or over-importance) of individuality, and the links between the modern, American family and professional middle class academia. Clearly, the ideology of the family goes beyond media depictions and becomes a way of life that is supported and restricted by societal institutions. What is it about academia and the "liberal arts" experience that makes it so hard to go "home"? How does this revolve around the professional middle class ideology of what a family is and what functions a family serves, e.g. what is the role of a mother, what is the role of a daughter? What structural barriers are in place that compel students in higher education to experience "family" in a similar manner and seek their own independence apart from the family?

Anna Beckwith, is Adjunct Lecturer of Sociology at UMass Boston.