
Making Sociology Accessible in an Ohio Urban Prison: Facilitating a Deeper Sociological Imagination Through ‘Ethnographic Seeing’¹

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When prisoners become students in the undergraduate sociology classroom behind bars, they often lack sufficient academic literacy to discuss collectively sociology’s focus on inequalities in social life by social class, gender and race during class discussions. Further, objectives of control in the urban prison prohibit doing sociology, which significantly impacts sociology’s pedagogical aim to promote a sociological imagination. Inspired by calls from urban ethnographers for ethnographic seeing in social science, this article draws upon the legacy of documentary to explore reflectively how David Apter’s *Up* documentary film series provides a useful ethnographic model of an openly class-stratified society. Recognizing its rich potential to unveil and illuminate often obscure social forces, the aim is to demonstrate the possibilities for instructors to fashion transformative dialogue and deeper sociological imaginations through the visual dimensions supplied by the *Up* documentary film series as a medium in the prison classroom.

Keywords: Ethnographic seeing, gender, race, social class, *Up* films.

Introduction

Students in the sociology classroom behind bars often apprehend that over-representation of minorities and the poor in urban prisons across America is related to a long history of inequalities generated by social stratification and related racism. It is rare, however, for a student to bring a sufficient level of social theory and vocabulary during initial class discussions to share coherently and collectively their lived observations of these wider abstract social forces. In their article on teaching sociology ‘behind bars’ Parrotta and Thompson lamented some of the ‘obstacles’ instructors and students face in many U.S. prisons — the biggest being incarceration itself with strict rules driven by objectives of control that ‘prohibited’ students doing sociology (2011: 168, 176). In her ethnographic exploration of ways to overcome these obstacles to teaching sociology behind bars, Kallman observed ‘that classroom discussion and seminar-style teaching is the most effective’ (2018: 306). Herring et al have argued this deep reading type of instruction is ‘ethnographic’ (2016). This article suggests, however, that hewing to intensive readings and classroom discussion in seminar-style teaching without ‘seeing’ is less than ‘ethnographic’ (MacDougall 2006: 254). Might there be possibilities that are truly ethnographic to overcome these obstacles?

Krase invites us to consider the possibilities from drawing upon an approach of ‘ethnographic seeing in social science’ (2012: 25). To understand how the innumerable interactions between people reflect the (re)production of culture and larger structures of society, Manzo reminds us that ‘ethnographic seeing’ illuminates ‘conflict, competition and dominance at a level not usually noticed and which can easily be related to the theories’ (Manzo 2013: 100). Central to this endeavour in the urban prison classroom is the development of a ‘sociological imagination’, which helps students to apprehend social

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processes and inequities generated by social class, gender and race/ethnicity (Mills 1959).

Drawing encouragement from academic calls to employ the cinematic space-opera trilogies *Star Wars* and the cartoon animated TV situational comedy *The Simpsons* in taught lessons of the sciences, this article suggests that a documentary teaching aid can similarly improve ethnographic seeing in sociology and contribute to student cultivation of a sociological imagination (Johnson 2017, Woodcock 2006). Manzo pointed out that ‘we could treat observations and photographs as we do other information, such as interviews or demographic data’ (2013: 100). Doing so audio-visually through the medium of Michael Apted’s *Up* ethnographic documentaries is a project well-suited to teaching sociology in prisons and other total institutions.

Pedagogical Possibilities

This article is informed by seven semesters of teaching 15-week undergraduate sociology courses condensed to 5 weeks from Autumn 2016 to Autumn 2018 in an Ohio urban single-story community-based correctional facility. To reduce the potential for bullying and manipulation, prison authorities implemented strict prohibitions for student exchange of personal information, including ethnographic research or other types of qualitative study. Based on the author’s experiences of teaching sociology to a morning class of males and an afternoon class of females meeting thrice weekly, this article describes how the *Up* documentary films provide a useful model of a class-conscious society for prison educators and teachers of sociology in total institutions to bring students audio-visually face-to-face with sociological concepts and discourse. The discussions are ethnographically rich as the students observe both a cross-cultural and a class-conscious society that has similarities to their own environment but with differences that are less personal for classroom discussion.

The following, therefore, is not ‘an in-depth study of’ the sociology classroom in the urban prison ‘and attendant complex dynamics’ of its setting (Pardo and Prato 2018: 1), nor does it explore the dichotomy between the pedagogical aims of teaching sociology and the social control objectives of the urban prison. These social dynamics have already caught the radar of ethnographers and sociologists of education (Squirrel 1995, Pallotti and Thompson 2011, Kalmar 2018). Rather, what follows is an ethnographic reflection on the possibilities for sociology instructors to employ this documentary film series as a medium in teaching sociological concepts and theory.

Believing audio-visual media to be detrimental to literacy, some academics are not keen to supplement instruction based upon printed textbooks with audio-visual media (Sanders 1995). In this regard, it is helpful to countenance film as ‘a medium initially called “animated photography”’ to consider the ethnographic power of documentary film for seeing (Baetens 2009: 143). To support this discussion, I will refer to my experiences with these students behind bars and their performative presentations of armchair ethnography through the medium of the *Up* documentary series.

This British documentary series provides a cross-cultural model of class stratification, which illuminates sociological links between power, space and social life. The interviewees in the *Up* films provide useful ethnographic examples of inequalities in social life generated by

social class stratification and other factors. The films encourage students to apply individually-acquired textbook sociological knowledge to collective analysis of the documentary's visual animation of unfolding primary, secondary and adult socialisation of a social cross-section of British children from working-class, middle-class and upper-class backgrounds. This opens the door for students to consider interactively class stratification in America and to ponder to what extent they, too, are 'creatures, and even prisoners' of their social class and culture (Commager 1966 [1965]: 53). For students struggling to overcome drug or alcohol addiction, this question is particularly apt.

The Prison Setting and Participants

With its longstanding socio-cultural repercussions, the geographic location of the community based correctional facility in Ohio's struggling manufacturing region influenced its founding in 1997. Over a decade earlier, the U.S. struggled with a severe economic downturn. The early 1980s recession resulted in a metaphoric rust belt in Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania — a diagonal line running eastward from Milwaukee to Detroit through Cleveland to Pittsburgh in which manufacturing nearly stopped for several years. Especially hard-hit were factories with unionised work forces that have since halved wages or re-opened with non-union employees working for wages at or close to the national and state minimum wage. Many families in Ohio's ninth largest populated county today continue to struggle with income levels below the national average. Exacerbated by the normalisation of trade with China in 1997 and the ensuing 21st century exodus of numerous Ohio manufacturers to relocate there for free facilities and other incentives, empty factory buildings abound. An accompanying exodus of merchants from shopping malls continues to shutter many. In addition to widespread poverty, other related urban problems are alcoholism and a rising epidemic of opioids abuse.

Over a three-year period beginning in January 2018, teaching of sociology was conducted by the author during Autumn, Spring, and Summer semesters for a total of seven semesters to a morning class of incarcerated undergraduate students in the male wing and an afternoon class in the female wing. Offered through a partnership between a local community college and the minimum-security community-based correctional facility, these federally grant-funded sociology classes averaged fourteen students in the male wing and seven students in the female wing. Classes met for 3 hours three times a week, which made for a seminar-styled discussion learning format. Students were graded on two class presentations in addition to midterm and final exams. Whilst sometimes absent from sociology classes in the female wing, African Americans and/or Hispanics were steady minorities in the male wing sociology classes and also in the total institution, whose relatively low numbers did not reflect the higher incarceration rates of non-Whites generally in Ohio or the nation.

Up Films and Social Stratification

'Stop it at once!' commanded seven-year-old John Brisby at one and half minutes into the first episode. Provoked by a fellow seven-year old from London's impoverished East End for ignoring a sign at the zoo not to feed the bear, Brisby's upper-middle class outburst was

spiced with condescending disdain. Spared Brisby's on-camera ire for also feeding the bear was fellow upper-middle class student Andrew Brackfield, who stated 'I know there's no feeding but it doesn't really matter'. London working-class Jackie Bassett later reported that '[t]hey threw a party for all the kids chosen for the series, took us to the zoo [. . .] [as] part of a social experiment to see how differently working-class children behaved compared to other kids' (Adams 2009). To a significant number of students in the Ohio correctional setting, however, it was the differences in the unfamiliar attitudes and mannerisms of the upper and upper-middle classes in the *Up* series compared to the more familiar lower-middle and working classes that were most striking.

Brisby's frustration seems not to have arisen so much from the sign being ignored but more from the discomfort he seemingly experienced from having to share space with individuals from the 'rather dirty' working class, as he complained later in the episode. Saying he loathed their accents, Brisby likely found their speech to be an assault upon the Queen's elocution of the English language, which is often coveted by England's upper-middle and upper classes. Such interpersonal tensions generated by social class stratification were animated by these British children to a significant degree. This article suggests that the *Up* films provide a unique audio-visual window through which to see ethnographically major components of social dynamics generated by social inequality.

Beginning in 1964 with narration by Douglas Keay under Canadian director Paul Almond, with Michael Apted as his research assistant, these films under the subsequent sole direction and narration by Apted are popular not only with the British viewing public but internationally as well. By chronicling 'the entrenched class system that really organises what people do, who they think they are and where they end up', these documentaries are pioneering in showing how class and culture, together with gender and race, impinge upon human agency (Willis 2009: 348). The first film introduced one child of mixed African Caribbean and British heritage, another of undisclosed mixed Bulgarian and British heritage, and eighteen British children — all extroverted 'good interviewees' at age seven years (Almond 1964; Willis 2009: 352). Subsequent episodes revisited fourteen of the children at age fourteen years (Apted 1970) and again at twenty-one years (Apted 1977), then revisited no more than thirteen and often less every seven years thereafter (Apted 1984, 1991, 1998, 2005, 2012). The most recent and ninth episode in which these children-*cum*-adults are revisited at age sixty-three years was produced after the termination of the Ohio urban prison sociology classes (Apted 2019).

Unlike the occasionally uninterested single male student in the child-free urban prison classroom, all female students responded well to the interviewees. These children easily captured the attention of students who were also parents. The novelty of this ethnographically flavoured series has inspired many copycat documentaries in countries around the globe — one in America by Apted himself. The global impact of the original British *Up* films was noted after the production of *49 Up* when the American Sociological Association honoured Apted in 2008 'for Excellence in the Reporting of Public Issues' (Burawoy 2009: 317). California sociologist Barrie Thorne noted these documentaries 'can easily be mined for sociological insights, most obviously related to social class, a theme flagged at the opening

and closing of each film' (2009: 329).

Students sometimes point out that the films' narrator Michael Apted was also at times disrespectful towards the working-class children he interviewed. Apted's less than positive attitude towards working-class children in the early episodes introduced viewers to a manner of social class hostility generally foreign to many Americans. Although Ghanaian sociologist Kwaku Obosu-Menah suggested 'that Americans tend to have a poor level of class consciousness' (2014: 227), such snobbery was perceived by most students as not only condescending but habitually rude. They noted that it continued even after the working-class children reached adulthood.

Confusing Paul Kligerman of the orphanage with Tony Walker of London's East End, Thorne observed that '[t]he working-class subjects seem to be fending off imputed shame [. . .] Paul [actually Tony Walker] [. . .] says a bit defensively at 21, "I'm as good or better than most of them, especially in this program"' (2014: 333). Infused with an entrepreneurial attitude generated by a desire to follow in the footsteps of an older sibling driving his own taxi and a younger one also aiming to do so, Walker staunchly saw himself as morally equal to his contemporaries in the documentary series and became indignant when Apted suggested otherwise. Fellow London East Ender Jackie Bassett in *Twenty One Up* was also perturbed by Apted's sniff attitude, admitting later 'I took offence at a lot of things Michael Apted asked me that day' (Adams 2009: N/A). In short, social class tensions and conflict were well animated by the series' third episode between the interviewer and interviewees.

Apted is indeed upper-middle class and public-schooled, which in Britain means he attended a private preparatory boarding school. What Americans refer to as public schools is known in Britain as comprehensive schools or state schools. This documentary occasion provides an opportunistic teaching moment on culture and its ability to generate distinct and sometimes opposite meanings for words of the same spoken language. American and British speakers employ the same English language but, due to an ocean of cultural differences, do so in distinct ways. Likewise, the upper-middle and upper classes in the *Up* films generated a different cultural language from that of the working and lower-middle classes.

Apted may not even have been consciously aware that he might have found Walker's self-perception to be almost audacious for believing he was morally equal to middle-class participants in the documentaries. This ethnographic documentary animation of class tensions offers a valuable opportunity in the prison classroom to consult British social critic George Orwell's 1937 autoethnographic *The Road to Wigan Pier* for his insightful critique of social stratification in British society. Having attended the most prestigious public school in England, Orwell explained this cultural programming as 'contempt' for working-class accents and mannerisms by Britain's upper-middle and upper classes (Orwell 1958: 128).

The historical roots in Britain for class stratification and bias are deep and rooted in centuries of monarchy and aristocracy, something many colonial revolutionaries in America found repugnant. It was not until two years after African American males won universal suffrage in 1865 that the average white British male householder was permitted to vote for a Member of Parliament (MP). Until the Reform Bill of 1867, voting in Britain was largely limited to the upper-middle and upper classes. Although the Reform Bill of 1867 extended the

vote to a significant portion of the working class, universal suffrage was not extended to farm labourers and other non-house holding white males until women's suffrage was also achieved in 1918 (Willson and Prall 1984: 530). When colonial Americans and other colonists complained about British Empire, they were reacting mostly to a mere three percent in England who voted and constructed laws that the other ninety-seven percent generally suffered along with empire's colonial subjects. This cultural legacy of social inequality is most pronounced among the *Up* series children in the mannerisms exhibited by Brisby, whose maternal ancestor viewers learnt in *28 Up* was an aristocratic duke (Apted 1991). As one student observed, upper-middle class children were groomed to sniff at others.

Whether conscious or unconscious, the exhibition of negative attitudes and disapproval from the upper-middle class production team against working-class children was not limited to Apted. Introducing working-class Walker to viewers at three minutes into the first episode, initial narrator Douglas Keahy never asked what he thought about girlfriends at his age or even if he had one. Instead, Keahy spoke for him — 'and this is Tony, his girlfriend calls him a monkey'. Ensuing discussion in the prison classroom over whether Walker actually had a girlfriend or if she was a fabrication by Keahy often leads to consideration of the potential for interviewer intrusion.

Querying the potential for interviewer bias reveals further dynamics of upper-middle class attitudes towards the working class. At seven minutes plus nineteen seconds, Keahy is observed to have misinterpreted the bottom-up cooperative play of working-class children with a 'world of the seven-year old [that] can be primitive, even violent'. The camera footage in the background simultaneously shows a playful sparring match that quickly descends into a fistfight between a bully and his victim, which unfolded on the playground of Walker's school apparently behind the teacher's back. Although film footage also captures Walker acting fearlessly as a school yard diplomat in his attempt to halt the fleeing bully and then talking to him immediately after the altercation, this was ignored by the narrator. Instead, Keahy took liberties to paint all the working-class children, including Walker, as primitive and violent.

Rural one-room schooled Nicholas Hitchon failed to demonstrate that he even knew what a fight is let alone how to win one. Hitchon stated 'you better watch out for me because as soon as you're not looking I like to dash up and put my hands up [palms out, he demonstrated] and hit them against your back'. Male students like to point out that Hitchon's approach would have ill-served him if he had to contend with the fisticuffs of Walker's schoolyard bully.

'[T]he difference between freedom and discipline was meant to be key to the children's futures', noted Duneier (2009: 343). A recurrent theme in the series, it did not end until working-class children reached adulthood and began voicing their objections to Apted. The disparity in interpretations by the upper-middle class makers of the series and predominately working-class students in the Ohio prison presented the opportunity for students to discuss sociology's notions of class stratification, symbolic interaction and deviance, and to consider to what extent class-based views influence interpretations.

Socialisation and Social Change

The *Up* films' treatment of primary socialisation at age seven years in the first film, followed by secondary socialisation at age fourteen years in the second film, leads classroom viewers of the third film to reflect upon the sometimes frightening prospect for these British children at 'becoming persons' as autonomous and questioning adults (Ingold 1991: 317). As each film unfolds and builds upon those that preceded it, a growing wealth of sociological examples provide a rich depository of ethnographic material to potentially illuminate social dynamics and social theory. I suggest, therefore, that the *Up* films provide a useful audio-visual window to permit students new to sociology to see ethnographically the 'process of socialisation' that trains individuals to employ differentiated social class uses of status symbols and ritual 'in expected ways' (Baylor 2014: 27).

In her article on visual approaches to urban ethnography, Manzo asked 'How do we visually build stereotypes? In the process of constructing reality, how can visual methods allow us to understand the social constructions of meaning?' (2013: 102). At nearly two minutes into the first film, a Jesuit-inspired maxim 'Give me a child until he is seven and I will show you the man' (Almond 1964) reinforces sociology's concept of primary socialisation as 'the initial socialisation experiences that individuals commonly encounter within the context of their family' (Brown 2014: 101). A child's family is the primary apparatus of socialisation to the dominant norms, values and practices they hold in relationship to their position in social class stratification. As a result of their primary socialisation, the children's attitudes and mannerisms in the first film largely echoed the socio-cultural norms of their parents and families.

Primary socialisation can become warped, however, by life strictly sequestered from family in a total institution. Studying the negative life-long effects generated by socialisation in total institutions, psychologists found as early as 1937 that institutionalised children suffered significant developmental disabilities. These included lower intelligence quotient (IQ) scores and less self-confidence (Gunnar 2001). For Basterfield in the *Up* films, whose parents had never married, and Kligerman, whose parents were divorced, the orphanage as a total institution became their primary apparatus of socialisation. The total institution for Balden, whose biological parents were also divorced, was a military-styled pre-preparatory school where he seemed to be always beaten without knowing why. Although Balden's self-confidence increased during adult socialisation, students argued that all three boys subsequently exhibited a discernible lifelong lack of confidence that kept them from getting or holding a job that fully reflected their personal aptitudes and abilities. Basterfield explained this in the third film as not letting his hopes up in order to protect his heart from the prospect of having them dashed.

Subsequent class discussion often encourages students to compare the schooling experience of Balden at the military-styled boarding school with the non-military styled boarding school experiences of Brisby, Brackfield and Furneaux. This distinction usually leads to further discussion on the democratic nature of house captains and the developmental importance of opportunities for self-governance. Students speculate that institutionalisation was less than total in the non-military boarding school, and therefore did not proceed to arrest

the self-confidence of Brisby, Brackfield or Furneaux. The self-governing experiences under democratically elected house captains were seen to have empowered Brisby, Brackfield and Furneaux's self-confidence for life after boarding school.

In the ensuing films, however, families or total institutions as their substitute were not the only apparatuses for socialisation. In *Seven Plus Seven*, the children at fourteen not only echoed their families but also their school mates and other friends (Apted 1970). Since much of this socialisation takes place beyond the family, especially at school, sociology labels this as secondary socialisation. School, therefore, is the major apparatus for secondary socialisation. As a formal organisation and social system comprised of peer groups and student sub-cultures with an overt curriculum and a hidden curriculum, school not only inculcates society's values but also reproduces social class inequalities. Packard averred that 'students from the lower social classes learn how to avoid drawing attention to themselves' (2014: 336).

From the outset of the *Up* series' first film, it was clear to most undergraduate students that upper-middle class and upper-class children were receiving superior schooling experiences. Working-class and lower-middle class children were at a considerable academic and social disadvantage compared to upper-middle and upper-class children. Students observed that whether a British child went to a state comprehensive school, a state-maintained grammar school, or a private public school, played a significant role in educational success.

The lower-middle class parents of Neil Hughes were both teachers. Although they instilled in him a desire to go to Oxford University, they did not enrol Hughes in a private preparatory school or grammar school. Instead, he attended a secondary comprehensive school. Subsequently, Hughes was not accepted to Oxford. Charles Furneaux's parents did put him on the pre-preparatory and preparatory route leading to higher education at either Oxford or Cambridge University, but he too was not accepted by either. Although Hughes later went to Scotland's third oldest university at Aberdeen, he soon dropped out to become a homeless traveller. Furneaux, however, did not drop out but studied at what is known today as a Russell Group or 'British Ivy League' university at Durham. After complaining in *21 Up* about the 'Oxbridge conveyor belt shoved out at the end' (Apted 1977), Furneaux successfully read a Master's degree at Oxford after completion of his undergraduate study at Durham. Subsequently he refused to continue future participation in the *Up* series.

Brisby proposed in *21 Up* that 'someone who works on an assembly line in some of these car factories earning a huge wage can well afford to send their children to private school if they wanted to' (Apted 1977). He added 'an awful lot of people can afford to send their sons to a fee-paying school but they don't choose to. I mean that's their choice' (Apted 1977). In the U.S., autoworkers have long enrolled and continue to send their children or grandchildren to private parochial day schools. Unlike British boarding schools, students argued that Ohio's parochial schools do not encourage the cultural deprivation exhibited by Britain's upper and upper-middle classes in their social interactions with working-class children.

When Apted asked Brisby in *Seven Plus Seven* about boarding school cultural deprivation stemming from a lack of 'many boys from very different backgrounds', his reply

was ‘I don’t feel any lack’ (Apted 1970). Brisby then asked Apted ‘what does backgrounds have to with it?’ (Apted 1970). Students pointed out that Thanksgiving dinner would become an awkward family mealtime of clashing cultural attitudes grounded in social class if Ohio autoworkers sent their children to British-type boarding schools to become ‘pricks’. Nonetheless, rarely did a student question how the British case might also reduce overall competition from working-class jobseekers for a finite number of upper-middle class professional, government and high-level management jobs.

Apted’s pursuit of Kligerman after his emigration at 8 years old to Australia in *Seven Plus Seven* and subsequent films put unfolding secondary and adult socialisation into cross-cultural comparison. Acculturated to Australian society, Kligerman’s participation in the *Up* films offered an alternative point of view on Britain in addition to a cross-cultural comparison for viewers between his socialisation in Australia and the socialisation of British participants. Asked at age fourteen what he remembered of England, Kligerman replied ‘It seemed to be raining all the time, I wouldn’t stake my life on it because I can’t remember very much’ (Apted 1970). Turning his attention to Australia in *28 Up*, Kligerman opined ‘I love the place you know [. . .] you can do more or less anything you want’ (1984).

Socio-cultural environments influence people’s behaviour, shape their values and institutions, and help define their identity. Whereas society is the organisational and structural scaffolding that surrounds individuals, culture refers to dynamically generated meanings within a social environment in flux. To understand society and culture is to comprehend a complex web of tradition and change. As environments change, so do people and vice versa. This dynamic interaction between people and their environments produces a fascinating array of diversity. Student apprehension of some of these complexities was a classroom goal of undergraduate sociology in the prison setting.

Farm-raised and former working-class Hitchon, who eventually secured a prestigious rung on the upper-middle class social ladder as a physics professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, shared a similar sentiment for American culture in *28 Up* as Kligerman held for Australian culture. Hitchon observed that an American university was ‘substantially different from an English university’ in that it ‘takes many more people and gets a huge section of the population to a level where they’re really technically very competent and go out and make Silicon Valley work’ (1984). Nonetheless, the differences between American and British culture made symbolic interaction difficult for Hitchon. ‘It’s really hard going to a different country’ he said in *42 Up*; ‘people don’t send out the same signals’ (1998).

Ensuing class discussion often sees students not only query whether there are class differences in America as there are in Britain, but also assess to what extent middle-class children are at a significant advantage academically compared with working-class children. One of the class’s sociology textbook authors noted that ‘diplomas from elite private schools and universities signal to others a myriad of things regarding a person’s social class and cultural background and status’ (Packard 2014: 337). Many students were able to judge that ‘there are important status distinctions, which operate as hidden selectors, so that the American system is in fact less open than it appears’ (Banks 1968: 64). Sociologists have long researched this phenomenon in the U.S., which presents an excellent opportunity for students

to discuss the relationship of schooling to political economy and society. Invoking students' memories of high school, I ask them to discuss by what criteria the current Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education was appointed when she was never a teacher or even high school principal?

Social class concepts of endogamy and exogamy are also well illustrated by the openly class-divided British society in the *Up* series and therefore demonstrate the challenges to social class mobility. Apart from farm-born Hitchon, whose father intervened on his behalf with a successful application to a preparatory school, all children remained within their social class into adulthood. Although Hughes stumbled into a period of homelessness and suspected drug abuse after only two months at Aberdeen University in northern Scotland, he eventually reclaimed his lower-middle class membership when he won election to council for the London borough of Hackney and returned to university as a non-traditional student. With two arguable exceptions, all marriages were also endogamous. In 35 *Up*, students saw upper-middle class Brackfield married to Jane, a fulltime London secretary from Yorkshire (Apted 1991). I also ask students whether a case might be made that the marriage of Hitchon to his first wife Jackie was more exogamous than endogamous. Jackie's Oxford-educated elocution of English suggests her parents were likely not working class like her in-laws, nor was it likely she had ever been raised on a farm.

After viewing and discussing the fourth *Up* film, students in every semester cohort were required at midterm to write a short outline and present orally in class in answer to the question: To what extent does social class affect an individual's ability to get a job that reflects her or his personal aptitudes and abilities? In this assignment students followed a simplified British A-Level PEEL (point, evidence, elaboration, link) outline to answer the topic question. Evidence was required to be sourced from their textbook. Elaboration of the evidence was required to come from an example in the *Up* films. Performative presentations of students' PEEL outlines were used as assessments every semester in both sociology classrooms to ensure students grasped a variety of sociological concepts and terms that touch upon unfolding socialisation in the *Up* films.

Gender and Race in Apted's *Up* Series

Although social class stratification and socialisation generate inequality in the *Up* films, they are not the only sources of social inequality. Gendered inequality is extensive and modestly illustrated. As a male conceived and constructed project, the *Up* films' early focus was trained on the socio-cultural reproduction of masculinities at the expense of equal attention to women. Thorne remarked that '[i]ssues related to gender call out for feminist analysis, since only four girls were among the 14 seven-year-olds who ended up as the long-run cast of the series' (2009: 329). Here I invite students to discuss sociology's concept of patriarchy as an explanation for the long-standing cultural system of gendered social relations bounded by male power. In America, for example, most people living in poverty are not men but 'women' (Obosu-Mensah 2014: 218).

Four examples of women experiencing differentiated schooling experiences as children were presented in the early films. For example, working-class but grammar schooled Johnson

embarked upon a lifetime career as a school librarian and married mother of two children. When Apted asked her how she managed ‘to keep a career going and bring up a family and hold a marriage together’, Johnson credited her husband Russ — ‘I couldn’t do it without him’ (Apted 1998). A postal worker, Russ did the cooking during the week and Johnson took her turn on weekends.

Upper-class Lusk, however, stopped her boarding school education at age sixteen to attend a secretarial college in Paris. When students discuss the resulting disadvantages for women to compete with men in the workforce for management positions, their sociological imaginations often blossom. Many note that upper-middle class males became the barristers, judges and solicitors that govern British society whilst women as secretaries carried little chance for career mobility.

When the children faced adulthood in *21 Up*, students use this film and subsequent films together as an ethnographic window through which they explore the life course prospects of adult socialisation as an ongoing and dynamic learning process of ‘culturally defined expectations’ (Brown 2014: 110). As males married, however, their wives entered the *Up* films. Together, spouses brought an increasing women’s perspective into focus. For example, Davies’ first wife Rachel asserted in *28 Up* that ‘[t]here’s no such thing as mobility in any sense of the world — it’s very difficult to move up’ (Apted 1984).

Although all four girls of the original cast of the *Up* films did not pursue an undergraduate education, farm-raised Hitchon’s first wife Jackie had a degree from Oxford University and lower-middle class Davies’ first wife Rachel had one from a teachers college as did Balden’s eventual wife Penelope. When Apted asked Rachel in *28 Up* about juggling a career and family life, she explained: ‘There are two risks — one to follow the other around therefore perhaps become frustrated and dissatisfied that you didn’t initially follow your own line and individual wants; or there’s the risk that you take that you do have to part sometimes for [. . .] what you particularly want to do’ (Apted 1984). Hitchon’s first wife Jackie shared a similar sentiment in *28 Up*: ‘I don’t want to be the person left behind while Nick flies in and shares an adult life with his children at college and working; I want to be there too’ (Apted 1984). After Hitchon divorced, he eventually married Professor Cryss Brunner at the University of Minnesota.

Working-class Walker’s wife Debbie, a mother of three children in *28 Up*, and expatriate Kligerman’s Australian wife Sue became contributing breadwinners for their respective families. Kliberman’s wife Sue went from working as a part-time hairdresser to becoming an occupational therapist in *49 Up* (Apted 2005). Debbie passed the knowledge test in under two years for a licence to drive a London taxi when Walker had taken a year longer. Although Debbie became a partner in driving their jointly-owned cab, Walker refused to become a partner in keeping house, unlike postal worker Russ in his marriage to school librarian Johnson.

Gendered inequality is compounded in white-dominated societies by racist practices suffered by people of colour. Non-whites in Britain and America, for example, are two groups who face disadvantages beyond their gender or social class membership in the form of ‘discrimination on the grounds of colour’ (Banks 1968: 62). Basterfield’s second wife

Vianetta, a non-mixed African Caribbean woman, gave a woman's perspective in *42 Up* — 'It's still tough out there. You're still fighting and you're still having to push yourself because unless you've got a job you have to always try and work harder. Even at school, you've got to' (Apted 1998).

A common criticism of the *Up* series in the Ohio urban prison classroom pointed to the filmmakers' selection of mixed-race Basterfield as the only representative of a racial or ethnic minority, which was perceived as giving short shrift to social inequalities of race and ethnicity. This concern might have risen, in part, from students' experiences of everyday life in America as a nation largely of immigrants where African Americans and Hispanic Americans together comprise more than twenty percent of the total population. Britain, in turn, has a population that is eighty-five percent white. This is not to say that racial and ethnic minorities in Britain do not face unequal treatment or other social disadvantages — they do, as the children in the *Up* series clearly demonstrate. Britain's approach to these dynamics through cultural pluralism, however, coupled with the banning of guns has reduced hostilities and resentment in comparison to the lethal violence accompanying America's melting pot approach.

Ethnicity, however, was clearly given short shrift in the *Up* series. When Brisby shared his view that racial prejudice is 'rather vile', Apted continued to ignore his half-Bulgarian ethnicity during the early films and his experiences of not being ethnically akin in culture and religion to Anglo-Saxon Protestants (Apted 1977). Race is nevertheless a topic addressed repeatedly in the films. Basterfield opined in *Seven Plus Seven* that 'white people got to get used to coloured people and coloured people got to get used to being with white people because if either side doesn't work properly, the other side won't work properly' (Apted 1970). He explained in *42 Up* that 'I've had it from both sides [. . .] I've had white people tell me you black this and I've had black people tell me I'm white this and that, so I've stopped thinking about colour a long time ago' (Apted 1998). In *35 Up*, Balden defined racism as 'prejudice plus power' (Apted 1991).

What is the relationship between social constructions of race, social inequality, and poverty? How is racism socially divisive? Statistics show that significant numbers of people from many groups in America are increasingly poor and do not share in America's plenty. Further, '[p]overty rates are different among races' (Obosu-Mensah 2014: 218). According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2012, more than fifty percent of Americans living in poverty are non-whites (Obosu-Mensah 2014: 218). Sociology's concept of racism helps to understand how '[r]ace is a powerful social idea' that organises society and the hidden dynamics of institutional discrimination by employers, labour unions, and police (Romero 2014: 251).

What does 'race', 'class', and 'social inequality' look like? The *Up* series provides a documentary medium for students to see ethnographically race relations in a society dominated by whites and how those relations change over time. Basterfield worked in the 'chiller' at Wall's Sausages in London for at least seven years. Students made comparisons of Basterfield's desire to keep his job with the many attempts by the fictional Italian American character Paulie Pennino in the 1976 film *Rocky* to leave his job in a Philadelphia chiller. Basterfield did not become a tow lift driver at an air freight company until the closure of

Wall's Sausages. Students discussed to what extent Basterfield's long-held chiller job and subsequent tow lift operator job were both a manifestation of his life chances due to racism, no doubt compounded by a lack of confidence from his years in the orphanage. Discussion raised the further question as to why his first wife Yvonne might have divorced him? Did Basterfield's experience of the orphanage as a total institution generate such a lack of self-confidence in him that he held back from seeking other employment with better wages? Or, more than one female student asked, did Basterfield divorce Yvonne? These questions were not answered in the *Up* films but did fuel students' sociological imaginations and class discussions.

Class discussions asked students to think about the social reality of the idealised life in America of personal happiness and material comfort known as the American Dream, which most students are 'socialised with the idea of achieving' (Stablein 2014: 182). But to upper-middle class Brisby in *21 Up*, the 'invasion of the American way of life' is blamed for 'decreasing respect for the family as a unit' and 'increasing dishonesty' in England (Apted 1977). What, students were asked, was Brisby talking about? One student pointed to his sociology textbook on disparity in life opportunities to share that 'people can't achieve that dream by legitimate means and mainstream norms', therefore 'they may attempt to achieve it illegally' (Stablein 2014: 182). The opportunity followed to explain that many Prohibition era immigrants to the U.S., facing xenophobia and denied opportunities to realise the American Dream, found themselves engaging in illegal enterprise in order to make ends meet. Popularised during Brisby's teen years by Hollywood gangster films such as Francis Coppola's 1972 film *The Godfather*, similar illegal opportunities in England's impoverished urban areas might have been interpreted by Brisby as an 'invasion by the American way of life'.

Conclusion

Although this article is argument for collective ethnographic seeing through documentary media to promote sociological literacy, classroom discussion and sociological imaginations, it has not analysed the effectiveness of using documentary ethnographic seeing for educational activities. That would involve decisions on what to measure — exams, written assignments, or proficiency in classroom discussions. Rather, the reflections of this film series as a medium in the urban prison classroom are intended to inspire prison educators and other instructors of sociology in total institutions to employ this documentary model of society in their teaching of sociology. Due to its longevity and ethnographic seeing of social inequalities by class, gender and race, this British documentary series provides a useful audio-visual window for students to collectively see unfolding socialisation in an openly class-stratified society. That said, it is likely however that the collective style of ethnographic seeing and ensuing class discussions are more social and therefore more conducive to grasping the social animation of sociological concepts than the solitary style of solely reading a text. In other words, the classroom in an urban prison need not be an impediment to the pedagogical objectives of sociology. With the visual documentary medium of ethnographic seeing, a classroom behind bars might serve as an interactive Parthenon for budding social philosophers.

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