LIMBO:
BLUE-COLLAR ROOTS
WHITE COLLAR DREAMS

A critical book review presented by:
Linda Clifton
March 20, 20118
Introduction

- Limbo: Blue-Collar Roots, White-Collar Dreams written by Author is Alfred Lubrano
- Mr. Lubrano is the son of a brick-layer
- Graduated from Lafayette high school in Brooklyn New York
- Earned his college degrees from Columbia University in Brooklyn New York
- Mr. Lubrano is very accomplished in his professional life
  - Contributing editor to *GQ* as well as contributing to several magazines and Anthologies.
  - Commentator for NPR since 1992
  - At the time of this book he had already won 6 national awards
Summary

• Mr. Lubrano’s Book takes us into a discovery of social classes and some of the issues that one faces when moving ranks
• Going from growing up Blue-Collar and moving into the White-Collar world
• Discusses class as being equally important as race and gender are when it comes to where one stands in society
• It is also discussed about the differences in the culture as well as the dual identity that those people including Mr. Lubrano feel as a result of this transition
Summary Continued

- Mr. Lubrano’s refers to those who are in this limbo between classes as “Straddlers”
- He uses education as the dividing line between working and middle class but clearly states that there are other factors that go into this division
- To convey the information about class and mobility movement he uses his personal story along with 100 other individuals in the same situation as himself.
- He makes comparisons throughout the book about the two classes such as working class being hard working and striving to do their best whereas, middle class has an entitlement attitude from a young age
- The biggest issue that this book covers is the struggle of trying to figure out there identity
Critical Evaluation

• Mr. Lubrano’s book is very well written and covers a topic that has not been really discussed: Social Classes and the struggles that one has when moving classes.

• Even though there have been studies on class mobility it has not been researched as much as race, gender and religion.

• Mr. Lubrano has first hand knowledge of the subject as he has gone from growing up in a working class family but has moved into the middle class dream after gaining a college degree.
Critical Evaluation Continued

• This book also discussed the struggles that one goes through trying to figure out who they are now, where do I fit in?

• Am I Blue-Collar or am I White-Collar - They try to hang on to their Blue-Collar roots but want to fit in to the White-Collar world that they are now a part of

• He accomplishes this by talking about his own struggles and referencing stories from others as well as experts on the topic
Critical Evaluation Continued

• Mr. Lubrano compares the two classes by talking about the differences in the two classes from the start of their lives

• It is pointed out that the two classes don’t receive the same treatment

• The book gives those who are trying to climb that social status ladder an understanding of what to expect in reference to struggles

• Even though Mr. Lubrano shares multiple stories about “Straddlers” I feel that maybe he could have included stories from those who have fell down the social ladder to compare the struggles.
Conclusion

• Unfortunately people make social status more important than they need to and that is why it makes such an impact on people’s lives

• I feel everyone should read this book, especially those who have grown up in the white-collar world

• It would be helpful to those who are trying to climb the social ladder as well as helping those who are white-collared understand the struggles of the blue-collar people moving up

• It would also be helpful to those parents, siblings, or friends who feel left behind have a better understanding of how hard the struggle is for their friend or relative
Conclusion

One major thing I can take away from this book is that I can keep my Blue-Collar morals and ethics but I will need to learn to adjust to my new surroundings in the my new White-Collared world.