



History

- I. Introduction
 - a. This gets us to origins: where did race begin?
 - b. Different historical periods had different cultures – our cultures today come from history.
 - c. In 1976: Bacon's Rebellion (100 years before 1776)
 - i. No large middle class. Our society today has been middle class since WWII.
 - ii. There was small elite, big working class.
 - iii. Class conflict generated race.
- II. Class Conflict
 - a. What is the source of class conflict?
 - b. The costs of production
 - i. The price of Electricity (or similar) from the company's point of view.
 1. Company wants to pay the lowest possible cost.
 2. Obviously the electricity doesn't care.
 - ii. The price of Labor from the company's point of view
 1. Company still wants to pay the lowest possible cost.
 2. Owners want to treat labor like any other cost.
 3. In order to lower the cost of labor, need to use strategies
 4. Divide and Conquer: Can't have unions and still lower costs.
 - iii. Price of Labor from the workers' view
 1. Livelihood depends on the price of labor
 2. Cannot treat it just like any other cost. It's a moral issue.
 - iv. The conflict between workers and owners is one of an economic standpoint versus a moral standpoint.
 - c. When dealing with conflict with owners, could act individually or collectively.
 - i. If acting collectively, who's inside the group and who's outside?
 - ii. The question is one of *social closure*. Without it, all workers are in the group.
- III. Matewan (Film) and Unions
 - a. Coal miners paid by the ton in scrip, trying to unionize
 - b. The economic crisis is union vs. company
 - i. Workers are basically slaves to the company
 - ii. "I sold my soul to the company store."
 - iii. The precipitating event: the company lowered wages to 90 cents per ton.
 - c. Attempted structural change: Trying to create a union. Previously the company was dealing only with individual workers.
 - i. Company is trying to close out the union. Workers are closing out blacks (who allow the company to achieve its lower wages)
 - ii. Really the company is trying to use social closure to divide and conquer – the workers are doing it directly but only because the company drove them to it.
 - d. Strategies for Working Class (or middle class)
 - i. Redistribute wealth downward
 1. Strike until we get more pay
 2. Usually a union strategy
 - ii. Social Closure
 1. Both a company strategy and a union strategy.
 2. It can be a company "divide and conquer" strategy
 - iii. Make a Bigger Pie
 1. A longer-term strategy
 2. Create growth. Takes years to achieve.
 3. Doesn't work for immediate conflicts.
 - e. Class Conflict and Culture
 - i. Partly a battle over culture (meanings, values, assumptions)
 - ii. Elements of culture
 1. Media / pop culture

2. Schools
3. Families / within homes.
4. "Organizational culture" – created within any group
5. Religious institutions (church, et cetera)
6. Workplaces (management discusses "organizational culture")
- iii. Things that we'd identify as culture
 1. Celebrations / traditions
 2. Food
 3. Body image
 4. Art / music
- iv. In Matewan
 1. The different cultures of Italians, blacks need to merge to form one union.
 2. Film used music to represent different groups (viola & guitar for Italian, harmonica for black)
 3. Could hear music start to get integrated though not without protest
 4. Religion was used as a battleground. First preacher (main preacher) says the union is Beazelbub. The second preacher (Danny) says the union is Jesus. (Jesus would have supported the union were he alive today).
- f. Slavery vs. Free Labor
 - i. Slavery
 1. Permanent. Can't get out.
 2. Choice belongs to someone else with more power.
 3. Harsh treatment.
 4. No pay.
 5. Specific master / owner
 6. Hereditary. This is how "indentured servants" became "slaves" (also how slavery got racialized)
 - ii. Free Labor
 1. Voluntary
 2. Still harsh treatment
 3. Paid (albeit in scrip, perhaps)
 - iii. Could also have partly free labor, sharing aspects of each category.
 - iv. Matewan
 1. Workers are partly free.
 2. Whites are the most free of all workers (but still not completely free)
 3. Blacks are least free (but still not slaves)
 4. Italians rank in the middle somewhere.
 5. Unions want to push toward free labor (unless they engage in social closure). Company pushes to eliminate that freedom.
- g. Group Unity
 - i. Important because groups can do things that individuals cannot.
 - ii. If an individual went on strike, s/he would just get fired.
 - iii. Important to recognize threats to group unity
 1. Disagreements within the group
 2. Outside group trying to split the group apart
 3. Someone focusing on differences rather than similarities.
 4. Individuals focusing on their own interests rather than the collective interests of the group.
 5. Laws can be passed prohibiting the group
 - iv. Two Key Threats
 1. Company can try to "divide and conquer" subgroups
 2. Company can try to "divide and conquer" individuals
 - v. Matewan

1. Company tried to bribe the sheriff / mayor (trying to divide and conquer individuals via rewards)
2. Individuals in the union wanted to blow up the mine shaft and ambush the agents.
3. C.E. Lively was acting as a company spy.
4. Joe was the only one *really* supporting the union.
5. Company was trying to discredit Kennehan and encourage violence
6. Role of Race
 - a. Whites acted alone in the ambush, then blamed blacks and Italians.
 - b. Blacks couldn't participate since the consequences would be much more severe for them.
 - c. The kinds of actions they could take were more limited than for the local whites.
7. Insider Knowledge
 - a. Groups develop common culture over time
 - b. People in the group know things outsiders do not.

h. Violence

- i. Is it a smart idea to use violence?
 1. Is it strategically appropriate?
 2. Is it immoral to use it (or not to use it) in some situations?
- ii. Arguments Against Use of Violence
 1. Strategic
 - a. Violence may lead to more violence
 - b. The other side may be able to bring more force than you
 - c. State and federal government may bring the national guard.
 - d. Public relations: Public needs to see the struggle
 2. Moral
 - a. It's wrong to hurt
 - b. It's destructive
- iii. Arguments For Use of Violence
 1. Strategic
 - a. C.E. Lively tried to provoke violence to end up taking out the leaders
 - b. Racial minorities can't use violence
 2. Moral
 - a. Moral vengeance. Have to get even for past crimes.
 - b. May want to achieve peace through war
- iv. Matewan
 1. Townsfolk: Just seeking revenge. Purely moral decision
 2. Company: Have always been trying to provoke violence. It put them in a better strategic position since they had more power.
 3. Company killed Hillard as an example to provoke the townsfolk into succumbing to violence so they could be defeated.

IV. Los Mineros (Film), Pay Systems

- a. Specifics and Generalities
 - i. Looking at specific cases of struggles between workers and management helps us understand the general concept.
 - ii. Will look now at another case, compare and contrast with matewan.
- b. Ways a Company can Control Workers
 - i. Company can own most things in the town – stores, housing.
 - ii. Get the workers into debt.
 - iii. Pay with company scrip
 - iv. All these things have to do with pay / the pay system
 - v. Threaten violence or be violent
 - vi. Isolate them socially

1. Social closure (ethnicity, race, religion?)
2. More generally: divide & conquer
3. Use scabs

c. Dual Wage System

- i. Mexicans in Clifton-Morenci, AZ paid half the wages white workers got for the same jobs.
- ii. The same system was in place in Mexico – Mexican workers got paid less.
- iii. This system was supported by both the company and the Anglo miners.
- iv. In Arizona, Mexican miners were physically segregated, barred from the good clubs, not even allowed to visit Anglos' houses.
- v. Mexican government was working so much for the company that they deputized Arizona rangers after they crossed the border to avoid an international problem.
- vi. Similarly to West Virginia: Same exact union (IWW)
- vii. In Arizona, sent workers out into the desert, exiled from town.
- viii. Mexican revolution followed (THE revolution)

V. History Take-Away

- a. Studying history is worthwhile because the same thread of events exists today.
- b. Jadzia Dax (Star Trek DS9): "If you want to know who you are, it's important to know who you've been."