

## America's Confederate Heart: Critiquing the Most Damaging Ingrained Class Ideologies through an Analysis of Mainstream Supremacist Thought in America

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This paper finally wants to suggest that the ideologies that sustain class society may be best understood as sharing much with what we might call supremacist thought more generally, which I identify as a powerful tendency in U.S. history and culture. Recognizing the continuities among white supremacist thought, patriarchal ideology, and the capitalist class ideologies, I argue, offers important insights into how class society works and, perhaps more importantly, a possibility for creating a shared understanding or bridge between the white working class and working-class people of color, as well as women. The vice-president of the confederacy argued that the confederacy “rests upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery-subordination to the superior race-is his natural and normal condition.” In short, “race” determines merit. Gender has historically worked the same. Women and People of color “deserve” less. Meritocracy, though, is a powerful and often unquestioned ideology in U.S. society. We understand “race” and “gender” as social constructions. Can’t we understand terms that organize class society such as “skilled” and “unskilled” as similarly social constructions, inventions that distort how we justify withholding or bestowing resources on different groups? This paper attempts to develop a language, the language of Supremacism, to help us re-conceptualize identity politics in materialist ways and highlight the connections and continuities of various identity positions and how they’re created, identifying hierarchical thinking itself, which underlies such concepts as meritocracy, as the deeply embedded root way of thinking that enables class society as well as racial and gender inequality. Without erasing the specific and unique dimensions of any particular oppression, this research is involved in exploring and seeking to unearth a fundamental tendency in the dominant U.S. cultural consciousness or psychology to think in vertical or hierarchical terms, thus limiting the dominant U.S. social imagination from entertaining other possibilities for organizing our lives, our social and economic as well as most intimate relationships, our political economy and workplaces, and so forth. In drawing out the hierarchical grammar or deep structure informing the thought processes and material organizations of U.S. life, I will draw on a range of social and literary narratives that make clear both the embeddedness of these narratives in the dominant U.S. cultural consciousness and the way they function as largely unquestioned premises.