



**CLASS**  
**DIVIDE**

*People who attended performances of a new work-in-progress by playwright/performer Anne Galjour on April 4 and 5, 2008 (part of the Hopkins Center's Class Divide Initiative) were asked to anonymously answer three questions about their own experiences of socioeconomic class. Excerpts of their responses are below, initiating a dialogue about Class Divide. Please add YOUR voice to this community-wide, anonymous-sharing circle!*

*We invite you to email, or print and mail us your own answers to these same three questions:*

- *Can you recall an incident where you became aware of your own class or social standing?*
- *What is your secret truth or belief about class?*
- *What do you truly believe but would never say aloud or admit to others about class?*

*Please note: Your identity will not be disclosed, unless you expressly ask us to include it.*

*Email: Hop.Outreach@Dartmouth.edu*

*Mailing address:  
Hopkins Center Outreach  
6041 Wilson Hall  
Hanover, NH 03755-3543*

***QUESTION: Can you recall an incident where you became aware of your own class or social standing?***

\* Whenever I tell someone where I live: in affordable housing.

\* I was working a summer job at a clothing warehouse during high school. I had to see the movie Romeo and Juliet and was talking about it with a co-worker. I was talking about the directing and camera work and effects. (I was in theater in high school) My co-worker asked who starred, and lost all interest in the movie when she learned that there were no famous actors and actresses in it. Her way of evaluating movies was very different from mine.

\* As a mixed race person, this has been made clear all my life.

\* I was rejected for a position because I came off as snobby. I later discerned that a working class woman who wanted someone less confident was judging me.

\* As a child, I was raised on a dairy farm. I knew we were important because we were helping to feed people. We actually felt a bit superior because we worked hard, raised animals, made a living on little money, and grew most of our food. It wasn't until I was in college that I realized how much society in general stereotyped farmers as being uneducated. Both of my parents had graduated from college!

\* A young girl I used to coach was telling me a story of flying to Paris. "We always sit in first class," she said. "Oh," I replied. "That sounds really nice!" She responded, "I know, I can't IMAGINE sitting anywhere else. My dad said that only the cattle sit in economy." She was seven years old.

\* In third grade, it became really clear to me. I was told by my teacher to sit next to another girl in class and help her with reading. This girl was kind of tough and totally intimidated me, but we ended up becoming great

friends. I went to her home and realized how differently she lived. She lived in the projects and the area around her home was dirty and their home was bare—five people lived in just a few rooms. It helped me understand how comfortable my family and I lived in our own home.

\* I must have been eight or nine. A kid who lived in a squalid house on the hill grabbed my bike. “I’m going to beat you up and take your bike,” he said. “Why?” I asked. “It’s not fair,” he said. “You have a bike and I don’t. “It’s not fair,” I agreed.

\* My mother was told by the minister she could not join the local church because she was too poor to pledge enough money to the church (I may have been ten or eleven).

\* When I realized how intrinsically linked hope and opportunity are to class—money and education makes choices possible. I was explaining to a pregnant teen how breastfeeding could help raise her baby’s IQ and she asked, “Now, what good would that do? Help her think about why life sucks?”

***QUESTION: What is your secret truth or belief about class?***

\* I grew up on the South Side of Chicago and now live in a privileged community where all that really seems to come up in conversation is your degree status and alma mater.

\* The division is becoming more and more apparent. There are two classes: the rich and the poor.

\* In New England, where other differences (race, diversity) are not as present, class differences become a lot more apparent.

\* I am often judgmental about those from another class- higher OR lower. I am not sure how to overcome that and it is something I’m not proud of.

\* (Class) is fluid, capricious and often fatally attractive. People fight earnestly to obtain it while saying it does not matter.

\* It’s as powerful a divider as race-- just not talked about, as it threatens our ideas about democracy.

***QUESTION: What do you truly believe but would never say aloud or admit to others about class?***

\* I miss the level of generational interaction— no matter if dysfunctional or not - that many local families share. I find most middle-upper class families keep distance from those who may be envious of many benefits of privilege.

\* My sister and her husband are dairy farmers who work together on the farm. They have figured out that she has the white-collar job because she showers in the morning. He has the blue-collar job because he showers after the day’s work is done.

\* I am terrified of class. I am terrified, defensive, and angry when I am judged by those of a class above me, and timid, silently stereotypical, and cautious when talking about a class below me. I feel that I am only fully fluent in the class assigned to me. I want to be honest. I am aware of the stereotypes I have about class, yet feeling my lower class, hide it from others in the environment of Dartmouth.

\*My class is the best one. There is some ancient component of human cultural experience, some immediacy of being, that’s passed on in “lower” class life and not in literature.

\* I would say this aloud, but I admire people of the working class for their level of manual skill and connection with family, land, and animals.

\* I think inherited wealth is poisonous to the receivers. They always feel as if they are being judged based on what they're worth, and they fall into the same trap in evaluating others.

*What has your life experience been? Please email your answers to [Hop.Outreach@Dartmouth.edu](mailto:Hop.Outreach@Dartmouth.edu) or print this form and mail it to:*

*Hopkins Center Outreach  
6041 Wilson Hall  
Hanover, NH 03755-3543*



*Can you recall an incident where you became aware of your own class or social standing?*

---

---

---

---

---

*What is your secret truth or belief about class?*

---

---

---

---

---

*What do you truly believe but would never say aloud or admit to others about class?*

---

---

---

---

---

*Please return to [www.hop.dartmouth.edu/classdivide](http://www.hop.dartmouth.edu/classdivide) to see the results of this project and upcoming Class Divide events.*