

**Unit Essay I Revisions**

Hannah K. DeLong

Department of Sociology, Longwood University

SOCL 401: Sociological Theory

Dr. Scott Grether

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### **Summary of Revisions**

After re-reading Unit Essay I, I have added methods of inquiry because I forgot to include that in the first submission. I also reworded the law of three stages because the way I had written about it before was confusing and not organized. Next, I add more information for Harriett Martineau because before I was only covering manners and morals. Furthermore, I added more depth to the section about social evaluation because it was a big idea of Herbert Spencer, and my paper before was lacking information in this section. I also added to my in-text citation because before, I was not clear which chapters I was citing from. Lastly, fixed my references section because when I submitted the paper, it was not in the proper APA style.

### **Introduction**

Many works of early theorists were brushed under the rug, especially if the theorist was a woman. A sociological theory provides an understanding of the way individuals act or an explanation of why a specific event occurred in the past. The three early theorists that this paper will focus on are Auguste Comte, Harriet Martineau, and Herbert Spencer.

### **Early Theorists & Their Contributions**

#### ***Auguste Comte***

To start, the first early figure that will be discussed is Auguste Comte. Comte wanted to establish a naturalistic science of society that could both explain historical events and human development but also anticipate future trends (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 1). Comte had many key concepts, which include social physics and sociology, meaning the study of society, and methods of inquiry (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 1). This study included how societies progress and how societies create social order (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 1). Comte used the methods of inquiry to understand observations, experiments, and surveys. Comte is also remembered for

formulating the term “sociology”, which creates an understanding of the study of society (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 1).

The law of three stages includes theological, metaphysical, and scientific or positive. At the theological stage, many individuals were curious to know why things happened (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 1). The metaphysical stage was a stepping stone that connected facts to ideas from the first stage of theology to the final stage of the positive because Comte argued that the human mind could not jump straight from the theology stage to the positive stage (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 1). In the final stage of scientific or positive, Comte argued that there was rational thought from science that was used to discover laws (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 1). According to Allan and Daynes (2017, Ch. 1), positivism is centered on knowledge and the notion that the capacity of the human mind to learn is infinite. Additionally, Comte aimed to offer approaches for examining society. Four scientific approaches were put forth by him to investigate society in a naturalistic way. The historical method, comparison, experimentation, and observation were among them (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 1). Even now, social phenomena can be studied using these techniques.

### ***Harriett Martineau***

The next theorist is Harriett Martineau, whose main focus was on morals and manners (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 7). Martineau also had a passion for feminism and was often overlooked by the men in sociology because she had different ideas and views. She noted that during her research on morals and manners, there were four American practices of domination. These four practices are slavery, the treatment of women, treating public opinion as a fixed and unchanging aspect of reality, and fantasizing about wealth (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch.7). In her study, she maintained that gender was a social construct, which strengthened arguments for

addressing these disparities. Martineau, like Comte, was interested in offering approaches to sociological inquiry. Martineau based her explanation on principles, etiquette, objects, and human speech. While manners are how people act and behave following those values, morals are ideals that are held throughout a society (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 7). Martineau argued that to comprehend society and its future developments, it is necessary to examine how these two ideas agree or contradict.

Martineau's work and research parallel the idea and concept of feminism (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 7). She writes that women have a unique standpoint to write and understand sociological research because women are discriminated against. Martineau is saying that women can use their experiences as women to document how they are discriminated against and how society is structured. From Harriett Martineau's perspective, this is a gendered standpoint, and gender differences are socially constructed (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 7). Furthermore, Martineau focused on and contributed to a society in which there are differences among women, and they should be studied. She pushes for a change in society, but explains that for a society to change, the people in the society can not be forced or coerced into changing. Martineau argued that if people were educated and wanted to change, then that could motivate people in the society to change (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 7).

### ***Herbert Spencer***

Herbert Spencer was influenced by Comte's work and the study of society. He was also influenced by Darwin's idea of social evaluation (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 2). Spencer believed that those who are most fit would survive in the social society because of some type of biological factor that made them the most sought after (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch.2). Furthermore, he believed that the rich and powerful would continue to be rich and powerful

because they were the most successful in society. Spencer wanted to apply a scientific view of social structure and social institutions rather than focus on the mental states of individuals.

Herbert Spencer's research is rooted in functionalism, structure, and growth (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 2). Spencer was heavily invested in human evolution, and he argued that sociology should be the science to detect the natural laws governing humans and societies (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 2).

In order to better understand how civilizations self-regulate and organize, Spencer proposed two different kinds of societies. Industrial cultures tend to be more peaceful, whereas militant societies are more strict with predetermined rules. Lastly, he applied positivism to try to understand society as an event that happens organically in the environment (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch.2).

### **Sociological Theory**

Sociological theories provide explanations for particular aspects of society that we as a whole want to understand better (Sternheimer, 2020). To better understand a theory or idea, an individual should look at the root cause and past scholarly publications. Sociological theory can be used to analyze social structure and social phenomena (Sternheimer, 2018). According to Abend (2008), the development and continued work of social theories is an approach to analyze and characterize the different works of sociologists of social movements in history. Furthermore, social theory is commonly looked upon as a guide to inform sociological research (Abend, 2008).

A sociological theory is not just created from the sky, it takes time and dedication. Theories in sociology can be created by many different studies and not just by one study (Sternheimer, 2020). Sociological theory is the result and product of countless investigations

conducted by scholars who put their efforts into contributing to the growth of sociological theory (Sternheimer, 2020). To better understand the work of earlier theorists, you have to research the root concepts of theory and what was impacting their society during that period (Sternheimer, 2018). For example, many important theorists rely on past research for inspiration to add to existing theories. One of the theories mentioned above, Herbert Spencer, was influenced by the work of Darwin (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 2). Herbert Spencer tweaked Darwin's work and research to add to the idea of evolution, which is still discussed amongst the general public.

### **How Sociological is Unique**

One thing that makes sociological theory unique in comparison to other theories is that in a social society, everyone has a different viewpoint or experience that they bring to the conversation (Sternheimer, 2018). This is very unique because it allows theorists to open their eyes to several different viewpoints that they might not have considered or thought of. It is also important to have different personal social experiences to share in case another person who has the same opinion or experience is too afraid to speak up. For example, as mentioned above in previous paragraphs, Harriett Martineau was a woman who wrote about her own experiences as a woman. She wrote about how women's rights and roles in society are discriminated against because of social norms.

Furthermore, another reason why sociological theory is unique when compared to other theories is that in social society, theorists study human experiences and not just psychological concepts. According to the Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences (2025), sociology stands out amongst the theories because of its unique focus on a human's everyday life. This is because social scientists do not view humans as programmed robots (Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences, 2025). Sociological theory is rooted in the belief that the human experience holds a

collective phenomenon in significantly different ways (Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences, 2025). For example, Comte believed that they naturally lean towards building a society (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 1). This research from Comte is based on societal norms and human emotions (Allan & Daynes, 2017, Ch. 1).

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the three important theorists, Auguste Comte, Harriet Martineau, and Herbert Spencer, all contributed to the establishment of sociological theory. Even if some of their work and research were minimized or overlooked, they were still able to create a scientific discipline that helps to explain other publications of theory.

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**Unit Essay II Revisions**

Hannah K. DeLong

Department of Sociology, Longwood University

SOCL 401: Sociological Theory

Dr. Scott Grether

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### **Summary of Revisions**

In this revision, I made changes to the section on the veil because what I had written was not clear. I added more sentences to clear up any confusion with the concept of the veil. For example, I deleted a sentence that I wrote that was not true regarding the veil. I also added a few sentences about how the veil is a concept that comes out of the color line, because before, I was mistaken and had written it the other way around. Furthermore, I made changes to the key contributions because I lost points there for not stating the correct concept of the color line.

### **Introduction**

In 1868, William Edward Burghardt DuBois was born into a poor black homestead in Massachusetts (Morris, 2015). DuBois grew up during the Reconstruction Era, followed by the Jim Crow Era. From here, he sought out his studies to fight for racial equality for black Americans (Edles & Appelrouth, 2010). The question and puzzle W.E.B. DuBois was trying to solve was why there was racial inequality. DuBois was a very intelligent person who was the first African American to earn a Doctor of Philosophy from Harvard University (Morris, 2015). He also helped to establish and found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. W.E.B. Du Bois's interest in understanding the race conflict can be understood from his key concepts of The Color Line, The Veil, The Double-consciousness, race as socially constructed, and mixed methods, along with the concepts of critical race theory.

### **Major Concerns & Key Theoretical Contributions**

During the time of W.E.B. DuBois, there was an abundance of racial tensions because of institutional racism among social classes (Edles & Appelrouth, 2010). According to DuBois, racial oppression and white supremacy were rooted in society's beliefs (Morris, 2015). DuBois,

unlike white social scientists, believed that the new research had to be thorough and well thought out to be legitimate (Morris, 2015). The idea behind The Color Line is that there is a racial divide among Americans and how people view race. DuBois concluded that there is no biological definition of what race is the best or better, but there is still racism rooted in the higher class because those without power have been treated poorly by those in power. In his work titled "*The Soul of Black Folk*", he introduces two other key concepts that help to explain The Color Line, and the two concepts are The Veil and The Double-consciousness.

The Veil is a concept that explains how white people see black people differently in America. The veil is a visual and symbolic wall of separation that emphasizes how racial boundaries, both social and psychological, are viewed. It also represents black "invisibility. The Veil is a social concept that represents the invisibility of black Americans (Edles & Appelrouth, 2010). The Veil has three components, which are the dark skin of black people, a physical dividing line of difference from whiteness. The second component is the barrier preventing whites from seeing blacks as literal Americans. Finally, the last component is the barrier preventing black people from seeing themselves outside of what white America describes them to be. The Veil also symbolizes the inability of white people to completely comprehend black Americans' issues because they do not encounter racial prejudice in the same manner. It draws attention to the disparity in awareness or empathy between classes (Edles & Appelrouth, 2010). In my own words, I would say that The Veil was a key concept of DuBois for white people to better understand what it is like to have darker skin. Furthermore, I think The Color Line is a key contribution to The Veil because it shows white people how race and racism have affected the day-to-day lives of black people.

Furthermore, another key contribution to *The Color Line* is Double-consciousness. Black identity is divided into two parts, making it difficult or impossible to have a unified identity. The veil prevents black people from having true self-consciousness, and that forces them to have double-consciousness (Kaufman, 2013). Part one of *The Double-Consciousness* is how an individual understands themselves in their family and community. The second part is how an individual views themselves through the eyes of white Americans. W.E.B. DuBois believed that race is socially constructed. This is because race is not rooted in a biological concept. Race can be understood and categorized by different experiences and observations, such as hair texture. Race can be created through our experiences and interactions in society. DuBois used mixed methods consisting of quantitative and qualitative research to better understand different perspectives (Gonzales, 2017).

DuBois made many contributions to society, including critical theory and critical race theory. Critical theory explains how hierarchy has power in society and how that is prevalent. This theory also touches on how social problems are due to an imbalance in the institution that holds the power. DuBois's critique of society, such as race as an organizing principle of American life, laid the foundation for critical race theory. Critical race theory uses the components of critical theory along with racism and race. The major goal is to critique racially oppressive ideas and meanings behind racism. One of the components of critical race theory is that different power structures are based on white supremacy and white privilege, which then perpetuates the marginalization of people of color.

### **Contributions & Society Today**

DuBois's theoretical contributions to *The Color Line* are still relevant in studying and understanding society today. His contributions are still used today because there are still issues

surrounding race and racism in the United States. For example, there are racial disparities in the criminal justice system. To further explain, black people are disproportionately represented by the legal system because if you can not afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you in court. Many court-appointed attorneys already have an abundance of criminal cases, and this can lead to a disorganized attorney not giving their client the best representation they deserve, all because they are too poor to afford a private attorney. This example relates to The Color Line because people still see a divide in race and how power plays a role in determining someone's fate. This is just one of many examples of how black individuals are disproportionately represented within the criminal justice system.

In society, we still use DuBois's key concern of The Double-consciousness. His focus on the lived experiences of black individuals remains a structure for understanding racial inequity. For example, we still see this today when a black individual is forced to fit in at work or school by needing to act a certain way (acting white) to fit in. This forces black people to forget their culture and try to adopt a new one. This remains a prevalent issue in society because black people still face challenges in social situations.

DuBois was ahead of his time when he created and studied social justice. Another example of one of DuBois's contributions that is still in use today is the NAACP. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is an organization that is focused on the civil rights of color people. The NAACP is still prevalent in society by creating youth achievement groups to combat the issue of racial discrimination and equal rights in America.

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**Unit Essay III Revisions**

Hannah K. DeLong

Department of Sociology, Longwood University

SOCL 401: Sociological Theory

Dr. Scott Grether

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### **Summary of Revisions**

After I re-read this unit essay, I made changes to the APA format because I did not have a running header. My revisions now have a running header because this is a professional APA paper. Next, my paragraphs were too long and I shortened them to make them between 5-6 sentences. Furthermore, I added a citation for the waves of feminism because I did not have a citation for the four waves. Next, I added a paragraph that is dedicated to the unique contributions of Jane Addams and Charlotte Gilman to make this paper stronger.

### **Introduction**

Many theoretical traditions help paint a clear picture of the social world. This essay will focus on how feminism has addressed the questions, social issues, or sociological puzzles surrounding women's equal rights. Feminism is a mental and consciousness-raising movement that is founded on the belief that men and women should be treated with the same respect and opportunities (Grether, 2025). Additionally, feminism is used to comprehend and improve gender inequality (Grether, 2025). The idea that gender disparities are socially and culturally developed and led to this understanding (Grether, 2025).

### **Waves of Feminism**

Over the years, feminism has shifted and changed. There have been four waves of feminism that have helped to identify social issues and puzzles. The oldest phase of feminist activism was the first wave of feminism, which lasted from 1848 to 1920 (Grether, 2025). The main issues that feminism addressed at this time were women's suffrage and resentment toward Black men for acquiring rights. The second wave of feminism, sometimes referred to as the "women's liberation movement," took place between the 1960s and the 1980s (Grether, 2025).

The main issues during the second wave of feminism were equal access to job opportunities, income, schooling, and women's rights. The third wave of feminism took place between the 1990s and the 2010s, which focused on the variety of identities that women can have (Grether, 2025).

At this time, correcting historical injustices within feminist movements, sexual harassment in the workplace, and sexuality were the main issues that feminism tackled. Moreover, we are currently experiencing the fourth wave of feminism. This wave is difficult to define because it is happening in real time (Grether, 2025). Today, feminist activists' concerns are traditional gender norms and practices, making men responsible for their acts, and the diversity of femininity.

### **Feminist Theorist**

There are two important feminist theorists whose work utilizes the feminist traditions. Jane Addams and Charlotte Perkins Gilman dedicated their efforts to be involved in the feminist movement and social reform (Foster, 2022; Haberman, 1972). Jane Addams was born on September 6th, 1860, in Cedarville, Illinois (Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley, 2007, Chapter 3). Addams was heavily influenced by her prominent father and four older sisters. Some things that shaped Addams into the sociologist she was, a search for the right to speak and be heard, Hull-House, the Chicago settlement she founded, different relationships with women, the social reform and social science movements of the Progressive Era, and her temperament (Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley, 2007, Chapter 3). According to Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (2007), in chapter three, "Addams wrote social theory as part of her larger project of achieving ameliorative social change in her society and time.

Jane Addams' main proposition is that the times need a social ethic as the common principle of conduct in society: people must learn to identify their individual interests with the common good, and the common good must be defined so as to recognize that an injury to one is an injury to all. Her social theory is devoted to a careful explanation of the need for this ethic and the conditions necessary to achieve it" (p.74). Furthermore, Jane Addams was an important social reformer, activist, and leader in the American peace and women's suffrage movements.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was born on July 3rd, 1860, in Hartford, Connecticut (Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley, 2007, Chapter 4). She was an active and prominent writer who published novels, essays, satire, journalism pieces, social analysis, and sociological studies (Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley, 2007, Chapter 4). Some key concepts of Gilman are reforming social Darwinism, common consciousness, work, excessive sex-distinction, sociality, androcentric culture, and sexuo-economic relation. According to Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (2007), in chapter four, states, "Charlotte Gilman was a theorist who sincerely believed in the critical and supportive possibilities of theory. With this in mind, she constructed a systematic social theory that explains human life as characterized both by a fundamental sociality and by unnecessary, socially produced human pain. Similar to Gilman's dual vision of society and what it is and what it might be is the dynamic relation between gender and social structure" (p. 113-114). Additionally, Gilman uses a model of social life and claims that the subject of sociology is a human social relation (Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley, 2007, Chapter 4).

### **Theoretical Contributions**

Both Jane Addams and Charlotte Perkins Gilman made significant contributions to feminist theory, and their work continues to resonate with contemporary social issues. They have

illustrated a theoretical tradition rooted in social justice, gender equality, and the dismantling of restrictive gender norms. More importantly, there are things that these theories have contributed to that we are still fighting for women's equal rights, such as the gender pay gap. Women are still fighting today for equal pay in the workforce. The sexuo-economic relation is the driver of why women are not being paid equally in comparison to men, and can be explained because of the traditional division of household labor (Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley, 2007, Chapter 4).

According to Foster (2022), Gilman argued that women's economic dependence on men is the "sexuo-economic relation". This idea was the true driving factor of women's trouble and was the first thorough work written by a woman to delve into the economic role of women's duties (Foster, 2022). Through Gilman's idea of sexuo-economic relation, it can be argued that because women tend to lean and favor certain jobs, such as a childcare position or employment in education, these jobs typically result in less pay. This means there is a gender pay gap with certain jobs when comparing what percent a female makes to a male. Moreover, another example as to why there is still a gender pay gap is that when women become pregnant, they miss out on work experiences and promotions due to the time they have to take off to be with their baby.

Jane Addams was the co-founder of Hull House. She gained recognition in 1889 when she helped found Hull House in Chicago, one of the nation's earliest settlement homes that offered community, academic, and cultural programs to the disadvantaged and immigrants. Jane Addams put forth endless effort to advance social justice and enhance urban living circumstances. She was also an avid advocate of peace. In 1931, she became the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her contributions to advocating peace and cooperation worldwide (Haberman, 1972).

One unique contribution of Charlotte Gilman is her novel titled *The Yellow Wallpaper*. She argued that gender is the driving force of social inequality, the lens through which to study and explain society, and the central concept that is infused in her theoretical work (Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley, 2007, Chapter 4). She also argued that sociality is a human-species potential (Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley, 2007, Chapter 4). Furthermore, Gilman stated that the capacity to realize one's true self by working on the things one loves to do and working with others on the things one loves to do is corrupted by sexuo-economic relations (Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brantley, 2007, Chapter 4).

### **Conclusion**

Overall, both Jane Addams and Charlotte Gilman provide insightful factors in their research that highlight social issues and social puzzles surrounding women's equal rights. Both theorists do this by addressing gender inequality in various forms of economic and social factors. By combining their work, it gives feminists a comprehensive view for addressing issues such as the gender pay gap, traditional gender roles, and the ability for women to be self-sufficient and not have to rely on males.

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