

873526591

Professor Phillips

SOCI 2860

10/7/21

### Reaction Paper #1

Donald Black is a sociologist who wrote the book *Moral Time* which is about conflict, why conflict occurs, and the movements of social time. Conflict is when one person defines someone else's behavior as wrong or their own behavior as wrong. There is a spectrum of wrongfulness which starts at the violation of etiquette meaning someone was rude or inappropriate. Second, there is violation of ethics and morality. Lastly, there is the violation of the law. What causes human conflict is the movement of social time and this is defined as a change in social space. There are three sections that movements of social time can be split into which are relational time, vertical time, and cultural time. Something that Black argues is that his theories are all scientific claims, and they are never moral claims. Science asks, "how does the social world operate?" and morality asks, "how should the social world operate?" Black talks about facts versus values and that what he talks about is facts and is not related to his morals. Science cannot answer moral questions and what should be can't be deduced from what is.

#### **Relational Time:**

Relational time is the first form of movements of social time, and it has two sections which are overintimacy and underintimacy. Intimacy is the degree of participation in the life of

another so too much intimacy (overintimacy) causes conflict and too little intimacy (underintimacy) also causes conflict.

There are also two subsections for both overintimacy and underintimacy. The subsections for overintimacy are overinvolvement (trespassing) which is too much involvement in another person's life and overexposure (revelation) which is revealing too much about oneself to others. The greater the trespass or revelation, the greater the conflict. The two subsections for underintimacy are underinvolvement (withdrawal) which is too little involvement in the life of another person. The other subsection is underexposure (concealment) which is revealing too little about yourself to another.

There are sub-propositions that have to do with overintimacy. Some of these theoretical sub-propositions include explaining variation across time and space, upward involvement causes more conflict than downward involvement, and too much involvement causes more conflict in distant relationships. For example, someone raping a stranger is punished more than someone who raped their spouse. This example falls under the sub-propositions of degree of conflict depending on existing relationships because too much involvement causes more conflict in a distant relationship compared to a closer relationship. A families of behavior example for overinvolvement is that staring is related to rape and for overexposure, flashing is related to espionage. There are also sub-propositions that have to do with underintimacy and some of these theoretical situations include more withdrawal causes more conflict than less withdrawal, too much withdrawal causes more conflict in close relationships, and explaining variation across time and space. For example, divorce used to be illegal and has become more widely accepted over time. Also, these sub-propositions can fall under the category of degree of conflict depending on the magnitude of the movement of social time because large movements of social

time are criminal, one example being perjury. A families of behavior example for underinvolvement is being distracted when talking to someone is related to leaving the military and for underexposure, keeping secrets is related to refraining from releasing information about a bad product.

One personal example I have that I will share has to do with relational time and overexposure. I grew up as a competitive dancer and when I was in middle school there was a girl on my team who tended to overexposure herself. She would post videos of herself on social media in outfits that were revealing and doing different dances that were vulgar and inappropriate. She would also come to dance class in revealing outfits and would continue to do inappropriate dance moves that made me and my other teammates uncomfortable. This caused conflict between all of us dancers because we were all uncomfortable with the things that she was doing but it also caused conflict with the dance studio because she was posting these inappropriate videos with our studio's name across her social media pages. She continued to do these things even though our teachers repeatedly told her to stop. When the conflict did no die down, my dance studio decided to make her leave the studio.

### **Vertical Time:**

The next form of movements of social time is vertical time and vertical time has two sections which are overstratification and understratification. Stratification is the differences in social class so overstratification means that the status between two groups expands and understratification means that the status between two groups contracts.

There are also two subsections for both overstratification and understratification. The two subsections for overstratification are oversuperiority and overinferiority. Oversuperiority is when

the status gap between group A rises above group B and overinferiority is when the status gap grows because group B falls below group A. The two subsections for understratification are undersuperiority and underinferiority. Undersuperiority is when the status gap between two groups shrinks because the superior group falls and understratification is when the status gap between two groups shrinks because the inferior group rises.

There are some theoretical sub-propositions for overstratification and some of these include upward mobility and domination. An example of upward mobility is a high school athlete who plays on a certain team and if a different player on the same team got a D1 offer, that would cause more conflict but if another player on a higher team got a D1 offer, it would cause less conflict. This is an example of conflict depends on the magnitude of the movement of social time. An example of domination is when a parent tries to tell their child what to do when their child is an adult. This causes more conflict than a parent telling their child what to do when they are a teenager. This is an example of conflict depends on the existing relationship. For the families of behavior for oversuperiority, running up the score in a sporting event is related to corporate monopolies and the families of behavior for overinferiority, being insulted by someone is related to being fired from a job as well as being physically assaulted. There is also a theoretical sub-proposition for understratification and it is that unequal offenses cause more conflict than equal offenses. A families of behavior example for undersuperiority include that theft of property and theft of creativity are related because they both cause conflict when the superior falls and for underinferiority, an example is resisting arrest and the Civil Rights movement are related because they both cause conflict when the inferior rises.

One example from class that stuck with me was when we talked about running up the score in a basketball game. In this example, Professor Phillips was talking about how he was

coaching his daughter's basketball team and at one game, they were doing well and had a significant amount more points than the other team. Professor said that at that time, he told the team to not score too many more times because it would be embarrassing and rude to the other team. After he gave those directions, one girl on the team continued to score three-pointers with little time left in the game. This is an example of oversuperiority because the status gap between the two teams was rising and their team was rising further and further above the losing team.

### **Cultural Time:**

The last form of movements of social time is cultural time and cultural time as two sections which are overdiversity and underdiversity. Diversity is differences in culture and culture consists of a wide range of topics including religion, customs, clothing, etiquette, and more. In cultural time, overdiversity is when the differences between two cultures grows apart and underdiversity is when the differences between two cultures shrinks.

There are two subsections for both overdiversity and underdiversity. The two subsections for overdiversity are overtraditionalism where cultural differences expand because the cultures collide and there is overinnovation which is when the differences in culture expand because a new cultural form emerges. The two subsections for underdiversity are undertraditionalism which is when differences between cultures contract because of a rejection of old culture and there is underinnovation which is when differences in culture contract when there is a rejection of a new culture. There is a theoretical sub-proposition for overdiversity, and it is that more conflict occurs when cultural differences expand among people who are similar. For overtraditionalism, an example for family of behavior is that a minor family debacle is related to the behavior during prohibition because cultures are colliding and for overinnovation, people who are thought to be ahead of their time are related because they have too much innovation.

There is also a theoretical sub-proposition for underdiversity and it is that more conflict occurs when cultural differences contract in a setting of differences. For undertraditionalism, the family behavior consists of women wearing pants and interracial marriage because they both are a rejection of old culture and for underinnovation, being against something that is popular like social media is like being homophobic because both are a rejection of a new culture. Another nuance in cultural time is that culture is a zero-sum game. A zero-sum game means that one person's gain is another person's loss and an example of how culture and diversity are a zero-sum game is that when there is a rise in one religion, there is a fall in atheism.

One example from *Moral Time* by Donald Black that stuck out to me was when he talked about underinnovation. Underinnovation is when there is a rejection of a new culture and an example of this that Black gives is the resistance to Protestantism during the Protestant Reformation and anti-Semitism. Black states, "During the Protestant Reformation when Catholics condemned and killed Protestants who abandoned Catholicism for new forms of Christianity... Consider the longstanding hostility of Christians towards those who opposed Christianity from the beginning: the Jews" (Black 130). Black's example of underinnovation stuck out to me because in the current age, it seems like a lot of conflict we see in the news is about a person or a group rejecting a new culture and with the fight against racism, we are seeing a lot of underinnovation these days.

### ***The Giver:***

After watching the movie, *The Giver*, there are a lot of different ways to connect it to Black's theory of moral time. In the film, the community decided to freeze social time because they wanted to avoid conflict. The Chief Elder stated, "When people have the freedom to choose, they choose wrong every single time." They froze time and wanted sameness because sameness

allows there to not be any anger, deviance, or differences and having differences is the first step in having conflict. The community froze relational, vertical, and cultural time by having sameness in the community. The community froze relational time by having everyone have the same amount of participation in each other's lives. For example, the people couldn't feel love, so they had no extra participation in their spouse's life compared to another person's life. They froze vertical time by having everyone at the same social status of wealth, power, reputation, etc.. They also froze cultural time by having everyone follow the same cultural guidelines. There were no cultural differences because they made everyone eat the same thing, talk the same way, wear similar clothing, follow similar schedules, and much more. The attempt to freeze social time ultimately failed because the main character Jonas learned about all the differences that the community could have had. Jonas was the one person who had a different status since he was given the infamous role as the Receiver of Memories and since he was considered special, he was able to make a difference. Once Jonas had continued to learn more and more, his status rose above everyone else's and the faster he was learning, the faster and greater the conflict he was creating. This led to the community's plan to freeze social time to fail.