

The Wheel of Respectability

By Sara Sligar

Another U.S. History paper. I think we were supposed to write a letter to someone, explaining the Wheel of Respectability to them. I expended so much energy in writing THIS letter that I can't explain the Wheel to you now, but trust me, it's pretty raw.

To my Dearest & most Beloved Relation,

I do not hope to trespass on your Privacy, but it has come to my own Attention that you are currently unknowledgeable as to the Existence of a most Wonderful and Incredible Innovation. Being as I am so Careful to properly inform my Friends of all matters of Import that pertain to them, I must insist on remedying your Ignorance.

The Innovation of which I speak was first brought to My Humble Attention by that Most Inspired man, Mr. Billius Utton on a Quiet Morning less than a fortnight ago. Yes, it was on that Quiet Morning that I learned of the Beautiful Existence of a Device called the Wheel of Respectability. You may have heard of That Wonder, but I surmise not, for That Wonder was not Thought of until far after our Time. (You may therefore wonder why I am Cognizant of it; I shall only tell you that it is a result of my Superior Intellect.)

The Wheel of Respectability is a Device used to help us mere Mortals understand the Mortal Actions of our fellow Mortals. The Wheel of Respectability classifies People based on their Level of Respectability. However, I must Reassure you that This Wheel does not Apply to us, for It Describes only the Productive Middling Classes & We are Much More Advanced than They.

You see, the concept of the Wheel of Respectability relies on Two Important Concepts that I expect you must be Familiar with: Limits and Power. If you are not as Educated or Intelligent as I (I admit this is a very likely Occurrence), I will explain these Concepts to you. Limits are what One needs in Order to keep One's Elemental Passions in Check; for We All are well Aware what No Good can occur when One does not Check One's Elemental Passions. Power: does this need any further Explanation? Power is in this Case Power over Other People; & mostly depends on social class. One must have both of these Things in Order to be Truly Respectable, or however Respectable Those who are not Very Rich can Be. The Very Best Type of Middling Classes (if

Indeed the Middling Cla[ss]e[s] have Good Type[s], let alone Very Be[st] are the Type[s] who have Limit[s] and Power; these People, I will have you know, are the Re[sp]ectable/Proto-Ari[st]ocratic.

The Wheel of Re[sp]ectability i[s] of Cour[se] a Wheel; & I expect you to be Cognizant that Wheel[s] are de[si]gned to move. Thu[s] i[t] should come a[s] no Great Shock that it i[s] Feasible for One to move on the Wheel of Re[sp]ectability, a[s] well. For in[st]ance, if One were to acquire large Amount[s] of Valuable Currency, One could move toward[s] the Proto-Ari[st]ocratic Group on the Wheel.

One Timely Example of this Phenomenon of which I s[pe]ak i[s] Our Dear Aunt Marge. You may remember that Dear Aunt Marge wa[s] Once a Trifle Hotheaded; but of Cour[se], not Wi[sh]ing to Profane Her Name, I mu[st] Add that Her Hotheaded Reaction[s] are alway[s] conducted in the utmostly Polite Way[s]. Even the Time she burned your Wedding Dress she wa[s] most Well-Behaved.

But La[st] Year you may Recall she finally realized that Her Behavior wa[s] a Trifle Ridiculous & so wa[s] Prompted to Become more Level-Headed. Since then she ha[s] been the Paragon of Grace! Even Mr[s]. Pritia Strange invited her to her Soiree thi[s] Saturday la[st], & Everyone had been Pining for Week[s] for an Invitation. However much, though, I do not Wi[sh] to Slight Our Dear Aunt's Name, I mu[st] say, for the sake of Posterity, that I believe the somewhat Large Inheritance she ha[s] recently come into ha[s] Not been a Deterrent.

This may lead you to Believe that the Wheel of Re[sp]ectability i[s] Only a Measure of social success; & in some Degree you may be Correct. Nowadays my Intelligence Inferior[s] are often Found to be Mi[s]interpreting this Wondrous Device & Applying the Nomenclature "Respectable" to all who are Popular. I, however, know Better; & mu[st] tell you Humbly that these People are simply Mi[s]using thi[s] Lovely Innovation which was Wrought for Our Purpose.

Best Wi[sh]es to Your Family. I will give your[s] to My Own Dear Fido since I know you will send these Wi[sh]es & It is Easier if you do not have to Buy Postage.

Yours Humbly,