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Inheriting Power: The Old Boys Network and the Reproduction of Privilege at Upper Canada College

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by

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Abstract

This study investigates the ideology of meritocracy through the lens of Upper Canada College (UCC), a prestigious all-boys private school in Toronto, Ontario. UCC promotes a 100 percent university acceptance rate for its students with an International Baccalaureate (IB) curricula and membership to elite private school organizations (Upper Canada College, n.d.). The research uncovers how the institution serves to symbolize and reproduce the social and economic domination of elites in Canada, particularly through the social mobility and power wielded by its alumni, known as the Old Boys. Through examination of neoliberalism's impact on education, the differences between public and private schools, and themes of meritocracy in the context of education, this paper demonstrates how UCC is representative of the ways elites obfuscate the inequities of power, wealth, and fortune, which in turn aids in its perpetuation. Drawing from Herman's (1999) traditional ideologies used by power elites to hold dominance, the ways in which themes of public service, masculinity, privilege, elitism, fortuna, and isolation present a formula for the institution and its graduates to perpetuate power is illuminated. By employing narrative analysis, testimonials from Old Boys over four cohorts, ranging from 1919 to 1993, and UCC's contemporary website were coded thematically, identifying key strategies that serve to reinforce the school's and its alumni's elite status. Oftentimes constructed with honourable characteristics of moral virtue, leadership, and hard work, these narratives work to mask underlying inequities that favour those from privileged backgrounds. Findings challenge the validity of meritocracy, arguing that location, socio-economic status, genetics, opportunities, and resources significantly influence one's upward mobility, instead of merit alone. This

work contributes to understanding how elites and institutions use self-representation to establish generous, moral, and admirable personas to society, while sustaining and perpetuating their self-serving power beneath the surface.

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Introduction

This research paper offers a critical investigation of the notion of education as the great equalizer in the context of Upper Canada College (UCC), an all-boys private school in Toronto. With 1,700 independent, private schools in Canada, UCC is one of seventeen male private schools in the country (Top Private Schools, n.d.). Domestically rated in the top 25 private schools with one of the highest annual tuition fees, the institution's esteemed reputation aids in establishing a significant number of current students and alumna, or Young Old Boys and Old Boys respectively, within the power elite (n.d.). Though, the role that elite private schools play in acting as a cultural origin for members of the power elite is largely unknown. In this research paper, notions of education as the great equalizer will be considered within the context of class, neoliberal education, and meritocracy in Canada. With reference to traditional ideologies of elitism that are commonly associated with privileged classes, the ways in which Old Boys and the institution itself validates its power will be uncovered. Through analysis, historic notions used in justifying class privilege, including public service, masculinity, elitism, privilege, fortuna, and isolation are revealed to highlight how Old Boys throughout four cohorts and the contemporary institution's website remain powerful and dominant. Findings underscore how narratives are manipulated to present the most beneficial storyline for the target reader, appearing as morale, reasonable, deserving leaders and changemakers. Given the lack of academic research on Canadian private schools, and UCC in particular, this work aims to provide clarity and awareness to one of the most influential and powerful private schools the country has to offer.

UCC's Notable Power

Examination of the UCC website reveals a list of hundreds of alumni who dominate the world of academia, politics, legal, media, economics, business, sports, and military services (Wikipedia, n.d.). Some of the most notable include: the founder of Essex, Ontario, former mayors of Toronto and St. Marys, as well as the major general, financier, and builder of Casa Loma (n.d.); the inventor of the stem cell; members and leaders of the Liberal Party and Conservative Party (n.d.); founders, presidents, and executive chiefs of CBC, CTV, ABC, Torstar, Reuters, and Star Media Group (n.d.); Canadian ambassadors and high commissioners to the United Kingdom, United States, Iran, India, Cambodia, Moscow, and Washington (n.d.); partial authors of the Treaty of Versailles, and the North Atlantic Treaty; Canada's first and second wealthiest man (n.d.); founders, chancellors, and presidents of Trent University, Toronto Metropolitan University, University of Toronto, Ontario Tech University, University of Western, University of New Brunswick, Ridley College, University of Trinity College, York University, and UCC (n.d.); Emmy Award-, Oscar-, Lasker-, and Olympic-winning journalists, producers, doctors, and athletes (n.d.); Ontario cabinet ministers, legislative members, education ministers, finance ministers, a justice and attorney minister, interior minister, and a minister of state for Canadian infrastructure and communities (n.d.); owners of the Toronto Maple Leafs, Brooklyn Nets, Hamilton Tiger-Cats, Maple Leaf Gardens; founders and presidents of Canada Life Assurance, the Royal Canadian Bank, the Imperial Bank of Canada, UBS AG, and St. Catharines General Hospital (n.d.); directors, chancellors, and presidents of the naval intelligence during the second

World War, the High Court of Ontario, the Court of Chancery, and Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition (n.d.).

While it would be unreasonable to claim that all UCC alumni have continued on to hold significant control over society, and particularly in Canada, findings from the website suggest that Old Boys have been given more opportunities, resources, privilege, and support for success than public school students. This consolidated structure of power among UCC alumni results in practices that favour their higher circles, rather than the public. By focusing on how the school has managed to establish and sustain its esteemed reputation in addition to its students' use of these learned tactics, this study provides an understanding of how elite education at UCC reinforces social hierarchies and power dynamics, challenging the notion of education as the great equalizer in Canadian society.

Literature Review

Introduction

Interconnected notions of neoliberalism, education, and the power elite form a complicated and inequitable narrative that defies the concept of meritocracy. Throughout the past half century, neoliberalism has gained significance on a global scale, serving to influence countries such as China, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, Chile, United States, and Canada in all facets of daily living (Grant, 2016). Defined as the advancement of human well-being through the liberation of entrepreneurial skills and freedoms for an institutional framework that values private property rights, free trade, and free markets, neoliberalism promotes passivity and capitalism (2016). Supporting ideologies are entrenched within the news people

consume, the wages they make, the commodities they identify with, the concrete jungles they travel on, and the curricula they are educated with, among numerous other things (2016). This embedment of neoliberal notions within education has resulted in the devaluation and defunding of public education, while commodifying high-level learning for private schools exclusively (2016). Resulting in an inequitable division of opportunities, information, resources, and support for power elite families in comparison to middle- and low-class families, whose education predominately focuses on preparing them to work under these power elite alumni. Perpetuating classist notions of who *deserves* power and wealth, while dismantling the legitimacy of meritocracy. Throughout this chapter, various research will be presented to diminish the falsified perception of education as the great equalizer in the context of neoliberalism, privilege, and the power elite.

Neoliberalism & Education

While education was traditionally perceived as a path to upward mobility, the significant distinction between public and private school educational opportunities, resources, funding, and status serve to disproportionately benefit upper class students. Marked by the significant polarization of public and private schooling, the gradual shift to neoliberal regimes resulted in the devaluation of public education and prioritizing individual success over the greater good of society (Holborow, 2015; Sharma & Sandford, 2018; Littler, 2013). Neoliberalism has re-established education as an economic endeavour, in which market principles of supply and demand, entrepreneurship, and consumers wants and needs predominately influence its direction. Resulting in the proliferation of private schools in affluent areas that offer

superior facilities and resources compared to public schools (Littler, 2013). This disparity extends itself to both the quality of education, as well as the extracurricular opportunities available to students, serving to enhance the attractiveness and perceived value and status of private schooling.

The key ideals of neoliberalism can be defined as follows: the rule of the market, deregulation, cutting public expenditures for social services, privatization, and the removal of the notion ‘for the public good’ in favour of individual success and responsibility (Martinez & Garcia, 2000; Ross & Gibson, 2007). Resulting in minimal government support and regulation for private institutions regardless of the social issues it may cause, and aiming for complete freedom of goods, capital and services (2000; 2007); cuts to social services including education and health care (2000; 2007); diminishing government regulation that serve to reduce profits (2000; 2007); the sale of state-owned goods, enterprises, and services to private investors like public education services (2000; 2007); in addition to the elimination of public or community goods for individual responsibility (2000; 2007). Thereby increasing the money required to access quality academics, support and opportunities, while benefitting those from the upper class.

Distinctions between community colleges and private universities further embed ideas of class-systems within education, while contributing to socio-economic calamities in neoliberal regimes (Roth, 2019). Roth (2019) argues that even though community colleges were established to enable vertical mobility and integration within society, these institutions oftentimes serve as a form of “sorting mechanism” that channels students into lower-paying, less prestigious jobs. This can be compared to public and

private secondary schools in the sense that elite institutions “offer unique environments, which embody privilege, status, and distinction,” thus, making these candidates look more appealing to post-secondary institutions (Courtois, 2018, p. 69). This vicious cycle of class-based acceptance to public and private institutions thwarts the integration of differing perspectives, experiences, and ideas within academia and society, while highlighting the close relationship between elite education and success.

In her text, *Neoliberal Keywords, Political Economy and the Relevance of Ideology,* Holborow (2016) illuminates that in Ireland, the state’s contribution to public universities through student support and grants has been reduced from 76 percent of funding for higher education in 2007, to an estimated 51 percent in 2016. Likewise, in their book, *Neoliberalism and Education Reform,* Ross and Gibson (2007) call attention to British Columbia’s public education cuts in 2004; during this year, the province added 17,000 new jobs, employment increased by two percent, home sales had generated $9.4 billion since 2001, one in three businesses were set to add jobs in 2005 with only nine percent expecting reduction, the government forecasted a $1.2 billion surplus, with provincial debt declining by $600 million (2007); yet, public school funding was cut extensively, resulting in 92 school closures since 2002, more than 14,000 students displaced, and 2,881 teaching positions cut, even with a 12 percent higher enrollment since the 1990s (2007). These examples provide clarity to the lack of importance placed on public education under neoliberalism, perpetuating inequitable levels of education, opportunities, and prestige to elite families. Furthermore, the significance placed on measurable outcomes and standardized assessments yields narrow curricula within public institutions, focusing primarily on subjects that are easy to quantify and mark,

rather than content that will instill values of critical thinking. Working to undermine the holistic development of public school students who lack the opportunities and resources to effectively learn, understand, and build an array of skills that private students receive.

In the United States, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) further exemplifies how under Bush Administration in America, failing public schools funds were siphoned to private corporations for supplemental tutoring services (Ross & Gibson, 2007). Under the NCLB law and labels, most public schools were deemed a failure, with 90 percent of schools in Florida failing (2007). Moreover, the authors state that nearly all schools in every state will, ultimately be considered a failure (2007). In other words, public school curricula in part works to the disadvantage of society by decreasing the opportunities for critical thought external to the neoliberal ideologies presented within their education. Thus, minimizing the chances of public advocacy against these regimes, while allowing for the perpetuation of powerful private schools at the disadvantage of public school students (2007). As such, public schools and especially those in underfunded areas encounter more issues in receiving and providing necessary support and resources for its students, leading to lower academic performance and fewer opportunities for social mobility (Roth, 2019).

Neoliberal ideologies within education also carry the ability to reinforce socio-economic inequalities of class, race, and gender (Sharma & Sandford, 2018). They state that neoliberalism promotes “extensive economic liberalization and policies that extend the rights and abilities of the private sector over the public sector, specifically shutting down state and government power over the economy” (2018, p. 341). Placing more control and flexibility in the hands of a few that possess the highest degree of

economic freedom, while perpetuating socio-economic inequalities for the rest. Referencing King and Keeping (2012), the authors elucidate that under neoliberalism, education is under attack in North America and globally (Sharma & Sandford, 2018). They emphasize that it is imperative that student's public education choices support the public policy objectives, as well as their academic needs, rather than reacting to market demands or serving the interests of the elite (2018). Though, neoliberal educational reforms serve to minimize the values of these goals, promoting for-profit educational management organization and reducing educational costs and services, including closing academic libraries, reducing special education resource expenditures, increasing class sizes, and establishing online learning courses (Ross & Gibson, 2007); in addition to implementing curriculum standards which centralize on outcomes-based education and required testing (2007).

Jeff Noonan and Mireille Coral (2015) argue that there is a difference between education from schooling, stating that within Canadian neoliberal regimes, the government has imposed policies that serve to merge agency with submission and attribute students' learning with passive adherence to capitalist demands. In addition to associating life-value with the generation of monetary value for the benefit of the ruling class and relating the 'real world' to the operations of labour and commodity markets (2015). The authors define education as the development of imaginative and cognitive abilities that aid in critically understanding and engaging with social realities (2015). In contrast, they denote schooling as the indoctrination of imagination and ideologies to maintain the ruling money-value system (2015). The former teaches individuals about the inequitable and one-sided nature of neoliberal capitalist ideologies, while the ladder

confines students to capitalist passivity and job-specific training (2015). Nick Grant (2016) extends on this claim, stating that schooling for students contemporarily is oftentimes pointless, mechanical, and disenchanting, while access to education can be considered an unattainable luxury. Moreover, that similar to other commodities, "education is provided at a price paid often by fees…[it] takes the form of global *edubusiness* run by *eduprenuers* as part of the investment by capital in service economies" (Grant, 2016, p. vii). This exploitation of education can be characterized by rigidity, passivity, lacking substance, and a necessity of global capitalism, rather than universal notions of humanity (2016). This utter disregard for the betterment of society and the development of critical thought impedes individuals' understanding of reality while dismantling ideas of resistance towards these injustices.

The widespread influence of neoliberalism has infected Canada's education system, classifying it within the concept of schooling, while characterizing education as an economic commodity for only those from the highest class. Thereby working to extend socio-economic inequalities by reinforcing class divides and advantaging those in power positions. Neoliberal regimes have axed public education funding, seeped indoctrinated capitalist ideologies within schooling and eroded support for public institutions. Favouring the interests of the privileged while dissolving the principles of accessibility and equity for the betterment of society.

Elite Schools

Elite schools are able to promote their exclusivity by emphasizing their long historical traditions, superior facilities and campus, and large financial resources (Courtois, 2018). Within Courtois' (2018) book, *Elite Schooling and Social Inequality:*

Privilege and Power in Ireland's Top Private Schools, she argues that in Ireland, elite schools perpetuate social inequality by protecting and amplifying the privilege of some. Through analysis of Ireland's high-paying tuition schools, Courtois (2018) distinguishes their corresponding status, falling into hierarchical categories of the "Top Elite," "Elite," and "Sub-Elite" institutions. In accordance with the author's definition of Top-Elite schools, which are deemed the most expensive, academically elite, and produce the highest numbers of elite alumni in the country, UCC aligns with this criterium. Through promotion of their historical prestige, superior facilities and campus, and large financial resources, Top-Elite schools emphasize their exclusivity and status (2018).

Holborow (2015) explains that this intensive campaigning can be attributed to the capitalistic neoliberal landscape of institutions, including education. She posits that "market terms have been extended to describe educational settings, with schools and universities often referred to as enterprises competing in a market" (2015, p. 41). Consequently, causing the destruction of terms such as patients, passengers, and students for the all-encompassing notion of the consumer and promoting ideologies that coincide with this adjustment (2015). As such, private institutions rely on the prospects of student success through ideological promotion of elitism to influence affluential families of the transactional nature of neoliberal education; connotating that in order to be successful and a member of the power elite, families must be pay enormous fees and send their kids to private schools.

Private institutions, such as elite schools, often evade educational regulations and are unaffected by decreases in funding due to donations from elite families of the school (Ross & Gibson, 2007; Gamsu, 2024). Likewise, private schools maintain their

dominance and perpetuate socio-economic inequalities embedded within their cultures and traditions. Gamsu (2024) states that research has consistently highlighted the connection between elite status and private schooling in Chile, with attendees of fee-paying institutions predominately belonging to the top five percent of the income distribution. Elite schools in England also use several methods to maintain and expand their wealth external to tuition, managing various streams of income (Courtois, 2018; Holborow, 2015); these include fundraising, investments, promoting their historical legacies, and implementing satellite campuses, that is universities or colleges that are far away from their flagship school or area (Courtois, 2018). In doing so, these elite institutions reinforce their exclusive status by only enrolling the wealthiest students, charging high tuition fees, and relying on donations. These strategies are also supported by extensive alumni networks and communities, who oftentimes provide financial support and learning opportunities for current students through the establishment of mentorships, career placements, and internships (2018). These networks ensure that elite students will receive competitive opportunities within and external to the walls of campus, reinforcing their educational development and the long-term benefits of attending a Top-Elite school.

Fernández (2009, p. 31) defines Chile's neoliberal education system as a quasi-market in which academia is perceived as a "private good rather than a public issue that fits better within the market's goals." While the country proposed a new education regime to regulate the activities of elite schools and the years of study that students can be considered based on cultural, social, and economic factors, research has found that all this has resulted in is increased discrimination, selectiveness, and inequality (2009).

Working to extend the segregation of Top-Elite private schools and state-funded private and public schools while structural inequities remain untouched. He states that "attending elite private schools in Chile is viewed as a legitimate right for those who are able to afford it, which doesn't necessarily include a responsibility towards the rest of the population" (2009, p. 35). Resulting in greater resources, educational expertise, and opportunities for Top-Elite students in comparison to public school students. This can be illuminated through Chile's accountability instruments, which were used in 2006 to measure public and private school's performance in the country; results found that of public school students tested in language and mathematics, students scored 242 and 236 points respectively (Ross & Gibson, 2007); State-funded private school students earned scores of 257 and 256; while Top-Elite students received 305 and 325 points (2007). This large discrepancy in performance is extended through the prospects of these students being accepted into post-secondary institutions, with 19.8 percent of 61,780 public school students, 26.2 percent of 67,944 subsidized school students, and 44.1 percent of 18,702 Top Elite students receiving offers (2007). As highlighted through this data, Chilean Top-Elite schools continue to hold a privileged position in society, and in the absence of regulatory provisions that impact these enterprises in a major way, these institutions will continue to charge high fees (Fernández, 2009). Enabling the establishment of improved facilities and educational programs that serve to expand the gap between upper- and lower-class students (2009).

Feelings of physical and social isolation are also common within these Top-Elite schools, enabling the maintenance and continuation of control over the student body (Courtois, 2018). This alienation is achieved by physical barriers framing the campus

and seclusion from the rest of society (2018). For example, Courtois (2018, p. 115) states that, “Clongowes Wood College is not signposted. It is located about two kilometres away from the town,” illuminating the separation between the institution and the greater community. Through this simultaneous seclusion from other social groups, and promotion of traditions of exclusivity, Top-Elite schools aid in students internalization of their privileged position within society (2018). Additionally, the wide array of extracurricular activities offered at these elitist institutions, in relation to their reputation of gold-standard academic practices serves to promote feelings of superiority and entitlement among students (2018). Courtois (2018) also underscores the prevalence of racism and ‘class disgust’ within these elite schools, stating that these institutions are designed to maintain and privilege those from wealthy beginnings, while marginalizing others. This can be attributed to the admission guidelines, traditions, and social networks fostered within Top-Elite schools, ensuring that those from the highest class sustain their privileged status (2018). This neoliberal market framework has enabled Top-Elite institutions to entrench their economic power, making them more resilient to economic fluctuations, while enhancing their superior facilities and programs by promoting the schools need for more charitable donations to further expand their enormous profits, opportunities, and perception of elitism. Moreover, marketing and public relations material that highlight successful alumni, exclusive partnerships with prestigious corporations and universities, and high academic achievements, these Top-Elite schools establish an image of their excellence. Working to attract affluent families looking to gain elitism and exclusivity through their children.

Through the combination of elitist traditions, substantial resources, and market-driven strategies, Top-Elite schools can extend their exclusive status and continue to wield control over educational- and career-based vertical integration and mobility. While differing countries removal of state funding and enactment of legal regulations may attempt to dissolve some of these private schools power, intensive funding from tuition and donations provide large sums of support and profit for these enterprises, while traditions of elitism minimize the ability for low- and middle-class individuals to be accepted; thus, ensuring that only the most affluent and prestigious students can access high-quality education, limiting social mobility, and reinforcing existing social hierarchies.

Education & Meritocracy

The neoliberal meritocratic narrative states that free, unregulated markets are inherently equal, reducing social value to mere market value (Santori, 2023). Through this perspective, disparities are morally justified under the pretense that success is predominately as a result of effort and talent, disregarding structural barriers and advantages. Littler (2013) argues that although meritocracy suggests a system of fairness where effort and skill grant success, it has been co-opted to perpetuate plutocracy (2013). Characterized as governance by a wealthy elite, plutocracy works to maintain this social order for the benefit of a few, rather than society (2013). The author calls attention to the essentialized notion of intelligence within meritocracy, arguing against the solely innate nature of talent for a more equitable ideal that takes into account the development of these skills (2013). Though, as Winslow (2017, p. 2) explains, “just like a football game or a political election, some teams and candidates

have to lose – our economic arrangements must have a bottom to have a top." In other words, under neoliberal regimes with emphasis on capitalism, unsustainable and arbitrary inequalities that establish radical threats to economic justice are inevitable (2017). Citing Stephen Ball (2015), Gamsu (2022) explains that educational institutions serving the upper and middle classes are significantly shaped through their access to economic resources, leading to exploitation and marginalization of lower-class citizens. Posing questions of the legitimacy of meritocracy within educational endeavours, opportunities, and job prospects in relation to Top-Elite institutions.

By reducing success and failure to individual and family responsibility, genetics, and market competition, schooling becomes another consumer decision in which students benefit by choosing carefully and wisely (Ross & Gibson, 2007; Brown, 2019). Though most do not possess the option of attending these high-fee institutions that serve to advance students significantly and disproportionately. Resulting in a perceived understanding of educational meritocracy in association with personal effort and individual success, even though research has proven that Top-Elite students receive greater post-secondary and work opportunities, with increased pay-rates and vertical mobility based primarily on their economic status. In this sense, meritocracy and inequity is falsely defined based on differing levels of personal effort. Providing the illusion of fairness and equality for opportunities for all students willing to work for it and obscuring the important function of inherited privilege and socio-economic standing (Courtois, 2018; Winslow, 2018). In extension, Wendy Brown (2019) argues that white and male dominance is embedded within neoliberal market initiatives which reproduce historic notions of social superordination and stratification. This includes the stark

contrasts found within public and private education, which alongside class, gender, and race, structure hiring regimes, promotional opportunities, and success (2019). This wealth-determined stratification of opportunities and resources within neoliberalism works to worsen social stratification (2019). Likewise, Ross and Gibson (2007, p. 3) argue that meritocracy presents a 'ladder' system for social mobility, fostering a socially harmful ethic of competitive self-interest that not only legitimizes inequality but also harms community cohesion.

In his article, *Careocracy or Isocracy? A Feminist Alternative to the Neoliberal Meritocratic Discourse,* Santori (2023) argues that neoliberal meritocratic discourse presents the notion that unregulated, free markets are meritocratic. Contesting this claim, the author explains that this form of discourse "often seems to serve primarily as a way for the winners in today's economy to justify any level of inequality whatsoever while peremptorily blaming the losers for lacking talent, virtue, and diligence" (2023, p. 3). Therefore, providing moral justification for economic inequalities while blaming individuals for their socio-economic rank, instead of acknowledging underlying barriers (Ross & Gibson, 2007; Littler, 2013). Alike Littler (2013), Gamsu (2022), and Winslow (2018), Santori (2023) argues that neoliberalism values individual success rather than initiatives for the greater good of society. He states that social value is equivalent to market value, thus working to reduce the importance of non-market activities such as the jobs of care workers who are considered inferior regarding salaries (2023). Littler (2013) states that these ideologies come at the expense of collective well-being and the greater good of society. In quoting Hayek (1998), Santori (2023) theorizes that as an implication of meritocratic discourse within the market, individuals will tolerate significant

inequities of material status under the circumstance that those in elite positions receive what they perceive that they deserve; only under the pretenses that remuneration equals estimated merit will the masses support market order (2023). In his text, *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?* Sandel (2020) highlights how this distortion of talent and social value promotes arrogance among the successful and shame or self-doubt among those who fell short in achieving similar levels of success. Within social psychology and economics, this phenomenon has been denoted the "meritocratic deficit," in which "the markets meritocratic game's losers are more willing to accept inequalities because they consider them fair game outcomes" (Santori, 2023, p. 3). Ultimately working to distort the validity of meritocracy in a neoliberal society and worrying various scholars of this increasingly inequitable and underhanded phenomenon if left untouched (Littler, 2013; Sandel, 2020; Ross & Gibson, 2007; Gamsu 2022). This meritocratic illusion is extended by neoliberalism's emphasis on individual achievement, obscuring the critical role of economic and social capital in shaping both educational and career outcomes. Students from Top-Elite schools are almost always more prepared and well aligned to take advantage of academic and extracurricular opportunities, not because of their merit but due to their access which enhances their chances of succeeding.

Sandel (2020) theorizes that even in the absence of market forces, meritocracy would still be flawed as the role of luck also comes into play in determining outcomes. Herman (1999) develops on this idea in his discussion of Machiavelli's theory of fortuna, a Latin word that denotes chance and circumstance in the roll of fortune; this concept will be expanded on within the analytical framework of the study. The neoliberal ideology

of individual achievement “makes it easy to forget that no one ‘makes it’ on their own” (Sandel, 2020, p. 109). Public infrastructure, communal resources, and social institutions contribute to individual’s ability to succeed. While libraries, healthcare, schools, and other public services help shape individuals’ opportunities for talent and skill development. As echoed by various scholars, Sandel (2020, p. 110) posits that meritocratic ethics enable individuals to claim personal rewards without any obligation or consideration of the community that aided in their success. Illuminating how meritocratic ideals are distorted in several ways, disproportionately benefitting those from higher socio-economic classes, while extending the inequalities associated with its structure.

The neoliberal meritocratic discourse serves to legitimize social inequalities by minimizing complex social dynamics to simplistic market principles. By ignoring structural factors that contribute to individual success, this type of discourse justifies existing disparities while also perpetuating them. The prevalence of these inequalities contradicts the notion of meritocracy, underscoring the importance of enacting more equitable and inclusive methods within education and social policy.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified the shortcomings of meritocracy in the context of neoliberal education enterprises, in which financial contributions are considered more valuable than a student’s intelligence and skill-set. Through its commodification, public and private school education have become polarized, indoctrinating students from the former to develop skills and knowledge to later be exploited by alumni from the ladder. Through the exclusive privilege and prestige granted to the private school students

emanated from their secluded, state-of-the-art campuses and facilities, elite social networks, and extensive resources, alumni are taught that they are the powerful leaders of tomorrow. Though, this privilege is rarely attributed to the advantages provided by attending such elitist institutions and having extensive wealth in a capitalistic landscape, posing the question of how these advantaged elite maintain and justify their power.

Theory & Methodology

Theory

Theoretical perspectives drawn from Mills, Davies, and Herman provide a comprehensive basis for understanding the influence and power structures at UCC, in addition to highlighting the significance of this research. Mills' (1956) theory of the power elite aids in illuminating how UCC systematically produces alumni who dominate in various sectors in Canadian society. While Davies' (2017) text serves to establish a contemporary lens of analysis on neoliberal regimes prominent in perpetuating influence and the existence of dominant monopolies within spheres of power such as UCC. In this section, Mills' and Davies' concepts will be applied to the institution to illustrate how its class system, school of thought, and social networks contribute to the perpetuation of the Old Boys community within the Canadian power elite. Using Herman's (1999) text, the analytical framework that illuminates the ways in which power elites maintain and justify their control over society will be established.

Mills was an American post-war sociologist who advocated for the complete democratization of American society (Trevino, 2011). His work largely remains relevant today in describing Western notions of power and is useful in understanding the nature of power within Canada (2011). Many scholars argue that the modern bureaucratization of Western societies reflect Mills' concerns about the alienation of individuals and the

dominance of the power elite (Trevino, 2011; Gane & Back, 2012; Elwell, 2006; Miller, 2018). In their article celebrating Mills' work, Nicholas Gane and Les Back (2012, p. 415) claim that his "critical attentiveness is a powerful warrant, regardless or perhaps even in spite of the empirical crisis posed by the *awesome* power of corporate and state knowledge." Furthermore, while there are a new array of "traps of today," Mills' claims remain relevant in understanding the nature of power elites and critically analyzing the complexity and interconnectedness of societal and individual issues (2012). Though, as explained by Davies (2017) some of the key players, and their collectivized influence are different.

In his text *The Power Elite,* Mills (1956) expresses that America is controlled by the small few who dominate key institutions, challenging the democratic ideal of equal participation and representation (1956). He writes that elected officials often come from an elite background (1956). He coins the phenomena the "circulation of elites" to describe how new members of the elite are recruited from the same social circles to maintain dominance (1956). These groups form a unified power structure by interlocking shared values, mutual interests, and social networks which work collectively to exclude other social groups from significant decision-making processes (1956). This concentration of power undermines democratic ideals by centralizing authority to a handful of people instead of the public (1956).

According to Davies (2017), modern forms of the power elite under neoliberalism have become separated and detached. He contests that neoliberalism aided in eradicating higher circles of jurisdictional elites while promoting "unconscious" processes over "conscious ones" (2017). Resulting in the prioritization of cybernetic,

mechanical systems over traditional juridical and political discourse (2017). The author coins the term “cyborg intermediaries” to characterize the contemporary elite who rely on data, codes, prices, and “diplomatic intermediaries” to describe those who contextualize and justify what markets are “saying” (2017). For example, the significant public outcry following the 2007 to 2009 global financial crisis resulted in minimal repercussions for the financial elite who seemingly evaded accountability (2017). This can be attributed to the differing classification of the higher circles under neoliberal regimes (2017); the power elite are no longer characterized by public, political, or cultural status. Rather, their dominance emerges in their skillful ability to navigate and manipulate technology and data to a high degree, and in the absence of public legitimacy or juridical oversight (2017). Contemporarily, the Millsian notion of interlocking higher circles translates to the dispersion of technological systems and market mechanisms through the dominance of algorithms, data, and financial systems (2017).

The concept of the power elite can be applied to the UCC’s small yet powerful population of alumni, though the ways in which they withhold dominance as alumni differ. Davies (2017, p. 233), referencing Michael Walzer (1983), emphasizes that from a liberal standpoint, elites can justifiably maintain exclusive control over particular instruments or areas of power, provided they do not gain dominance over competing ones. In this way, the critique of professional power can be understood as the plurality of jurisdictions that dominate in separate facets of power, serving to conceal more fundamental inequities (2017). As such, UCC can be perceived as an academic institution whose alumni significantly dominate the world of finance, data, and

technology, with nearly 30 percent of 4,000 UCC graduates working as stockbrokers, realtors, management consultants, bankers, accountants, and investment and insurance brokers in 1990 (FitzGerald, 1994). Another 28 percent considered themselves businessmen within or external to corporations (1999). Lawyers and judges consisted of 12 percent of Old Boy respondents, while dentists, doctors and other healthcare professions accounted for seven percent (1999). Educators and teachers made up six percent, and media professionals consisted of five percent (1999). Even though the interconnectedness of these Old Boys and corporations is unknown, UCC's collectivized control is sustained through Old Boy's employment of cyborg and jurisdictional intermediaries (Davies, 2017). These are ideologies that have been instilled in UCC graduates through the institution's promotion of its abundance of resources and long list of successful Wall Street Old Boys (Upper Canada College, n.d.). Denoting that to be successful, Young Old Boys must follow in the standardized footsteps of those who came before them.

Analytical Framework

Within Herman's (1999) book, '*The Better Angels' of Capitalism: Rhetoric, Narrative, and Moral Identity among Men of the American Upper Class,* he emphasizes how wealthy American men construct and justify their position within the power elite. Through analysis of rhetorical and narrative notions of power, the author uncovers the ways in which the higher circles legitimize themselves within capitalistic, patriarchal, elitist control and regimes. Using Herman's (1999) text, the analysis chapter will set out to provide clarity on how the institution promotes and justifies the power of those who emerge from it.

The author argues that those in privileged positions use individual and collective narratives to establish a professional identity and legitimize their influence within society (1999). These accounts commonly rely on themes of meritocracy, moral virtue, and hard-work to appeal to the social groups and solidify their influential status (1999). He explains that “the primary way in which wealthy men make sense of their power and privilege is to speak about it within the context of an (auto-)biographical narrative of fortune and virtue” (1999, p. 8). Even though this ethos of public service is riddled with motives of self-interest in expanding the ruling elite of higher circles (1999). By underlining success as a result of ethical value and personal qualities, members of the power elite are able to control the other social group’s perception of their position in society (1999). Thus, proposing that wealth is a legitimate reward for moral virtue (1999).

The intersection of fortune, masculinity, and virtue is another key argument within Herman’s (1999) examination of the American power elite. He theorizes that these themes are culturally and historically embedded in the perceived identity of wealthy men. These gendered narratives work to establish the identity of the power elite as masculine, with traditional male traits of leadership, control, and rationality (1999). These ideologies have historical roots within the era of Renaissance mercantile capitalism (1999). During this period, wealthy men were expected to embody masculine characteristics of courage, decisiveness, and the ability to manage and control resources (1999). These virtues were, and still are believed to allow men to achieve and maintain power and wealth (1999). The author notes that, “the performance of masculinity is integral to the social reproduction of elite status, requiring continual

demonstration of masculine virtues in both personal and public spheres" (Herman, 1999, p. 60). Likewise, that the power elite's dominant perspective and self-narration works to establish the perception of the wealthy man as autonomous, focused, and possessing the power to influence himself and society (1999). This notion of autonomy can be extended to feelings of isolation experienced by the power elite, being that they are unable to relate to majority of society due to their "bourgeois ego" (1999). Through personal behaviour in tandem with public displays of success, such as philanthropic activities, strategic decision-making, and leadership roles, members of the power elite are able to validate their dominance within society (1999).

Herman (1999) delves into how members of the power elite use storytelling to push perceptions of their ethical contributions to society. Promotion of the higher circles' public service, charitable donations, and other philanthropic endeavours aids in defending their overt dominance over other social groups (1999). Inclusion of this information on personal websites, news platforms, and company's marketing campaigns act to connotate members of the power elite's moral and ethical superiority (1999). Thereby highlighting how financial wealth translates into moral worth for members of the Western neoliberal power elite, perpetuating socio-economic inequalities over society. The author argues that until we distance ourselves from the notion that wealth equals power and that individuals who possess it are powerful, society will continue to affirm and accept the valorization of these elite who encapsulate capitalistic sovereign ideologies (1999).

The power elite is described by Herman (1999) in relation to G. William Domhoff's (1970, 1979, 1983) denotation of its meaning. The author explains that this

form of elitism involves “the leadership vanguard of the upper social class that is able to exert hegemonic influence and control over the social, economic, and political institutions of a community,” whether that be locally or nationally (1999, p. 30). Moreover, that this description includes the Weberian concern of rituals and institutions of social closure, including elite schools, the interlocking of formal and informal networks, and social clubs, to name a few (1999). The author also touches on the generational obligation of stewardship within power elite families, highlighting the responsibility of control and management within elitist regimes (1999).

Privilege is another key area discussed throughout Herman’s (1999) text. He underlines how fortunate circumstances of geography and birth are associated with ideals of privilege (1999). Emphasizing that privilege is associated with those born with “a silver or, rather, gold spoon in [their] mouth” (1999, p. 95). In the context of the Boston elites, or the Brahmins, the author states that power and privilege is accompanied by a privately controlled network of educational, cultural, and welfare institutions that maintain their dominance through elevating and educating other social groups (1999). In this sense, Top-Elite schools and other private enterprises bask in the benefits of privilege while those unable to be member of such institutions receive information and resources that serve to maintain the dominance of the elite class.

The author also discusses the notion of fortuna, or fortune and its roles in validating and perpetuating the power elites’ dominance (1999). While fortune can be considered possessions with positive or negative implications, it is commonly attributed to the cornucopia of resources and possibilities that wealth enables, regardless of the negative repercussions often discussed by those who have deep pockets (1999). The ill

words spoken by the power elite about fortune serves to diminish the apparent possibilities that wealth provides, while justifying the rare, expensive, and privileged experiences these individuals have been granted (1999). This illuminates the inherent limitations in meritocracy to be valid and fair – factors such as the family one was born into, their genetic endowments, and socio-economic status throughout their upbringing massively contributes to one's opportunities and achievements; even though, these realities are diminished and deflected through the *horrible* experiences associated with fortune (1999).

Methodology

Narrative analysis was used in this study to analyze the testimonials of 71 UCC graduates presented within James FitzGerald's (1994) book, *Old Boys: The Powerful Legacy of Upper Canada College.* The author includes Old Boy accounts from four UCC cohorts ranging from 1919 to 1993, thus illuminating the historic development of the school and student's perceptions of headmasters, masters, principals, curricula, and the campus (1994). UCC's website testimonials, marketing material, "Giving" page, and their publication *The Blue and White* was also examined to identify the ways in which Old Boys and the Top-Elite school itself justifies their power contemporarily through traditional ideologies of elitism. Through analysis, this study identifies connections between UCC's historic traditions, the impacts these ideals have on different cohorts of Old Boys, in addition to the school's current enactment of justification and maintenance tactics.

Referencing Luc Herman's and Bart Vervaeck's (2019) text, narrative analysis is employed within this study. In alignment with Ross Chambers (1984), the authors state

that narrative tactics aim to “seduce the reader, who adapts these techniques to his or her own desires” (2019, p. 169). This discourse only becomes comprehendible through this exchange between seduction and desire, in which narrative regimes and characterizations take on a prominent role in the decision-making process (2019). Through this process, the narrative gains its values while the reader assumes the responsibility of responding accurately to these seduction strategies, as well as the intentions of its author (2019). This intersubjective method is used to distinguish truth from falsity, while considering epistemological and cultural nuances (2019). In the world of academia, the scope of this method relates to an ever-increasing number of cultural and social phenomena with the underlying notion that story-telling is an intentional, goal-directed effort that sets out to establish order and balance relations with others and reality itself (2019). Although narratology does not yield objective positions of discourse illusions, it highlights the ambiguities and contradictory elements found within bodies of text, helpful for conducting thematic coding of qualitative data (2019).

Citing Susan Onega and José Angel Garciá Landa (1996), the authors explain that “a narrative is the semiotic representation of a series of events meaningfully connected” between the text and the reader (2019, p. 13). For Herman and Vervaeck (2019), these important relations differ based on the reader’s interpretation of its metonymical, metaphorical, or thematic significance. Through these connections, underlying cultural and political assumptions surface, forming the implied author of the text (2019). Distinct from the narrator and actual author, the implied author denotes the intended message or moral stance of the text which is structured by the author’s inclusion of certain values and attitudes, and the omittance of others (2019). In the case

of the Old Boy testimonials, the implied author extends to the story itself since narrators will always synopsize, extend, embellish, and remove certain elements of their experience (2019). Nasheeda, Abdullah, Krauss, and Ahmed (2019) posit that narrative examination also underlines the relational engagement between participant and researcher in co-creating the narrators' experiences. Given that FitzGerald himself is a UCC Old Boy, his relationship with the interviewees is biased in the sense that the author experienced the school in a particular way that may have guided his interpretations of narrators' perspectives. This can also be extended to the UCC website, which intentionally highlights some elements and minimizes others to promote their prestigious, elite reputation from a marketing perspective. As such, both bodies of text can predominately be considered diegesis summaries in which the narrators' voices, including Old Boys, headmasters, teachers, and employees are brought to the forefront in a coloured format by the perspective of the author, including FitzGerald and UCC as an institution (2019). This method is denoted as the act of "telling" rather than mimesis, which centralizes on "showing" through direct quotes from the narrator (2019). In analyzing the sources' uses of this narrative method, this study will emphasize the inherent prejudices that favour the intended meanings of the texts.

Using comments, bolding, and highlighting features in Microsoft Word, thematic coding of the testimonial book's and the UCC website's data was conducted. Thematic coding allows for patterns to identified within the data, enabling themes to be formed from the findings. The most pertinent data was extracted and categorized under four subcategories. Given the large data set analyzed, this method was useful in establishing parameters to highlight the pertinent content in alignment with the chosen

theories of focus. These groups align with Herman's (1999) notions of historic elitism which he argues are commonly employed by the power elite to defend and sustain societal power, these include: (1) Public Service, (2) Masculinity, (3) Elitism, and (4) Privilege. The defining parameters of these key terms were identified by integrating and sorting the 258 significant alumni statements within a Microsoft Excel chart; investigating every page and subpage located on UCC's website and extrapolating the most noteworthy information aligned with Herman's text in a second thematic chart; as well as, highlighting key definitions and quotes found on dictionary platforms and the authors' text. The consolidated descriptions of these topics are as follows:

(1) **Public Service** is described within this study as a required, performative action instead of a genuine moral choice. Volunteering, donations, and community service are institutionalized as a mandatory commitment, establishing the image of philanthropic values to society, while serving to minimize the guilt commonly associated with the wealth of UCC families. Leadership positions are also highly regarded within the institution, fostering values of initiative and entrepreneurship. These charitable and management endeavours are outwardly promoted as a tactic of self-validation among the elite and the school, contributing to their generous and reputable appearance (1999). Through this process, the wealthy can construct their moral identity, serving to validate their elite status over the rest of society.

(2) **Masculinity** can be associated with Herman's (1999) ideals of sovereign masculinity, which highlights risk-taking, leadership, and a commitment to data and business acumen. This persona is constructed by UCC's values that serve to foster qualities of leadership, strength, diverse skillsets, and control that can be applied

within a variety of social situations (1999). The lack of female representation among employees and teachers at the school yield a hyper-masculine, patriarchal environment where sexism is pronounced, and traditional male roles are celebrated.

(3) **Elitism** can be explained as a superiority complex developed by Old Boys and portrayed through UCC's promotion of its exclusivity and prestige. As well as student's association with the school's elite status and their family's high-class socio-economic background. This theme is reinforced through the institutions selectivity and limited enrolment of students, which in most cases, relates to family's ability to pay high tuition fees and donate to the school, rather than their academic ability. The highly competitive atmosphere instilled by institutional and elite values extend the importance of success and control to students. The Old Boy network also encourages this ideal of elitism through its membership to private and renowned associations and curricula (Upper Canada College, n.d.). These prestigious opportunities are promoted and emphasized in a way that highlights merit rather than wealth to rationalize Old Boy's high-reaching vertical integration upon graduation. In summary, elitism focuses explicitly on the school and its students notions of superiority, exclusivity and power.

(4) **Privilege** in this context refers to the special benefits granted to UCC students, especially in relation to their elite education and resources directly linked to financial capacity. While Oxford Learner's Dictionary (n.d.) appropriately defines privilege as a "special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group," their use of the example "education is a right not a privilege" is not as fitting. While most have access to schooling, the degree of academic rigor and

advantages granted to students is based on the amount of money one has or is willing to spend on private education. This is illuminated by the school's promotion of its 100 percent university acceptance rate, enabling alumni to attend any institution of their choosing. As well as their two campuses which aim to instill both academic and life skills for its students. All of which serves to open doors for Old Boys that perpetuate their elite status based on classist requirements. In short, privilege highlights the advantages tied to wealth and access to resources.

Two additional themes were identified at a lower frequency than the rest, which were (5) Fortuna and (6) Isolation. While these subcategories are not as prominent as the other four within the research findings, they both underline other important ways that individuals and institutions in higher circles justify and maintain their power, as described by Herman (1999). These will be included within analysis to a lesser extent and can be denoted as:

(5) **Fortuna**, the role of wealth and circumstance in shaping the experiences and opportunities of students (1999). Seen as both a blessing and a curse, students minimize their privileges associated with wealth by harping on the disadvantages commonly attributed to possessing it. Through these narratives, the negative aspects of fortune are brought to the forefront, while the abundance of prestigious advantages are diminished, working to effectively rationalize their dominance in society through the hardship of excessive wealth.

(6) **Isolation** experienced both physically and socially at the school. Through the private institution's esteemed education, promotion of elitism, and physical barriers segregating students from the world external to the walls of campus, UCC fosters a

sense of exclusivity from the rest of society (1999). Working to instill institutional values within students more efficiently and effectively, while strengthening Young Old Boys' understanding of their elite status. Consequently, reducing their identification with the masses that they control.

These six themes were used to structure the outline of the analysis, parsing the chapter by subcategory and dividing it further into two sections: (1) the ways in which UCC Old Boys employ each ideal to justify and maintain their power, and (2) how the school itself uses each notion to rationalize and perpetuate their dominance.

The concept of diegesis summaries and the implied author is pertinent to understanding how the six identified themes are used by both the narrators and authors to background and diminish the inegalitarian nature of elite education, while still emphasizing UCC's esteemed reputation. Through employment of these two narrative modes, the authors effectively direct their preferred message to what Walker Gibson (1950) coins, the "mock reader" (Herman & Vervaeck, 2019). That is, the imagined or constructed reader that the text anticipates and attempts to reach through the structure and content presented (2019). In the case of this study, FitzGerald's text attempts to align with those interested in the legacy and elite status of UCC, presenting a decade-long recollection of events that are both familiar for Old Boys and ideological for readers attempting to comprehend the power that emerges from the institution (James FitzGerald, n.d.). While the UCC website appeals to elite families hoping to enrol their male offspring in the enterprise (Upper Canada College, n.d.). In both cases, this information has been skewed to present a story that aligns with the construction of moral identities that makes sense of privilege and power in the (auto-)biographical

narrative of virtue and fortune (Herman, 1999). However, the ways in which this is accomplished significantly differs between Old Boys and UCC as an institution.

In summary, this study will consider how FitzGerald's and the institution's diegesis mode of delivery relates to how Old Boys and the school itself justifies and maintains its power through traditional modes of dominance. The role of the implied author in extending this narrative will also be included to consider the underlying preferred meanings of the content. The ways in which the mock reader informs and frames the narrators' and authors' presentation of this information will strengthen understandings of the motives and benefits underlying these narratives. Through extraction of the most pertinent examples of each theme found from the two sources, the analysis chapter will underscore UCC and its alumni's perpetuation and preservation of power and status through narrative modes of presentation.

Analysis

Using narrative analysis, this study underscores the role of diegesis summaries, the implied author, and the mock reader of FitzGerald's Old Boy testimonials and UCC's website branding to uncover maintenance and perpetuation tactics of privilege and power. While these modes of analysis are more straightforward in the context of FitzGerald's book, the role of the implied author and the mock reader become more complex when analyzing the UCC website; in this case, the implied author relates to the writing style employed by UCC's marketing copywriters in alignment with the institution's ultimate branding guidelines and values. Although the narrators who are writing the website content differ, the implied author remains within the same parameters of UCC's overarching ethos, values, and style guide. As such, the concept of the implied author

will be used to analyze the communal representation presented by the multiplicity of mutually authorizing narrators who together, establish the tone of voice, style and formatting, imagery, typography, vision, mission, and story of UCC (Herman & Vervaeck, 2019). In relation to the website's mock reader, the ideal audience changes between potential students' families and Old Boys' families depending on the section. The mock reader of the website's pages will be identified within each theme overview based on its content. Thereby allowing for a comprehensive and accurate examination of its intended meanings. Within this chapter, the themes will be presented one at a time, with subheadings dividing FitzGerald's testimonials and UCC's website one after each other. Findings will be included throughout the text, with overarching conclusions being presented at the end.

(1) Public Service

Old Boy Testimonials

Through FitzGerald's (1994) inclusion of diegesis narratives showcasing the values of public service for personal gain, the Old Boys' and UCC's reliance on philanthropy and charitable acts for the betterment of the public's perception is illuminated. James Arthur, a UCC alumni from 1993 emphasizes that:

> performing thirty hours of community service is a mandatory part of the curriculum… It would be better if [there was no] promise of bonuses to their marks, without the promise of gold and silver pins to wear on their lapels…it improves the school's image…[and] allows noblesse oblige to dispense some of the guilt that I'm sure members of wealthy families often feel. I only did it because I had to. (p. 357)

Arthur exposes how charitable acts such as volunteering is enforced at the school by offering rewards that grant status and minimize feelings of “guilt” associated with possessing significant fortune. This establishes the narrative that the power elite do feel upset about the discrepancies of privilege they wield in comparison to the mock reader, playing into this traditional ideal of the power elite’s moral public service (Herman, 1999). Although Arthur explains that he only completed the community hours due to the graduation requirement, UCC promotes these acts of public service to enhance the institution’s external perception. In addition to training Young Old Boys to participate in similar acts of philanthropy to receive more badges or “pins” of honour. Canada’s wealthiest man and UCC alumni David Thomson extends this notion through his statement about the expectations pushed on him by his Old Boy peers, who told him that “you have made a pledge. You now are a secret member of a secret order. You owe society” (FitzGerald, 1994, p. 255). While Thomson’s track record of public service is limited, the Old Boy has been persecuted by many of his peers and the institution itself for it, with many questioning how “someone with so much gave so little” (1994, p. 255). In this sense, the Old Boy community and UCC itself frowns upon behaviours of the higher circles that challenge traditional notions of elitism. This is also emphasized in 1969 Old Boy Andrew Ignatieff’s statement that “UCC’s idea of community service is paternalism and noblesse oblige of the worst sort” (FitzGerald, 1994, p. 211). Peter Gooderham, 1933 alumni adds to this claim in his testament about his grandfather’s philanthropic persona who was also an Old Boy, illuminating that “he was a…great patron of UCC…chairman of the board from 1912 to 1934 and chairman of the Old Boy’s Association at the same time. He was a real philanthropist, but he never allowed

anything to be named after him, on purpose" (p. 29). With FitzGerald (1994) including explicit information regarding Gooderham's family wealth, noting inheritance of $500 million to his father, the inclusion of their family's public service is paramount to justifying their possession of such wealth to the mock reader. Regardless of the actualities of Gooderham's statement regarding his grandfather denying association with his donations, the benefits of his philanthropy emerge in his biographical summary about it, in addition to the portrait of him plastered on the UCC wall (Herman, 1999). Enabling self- and familial-validation of their social superiority.

FitzGerald's (1994) diegesis summaries in his journalistic text constructs the implied author of this theme, presenting a moral rationale for the fortunes enjoyed by the Old Boys by aligning their charitable acts with a broader narrative of social responsibility. Through careful selection of the narrators' experiences, FitzGerald (1994) presents public service as a highly regarded virtue that many Old Boys feel committed to in order to legitimize their elite status and appear rightful in their actions.

UCC Website

With UCC marketing material asking for donations to fund the school and the organization of annual charity events, Herman's (1999) analysis of the ways in which the power elites use philanthropic and ethical narratives to justify their status is significant (Upper Canada College, n.d.). While the school is located on tax-free land and listed a total revenue of $70,814,167 dollars in 2023, UCC claims that its annual tuition covers only 78 percent of the student experience, serving to embellish the experience of attending the school and the money UCC contributes to its betterment (Charity Data, 2023; Howard, 1979; Upper Canada College, n.d.). With several diegesis

narratives scattered throughout the website, UCC states that it relies “on the generosity of [their] school community… welcom[ing] donations of any size and kind to support important initiatives at the College” (Upper Canada College, n.d.). This is extended on their “Giving” page which states that “our strong and enduring culture of philanthropy makes UCC the very best it can be for current and future students…with impact[s] that reaches far beyond our campus” (n.d.). This messaging aids in establishing the implied author of UCC, promoting the institution’s virtuous and socially responsible reputation that gives back to the community within and external to 200 Lonsdale Road. It also reinforces the connection between elitism and philanthropic activities in stating that donations will serve to better the school and the public as a virtuous endeavour (Herman, 1999). Thus, acting as a method in defending the institution’s prestigious socio-economic status and training the mock reader, that is potential, current, and past Old Boys to operate in a similar moral fashion to solidify their influence over society (1999).

The website’s “Generosity Map” section states that “giving is in our culture” and includes a link to a virtual map of the school (Upper Canada College, n.d.). Through this interface, users are able to jump around the campus from a birds-eye-view by clicking on the buildings (n.d.). In doing so, modules appear on the screen with messages of gratitude to the families who donated to the construction of this infrastructure (n.d.). For example, under the “William P. Wilder ’40 Arena & Sports Complex,” the module explains how it was named in honour of “the generosity of lead donor Bill Wilder ’40, the Wilder Arena was built with $16.5 million in donations raised from across the UCC community. The arena is an exceptional athletic training facility…” (n.d.). These call-outs

act as a biographical narrative of Old Boys' moral virtue and public service by underlining their generosity to the school and Young Old Boys to come. Granting them status and validating their elite position in society. UCC utilizes this hierarchy of donation levels in other places of their "Giving" page as well. For instance, UCC's Annual Donor Society cocktail reception has a tiered scale of donation levels with increasingly prestigious honorary titles; under their "Ways to Give" page, UCC (n.d.) states that it:

> recognizes annual donors…to the College at the following levels: Founder - $10,000+, Principal - $5,000 - $9,999, Leadership - $3,000 - $4,999, Patron - $1,500 - $2,499 ($500 for Young Old Boys), Supporter – up to $1,499. Donors who give annual gifts of $1,500+ ($500 for Young Old Boys) are invited to attend a cocktail reception.

The status UCC grants attendees based on the "level" of their donation reinforces Herman's (1999) argument that financial wealth is framed as a reflection of moral worth and standing; in this case, moral worth is attached to charitable donations to "help" the institution.

Illuminated by the advertised $6,000,000-dollar annual funding for students from families of the school, these values are significantly influential in the perpetuation of the UCC power elite. Although the school promotes its financial assistance programs with grants ranging from $7,500 to $30,000 dollars and eligibility commencing in grade five, relief only reaches 196 students of more than a thousand (n.d.). Creating the falsified impression that UCC uses moral judgement and ethical consideration in funding a small portion of the comprehensive $516,650 dollar tuition for domestic day students

attending from SK through grade 12, $353,500 dollars for domestic boarding students and $371,050 for international boarding students from grades eight to 12 (UCC Financial Handbook, 2023).

UCC also promotes philanthropic ethos on their “Notable Alumni” page which includes a large list of paragraphs dedicated to esteemed Old Boys who have become pronounced leaders in society, such as the founder of Rogers Communications, co-founder of Atlantis Films, former Ontario lieutenant-governors, and co-founder of Sick Kids Hospital (Upper Canada College, n.d.); all of which were accompanied by phrases such as “a well-known philanthropist,” “a dedicated philanthropist,” “a renowned philanthropist,” and “a generous benefactor” (n.d.). Denoting to the mock reader that public service is highly valued within the elite class and should be included within their formula to accessing power and wealth. The CEO of Oxford Properties Group Inc., Blake Hutcheson, even said within his website testimonial that “[he is] committed to seeing [UCC] continue – better than ever – for other young men who have the privilege of experiencing this same opportunity” (n.d.). Reinforcing the idea of public service as an important factor in social climbing. This is extended in the school’s curriculum which requires students to “take part in individual projects or join team-based service projects and service clubs” which cater to local, national, and international projects (n.d.). These may include working “at a local food bank or seniors’ home, volunteer[ing] with our Horizons tutoring program for public schools…or volunteer[ing] with not-for-profit organizations” (n.d.). Through this program, students are educated on the ethos of morale service in bettering the school’s and their own reputation and status within society.

The UCC website's narratives work to perpetuate and validate the school's socio-economic power by presenting its status as inherently associated with philanthropic and charitable activities, in addition to promoting this ethos of public service to elite families. The implied author of UCC's branding and copyright promotes the institution as a socially responsible and morally upright institution which wants to provide financial, experiential, and educational support to students. Encouraging members to perceive their financial contributions as a privilege and a duty. Through hierarchical classification of donations, traditional ideologies of elitism are reinforced, while UCC's power is perpetuated, training the future cohorts of elite families to engage in similar practices of moral justification through wealth and philanthropy.

(2) Masculinity

Old Boy Testimonials

Traditional notions of masculinity, including leadership, courage, business acumen, and control are highlighted within FitzGerald's (1994) presentation of Old Boys' testimonials (Herman, 1999). John Eaton, Old Boy of 1957, explains that "UCC was training guys to be leaders. They were teaching them how to be competitive, how to exist in a world that is competitive" (FitzGerald, 1994, p. 110). This establishes the implied author as defending Old Boys' preparation and ability to step into high-level positions of power, emphasizing that at UCC, this is the training that was provided. This "inculcation of leadership" as 1955 Old Boy Stephen Clarkson puts it, was enforced through regular speeches presented to students by inspiring members of the power elite (1994, p. 96). Michael Ignatieff, 1965 graduate, states that "it is very important for a boy, for a young man, to see male authority that he can believe in (1994, p. 161). Many of

these speakers are Old Boys themselves, returning to the school to instill similar values of leadership and management that they learned during their time and after graduation (1994). This constant performance of male dominance and power from past Old Boys serves to reinforce ideologies of masculinity associated with elitism to Young Old Boys, while presenting the notion that UCC consists of a talented alumna community who act as role-models to younger generations to the mock reader; not only are students educated on becoming a leader, but they are also given advice from those who have already achieved this goal. FitzGerald (1994) includes David Thomson's experience, adding that:

> you frequently encounter an attitude in business where it is considered a sign of weakness to show any emotion or passion for something. If you are not a very cold, analytical, rational person who can cut the shit out of expense, you are not a true man. When you try to live a more balanced life, traditional businessmen think that you are not a real man. (p. 256)

This aligns with Herman's (1999) arguments surrounding traditional ideologies of masculinity which emphasizes diverse skillsets and control over assets, presenting the message to the mock reader that Old Boys are knowledgeable about the requirements of wielding influence. This is echoed in Michael Ignatieff's testimonial of his time as a student from 1959 to 1965, explaining that "I think the indictment that perhaps gets closest to what I really feel was that UCC was a school that put too much emphasis on duty, responsibility, honour, and achievement" (FitzGerald, 1994, p. 161). FitzGerald's (1994) diegesis summaries of these Old Boys serve to establish the implied author of this theme, highlighting how the school makes "real men" who are highly competitive,

multifaceted, logical, and avid leaders; all of which are emblematic of ideological and traditional notions of masculinity (Herman, 1999). To the mock reader, this aids in creating the image of UCC alumni as well-trained, highly skilled individuals who are equipped and deserving of the high-risk and high-paying upper management positions that many of them have, or inevitably will obtain. Thereby working to defend and extend the power of Old Boys within society.

Misogynist characteristics in the case of UCC also give rise to sexist and patriarchal ethos that, given its high frequency of mentions within FitzGerald's (1994) text, cannot be overlooked. UCC graduate of 1968, Robert Pattillo explains that "certainly, we didn't have a lot of respect for women…as [UCC] boys, we thought we were better than just about everybody else, including the women that we spent our time with" (1994, p. 230). Evan Jennings, class of 1985, states that "still, I can't help treating women as something other than me, which was part of the subtext of being at [UCC]" (1994, p. 309). Andrew Ignatieff highlights how "it was impossible to ever have a normal relationship with woman because it was so put into your mind about how women are stupid, inferior, and fickle" (1994, p. 209). This is extended through 1988 graduate John Schoeffel's experience at a 1991 UCC meeting for Old Boys; when the school's delegates were asked if the institution would become coeducational, the official said that the school was not under the same financial pressure as other private schools to admit women (1994); Schoeffel explains that the school "wants to make money, but they can't add more students, so why add women?…[the delegate] is not considering the fact that it would help women to gain access to equality in social positions" (1994, p. 335). The author's depiction of the narrators' misogynist responses presents the implied author as

one that largely places the blame on the school itself rather than the students within it. This highlights how the school itself promotes these values, as stated by Ian Charlton, 1989 graduate, who believes that “sexism is a huge issue at the school” between the school’s tenacity to hold onto its hard-core traditional values and the maids who cleaned their laundry and rooms in boarding (1994, p. 346). 1938 graduate John Weir states that, “stockbroking is not a business for females…the feminists can go to hell as far as I’m concerned. In this business, women end up being stressed out and not female and they don’t last” (1994, p. 51). Weir also states that he doesn’t think UCC should become co-ed, “it’s just as ridiculous as having women in the elite corps of the Army. It just seems to me an awful waste” (1994, p. 51). The implied author also underscores how women in their minds are not capable of handling the stresses associated with powerful and high-risk jobs, rather they are “stupid, inferior, and fickle,” not worthy of having a place at UCC, and unable to work on Wall Street or the Army. To the mock reader, this narrative presents a story of sexist attitudes instilled and promoted by the school, erasing the blame from Old Boys’ actions and behaviours, while still subtly encouraging the idea that women are not equipped to handle positions of power. Thereby serving to extend the ideology of traditional masculinity as a significant element to obtaining and deserving dominance.

UCC Website

Herman’s (1999) explanation of the intrinsic tie between wealthy men and themes of masculinity, fortune, and virtue is highly applicable to UCC’s masculine, patriarchal and elitist student demographic. Given that their Young Old Boy population consists of males from Canada’s top one percent, these students’ life experiences and

privilege makes it more difficult for them to identify with the rest of society (Upper Canada College, n.d.). A news article written by Old Boy Kimathi Muiruri (2019) on *The Blue and White*, UCC's online publication explains that:

> UCC is not very diverse…every student is of a single gender identity, and usually a…similar gender expression too. Almost everyone who attends UCC belongs to…the top 1 [percent] wealthiest in the country…the school is overwhelmingly white, and compared to the demographics of Toronto by percentage, black and other students [and] staff of colour are extremely underrepresented.

This concentrated, and almost exclusive student identity of white, heterosexual, privileged boys at UCC largely disallows understanding of, and connections with other groups, such as women, marginalized groups, individuals from lower-economic classes, and members of the 2SLGTBQIA+. Encouraging the continuance of historical and cultural values of masculinity and elitism commonly associated with the identity of those in higher circles, while reinforcing Old Boy's sense of entitlement and superiority (Herman, 1999). Another example of this is illuminated through UCC's emphasis on its abundance of leadership opportunities and extracurriculars (Upper Canada College, n.d.). By offering internships through partnerships with successful Old Boys' companies and organizations such as Sick Kids, Canadian Institute for Diversity and Inclusion, and Climate Action Accelerator Program, Young Old Boys receive exclusive and competitive opportunities and advantages over other social groups (n.d.). Creating the perception to the mock reader, or potential Young Old Boy families, that students who attend UCC are more well-equipped to take on esteemed and powerful positions upon graduation.

The Notable Alumni section features 51 esteemed and all-star alumni willing to be on the website, representing top-tier athletes, elite businessmen, former political leaders and others who have achieved significant success in their field (n.d.). Each Old Boy's career biography includes several lines of accomplishments, responsibilities, and leadership positions (n.d.). For example, Michael Wilson, class of 1965, has his own page which includes the following summary:

> A former Member of Parliament and Finance Minister under Brian Mulroney's leadership; former Chancellor of Trinity College and former Chancellor of the University of Toronto; former Canadian Ambassador to the United States; appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2003 and promoted to Companion in 2010.

This comprehensive list of achievements included for all entries serves to establish the implied author of the website as promoting the school as a launching pad for significant interdisciplinary leadership opportunities, recognition, and power. By aligning itself with the early precursors of elitist masculine identity, the school is perceived by the mock reader as a highly acclaimed institution that produces skillful male leaders who are set up to wield power, control, and fortune. In this way, UCC perpetuates notions of the hegemonic masculine identity that compliments its structures and values.

(3) Elitism

Old Boy Testimonials

Notions of elitism in alignment with Herman's (1999) ideas were prominent among the testimonials found within FitzGerald's (1994) text. Lincoln Caylor, class of 1987, explains that "when we were at UCC, there was no doubt in our minds that we

would become leaders… We still think nothing's going to stop us, and we will be leaders in the community… probably by the attitude: UCC is supreme, and we will be too." (1994, p. 320). Caylor also expressed that he went to university and did well "because of Upper Canada. [he doesn't] know what would have happened if [he] had been at a public school with three thousand students. [he] probably would have dropped out and started pumping gas" (1994, p. 319). Caylor's statements serve to mask the role of fortune in his success, attributing his triumph to the merit earned by UCC's rigorous education and opportunities; though, mentions of the school's wealth-permitting exclusivity are absent, establishing the perception that UCC boys are superior not for their unique ability to attend the school, but rather their abilities that were further developed and enhanced by the institution. 1988 graduate John Schoeffel stated that, "at Harvard, I was incredibly well prepared by UCC to do all the academics, the athletics, and the extracurriculars" (1994, p. 335). Similiarily, 1993 graduate James Arthur expressed that "I really do believe that it gives one of the best educations in Canada, if not the best… all the…competition does lead students to find their own niche and their own opportunity to develop." (1994, p. 357). Creating the implied author as highlighting the student's inherent skills and drive required to be successful that were merely extended by the school, instead of their enrolment in a Top-Elite institution significantly influencing their opportunities and pathways to prosperity. James Bacque, 1947 graduate explained that "some time after graduation, [he] began to see that the grounding [they] had learned was far superior to that of kids from other schools" (1994, p. 68). Bacque's testimonial underlines the advanced education that the institution offers, presenting the notion that UCC is intellectually superior to other schools, and Old

Boys are more well-equipped in a multiplicity of ways. Sean Gammage, Old Boy of 1988, said “I’m quite sure a UCC diploma does make a difference for a lot of university review boards” (1994, p. 337). Gammage’s comment emphasizes the school’s internationally-esteemed reputation, further underscoring UCC’s high-ranking education and student development. Moreover, Perrin Beatty, 1968 graduate, argued that UCC’s philosophy aligns with “the belief that your best citizens in government, business, law, or anywhere else will be those who have the broadest possible education and who are well trained as human beings” (1994, p. 195). Beatty’s statement is a good example of Old Boy’s claim of merit while diminishing the role of privilege and access in becoming a “best citizen.” Implying to the mock reader that there is a hierarchy of citizens relating to levels of education, with UCC Old Boys at the very top. Thus, masking the notion of exclusivity in receiving this training and reserving the reigns for those with significant fortune. While these entries were some of the most notable under the theme of elitism, FitzGerald’s (1994) text contains a multitude of other testimonials that further highlight the level of exclusivity, superiority and power experienced and acquired by Young Old Boys.

Through the author’s use of diegesis summaries, he is able to establish a narrative that underscores the elitism of the school itself and the leaders that emerge from it. By “telling” rather than “showing” direct statements from Old Boys, FitzGerald (1994) is able to guide the mock reader towards a specific understanding of UCC’s impact on its alumni and their success after graduating. The implied author works to validate and perpetuate Old Boy’s dominance, given the esteemed educational background received from the school. Emphasis on leadership and high status granted

by the school works to grant legitimacy to the belief that elite education translates to rightful membership within the power elite. Denoting to the mock reader that while UCC alumni wield significant authority over society, this power was duly earned through academic rigour, athletic training, and critical application to the highest degree.

UCC Website

Rated an International Baccalaureate Organization (IB) World School with membership to the G30 Schools association, UCC promotes its elitism through its exclusive and esteemed curricula and reputation (Upper Canada College, n.d.). IB schools possess an international framework of education, providing students with teachings appropriate to their "culture, context, needs, interests and learning ability" with research studies highlighting that "IB students perform better than their non-IB peers" (International Baccalaureate, n.d.). At UCC, this translates to inspiring students to become "inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective" (Upper Canada College, n.d.). This establishes the implied author as advertising the school's rigorous, multi-disciplinary, and superior curricula to potential Young Old Boys and their families, that is, the mock reader. This is extended through the school's "Design & Innovation" program, "Creativity, Activity & Service" (CAS) program, "Wernham West Centre for Learning" support resource, and university counselling services (n.d.). The Design & Innovation program begins at Year 6 and exposes students to digital media design, innovative product design, and programming, while encouraging practical and critical thinking skills (n.d.). The CAS program requires Young Old Boys to explore and extend their ideas by leading "an original or interpretive product of performance…[they can] join a band or

choir, write articles or design pages for a student publication or shoot photos with the Photography Club" (n.d.). They also receive the opportunity to participate in team, recreational, and individual sporting events that encourage healthy living, aside from their extensive sports programs, "UCC offers dozens of clubs, including mountain biking, judo, fencing and outdoor tripping" (n.d.). The learning centre provides students support with note-taking, critical literacy skills, deep reading, and exam preparation (n.d.). University counselling services aid in helping students identify their strengths and passions, while setting them up on the most beneficial and direct path to achieve greatness. As such, UCC promotes the narrative that their students receive superior education, resources, and support, in addition to a personalized strategic plan for success in comparison to other social groups.

The school is a member of the G30 Schools, an association that holds annual conferences to connect the heads of schools "to discuss issues central to educational leaders. It includes 50 schools from 30 countries, with membership by invitation…based on the reputation of the school and its leader" (n.d.). This exclusive membership emphasizes the schools' elitist reputation, while promoting its dedication to providing Young Old Boys with the best curricula, extracurriculars, events, and resources. Paired with the schools small population of 1,240 students, with 20 students per class, UCC establishes its implied author as a competitive, opportunity-filled, directed, and world-renowned institution that only has the capacity to support the best, brightest, and wealthiest boys in achieving their goals (n.d.). This narrative presents itself to the mock reader as an optimal place for their boys to flourish and network among future power elite leaders.

(4) Privilege

Old Boy Testimonials

The expansive privilege granted to UCC students was extensively covered within FitzGerald's (1994) book, with 72 statements coded under this theme. Borys Wrzensnewskyj, class of 1979, expresses that "most of [his peers] really were born with a silver spoon in their mouths and hadn't seen the rougher parts of life" (1994, p. 287). This is illuminated through various entries underscoring the benefits associated with wealth, such as 1941 graduate George Mara's interview; he stated that NHL player "Joe Primeau became a coach for [UCC] the year we won the championship…he subsequently became coach of the Leafs" (1994, p. 53). Mara's testimonial highlights a major benefit to attending the school, while also suggesting to the mock reader that athletics at UCC are advanced to the extent of deserving NHL-level coaching. Likewise, Kenneth McNaught, 1936 alumni explains that "I came to love UCC. We had such tremendous opportunities that none of the high schools of the day could provide. There was a wonderful art room" (1994, p. 44). Establishing the implied author of UCC as an optimal learning environment in which unique, exclusive opportunities are bestowed on students privileged enough to attend the school. FitzGerald (1994) also included Robertson Davies testimonial from the class of 1932, he stated that:

> the UCC masters had been in the Navy and the Army and had seen service all over the place. They had travelled in the East or had been in the intelligence corps. They brought a world with them from beyond that narrow world of the Ontario College of Education. (p. 28)

This excerpt from Davies testimonial emphasizes the decorated background of the UCC educators, signifying the exceptionally knowledgeable and culturally diverse mentors present at the institution. James Bacque highlighted that when he thought about it, he "felt as if [he] was part way up a mountain on an expedition against [his] family. [His] family had brought [him] as far as the 20,000-foot level by giving [him] a private education" (1994, p. 71). This aids in establishing the implied author of the text as recognizing the superior background provided by attending a Top-Elite private school in paving the path for success in comparison to public schools. Similiarily, Stephen Clarkson underlines that he "was a Rhodes Scholar… [which] is based on the values that Canadian private schools adhere to and propagate," he attests that "it's probably true that if I had done equally well academically, but had not gone to Upper Canada College, I would not have won the Rhodes Scholarship (1994, p. 99). Clarkson also underlines how the school "prides itself on how large a proportion of its graduating class are accepted by American Ivy League universities. I take that to be quite in the tradition of the school" (1994, p. 101). Clarkson acknowledges the privileges associated with attending UCC, while maintaining his claim to merit through his aptitude, denoting that UCC is only partially accountable for his success. Evan Thompson illuminates that "I find that I am socially adept, that I do have good connections, and it does look good on my resume" (1994, p. 249). These statements establish the perception that UCC grants worldliness, exposing students to places, things, and ideas that have made them into the men that they are today.

FitzGerald's (1994) diegesis summaries of Old Boys serve to admit to the mock reader that alumni do experience significant benefits during and after graduation, while

still acknowledging how the institution plays a pivotal role in providing these opportunities and accolades. Establishing the implied author as one that accepts the inherent privilege bestowed on Old Boys in a less harmful way – that is, understanding that they themselves are only partially responsible for their triumph and that without the institution, their success would have not been the same. Thereby removing some of the preconceptions of Old Boys as being high-and-mighty and ostentatious and placing some of the accountability on the school itself. Working to present Old Boys as more alike other social groups than expected to the mock reader. Through acknowledgement of their skills and the role of UCC in helping them reach their goals, Old Boys are able to reduce adverse feelings of their power and influence felt by other social groups.

UCC Website

Under the school's "Academics" section of their website, UCC promotes that their educational promises come with a "diploma that opens doors," with many "receiving scholarships and university credit for advanced courses" (Upper Canada College, n.d.). Paired with their advertised 100 percent acceptance rate to universities, the institution appears promising and next-level to the mock reader, or potential students and families of the school. This is extended by their two campuses and three schools that cumulatively span 465-acres in Toronto and cater to only 1,240 students (n.d.). The Preparatory School is home to "close to 410 boys in SK through Year 7," which translates to approximately 51 students per grade (n.d.). The school is advertised as delivering "big school opportunities with a small school feel" (n.d.). Moreover, UCC states that "while graduation day may seem like a long way off to our Prep students, it's worth noting that the effort of the IB Diploma Programme is well worth the enhanced

recognition our graduates receive from universities," creating the perception to the mock reader that their son's proper edification as members of the power elite begins at age four to ten (n.d.). In the Upper School, there are "about 750 boys in Years 8 to 12," which is equivalent to 150 students per year (n.d.). These small class sizes allow for students to receive significantly more support and educational opportunities from their educators and the institution in comparison to their public-school peers (n.d.). Upper Canada College's (n.d.) Norval Outdoor Campus is advertised as a place where students:

> sharpen their outdoor skills and enhance their learning in science, geography, math, art and other subjects while having fun and bonding at the all-season school's facilities which serve as headquarters for the exploration of the wide-ranging terrain on this property outside the hamlet of Norval along the Credit River.

Further illuminating the advantages tied to privilege, with grade 9 boys having "11 weeks of wilderness learning, with overnight and day trips, maple syrup making, skiing and snowshoeing, plus lots of time for unstructured play" (n.d.). These opportunities create the implied author of UCC as a unique, personalized, skill-building experience limited to only the most deserving students. That is, an experience that comes with advantages that are worth the cost.

(5) Fortuna

Old Boy Testimonials

Ideologies of fortuna are emphasized throughout FitzGerald's (1994) book, with a number of Old Boys harping on the disadvantages tied to wealth. Peter Dalglish states

that “there is a veneer that these kids come from nice, affluent families where everything is going fine. In reality, a lot of them are from seriously dysfunctional families” (1994, p. 267). He also states that:

> some of these rich kids have it worse than the poor kids I work with in Bogota, Colombia. They don’t have much of their parents’ time. A lot of these kids just need to be loved and there’s very little love at home (1994, p. 273).

Dalglish’s statements highlight the misfortune associated with wealth, going as far as stating that poor families in Colombia are better off than students at Top-Elite private schools; creating the perception to the mock reader that conventional notions of wealthy families being happier and more fulfilled are inaccurate. Patrick Crean adds to this in explaining that “the influence of privilege and money is a very difficult thing…the wealthy have their own set of problems” (1994, p. 184). Brian Johnson, class of 1967 extends this claim in expressing that, “you aren’t lusting after wealth because you see, among other things, that a lot of the really rich kids are not very interesting or happy. You see what wealth does to people” (1994, p. 194). Crean’s and Johnson’s statements aid in creating the implied author of the text as underlining the disadvantages tied to fortune, denoting to the mock reader that wealth is not something that Old Boys sought after, but rather they are burdened with.

Within FitzGerald’s (1994) text, the implied author also includes extensive coverage of painful experiences of students with more than 50 instances mentioned in the 71 testimonials. While this research does not aim to discount the negative and oftentimes disturbing experiences endured by Young Old Boys during their time at UCC, it does acknowledge that there is another side of the story that is not told in the context

of this research; that is, the experience of public-school students and the respective status granted to them based on their less esteemed education. Testimonials presented within FitzGerald's (1994) text frequently include instances of physical and sexual abuse, grooming, bullying, and homophobia inflicted by fellow classmates, masters, and headmasters. This is not something that is not taken lightly, however, it would be naïve and blatantly wrongful to not assume that similar experiences are also experienced by public school kids, who attend smaller schools with fewer support services, minimal extracurricular and club activities, and significantly more students. This perspective aligns with Toronto Sun reporter Jill Rigby, who in her review of FitzGerald's text argues that "so what if some UCC teachers were pedophiles? All that stuff has been going on in educational institutions since Socrates met Plato" (James FitzGerald, n.d.). Herman's (1994) notion of fortuna also relates here as Old Boys are, consciously or subconsciously, promoting their experience at UCC as unfortunate and working to mask or minimize the benefits of elitism, status, and privilege granted by fortune. Again, this is not to say that these experiences should not be categorized as traumatic, cruel, and unfair, though in the context of short diegesis testimonials of their time during and after UCC, these narratives paint a picture of overwhelming misfortune in many ways that do not emphasize or acknowledge the life benefits of attending a Top-Elite private school. In this circumstance, emphasis is placed on tragedy and harm, while omitting and minimizing other instances of effective learning experiences, triumph, and advantages granted by UCC.

UCC Website

While UCC's ideologies of public service promote status and moral virtue for the school and Old Boy's families alike, what if families are unable to donate on a large scale? Hierarchical status and elite reputation are granted to students and families that generously provide support to the institution, though those who are not as financially endowed are more likely to be typecasted as less privileged, important, and moral. With an entire page with seven sections dedicated to "Giving," the inability to financially contribute reduces both the student's and the families' status in relation to the institution (Upper Canada College, n.d.). In the absence of annual donations of $1,500 for families and $500 for Young Old Boys, these members of the community are unable to even attend the Cocktail reception, minimizing their importance and reputation in the eyes of the institution and peers (n.d.). So, while these students remain a part of the institution, their contributions do not grant them access to any of the benefits or the Old Boy network without further financial support.

These underlying notions, stemming from the website's intensive promotion of donations, diminish the significance of students paying their annual tuition of $40,750 to $81,100 dollars, reducing it to an inconsequential figure within their exclusive community (n.d.). This presents the perception to the mock reader – potential, current, and Old Boys of the school – that in the absence of significant financial support, they will be considered greedy, less important, and selfish. Denoting the implied author of the school as a place only for those with substantial wealth, enough to pay the comprehensive $353,500 to $516,650 for the tuition and donate extensively more for the status (n.d.). Working to maintain and perpetuate their dominance through ideological notions of public service tied to morality.

(6) Isolation

Old Boy Testimonials

Notions of isolation within and external to the institution were notable in analysis of Old Boy testimonials presented within FitzGerald's (1994) book. Borys Wrzesnewskyj explains that "being from a culture that is very colourful and warm, the coldness was something I noticed quickly" (1994, p. 287). Wrzesnewskyj's observation of the school's "coldness" in comparison to the warmth of his cultural background suggests a deliberate emotional distance that fosters resilience by encouraging Young Old Boys to rely on themselves instead of seeking external support. This presents itself to the mock reader as a sense of detachment which aids in building independence, training students to navigate challenges without the comfort of community and reinforcing a solitary form of success. Peter Dalglish explains that "I think a prime failing of Upper Canada and many other schools is that they still have no sense of being part of a community within the city or the country, UCC still sees itself as set apart" (1994, p. 270). This division from the broader community cultivates a unique identity of superiority and exclusivity to students. The notion of being "set apart" presents the implied author of the text as the school, and by extension, its students, being resilient and independent, with their success framed as a result of existing outside the norms of the rest of society. Evan Jennings explains that "if you think of yourself as an outsider, Upper Canada College is great. You can just be yourself. I feel a real benefit to being an outsider, which is something I learned at UCC" (1994, p. 307). Jennings reflection on feeling like an outsider and finding strength in that identity establishes the perception that UCC fosters a sense of individuality, positioning isolation as a source of personal flourishment. James Bacque notes that as a border, "I

remember feeling quite lonely. I couldn't see any reason for it. I hadn't had these kinds of restrictions as a day boy, so why was I being restricted like this?" (1994, p. 73). Bacque's comments showcase the increased isolation experienced by boarder students. Likewise, Patrick Crean explains that "there was an incredible loneliness about boarding school too. I remember Sunday as being an especially bad day. Time passed so slowly" (1994, p. 83). The intense isolation of boarders and Crean's remark about the slow passing of time demonstrates the endurance and inner strength students are expected to develop from UCC to the mock reader. Chris Gilmour, class of 1965, expands on this in saying that "I didn't really make any close friends. I felt alone. I don't think I really trusted anybody. I don't know whether it was my goal to do well, or whether I was told to do well, but I certainly tried my very hardest" (1994, p. 168). These testimonials underscore the loneliness oftentimes accompanied by attending UCC given the intensive pressures, competition, and exclusivity placed on its students and their capability to succeed.

These diegesis summaries of the Old Boys' experiences work to seemingly diminish the benefits of attending a Top-Elite private school to the mock reader, while emphasizing the isolated, personal struggle these students endured to reach the top. Establishing the implied author as acknowledging these students' isolation in the midst of their hard work, competition and learning. Denoting to the mock reader that segregation from peers and the walls external to campus is required to create well-trained and notable power elite that deserve the reigns.

UCC Website

Feelings of isolation shares resonance with UCC's golden reputation and high registration fees; paired with their two-century-long commitment to, and precedence of alumni success, resulting in feelings of pressure to succeed and alienation to emerge among students (Upper Canada College, n.d.). The foliage and boarders framing the campus extend the insular feeling of the school, appearing separate from the communities that surround it (n.d.). Moreover, the school's 80 boarding students consider the institution their home, extending UCC's influence on their ideologies and beliefs, while isolating them from the comfort of their lived experience (n.d). The intense pressure to conform and succeed within the institution breeds detachment from wider societal concerns and reorients students to focus on personal success and advancement. This is illuminated by the mere three humanitarians listed under the UCC's notable alumni, in comparison to the 31 Old Boys included under the notable academics section (Wikipedia, n.d.). Although this notable Old Boys list is by no means comprehensive of the privilege, skill, and power that emerges from the institution, the school's mission to "inspire each boy to make a lasting and positive impact on *his* world" encourages individual accomplishment and socio-political leadership within a narrow, elite context (Upper Canada College, n.d.). Denoting to the mock reader, or potential and current families of the school, that success is measured based on personal accomplishments, advancements, and accolades. This resembles Davies (2017) argument that neoliberal power elite have little concern for how their professional actions will impact others within and external to their institution. He states that the power elite's actions "carry meaning for themselves and are governed by their own normative presuppositions of 'vocations' (2017, p. 234). These actions, while meaningful to the

elite themselves, are commonly detached from broader social responsibilities or the potential betterment of the wider community. This self-referential approach validates their self-fulfilling decisions and actions that reinforce their personal power, while turning a blind eye to collective well-being of other social groups. Davies' (2017) characterization suggests that this detachment is not as a result of their position but rather a deliberate strategy to maintain and reinforce their control. Muiruri's (2019) online publication explains that:

> UCC can teach you math…ecology, or English literature…one thing it cannot force you to learn is deep empathy…the kind of empathy which helps you drop the pretense of an all-male environment to seriously consider the implications of your actions, and consider whether your attitude is one that helps make the world a better place for all of its inhabitants – not just the ones who are well off, or white, or male.

So, while UCC's academics may be considered world-class, the sociological imagination established from attending does not provide an accurate representation of life external to the privilege granted to students at 200 Lonsdale Road, Toronto. Additionally, the predominant student population of white, straight, rich males leaves little room for individuality and differing perspectives. Thereby extending the isolation experienced by Young Old Boys and encouraging the adaptation to UCC ideologies and identity. This shares resonance with Mills' (1951) notion that bureaucratic institutions instill values of standardized and routinized roles, or in this case ideologies of what a successful UCC student looks and acts like, resulting in a diminishing sense of self. Muiruri (2019) also emphasizes how UCC's dedication to promoting how great the school is, and its exceptional spaces results in students wearing "an extreme pair of

blinders to the very real world which exists outside of our campus and neighbourhoods…but when blinders are on, the rest of the world can still see you, though you cannot see the rest of it." As such, this intense emphasis on UCC's resources and greatness encourages Young Old Boys to conform to its school of thought and ideologies of elitism and patriarchy to be successful; however, this detachment can result in a loss of identity and failure to connect and form relationships with individuals outside of school as underlined by Muiruri (2019). Thus, impacting student's social roles within and external to the walls of UCC. In addition to making them more inclined to support and participate in controlling and manipulative practices that benefit the institution while perpetuating socio-economic inequalities for other social groups that they do not identify with.

Concluding Findings

Old Boy Testimonials

Through narrative practices highlighting traditional notions of public service, masculinity, elitism, privilege, fortuna, and isolation, Old Boys are able to effectively validate and sustain their influence and power. By contributing to charitable services, donating to the institution, and dwelling on elites who do not follow in suit, alumni establish appearances of moral virtue for the betterment of society. Working to rationalize their wealth through philanthropy and service, while masking the self-serving benefits achieved from these acts. Traditional performances of masculinity, including high-levels of leadership, risk-taking, and control applicable in various circumstances are significantly promoted by Old Boys within their testimonials. These characteristics serve to validate the dominant positions they hold through claims of enhanced abilities,

motivation, and edification. Creating the perception that UCC alumni are the most suitable and deserving well-rounded candidates for high-ranking positions. The lack of female representation in the student population and institution's community reinforces this ideal of male elitism, extending the belief of the Old Boys' merit while subtly minimizing the appreciation of female counterparts. Though, accountability of these misogynist beliefs is oftentimes blamed on the institution itself, diminishing the blame from Old Boys while still perpetuating gender inequity and promoting male superiority. Narratives of elitism cloaked in merit are used to associate Old Boy's exclusive enrolment in a Top-Elite school with their aptitude and inherent values, rather than their wealth and fortune. Contributing to the perception that Old Boy's rightfully occupy their place within the power elite as a result of their disposition which was further refined by UCC's demanding academic program and holistic extracurricular activities. Notions of privilege within the Old Boys' narratives showcase the unique learning experiences, opportunities, and accolades associated with attending a Top-Elite school. By portraying a sense of gratitude for the advantages provided, while recognizing the role of UCC's esteemed image in receiving these benefits, UCC alumni reduce society's belief of their pretentious nature. This approach helps to bridge some of the discerned differences between Old Boys and other social groups, in addition to alleviating negative sentiments toward their superiority. By framing fortune and wealth as misfortune, the Old Boys' narratives downplay the benefits of their elite experiences, opportunities, and status. This concept of fortuna attempts to reimagine the elite world, suggesting to other social groups that wealth often brings unhappiness, loneliness, and adversity. Establishing the idea that the power elite are serving society by assuming leadership roles, as wealth is

portrayed more as a curse than a blessing. Isolation discussed through Old Boys' testimonials highlights the individual strength, perseverance, and problem-solving abilities essential for success at a Top-Elite private school. This narrative also reinforces the perception that such independence is necessary for wielding influence after graduation, suggesting that power and privilege are achieved at the cost of isolation and intense self-reliance. These Old Boy narratives act as a powerful tool in maintaining their position within the power elite, concealing privilege through the notion of merit and transforming wealth into a socially beneficial, yet personally taxing responsibility.

UCC Website

UCC's website includes copywriting riddled with traditional notions of elitism and masculinity, presenting the institution as a morally upright, virtuous, and advanced Top-Elite school for future leaders and changemakers to flourish through edification. The extensive promotion of charitable acts and philanthropy, framed as contributing to the betterment of the institution, student experience, and external reputation, not only helps to sustain UCC's elite status, but also serves to increase its annual revenue. This approach enables the creation of additional opportunities and infrastructure for Young Old Boys, further elevating the school's esteemed reputation. Emphasis placed on holistic leadership opportunities available for students and promotion of notable alumni and their interdisciplinary accomplishments creates the impression that Old Boys develop strong, diverse skillsets applicable in various situations. These characteristics of leadership, control, risk-taking, and business acumen align with traditional notions of masculinity, strengthening the idea that UCC cultivates qualities that lead to success and influence. Through promotion of its IB curricula, skill- and entrepreneurial-building

programs and resources, and membership to exclusive associations, UCC emphasizes its exceptionality and elitism. These narratives affirm UCC's esteemed academic and extracurricular status, while promoting the extensive benefits of attending. The school's advertised two campuses spanning 465-acres with three schools and limited class and cohort sizes highlights student's advantages and entitlement in attending. Paired with the school's promoted 100 percent university acceptance rate for its students, UCC bolsters the privilege associated with attending, appearing as an optimal institution for the development of potential Young Old Boys. The concept of fortuna extends to Young Old Boys and their families, where the cost of attending UCC community events may impose additional financial burdens or lead to exclusion for those who enrolled through scholarships or loans. This financial burden limits their participation in campus activities and networking events, creating a hierarchical divide between those who can afford to contribute beyond tuition and those who cannot. This dynamic strengthens the idea that financial support equivalates to moral worth and social status within the community, suggesting that wealth is a marker of success in addition to a prerequisite for full membership in the institution's elite network. The insular, isolated nature of the school, as promoted by the campus walls, emphasis on individualistic learning values, and its portrayal of institutional greatness, encourages Young Old Boys to internalize and adhere to UCC's ideologies and ethos. This environment fosters a strong sense of identity and loyalty to the institution, compelling students to embrace and perpetuate traditions that enhance and reinforce UCC's elite position. Through these narratives, UCC illuminates it exclusivity by underscoring its tradition and strategically promoting its values and resources. Thereby ensuring that UCC remains an unparalleled institution in

developing future leaders, while underpinning the social and financial hierarchies that sustain its elite status.

These findings raise critical questions about the broader societal issues of the power elite's tactful justification of their dominance. Promoting a deeper examination of how narrative practices within neoliberal regimes and educational systems contribute to reinforcing and perpetuating elite power. By extending the discussion to the role of meritocracy in shaping societal structures, the intricate ways in which the power elite maintain their privilege will conclude this study.

Conclusion

"People should have to qualify to hold power. Somebody has to deal with power because it will always exist. That's why UCC has to train people to deal with it properly and responsibly" (FitzGerald, 1994, p. 183)

This research has addressed the pivotal role of narratives in justifying privilege for members of the power elite and private institutions like UCC. The school itself functions as a mechanism for reproducing societal hierarchies, instilling traditional values of elitism among Old Boys in a meticulously constructed fashion. Ensuring that the power of the elite class is not only maintained but also continued across generations. These values are not merely presented as virtues, but as strategically employed tools to reinforce the legitimacy of wealth and power. UCC is thus perceived as a paragon of virtue and exclusivity, reserved for the most exceptionally skilled and prosperous. Establishing the narrative that Old Boys are inherently deserving and equipped to be respected and affluent leaders.

These findings can be associated to the dominance of neoliberalism within society and education. Through the commodification of high-level learning and the devaluation of public education, the differential in opportunities, resources, and level of education granted to private school students over public school students has significantly widened. Given education's reclassification as a marketable enterprise rather than a public good, private schools such as UCC have been able to leverage their significant resources to employ the best educators, implement state-of-the-art facilities, and provide numerous extracurricular programs. While public schools have received cuts to funding, lay-offs, reduced support services, and increased class sizes. This stark contrast has resulted in a substantial difference in academic and holistic performance of private school students and their public school counterparts. Naturally resulting in more post-secondary acceptances and career opportunities to be granted to those from Top-Elite private schools. Though, in the context of UCC and its Old Boys, their narratives of these achievements and accolades translates to a falsified claim to merit, rather than acknowledging the entitlement granted by their elite primary and secondary school education.

This dichotomy of abilities and critical thinking skills provided to private school students in comparison to public school students works to further affirm the elite's high-ranking positions and dominance over society. Additionally, neoliberal ideologies seeped into public school curricula serve to train these students to accept their standardized positions in society, indoctrinating them to become wheels in private school student's businesses, teams, and corporations. All of which is extended by narratives presented by institutions like UCC and its Old Boys that highlight their supposed superior aptitude,

enriched education, and holistic development, as if these advantages were naturally and rightfully earned.

Ultimately, the alignment of neoliberal values with elitist narratives of justification and preservation creates an extreme disservice to society, inequitably granting fortune and power to those privileged enough to attend institutions like UCC. This system deliberately overlooks the work ethic, tenacity, and innate abilities of public school students, who are marginalized by standardized testing, undervalued education, and limited access to athletic and extracurricular opportunities. Working to establish a cycle where the privileged few are able to ascend to positions of power, while the majority of society are left to navigate a system designed to restrict their potential and wormhole them into positions underneath their private school counterparts.

The narrative of meritocracy, often promoted by UCC and other Top-Elite schools works to obscure the structural benefits granted by fortune and access, enabling those in power positions to maintain the status quo at the expense of societal equality. Consequently, suppressing genuine talent and innovative from a diverse set of backgrounds and enabling the reigns of influence to be handed over to those who have simply inherited privilege. This reinforces a deeply flawed system in which education, rather than serving as the great equalizer it is oftentimes claimed to be, instead becomes a strategic tool for strengthening existing power structures. Thereby exposing the promise of education as a pathway to equal opportunity as a hollow ideal – one that continually undermines the skill and success of other social groups and denying most individuals the opportunity to reach their full potential.

This study has showcased the neoliberal imbalances in Canadian education, favouring private school students through falsified claims of their supposedly earned entitlement to attend prestigious institutions. Findings underscore the urgent need for more research to be conducted on the nature of private school privilege and power elite justification tactics, with the hopes of exposing the unfair life benefits these institutions grant to its students. In advocating for the betterment of educational disparities through research, this study underscores the essential need for a comprehensive educational reform. Moreover, this work aspires to aid in paving the way for a future where education can genuinely fulfill its potential as the great equalizer – a role it currently falls short of achieving.

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