

The Alienated American Male

Get the *The Femsplainers Podcast* and find the episode from 19 February 2019: “The Alienated American Male” and listen to the interview with Timothy Carney (author of the new book, *Alienated America*). You can listen to the whole episode, but the important part is the interview from 15:00 to 42:00 (and on to 59:00 for more, if you want it). So this will take you about 25 Minutes to listen to – but more for stopping the podcast to take notes.

You can subscribe to it and find the episode on a normal computer (femsplainers.com), but I recommend going to itunes and finding *The Femsplainers Podcast* and then finding the episode and listening to it on your smartphone. Again, skip ahead to 15:00 if you want.

If you listen to the podcast on a podcast player, you can slow down the listening speed without changing the tone! Slow it down to 90% or 75% if you’re having trouble understanding the speakers!

Background:

- a) At one point (25:20) Carney mentions the “Moynihan Report”. That was a government report written in the mid 1960s about the socio-economic decline in African American communities. More and more Blacks were having children out of wedlock [*unehelich*], more and more were leaving the work force, crime rates were going up. Now, fifty years later, some of those trends have reached the white community.
- b) A few moments later, Carney mentions Williston, North Dakota and the “fracking” boom. Williston is way out in the remote northwest of an already remote state, close to the Canadian border. That whole area starting making a LOT of money about 10-15 years ago with the boom in natural gas by a controversial method known as “fracking”. It is a bit like the old west – lots of men go there to work in the gas fields, but not necessarily men with families.

Questions to consider:

1. Briefly describe Carney’s methodology. How did he study the people he studied?
2. Who were his target people? Who are the primary people he is interested in studying?
3. Why did people vote for Trump? What are the places like where those people live?
4. What are the symptoms of alienation that Carney mentions? List several examples.
5. What do the men do? What don’t they do? Briefly explain why/why not.
6. Describe the example of the “man camp”.
7. Starting at about 29:00 they talk about the difference between something being “institutional” and something being “transactional”. Briefly explain the difference.
8. He quotes someone as saying about today’s men, “We are trying to align their short-term incentives with what we know is the long-term good.” Explain.
9. What has happened with class differences in the US with regard to culture?
10. Compare dating 30 years ago with dating now.

Vocabulary Help:

lent	Fastenzeit
yuppie	“young upwardly mobile professional”
roadside	not in the city
“maga hat”	a red “Make American Great Again” hat
crumbling	am brockeln,
labor force	Arbeitsmarkt
coal mine	Kohlemine
steel factory	Stahlwerk
boarded up	verschlagen, zugenagelt
fracking boom	see above
“man camp”	the young-male oriented life in Williston
rec room	recreation room (a special room at home with games)
dorm room	Studentenwohnheim-ähnlich
warren	Gewirr, Kaninchenbau
trailer	Anhänger(Wohnung) – like a “white trash“ trailer park, but nice
fussball	Tischkicker
college debt	Schulden vom Studium
wages	Gehälter
childbearing	Kinder kriegen
prevailing attitude	herrschende Einstellung
Park Slope	affluent neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York City
eclectic	vielfältig
hipster	young, wealthy person involved in alternative and “indie” culture
Chevy Chase	a wealthy suburb of Washington, D.C.
serendipity (serendipitous)	Zufall(ig)
happenstance	Zufall
mingle	mischen, sich treffen
to run errands	Sachen (in der Stadt) erledigen, Besorgungen erledigen