CANDIDATE'S EXAMINATION NUMBER
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68

EXAMINATION
(e.g. Tripos and Part)

History Prelim to Part I

Subject/Paper Number and Title

Paper 1: Historical Argument and Practice

SECTION
(where applicable)

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Read carefully any instructions on the question paper.

Write on both sides of the paper. If you fill your booklet(s) ask the invigilator for an additional one. Additional rough note paper may also be obtained from the invigilator.

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At the end of each examination tag together all of the answer books you have used, unless specifically requested to hand them in separately. Any loose sheets of plain/graph paper or other material should be tagged inside the relevant booklet.

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20 page booklet
The terms 'class' and 'social status' most rank among the most used and reviled of modern historical historical writing. Whilst once class identification hit a down with the enormous expectations of the left leaning historians of the 20th century now faces their bitter disappointment, 'social status' has been passed around, used in every imaginable way by those scholars of every discipline, with the terms of its relationship to their field rarely being properly defined. For this reason, the collapse of class as the predominant fundamental, enduring and all-important social, economic and political category has led many to simply equate it with the somewhat open concept of social status. This long familiar by social historians has been in no small way facilitated by the recent re-emphasis of gender in feminist history which, until recently, had continued to elevate gender as an (if not the) instrument of analysing social power & relationships. This recent
preoccupation of historians of gender with analyses of
meaning and representation along cultural lines. However,
has meant that while class has fallen declared to a
measure of social status, gender has become something
subtle and arguably still more substantiate but substantial.
This is not the end of the story. More sophisticated
analyses have salvaged class, demonstrating its power in
determining collective identity and action. Equally, the
current preoccupations of most gender historians have
not stopped John Tosh and Judith Bennett, amongst
others, from making a persuasive case for its consideration
us one of many useful frameworks in the analyses of
social relationships. The sloppy reflex after Peter
Joyce declared the fall of class, has indirectly been
so allow it to collapse into social status. Thankfully,
more thoughtful scholarship has preserved, and
indeed extended the virtues of both terms.
The fall of class from its pedestal in the social history of the 20th century became an inevitable consequence of the decline of mercantile and missionary models after the fall of the Berlin wall. Class is, for example, no longer the default analytical frame through which historians perceive the industrial social upheaval of the industrial era in Britain. Whilst in the 60s and 70s A. R. Briggs could write about the rise of the working class as a consequence of the factory system of the early 19th century, and the manifestation of such a shift in the class language of Chartism and pamphlets like 'The Bourgeois', such an assessment no longer holds water. Revised understandings of the process of industrialisation have pushed such the developments of politicisation and national industrialisation that Briggs' theory rested upon upon which Briggs' theory rested, undermining the idea that
the class language has emphasized reflected a real decline of national class consciousness. This loss of faith in language is the proof of class has led several historians, notably Long and Cannadine, to propose alternative models of populism or hierarchy, to conceive of the society of the early 1800s.

When one applies Cannadine's hierarchical model, stressing a multitude of tiny gradations or ranks in social status, it seems all too likely that the tripartite class model has broken down, obliterating distinctions across a far more complex system of status distinctions - class as shorthand.

However, as if the marxian model of class as constant and fundamental has been proven untenable, this does not necessarily preclude the acceptance of class as being relevant (if not supreme) at particular moments in history. Klein stresses the importance of the idea that people
choose to identify themselves as belonging to particular social categories depending on the context - people, the same people identify, or are identifiable, as unskilled workers, the people, and the working class, depending on the era and the situation. The possibility remains, then, that class has been there and historical moments in which class gains this primacy in the determination of identities, and hence becomes a useful prism through which to analyze the actions, not just the status of groups of people. Returning again to the 18th century, it is possible to observe in the rhetoric, collective arms and joint methods, a temporary manifestation of the working class in both the Chartism of the 1870s, and the socialism of the 1880s. While Anne Blatchie has convincingly argued that gender is also relevant to our understanding of Chartism, then...
and not prevent us from usefully and going it from a class perspective. In these instances of class action, societal groups, rather than being cemented by economic forces into their vision of the proletariat, understood themselves as a collective. This understanding, crucially, was based on an appreciation of shared values, shared priorities, and shared desires for change. It is not merely found on a mere acknowledgement of similarity of status.

Furthermore, difficulties arise when attempting to translate class simply into social status. Class system. The three different classes have historically been associated with or dictated by very different social themes, making it difficult to accept the simple proposition that they were divided along universal status lines. Whilst 'working class' carries fairly consistent connotations of manual labor and relationship to the means of
production, the associations of the middle and upper classes have rarely been so clear cut. Whilst wealth and power are the usual traits associated with the upper class, the image of an impoverished miscreant or an wealthy and powerful man is unchartered. Familiar to any student of the period 1600-1900, do not fit easily into this class system. The associations of the middle class - professionalism, deposition, and conspicuous consumption - are even harder to define, and any attempt to describe morality, virtue or respectability to any individual single class will necessarily have incredibly reductive results. The sense of wealth, power, morality, virtue and respectability are all crucial in our understanding of social status, and are not simply with the class system. It seems that class can only be mapped very roughly onto social status.
The last section has begun to demonstrate the complex nature of "social status" as a classifying consequence of gender too as a factor in determining status. The complexity of such an analysis can be revealed even more clearly. Recent trends in the historiography of gender towards analyses of discourse and representation within roles of women and men in the period of culture have diverted the discipline from an analysis of how gender impacts on social reality, power relationships and status. Whilst there is much merit in Bennett's argument that this trend is the product of a desire to gender history to seem "inclusive, less threatening and hip", it seems probable that the discipline's preoccupation with the 18th and 19th centuries, so abundant with cultural evidence, has also played a role. If one examines the history of earlier periods, where (as Harvey and Shepherd)
Note: the methodology of social history is more prevalent, a different picture emerges. It is impossible to imagine the bold conclusions of one historian of gender in medieval Britain, who argues that the demographic impact of the Black Death did little to reduce the dominance of men in the household economy, or in the courts, arising from the useful cultural analysis applied to later periods. There is, however, reason for optimism: Harvey and Shepherd, along with Tonk, have recently called for a new history of gender demonstrating how social and cultural conditions changed across wider periods.

It seems probable that this change in direction will restore gender and indeed other identities as categories relevant to the analysis of social status.

Even current historiography has done much to reveal the extent to which gender, in conjunction with other factors, can affect the social status
afforded gender particular groups. Studies of multi-
ethnic societies in South East Asia, for example, compiled by
Ody and Adano, are particularly illuminating. In the society
of the Melayu Keling of Indonesia, for example, women
are afforded a great deal of economic and ceremonial
power over marriage and descent rules, but the
elevation of men as head of the household by the state
and the dominant Islamic religion restrict the contexts
in which these powers endow them with social
status. In Java, for example, men enjoy a reputation
as the more substantive, according to, but in
reality, it is women, supposedly ruled by parents,
who have independence in the market place and
dominate the home. These studies demonstrate
first how gender intersects with religion and
perceived intelligence, and also how difficult it
is to define social status in terms of either
power or prestige.

Analyses of the ability of class and gender as a frame through which status can be examined leave therefore both revealed the extent to which the application of different criteria on carefully selected contracts is necessary to gauge gage if accurately knowing criteria employing on status would have to include gender, religion, foreignness, race, region, education (and particularly western) as well as marital, responsibility, virtue, wealth and political power. However, these categorisations function not as simple dichotomies in their relevant contracts, but in complex overlapping sets and interlocking combinations, as Eben has demonstrated. Millard's work on empire is relevant here. The overlapping of states in the British empire, both at the metropole and at the periphery, was along lines of
race, gender, and rank or class. For this reason, it was common for those categories perceived low status to become conflated - the Irish or peasants and the lower social inferior, or the "savage tribes," while colonized people in S. Africa were characterized in cartoons and ads as well as general discourse, as having feminine features in line with their shared lack of masculinity with women. While simple dichotomies are an inevitable legacy of structuralist thought, and an easy way for scholars to tidy the discourse space, the reality is far more complex. Social status is far more than class, or gender, or race, it is an inherently composite category of analysis.

To equate class with social status is therefore to oversimplify the latter and underestimate its utility.
of the former as an analytical model. Class
The importance of class is perhaps best evidenced
by its survival in common parlance despite the
influence of the ideology and academic from which
it emerged. Whilst British and European mid-
Americaans are now most likely to identify
themselves by occupation, as blue collar workers,
white collar workers and those too rich to work.
Both societies commonly map these distinctions,
somewhat awkwardly, onto the old categories of
working, middle and upper class. The stereotypes
embodied by Class, Bourgeois and Caste are likely
to outlive them all. Social status The ambiguities
of social status are similarly the thriving too:
our only need analyse the wide stereotype
most common in the U.S., that Asian people are thought,
good at maths and make poor drivers to see that social status in society is still determined by race, money, intelligence and skill. The stereotypes' variability also demonstrates the continuing truth that these constructs have different relationships and valences in very different contexts. Ultimately, it is impossible to ignore the complexity of the question posed by the issue of social status - How highly regarded are you? How highly is a group regarded? Nor is it possible to ignore the problem that the only answer to that question is two more questions - 'Regarded by whom?' and 'Regarded as in what?' Class alone provides the answer to neither.