Write a 750-word essay on the following topic. Your essay is due in CLA 251 by 4 PM on FRIDAY February 19. Please include a title (not on a separate page), single space, and use both sides of a single sheet of paper. Also, please include a word count.

Is Hofstadter’s psychological interpretation or Holt’s political interpretation of the Antimasons more accurate and persuasive?

Be sure to use direct quotations from the reading to bolster your argument and to cite the page number in parentheses after the quotation. Finally, be sure to include at least one claim-objection-rejoinder sequence.

Both Hofstadter and Holt agree that the Antimasons as a social movement and political party were motivated by social and economic dislocation. They would agree with the portrait of a movement motivated by the loss of class status described by Goodman. It is commonly accepted as fact that when the industrial and communications revolutions—often simply called “the Market Revolution”—came to the North, village leaders in Massachusetts lost their standing to new comers and farmers in Vermont sold their farms to sheep ranchers and left for the big cities. Such dislocations caused instability and many felt a general lack of control over their circumstances that motivated the turn to the Antimason movement to vent grievances and frustration.

But both Hofstadter and Holt push beyond the social and economic interpretation to emphasize other, different motives behind the movement. Hofstadter engages in a psychological interpretation of a “paranoid style” which made the movement attractive because it gave Antimasons “an opportunity to project and freely express unacceptable aspects of their own minds” (34). In contrast Holt argues that “it was a political vacuum caused by the weakness or absence of two-party competition that best explains why the Antimasonic party flourished in some states but not others” (5).

In the essay by Voss-Hubbard and the chapters by Goodman, additional evidence supporting one or the other position can be found.