

Cendric jennings life history: a letter to a friend



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I would like to offer you an opportunity to understand the critical analysis of the case on Cendric Jennings life. Owing to the fact that you are familiar with the story, this analysis will focus mainly on addressing the emerging themes and how they unfold. Sociological perspective will provide an insightful and a wealth of descriptive material regarding the life of Cendric Jennings. The paper will tend to shed more light on his life to understand that the success of an individual is based on more than just personal determination or initiative. This paper will focus on the life of Cendric at tender age and before his university life, during the university and after the university life.

Cendric Jennings had to struggle a lot with his environmental forces, which tend to limit his innate potentiality. For instance, his focus to move out and venture into the infinite world of endless possibilities puts him in the glare of public and at a greater risk than if he could have remained uneducated. This courageous move from the world of illusions to a world of enlightenment is what brings about social change in his life as well as that of others (Watt, 1997).

Cendric's education took place in a very challenging environment. The fact that people developed a culture of frustrating the more focused individuals put him at a greater risk. Someone like Cendric in such an environment was vulnerable by the fact that he was disrespected and never confronted anyone. This made him to be even more susceptible. Cendric's environment can be explained from the social reproduction theory's point of view.

Cendric's story can be also illustrated by the story of Melba Pattillo "Warriors don't cry", who was chosen to integrate at Little Rock's Central High

School which was for all whites. She was attacked frequently by her schoolmates and threatening of her parents was part of the taunting experience. Despite all these challenges she was determined in her education to succeed in life and attain liberalization.

The positive socialization that Cendric got from people like Mr. Taylor in addition to that of his mother made him to focus the more. In the previous school system, there was greater inequality in treatment of students through racism or social status as postulated by Thomas Jefferson in his theory. These gaps have been filled by education. It was through schooling that Cedric was able to meet a variety of people from different cultures and values and hence was enlightened about the society's stratification and how to cope with it.

As observed in "Schooling the African Americans," the chances that are available to these students to attain higher education are limited. The cultural trend of the people seemed to emphasize the success of the whites at the expense of the minority group. Educational opportunities for the African American are different from those of the whites. John Ogbu argues that the African Americans in the United States cannot easily fit in the system and socialize effectively with the white kids. This is because they perceive themselves as involuntarily deprived of their freedom, property and displaced from power thus resent on this injustices (Ogbu 1979). Based on these conditions, Cendric uses education as a defense mechanism, which later turns out positively in his life.

According to McLeod People may have the same social locations and Habitus comprising of their orientations, beliefs, and aspirations but may not have the same experiences. This difference in experience is because of complex intersections among the social locations. Hence, social reproduction can be influenced by these variations. In reference to Cedric, he grew up in a working class economy where many children peddled drugs and dropped out of school. Despite all this, his mother, school mentor Mr. Taylor and religion effectively oriented his social learning hence influencing his social mobility.

In the context of social reproduction, it implies that schools are not institutions of equal opportunities but a mechanism for perpetuating social inequalities. Key also is social mobility, which dictates more of achievin a new social status through working hard. An illustration can be derived from the affirmative action programme at Brown University where the minorities were left to fend for themselves upon admission despite their disadvantage. Social class is self-evident as observed in the stratification that exists among the students at the MIT programme and Brown University. In the film “people like us,” the postulation of Americans as middle class is a means to effectively propagate social reproduction and classism in a mitigated way.

As observed in the box of constraints, the implications of the constraints is that they define the scope of opportunities and experiences one will be able to access. Varying social classes in society are because of confronting different historical conditions and experiences. It implies that the social location’s complex interconnections define one’s social class. Race determines social mobility and reproduction. It is socially structured to perpetuate inequalities and serve the interest of the dominant groups. Cedric

perceived the society as being unfair by limiting equal opportunities for all students. His rejection at the MIT programme is perceived as racism also the blacks and the Hispanic's isolation in the robotics class.

McIntosh in "the white privilege," depicted whites as having more opportunities in society and possessing the ability to manipulate them while oppressing the minority. Whites would exploit the blacks with the aim of maximizing their opportunities. Likewise John Ogbu observes that the blacks in America were perceived as inferior and possessing undesirable personal traits thus were exploited based on these stereotypes (Ogbu, 1994). Cedric illustrates this through the unfair treatment he has accorded at the university by his peers and the feeling of being lonely due to segregation. Schools are stakeholders in the social reproduction. Schools as institutions focus on maintaining the status quo and ensuring that the rich are taught how to be skilled managers while the poor are trained to be good workers.

Furthermore, there is difference in service delivery to people in different social classes.

Working class parents are treated differently because they are deemed inferior in contrast to the rich on their social capital context. As evidenced by Cedric, access to equal opportunities in education was denied by limited resources. School funding contributes to the development of social reproduction in schools and poses a challenge to the equity of educational opportunities. Most available funding for schools are characterized by political bargaining power as illustrated by the MIT scholarship programme. This disadvantages the minority who do not possess the power of influence.

McLeod elucidates the role of habitus in the social reproduction process in society. He argues that social mobility by people who share the same social locations is relative to the experiences. A move from one social class to another is defined by complex interconnections among the social locations. Despite the social location, Cedric managed to succeed while his peers remained in the same social class. Cultural capital entails depositions of the mind, body, cultural goods like books, pictures, and educational qualification. Sonia Nieto argues that the treatment accorded to the minority groups with limited cultural capital is unfair. Cultural capital defines the parents and school relationship (Bourdieu 1977). This is because the social locations for working class parents dictate that they live most of their children's education to the teachers thus are minimally involved in the school events. This negatively impacts their children's success potential. He argues that schools utilize particular linguistic structures which pose challenges to the Black Americans since they feel inferior. Children from higher social locations enter school already understanding this structures, authority patterns and types of curricula (Bourdieu 1977). This is illustrated by a student at MIT who perceives the studies there as just review while on the other hand Cedric struggles very hard to cope with the rest of the students. There is unfair treatment of students by teachers by virtue of their social status.

As observed by Soniia, that working class families were deemed limited in cultural capital hence inferior to the rich class. Coleman argues that social capital can be created by making relations among other people. He observes that where there is support of a child success is inevitable. The support structures in Cedric's life aided him in attaining success through the

lecturer's motivation when he lost hope at MIT, his mother's constant motivation and introducing him to religion.

Lisa Delpit's postulates the culture of power where those in power control the vulnerable (Coleman, 1987). At MIT professor who told Cedric that he is not an MIT material and hence influenced the path of his life. Structures in society favored the success of white kids. Most of the white kids came from good social locations that possessed the power to influence policy in schools. Lisa states that people with less power always feel the effects of those with power since they are they are subjects In the case study of Cedric, it is observed that both structural and functional approaches to social capital poses some deficiencies. His mother raised him because the father was in prison and he turned out to be successful. As depicted by Philip who engaged in unconventional behavior despite his functional family structure. Mentorship accorded has positive impacts even when the family is not wholly structured. The external environment poses a lot of challenges to children whose social capital is not compatible with their teachers', making it hard to interact (Annette, 1987). This is because of the differences in social locations among the teachers and students.

Peer groups may decide to counter success rather than support it. As observed, Cedric's immediate society in school hated achievers and publicly insulted them. Students like Cedric was a common target for bullies because of his success perceive acting white as treason. Working hard was established to being white hence hostility from peers. This stimulated a culture of appreciating failure as part of life as depicted by Philip and his influence on his siblings.

Students and their families exhibit either passive or active resistance to education they access. This has counterproductive implications to the interest of the student. It may stimulate an urge to change the status quo, hence focusing on studies with an aim of providing change. Cedric was resistant in high school and at the MIT programme but through motivation, he pulled through to later impact his neighborhood. Expressive responses in institutions through the perception of others as inferior and possessing undesirable traits, promoted segregation. This is usually common between the minority groups as postulated by Cedric's roommate discriminative acts.

Schools play a role in interrupting social reproduction. Education on culture of power while valuing a student's cultural capital would be ideal. Through education, students will be enlightened on the importance of power and how it can aid in improving their social mobility (Nietro, 2000). Cedric was able to influence the society and create awareness on the plight of minorities through the power of education. Change in the attitudes and perceptions of teachers towards the students would widely contribute to the alleviation of social reproduction. Teachers create stereotypes about the students based on the emerging social locations thus limiting service delivery. McLeod illustrates that the dynamics of the habitus define one's social mobility.

Cedric's social locations were not in favor of his success (McLeod 1995). By virtue of being a black American by race, born to a middle class family, poor quality school and living in a bad neighborhood, he was disadvantaged in contrast to other kids at MIT. This mounted pressure on Cedric to work twice as hard as the other white kids from good schools were and good neighborhoods were. He applied extra effort and studied complex units such

as robotics and computer science to pursue success. Limited access to parental support by Cedric due to the economic situation can also be used to illustrate how habitus affects his success. His mother was not able to visit him at school because of limited finances while his roommate was well attended to by his parents.