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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This year's issue of *The Sosland Journal* is only the second edition published since moving to an all-digital format available at **http://soslandjournal.wordpress.com**. Our decision to publish the journal online was driven by two factors: First, it allows students and teachers to access the journal for free. Second, it makes the journal more widely available for those who want to use it. In a time where the costs associated with higher education are on the rise, while at the same time a college degree is becoming more and more necessary for economic and social advancement, we hope that the free, online version of the *Sosland* will continue to provide the UMKC community with access to exemplary models of academic writing with as few barriers as possible.

The essays in this year's issue of *The Sosland Journal* are exemplary because of the high quality of the argumentation and critical thinking demonstrated by their authors, in addition to their abilities regarding grammar, punctuation, and style. In fact, the *Sosland* editorial staff has made only minor mechanical and formatting changes to the essays that follow because we believe that even in excellent writing, errors and weaknesses can serve as catalysts for composition instruction and classroom discussion. This year's entries are also good models because of the important topics they address, from long-standing controversies around subjects like imperialism to contemporary issues like the news media's relationship to the events surrounding the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri last year. The ideas contained in these essays are even more important than their style and mechanics.

I would like to extend my thanks to every student who submitted their work to the journal and the instructors that encouraged them to do so. I would also like to thank my team of readers, Grace Bornhoft, Derek Cowsert, and Ande Davis, as well as the UMKC faculty who served as

judges for determining the winners at each proficiency level, Crystal Gorham-Doss and Ben Moats. Craig Workman, Assistant Editor, and Dan Mahala, Director of Composition at UMKC, have been invaluable assets as well, and I am grateful for the help they have provided. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank the benefactors of *The Sosland Journal*. It could not be published without the generous support of Rheta Sosland-Huwitt and the Sosland family. We hope that this issue is in keeping with the tradition of *The Sosland Journal* and that it continues to reflect the Sosland family's commitment to excellence in education.

Happy Reading!

Jonathan Nevins, Editor, *The Sosland Journal*

DEBUNKING AMERICA'S MARRIAGE MYTHS

Anne Crawford

No family is perfect. Most everybody recognizes this. However, in America, there is a certain ideal family that tends to be romanticized as the best, the quintessential representation of the American dream: the married mother and father with their two children. For decades, most television shows, advertising, and other kinds of media have promoted this view. The idea that nuclear families provide the best quality of life is still a common belief in American society even as more diverse family frameworks have emerged, and some believe that different types of families can even be harmful. Although many Americans believe that only a traditional family can provide an appropriate familial environment, families formed by unmarried or non-traditionally married people can provide all the love and support a family needs.

Stereotypes and quick judgments abound when it comes to nontraditional family situations and the families that form from them. In my own life, some of the reactions of others who find out I have a single mother are disturbingly ill-founded. Once, when I was asked by a woman what my father did for a living, I replied with the usual dismissive "he's not in the picture." Her response was of sympathy for my mother who "must have been so strong" to deal with my father's retreat. When I explained that my mother, in fact, used a sperm donor to have me and there indeed was no father involved, she appeared stunned and very uncomfortable.

This is just one example of single parents being tied to inaccurate assumptions. When one thinks of a single parent, often the image of a woman left behind by an irresponsible partner comes to mind. This stereotype has caused some to condemn the rise of single parents, especially

single mothers, as a barrier to the success of society as a whole. As Charles Murray comments, "…non-marital births are problematic. On just about any measure of development you can think of, children who are born to unmarried women fare worse than the children of divorce and far worse than children raised in intact families" (Murray 349). However, this one-size-fits-all approach to the issue of single parenthood does not delve into what it truly means to be in a family formed from a nontraditional marriage situation.

Though many single mothers do face harsh problems, there is a strong minority that definitely do not fit that mold. Many have high expectations for their children, thriving careers, and highly independent mindsets. As Michele Weldon points out, "single moms have given us Olympian Michael Phelps, comedian Bill Cosby, (and) Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton" (Weldon 1). Single mothers have all the potential to raise responsible, productive children. Moreover, all single parents have a leg-up on nuclear families in that they can spend the time they would use for a spouse to help their children grow and mature. For those single parents who can afford this luxury, it is one that can truly give a child a sense of love and attention. Michael Kimmel, a sociologist at Stony Brooke University of New York, even reports that "we see constantly children of single-parent families who thrive because the parents are so devoted…" (Jaysonusa Today 2). And, beyond the common belief, many single mothers enjoy fruitful careers. My single mother has had a successful legal career spanning over 25 years.

An even more controversial concept in America than single parenthood, however, is gay marriage and families formed out of these marriages. As more and more states start to legalize gay marriage, the topic has only become more prevalent and heated. Beyond the fact that morality of gay marriage is highly contested, the family structure and ability of gay couples to raise a family is a large issue. Some argue that gays raise children in a way that is inferior to any

other type of family structure and condemn it whole-heartedly. However, this myth has been debunked many times over. According to a study done at the University of Melbourne in Australia, "children of same-sex couples fare better when it comes to physical health and social well-being than children in the general population" (Bever 1). Studies like these show that same-sex couples have all the potential to provide a secure familial environment despite the criticism against them.

This idea has started to emerge as a more accepted and widespread one by the media and the general population. Even television shows are starting to portray gay couples in an accepted, even admiring light; in ABC's *Modern Family,* for example, a gay couple works together to provide a loving, supportive family for their adoptive daughter. However, they are portrayed as just as imperfect as the traditional family that they live alongside. Both families struggle through domestic and work related problems, but always work their issues out in a loving, productive way (*Modern Family)*. What many people do not stop to consider is that this is not just fiction, but reality for many Americans and their families. No family structure is perfect, and they all have their strengths and weaknesses.

The myth that the nuclear family with a traditional marriage provides the absolute best familial environment is a myth. Undoubtedly, when it comes to the statistics, these traditional families do have an edge on others. However, they are plagued with their own issues and challenges. Overall, "family climate has the most direct effect on child development" (Valdez 1). According to Alesia Montgomery and Robert Rossi from the American Institute for Research, "two-parent households are not always stable and supportive and single-parent households are not always isolated and overwhelmed" (Valdez 1). Factors like alcohol, drugs, and infidelity do not discriminate; though some may be more at risk, no couple or family is risk free. Any parent

that devotes himself or herself to providing a safe, well-structured, and productive life for his or her family can find success and love.

With a proper familial environment, non-traditionally married parents, despite challenges, have the ability to provide all the resources for success. It is well known that certain types of families are afflicted by economic challenges, like the statistics show many single parents are. Economic instability can be extremely difficult, but it can afflict any family. Though many unmarried family heads do face the challenge of supplementing the income that a spouse would provide, they still have every chance to provide love and emotional support for their families. Same-sex couples, despite much discrimination against them, have successfully raised families for many years. Though these families face challenges, they most definitely have the tools to combat them. With love, effort, and plenty of caring support, any family can find a way to stay resilient through tough situations. All it takes is for a family of any size or shape to come together and agree to work through their issues.

When looking at the American family, one must expect to see multiple molds and characteristics. Just as individual Americans have their own unique qualities, so do individual American families. Even though the heads of one family may be married, this does not automatically mean that they are more productive and supportive than those that are unmarried or in a non-traditional marriage. Statistics and circumstances cannot accurately predict the success of a family; only the choices and actions of its members can determine that. Like the problems that have the potential to hurt any family, love does not discriminate based on family structure. It is a choice that unmarried or non-traditionally married family heads consistently make and act upon.

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OBAMA'S DREAM ACT: ARE IMMIGRANTS REALLY ABLE TO ACHIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM?

Mallory Barnes

Immigration and diversity are the two objects that shaped the United States into what it is today. In the beginning, the United States was founded as a place of refuge. It began as a place where refugees could practice religion freely but today people seek out a home in the United States for many different reasons. The United States has provided people from other countries a safe haven; where they have the ability to escape the problems in their home countries, earn money, or reunite with their families. As a result, illegal immigration is a difficulty that is sweeping the nation. In 2009, an act was introduced in the Senate that would provide temporary amnesty, permission to work, and the ability to get a higher education for undocumented children. The DREAM Act (**D**evelopment, **R**elief, and **E**ducation for **A**lien **M**inors) required that a child must have had to enter the United States before reaching sixteen years old, been in the United States for five consecutive years, between the ages of twelve to thirty-five at the time of application, and has good moral character (Durbin).

Although the DREAM Act does aid with the problem that immigrants have, there are still difficulties that they have to face. In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled that children that are illegal aliens had the ability to obtain education in public schools. Along with individual states compulsory attendance laws, illegal children can acquire primary and secondary education (Ruge, Iza 259). However, the ruling did not include higher education. The DREAM Act now allows high school graduates to attend universities but without financial benefits. The topic of DREAMer's in higher education is thoroughly debated; Legislation in many states strongly

oppose allowing DREAMers to receive in-state tuition because of the lack of taxes that their parents pay. Investing money in the education of DREAMers would not only improve the future of individual lives, but would also mend the economy of the United States in the future due to the lack of necessity of social services and the high educated immigrants.

When the DREAM Act was first passed, DREAMers had to pay out-of-state tuition at every university. As of now, fifteen states give DREAMers the ability to gain residency and pay in-state tuition and many states are in the process of passing bills that allow the same ("Improving" 12). In contrast, some states have put a ban on that benefit for DREAMers. Currently, DREAMers are not qualified for governmental financial aid or loans. The price of tuition is extremely expensive and paying not only out-of-state tuition, but also having to pay for college without any assistance from the government is nearly impossible. Furthermore, DREAMers cannot obtain a federal loan. There are opportunities for privately funded scholarships, but very few exist. Conclusively, DREAMers have a small chance of acquiring a higher education.

I believe that DREAMers should be able to obtain in-state tuition and government financial aid and scholarships. At the University of Missouri-Kansas City, I receive both scholarships and financial aid. I receive about $1,700 per semester through scholarships that were awarded to me by UMKC. I also qualify for in-state tuition because of my Missouri residence. Even for me, college tuition is overpriced and I pay in-state tuition and receive money for scholarships. Out-of-state tuition costs up to three times more than in-state tuition (Ruge, Iza 260). Barely anyone is able to afford to pay that without loans. Paying out-of-state tuition out of pocket, without any scholarships available, nor financial aid, nor loans at disposal, college is

practically impossible. With the price of college, most DREAMers don't have the ability to get a higher education.

The argument against DREAMers in higher education is that American taxpayers have to compensate for their education since their parents do not contribute to the economy by not paying taxes. Floridian legislator, Rick Scott proclaimed, "The issue you're dealing with there is that we're taxing our own citizens to pay for an education system. So what's fair? Right now our universities are always asking for more money as it is. So, I think the right thing is if you were born in this country and you have the residency requirements of this state, you get in-state tuition" (Sherman 3). What he is stating is that as American citizens, we are paying DREAMer's education through our taxes, when the money could be used for another outlet to improve out country. He also stated, "... They have caused tuition to be too expensive so lower-income, middle-income families cannot afford their tuition..." (Sherman 3). Now the inflation in college tuition prices is not caused from the amenities being added to college nor the demand for better pay by the workers, but because DREAMers are able to go to college paying in-state tuition. However, these statements made by Rick Scott are utterly false and have no evidence or information to support his claims.

DREAMers pay taxes on their income and they should be able to collect the benefits that citizen taxpayers do. Every year, there is a fifty billion dollar surplus from taxes paid by immigrants (Ruge, Iza 260); Meaning that after all of the taxes are collected from immigrants and the federal money that was spent on immigrants is taken into account, there is still fifty billion dollars profit. That's fifty billion dollars that could be invested in the educations of DREAMers. The fact that there is a ginormous immigrant surplus disproves the statement that Rick Scott originally proposed. In addition, this demonstrates that tuition is not rising from the

shortage of money that colleges now have due to the ability DREAMers have to pay in-state tuition. College prices are peaking from various causes, but because immigrants are now able to pay in-state tuition is not one of those causes.

Another example of how immigrants are aiding the American economy is the money that can be produced by them. For example, for every federal dollar that is spent on education of an immigrant, five dollars is generated in the economy (Ruge, Iza 261). Long-term projections have shown that not investing in immigrant's education will cost more. The need for social services is greater for someone that did not get a higher education and the need for social services of uneducated immigrants in the future will total more than an investment in education now.

In conclusion, allowing DREAMers to receive in-state tuition and governmental financial aid and scholarships will benefit the United States economy and the lives of individual immigrants. The DREAMers would be able to obtain a college education without an outrageous price and in turn, the graduates would generate money for the United States economy. Immigrants would have the ability to obtain better careers and live a life free of poverty. The United States would have more money at their disposal to pay off the national debt or reinvest in future immigrant's education. Both the United States and immigrants would profit from a small change in the DREAM Act. The addition of in-state tuition, federal aid, and loans would change the United States a great deal in terms of money spent in the start of the changes. Colleges would need more federal aid at first and the United States might go into more debt, but after a short amount of time the money will be returned into the economy. The problem that immigrants have in the higher education system has a plausible solution and I fully believe that the benefits outweigh the costs.

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BODY CAMERAS: PROTECTING OR CONDEMNING OUR CIVIL SERVANTS

Corbin Emanuel

Recently, there has been a lot of discussion in the United States about the police and their use of force. Police officers are on guard now more than ever due to consistent public criticism and fear of extreme repercussions for an action resulting in use of deadly force. This, along with social media, word of mouth, and popular culture have caused a large portion of the public to mistrust the police force. This has led to a proposal that police officers on duty be required to wear body cameras in order to document their decision making and overall discourse with the public at all times. While police officers need to be monitored and checked in some way, the use of body cameras is irresponsible because it will create privacy issues when officers are entering private property or interviewing sensitive victims, it will make officers feel mistrusted and feel that the public no longer values them as protectors of the community, and it will be a very costly endeavor that will come out of our pockets as tax payers.

Depending on the state in which you reside, current forms of electronic monitoring of police, such as dash camera videos, are either considered public records or can be acquired via subpoena. Dash cameras capture video of what is directly in front of the officer's patrol car in a public space. By Missouri law, it is absolutely legal to record video in a public space where a person would already have a limited expectation of privacy. However it is not legal to record in someone's home without their expressed consent. This brings up the issue of privacy in the use of body cameras. Though these cameras can help gather evidence and increase transparency, "advocates for domestic violence victims caution that they also hold the potential to hurt the women the criminal justice system is trying to protect if they find their way into circulation

beyond law enforcement uses." (Prather 1). In order to make body cameras effective, we "would have to require officers to record every interaction with citizens. Activation of head cams would need to become absolutely routine for any encounter between a police officer and a citizen" (Harris 11). While transparency in law enforcement is not a bad idea, having a camera constantly recording may lead to a serious breach of citizens' privacy. If we want transparency we would most likely need to allow these videos to be released to the public under the Freedom of Information Act. If body cameras were used by police officers at all times, including when they are in people's homes, these body cameras would capture the layout of the person's home. This, in turn could be requested via the Freedom of Information Act, public records, or subpoena by a criminal to allow them to case someone's home before attempting a robbery. Of course, this would most likely leave a paper trail, but is a threat nonetheless. A video captured inside a subject's house may also capture some things a person would want to keep private. There is nothing wrong with having a reasonable expectation of privacy in your home. That is why we have the fourth amendment of the constitution. Of course, we could make these body camera videos restricted, but that would defeat the purpose of developing transparency between the law enforcement community and the citizens which it serves. These are issues that are coming to the forefront of the debate over body cameras. The most important privacy violations to consider are interviews of domestic violence or rape victims. If the officer is interviewing a domestic violence victim, there is the possibility of alerting the attacker that the victim has testified against him/her. (Smith) This may spur another attack. In the case of sexual assault or rape victims, many of the victims not only are fearful when disclosing information, but are embarrassed and do not want any of that information to be accessible by the public. There are ways to mitigate this of course;

however, a lot of litigation and deliberation would be required in order to eliminate the privacy concerns that surround the use of body cameras.

A large portion of the public has formed a relationship of mistrust with the police. This is possibly due to media distortion of events or personal negative experiences with a police officer. It has been a growing trend recently for the media to delegitimize and criticize the police leading to a public outrage and overall negative viewpoint of police officers. Specifically, the cases covered are use of force cases that are very subjective in nature. We can look at these events and how they were handled, and deduce that "The degree of public outrage and level of media coverage precipitated by these and other events are clear indicators of a troubled relationship between the public and the police" (Tyler 3). There is no question that the police force's ability to use deadly force, or force in general should be checked. However, we must realize that highly threatening split second decisions are not easy ones to make. While there are officers that abuse the power that a badge holds, most of the men and women employed as police officers are doing it for the good of their community. By holding the irresponsible officers accountable, we are also punishing the officers that do what's right. Officer Smith, a 7 year veteran of the Green County Sheriff's Department, Army reservist, former Detective, and SWAT team member divulged that the body cameras would make him feel "like the public doesn't trust me. I wouldn't mind wearing a camera because I do my best to do the right thing all the time, but it makes me feel as though the public no longer supports me and my fellow officers." In fact, Officer Smith is not unique in his view. A study of the Montana Highway Patrol found "law enforcement officers firmly believed that the populations they serve had primarily negative perceptions of them" (Tooley 1). On top of the negative criticism the officers receive from citizens, with the implementation of body cameras they will deal with negative criticism from their superiors. Imagine if you were

being watched and listened to constantly by your superiors while you were conducting your daily business in the workplace. The dash cameras we already have in place are sometimes "diverted for workforce surveillance" (Pearce 1). Missouri State Representative Michael Roorda, the Vice President of a police union is skeptical of the effectiveness of body cameras. He expects that "Instead of the cameras being there to protect the officers, they get disciplined for petty stuff constantly — for violating the uniform code, or rolling through a stop sign for an urgent call, or for not turning the camera on" (Pearce 1). His statement is based on St. Louis Police Department's current experiences with dashboard cameras.

These body cameras will not only come at the cost of privacy, but will be a cost to citizens in the form of additional taxes. Currently in the United States the government spends "more than $100 billion on police every year. This money goes to fund 714,921 sworn police officers and an increasing number of militarized police units" (Long 1). While there are many other factors to consider, such as: salary, benefits, retirement, and other human resources spending for police employees; we should take into account the cost of equipment police have. Body cameras are high tech pieces of equipment "which can cost between $350 and $700 a piece" (Edwards 1). An average body camera made by Taser costs three hundred and ninety nine dollars ("AXON"). This is not to mention the dock that is required to charge the battery and upload the evidence gathered. If we were to place body cameras on every police officer in the United States, the American public would be looking at a cost of $285,255,873.00. This number is based on the cost of the individual cameras multiplied by the amount of sworn police officers mentioned above. The additional equipment required to operate these cameras, along with the maintenance, upkeep, and replacement and repair costs are all subjective numbers that must be factored in as well. This, of course, will be added to every citizen in the community's tax bill. In

the city of Phoenix, Arizona alone, "where police took pay and benefit cuts in a 2014 budget shortfall, outfitting every patrol officer could cost up to $3.5 million" (Edwards 1). While costs will vary depending on the amount of officers a community has, it will still be a very hard thing to accomplish without raising taxes or lowering police officers' already mediocre wages or eliminating funding to other more important pieces of equipment. It is also possible that we would have to lower funding for other programs outside law enforcement to make up for a potential increase in spending.

  With police encounters becoming covered more and more by the media, and the public becoming more volatile towards law enforcement officers, it seems logical for police departments to react in a proactive manner. The public wants complete transparency between officers and civilians. Body cameras could potentially increase transparency and save money on litigation by providing video evidence of encounters, but at what cost? The morale of our civil servants will initially decline as they are criticized for everything they say or do and possibly receive pay cuts in their salaries to compensate for the cost of body cameras. Privacy will be limited not only for police officers, but for the citizens which they serve. The initial and upkeep cost of implementing them would increase taxes or decrease funding of more important programs or equipment. Perhaps testing them in smaller departments and implementing them slowly to allow the police and citizens adapt would be an effective approach. We could figure out what works when it comes to preserving privacy and protecting victims on a smaller and more controlled scale. Eventually, body cameras may be a good idea for both police and citizens. As it stands right now, there needs to be a lot more deliberation on the above stated issues to mitigate or eliminate the risks before body cameras can be implemented safely and effectively.

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A MIX OF FACT AND FICTION: THE EFFECT OF MEDICAL DRAMAS ON PERCEPTION OF HEALTHCARE

Brooke Horridge

The first television was invented in 1927; in the 40s and 50s, televisions began to gain popularity as more and more people started putting them in their homes. We have come a long way from the big, square, black and white televisions of those decades. One difference is in the number of shows available for the viewer audience, as well as the abundance of genres. One genre that has been around awhile is medical dramas; in fact, the very first medical drama on television was *City Hospital* and it first aired in 1951. Over the decades, many other medical dramas have come on to the scene. Some of the most recent and popular include *Grey's Anatomy*, *Scrubs*, *ER*, and *House*. With medical dramas comes a lot of medical terms and information, and although some scenes from these dramas can contain useful and accurate information, the majority of the episodes are full of inaccurate information and depictions. As a result, society has undoubtedly made false assumptions about healthcare based solely on what they have watched on television. Sometimes these false assumptions result in unrealistic expectations and general confusion. It is important to realize that not everything seen on medical dramas is accurate, no matter how realistic it may seem.

When it comes to what is viewed on television, most would probably like to think that they are able to separate what they watch from reality. However, the truth is that doing so is a lot more difficult than many would believe. There is a term for this overlap between what is watched on television and views of reality, and it is called cultivation theory. This theory, "in its most basic form, suggests that television is responsible for shaping, or cultivating viewers'

conceptions of social reality" ("Cultivation Theory"). This means that when viewers sit down and regularly watch shows such as *Grey's Anatomy* or *House*, they eventually start to apply what the series presents to reality. With that being said, it is worth noting that people often make this connection between television and reality unknowingly, because watching television tends to alter thinking in "subtle and complicated ways" (Beck). This means that even if one does not think they are influenced by the fictional dramas, they very well could be. For example, if one continuously sees scenes where doctors are acting unprofessionally, they, the viewer, are likely to start believing that this is how many doctors actually behave. It is not just medical dramas that can shape one's perspective; all television shows have the ability, but medical dramas are known for having lots of realistic (or not so realistic) information that is very misleading to viewers.

There is a lot of inaccuracy contained in each episode of medical dramas. One big discrepancy is in the behavior of doctors, nurses, and other medical staff. For example, on the show, *House*, the viewer can see the main character, Dr. House, (played by actor Hugh Laurie) talking to patients as if they are completely unintelligent. He very often comes across as rude and sarcastic; traits one does not, and should not, seek in his or her physician. Although it may seem laughable at the time, cultivation theory shows that watching a healthcare worker act disrespectfully, such as Dr. House, really does rub off on the viewers. People may begin to believe that if they go to see a doctor, they will be treated the same way the patients on television are treated, which is often poorly. This shows just how easily scenes where healthcare workers talk disrespectfully to patients, and even coworkers, can unfairly shape how one perceives the real life medical world and all of the professionals involved. In a study conducted in 2003, "watching more prime-time medical shows was associated with 'perceiving doctors as more

uncaring, cold, unfriendly, nervous, tense, and anxious'" (Beck). No professional wants to be labeled like that, but unfortunately, the inaccuracies in medical dramas have led to this.

Another inaccuracy of medical dramas that viewers are likely to accept as realistic is the way in which individual cases are handled. On television, there is no time, or need, to discuss the costs of treatment. If a patient has a problem, they are immediately sent to a bed and tests are ordered. However, in real life, cost and payment is a very significant consideration of patients. New Choice Health and MTBC, "companies dedicated to comparing hospital charges and physician billing" (Gutierrez-Folch), reported that a typical test sequence done on an episode of *House* would cost someone about $9,200, which shows how "television has consistently portrayed treatment as an unlimited resource" (Gutierrez -Folch). Unlike the actors on television, patients need to check whether their insurance covers specific tests and treatments; and the reality is that sometimes health insurance does not cover everything doctors prescribe. When that happens, some may ultimately choose not follow through with the suggested treatment, and they may attempt a different treatment that is covered by their insurance. On television shows, this is just not the case. No one ever asks to see insurance cards, or inquires how long they have to stay in the hospital and how much it will cost them. As a result, frequent viewers of medical dramas may adopt this way of thinking and not consider their own finances before agreeing to an extensive, and often expensive, health solution. In addition to not mentioning costs, TV doctors tend to diagnose very quickly and then insist on starting treatment immediately. Often, the television doctors will even misdiagnose their patients, come up with a new treatment, and start treatment for the new disease or condition immediately. If this were to happen in real life, doctors would be facing malpractice lawsuits left and right. Misdiagnoses can quickly become the difference between the life and death of a patient, but once again, this is not something the

television shows acknowledge. Instead, the goal of the pretend doctors seems to be to diagnose as quickly as possible, and if they are wrong, simply come up with an alternative treatment plan.

In real life, medicine practice is all about tincture of time, meaning, "how things change and develop over time may be the clearest indication of all of what the underlying condition is" (Katz). This is due to the sheer power of medicine, and the ultimate responsibility of physicians to watch out for the patient's well-being. The health of patients would be greatly at risk if real physicians were to make as hasty of diagnoses as fictional physicians do. So, in an ideal world, when viewers watch medical dramas, they will realize that they shouldn't expect to be cured in forty-five minutes like the actors, and that there are many things to consider before agreeing to various treatments. Unfortunately, the realistic vibe given off by medical dramas can make it difficult for the audiences to come to this conclusion.

Aside from the more notable characteristics of medical dramas like rude physicians and careless practice, there are a lot of other smaller, but still significant, inaccuracies contained in just about every episode of every medical drama. One big mistake that occurs repeatedly is the way cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillator use is depicted. In the very first episode of *Grey's Anatomy*, a patient's heart stops beating, and the monitor shows a flat line heart rate. Dr. Meredith Grey, one of the main characters and namesake, leaps into action by ordering the nurses to perform chest compressions while she gets the defibrillator ready. Dr. Grey then takes the paddles of the defibrillator, rubs them together, and places them on the patient's chest to administer the shock. Within a few seconds, the girl's heart starts to beat again and the medical team breathes a collective sigh of relief. As often as scenes similar to this one occur on TV, one would think the producers would make sure the scene is as accurate as

possible. However, this pilot episode of *Grey's Anatomy*, along with most other similar scenes, contained many mistakes. Notable mistakes include the rubbing together of the paddles (ineffective and could damage equipment), using the defibrillator on a flat-line patient (it is used when the heart is beating irregularly, not when it has completely stopped), and the ever present image of the patient's body jumping up off the hospital bed when the shock is delivered. Not everyone who watches medical dramas will see the less obvious technicalities like the ones mentioned, but they are still continuously present and can lead to false expectations of what will happen when someone is actually in such a situation.

Perhaps the most misleading part of cardiopulmonary resuscitation on medical dramas is the survival rate of the patients. Based solely on what is shown on television, one would think that cardiopulmonary resuscitation is extremely effective; the vast majority of characters who receive CPR live to see another day. Unfortunately, the truth is that patients "tend to survive cardiac arrest more often on television than they do in real life, making CPR seem more effective than it often is" (Beck). This can lead to "a misunderstanding as to the likelihood of a patient or loved one surviving cardiac arrest" (qtd. in Beck). It is hard enough when someone's loved one is in a frightening medical situation, but even worse when the family thinks the issue can be as easily resolved as it is on television, when in fact it cannot. When all of the other miraculous scenes in medical dramas are taken into consideration, there ends up being many, many, many inaccuracies, and all of which can lead to the creation of false expectations.

Although there are many inaccuracies in medical dramas, this does not mean that there is absolutely nothing to be gained from watching these shows. Believe it or not, there have been cases where one acquires information from their favorite medical drama, and uses it to help someone. Even if the scenes –such as the CPR clips- are not completely accurate, sometimes

they are accurate enough to be useful in a future situation. There was a time recently when an episode of *House* aided a physician in Germany. Dr. Juergen Schaefer met with a man who was suffering from severe heart failure, blindness, deafness, and enlarged lymph nodes. None of the physicians the man had previously met with could figure out why he was having such symptoms. Luckily, according to an online articled published by *Times*, Dr. Schaefer was able to diagnose the man in merely five minutes. The difference between the other physicians and Dr. Schaefer came down to his past viewing of the American television series, *House*. That is the series with the rude, unprofessional, and perhaps even crazy, Dr. House played by Hugh Laurie. As unrealistic as Hugh Laurie's character may be, in one episode of the series there was a woman with heart failure caused by cobalt poising from her hip joint replacement. Dr. Schaefer, upon meeting with his patient, was able to relate that episode with his current patient, and thus save the man's life. It turned out that the man was suffering from the exact same issue as the patient in *House*: cobalt poisoning. Not only do Dr. Schaefer and his patient have a medical drama to thank for this case, but the doctor even wrote an entire book on how to "apply *House* the fictional television show to real life medical practice" (Knibbs). Which means *House* could now be useful in treating countless other medical cases. This scenario shows how even physicians can learn a thing or two from prime-time medical television.

Another case where a medical drama just might have been the difference between life and death took place in 2011 in Wisconsin. A thirty-six-year-old woman, Kandace Seyferth, collapsed. The woman's ten-year-old daughter and her daughter's friend were present. Thanks to *Grey's Anatomy*, the girls had witnessed CPR countless times and knew chest compressions and mouth-to-mouth were essential for helping Ms. Seyferth. The young girls were able to work together on applying chest compressions and mouth-to-mouth until the paramedics arrived

(Moisse). The quick thinking and television watching experience of the young girls is what saved the woman until help arrived. Like with the German physician, a favorite television show became more useful than anyone could ever imagine.

In addition to the specific scenarios medical drama viewers have found themselves in, University of Southern California researchers concluded that an *ER* episode featuring a girl who was diagnosed with hypertension and told to eat more fruits and vegetables, resulted "in self-reported healthier eating habits and a better understanding of hypertension and weight issues among *ER* viewers" (O'Callaghan). In this case, one small scene in a medical drama reportedly contributed to healthier habits in countless lives. It may not be as hands-on of an effect as Dr. Schaefer and the Wisconsin girls experienced, but the medical drama did still influence lives. This is yet another report that shows that though not all the scenes may be completely accurate, they could be realistic enough to help save a life, or lives.

Overall, there are indeed facts presented in medical dramas that can be of use to viewers. Unfortunately, with the good comes the bad, and the bad news is that the majority of the medical television shows contain inaccurate information on the medical field. It may not seem like an immense deal, but with cultivation theory, it becomes apparent that the things watched on television indeed have an influence on thoughts of reality. For instance, the behavior of medical staff on television is capable of leading viewers to believe that this is how real doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers behave. People may even choose not to go to a hospital because they are afraid they will be treated poorly. Alternatively, one could be under the false impression that if they go to the hospital they will be diagnosed as quickly as the characters on television are, and that cost and length of treatment is nothing for them to consider. In reality, diagnoses take time, and cost is indeed something to consider. Since there is such a fine line between realistic and

unrealistic in medical dramas, it is important to realize that these shows are indeed fictional, and the information viewed should not be assumed factual.

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MEDIA INTERRUPTION OF FERGUSON

Alauna Christian

During the year of 1992, the L.A. race riots had the nation's full attention while the American and Korean media covered the details of the chaos. The media focused their efforts on idealizing specific groups within the riots instead of the overall picture; claiming the riots to be "America's First Multiethnic 'Riots." News One published the article, "Rodney King Riots In Los Angeles" outlining the effects the media can have on its viewers. The article debates, "For those who lived through the times of the King case and the riots, it was a firsthand look at how the media's coverage of an event can both inform and inspire less desirable actions from its viewers. The constant news cycle of today has its roots in the real-time coverage of this tragic and unfortunate event." The media portrays a role of manipulation to their audience by choosing to display the chaotic side of the event, instead of presenting inclusive information to allow their audience to exchange in their own viewpoints.

History repeated itself again in 2014 when Ferguson became the center of attention after the killing of Michael Brown. The media played a similar role in manipulating the audience as before, in the LA riots. In the military occupation of Ferguson, after the death of Brown, the media interfered with the conflict between the police and protestors, by enhancing the violence and creating hostility between the opposing sides. The media immediately displayed their favoritism towards the police over the protestors by centralizing the idea of violence instead of peace. Also, they manipulated the views of America through the partial coverage they decided to promote.

Economic and Political Weekly published the article, "Race in Contemporary America: Protest, Police and Media in Ferguson" by four PhD students from Washington University in Saint Louis. The scholarly article outlines the views of how the media focused on the negativity of one group of protesters, as a substitute for informing the world with the central idea of the Brown's death. This article can provide background on the false accusations the media will cover.

Also, Economic and Political Weekly published another scholarly article by the same four students depicting the reactions of the verdict with Brown. "The Ferguson Verdict," reproaches the media entail with information involving the battle between violence and peace embarked by the protestors. The article possesses credibility for the topic of Ferguson specifically because the authors are in the area of Saint Louis. Their claims and opinions hold more value and support in one article than the media could over their entire coverage.

The last piece of evidence providing background for the topic involves a photograph by Jim Young. He is a young photographer from Canada, based in Chicago, IL. He is employed by a company called Reuters, which strives to establish imaging on the top controversial events. Young was sent to Ferguson around the middle of the Brown conflict in October, relatively around the most violent protesting times. The irony of Young's presence being around October indicates his missed coverage of the beginning sprawls with the case in all. Young was not present to identify the immediate peaceful protest following the death in September. Furthermore, his photograph of a "violent young African American teen" will provide direct representation of media coverage.

The considerable amount of attention focused on the specific aspect of violence within Ferguson caused the military occupation to occur involving the National Guard. The media

directed their attention over the violence instead of peace, providing Ferguson with a negative view. The media viewers speculated the violence was the sole purpose of the Ferguson conflict, between the protestors and police. In "Race for America," the writers analyze the situations effects from both sides instead of one. The writing refutes, "This created a tense situation where each night thousands of people – both peaceful protestors and people looting and damaging property – would flood the streets in Ferguson to square off against a police department throwing tear gas and pointing AK 47s at them from the top of armored tanks." The students take into consideration the effects of both standpoints of protestors, but often in the media you will only hear about one. The ongoing coverage places pressure on the officials of Ferguson, to control the violence.

The media overpowers the effects of the peaceful protestors, making their actions meaningless in the light of violence. "While many mainstream media outlets sought to focus on the provocative and inciting images of violence and looting, that was not and has never been a fair and holistic representation of the protests." This text from "The Ferguson Verdict" evidently illustrates the picture the media was destined to portray to the world. The protestors were unfairly judged based upon the media coverage of a few violent teens within the area. Additionally, the popular photo by Jim Young clearly states the violence on the scene of a young black male jumping on a police vehicle. The background of the image surrounds many viewpoints of the violent police working to control protestors, and the harmless young child standing on the sidewalk with her mother. But, instead of capturing the aim of another meaningful topic they choose to portray the young black teen, which outweighed the random violent tear gas thrown by the government offices. The images highlighting Ferguson will always

look like Young's picture, young black violence as opposed to peaceful Ferguson resident protestors.

The next attribution the media makes in illustrating the Ferguson picture pertains to the favoritism they displayed in their coverage. The media should provide their viewers with unbias information when covering a story, sensitive to the racism issues in our nation like Ferguson. Unfortunately the media chooses to share a pessimistic route for the protestors of Ferguson. Within "Race for Contemporary America," the text evaluates how the media focuses their attention on one specific group of interest, violence with protesters. The article articulates, "The attention also seems to be excessively on the tanks and tear gas instead of the death of an 18-year-old boy." The students contradict the overall attention being placed on the specific group within the situation. The bias research the media displays creates a false picture in the minds of its viewers. Instead of creating a full picture of the situation, they decide to focus on the efforts of one specific group of violent teens.

"The Ferguson Verdict," reminds its audience of the overall coverage of the media presence and the central idea. The text states, "The international media's heightened presence in the region has had a dizzying effect as it tries to cover every minute of the region after the grand jury verdict. It is important to note that while there is no denying of instances of violence, fire and destruction, the region has been the center of peaceful protests." While the media tried to display "full coverage," they failed to grasp the big picture of the peaceful actions the Ferguson area demonstrated. The bias coverage of the media constructed a negative image for Ferguson and created hostile actions to conspire within the area. Through further analysis of the image presented by Jim Young, the consistency of violent protestors is displayed through the image. Instead of the photographer capturing the National Guard throwing tear gas in the background,

they captured the young teen running off the car. The image is directly turning to the teen instead of the violent acts of unjust from the National Guard and police.

The occupation of Ferguson presents a phenomenal amount of influence worldwide, but specifically in America. The influence of Ferguson ultimately shifts the views and points of the police and protestors. Within "Race in Contemporary America," the students deliberately prove once again how the media specifically directed the viewers' attention to the violence. The text states, "For example, the media presence appeared to significantly increase only after two journalists were arrested during the protests. It has also been criticized for not paying attention to the historical issues that gave context to the situation and instead focusing on looting and rioting." The media brings the attention directly towards the violence, and only provides minimal coverage during the actual issues. The media failed to capture the emotions the citizens felt of racism towards the National Guard and police. The coverage presented only focused on violence, so automatically the people within America felt disgusted by the violent crimes.

The media did not capture the firsthand account events that led to the absurd acts surrounding Mike Brown's death; leaving America to only feel disgust. "The Ferguson Verdict" states what mainstream media could not; the text provides proof of peace surrounding the city. The article confirms, "Protesters were active facilitators of crowd control, encouraging peaceful protests and deterring the few fellow protesters from engaging in destructive riots and looting." Unfortunately these acts of compliance for peace we're rarely viewed on the TV screens; I had to go witness the acts of peace firsthand in Ferguson to contradict the media's lies. The media purposely ensured peace wasn't displayed to prove to the world that African Americans are chaotic civilians. In addition, the photo presented by Young proves the further role of the media's unjust coverage. The captions states, "A protester jumps on a Ferguson police car set on fire by the

protesters in Ferguson." The caption does not illustrate the reasoning behind the man jumping on the police car; the National Guard and policemen in the background were throwing tear gas on the area. The young teenager hopped on the car in hopes of avoiding the crowded street to get away faster. The lack of information presented in the caption provides valuable proof of the media coverage being flawed. The photographer failed to display the information of the background leading to the teenagers' actions. The media shifts the views to conveying Ferguson protestors to being only destructive and violent. The actions of the media automatically created hostility between the police and protesters, by capturing the brutality of the opposing side to the nation for interpretation.

The L.A. riots consisted of evident signs of violence constructed by the protestors; Ferguson displayed signs of peace and violence, but was only recognized for one. The media manipulated its viewers into thinking the actions after Michael Browns death were purely chaotic and rambunctious. The media caused a direct interference between the police and protestors by creating an incredible amount of hostility. The government officials were pressured by the media to control the actions of the violence. The protestors felt their voices were not being heard by the media representation of their "uncivil" violent actions. Also, the bias views of the media influenced their viewer's opinions all over the globe. America is manipulated by people every day including the media. We should learn to contradict what is heard and do more research before forming our opinions.

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MOTIVATION BEHIND THE DARKNESS

Krishna Amin

Published in 1899, originally printed in the form of a three-part magazine serial, *Heart of Darkness* has become one of the greatest novellas ever written and is perhaps the most famous work of Joseph Conrad. This narrative has been critiqued time and again since the year of its publication. The lack of definitive answers, with regard to Conrad's motivation for creating the story, presented in *Heart of Darkness* have led to the numerous, distinctive interpretations that have been made by individuals explaining their understanding of Conrad's reasoning behind writing his most famous work. Chinua Achebe's "An Image of Africa" and Patrick Brantlinger's "Anti-Imperialism, Racism, or Impressionism?" display two polar-opposite understandings as to what led Conrad to create such a story. Achebe's point of view that Conrad utilized *Heart of Darkness* as a medium to channel his personal racism disregards the influence Conrad's surroundings had on him. On the other hand, Brantlinger's perception of Conrad's motivation for writing *Heart of Darkness* stems from an understanding of the time period during which Conrad lived. Recalling the events of the Victorian Era will assist an individual in realizing that Brantlinger's viewpoint of *Heart of Darkness* is more practical, or justifiable in comparison to Achebe's perspective. It is important to *critically* interpret this published document with regard to the time period in which it was written because even though racism is bluntly stated in this text, it is absurd to analyze this novella as the author's personal ideology. One individual cannot be held responsible or blamed for a state of mind that is prevalent during their time period, especially if the mindset is one that is widespread throughout a nation. It might even be reasonable to conclude from Conrad's work that he is attempting to reveal the mentality of Europe.

Patrick Brantlinger claims that "*Heart of Darkness* is specifically about what Conrad saw in King Leopold's African empire in 1890" (364). During the months when Conrad was exploring the Congo, it was King Leopold II of Belgium who was considered Conrad's ultimate employer. Brantlinger goes on to say that *Heart of Darkness* is not constructed from what Conrad witnessed in the Congo, but from his readings that exposed him to King Leopold's methods of operation. Reading about the war between Leopold's forces and the Arab slave traders accounts for the great emphasis on the cannibalistic nature of the natives. He articulates that "war is not mentioned in the novella...omission has the important effect of sharpening the… 'evil' and 'darkness'...between only two [directly contrasted] sides, European and African, 'white' and 'black'" (371). Exclusion as to what gave rise to the cannibalistic nature of the Congolese is a perfect calculation by Conrad to intensify the contrast between white and black, in an attempt to reflect the state of European racism. Brantlinger argues that in order to creatively display the imperialistic nature of Europe, Conrad escalated what he witnessed while he was touring the Congo River. When he is discussing *The Inheritors: An Extravagant Story*, created by Conrad in collaboration with Madox Hueffer, Brantlinger comes to conclude that there might be a "possibility that the worst feature of imperialism for Conrad may not have been its violence toward the 'miserable' and 'helpless,' but the lying propaganda used to cover its bloody tracks" (367). He places emphasis on the lengths Europe went to in order to camouflage their judgement of Africa as an uncivilized nation and their belief that it was their moral obligation to humanize the natives. In *Heart of Darkness*, when the narrator is speaking of the great men on voyages who never return, he mentions:

> Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the
> sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark

from the sacred fire. What greatness has not floated on the ebb of that river into the

mystery of an unknown earth!...The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the

germs of empires (2).

Here, voyagers are portrayed as altruistic beings who set out to bring sophistication or

civilization to inferior nations that inhabit the earth. If one is to only read what is explicitly stated

in this novella, it becomes quite easy to interpret *Heart of Darkness* as the author's personal

point of view.

Chinua Achebe embodies this type of understanding when declaring the reason(s) as to

why Conrad created *Heart of Darkness*. In "An Image of Africa," Achebe's critique of Conrad's

most famous novella, he openly labels Conrad as a "bloody racist." His perception is one that

screams "*Heart of Darkness* projects the image of Africa as 'the other world,' the antithesis of

Europe and therefore of civilization" (3). Achebe is not wrong in stating this, because there is

textual evidence that illustrates Africa as an uncivilized nation. In the beginning of this novella,

when Marlow is gradually leading into sharing his experience with the other individuals on the

boat, he first mocks the voyagers and their longing to enlighten Africans with a civilized

lifestyle. He says, "...I was loafing about, hindering you fellows in your work...just as though I

had got a heavenly mission to civilize you" (5). Even though this directly hints at the notion that

Africa is a nation in need of civilization, Achebe's shortcoming--his inability to understand that

this perspective arises from the European mindset towards Africa, and not Conrad's personal

distaste for people of color--hinders him from understanding Conrad's main point. The *need* to

civilize Africans is the attitude of Europeans. Interestingly, Africa is not the only nation that has

been classified as churlish by Europe. In fact, during the Victorian Era every non-European

nation was deemed uncivilized by Europe, and therefore its antithesis. It simply cannot be said

that Conrad is a racist on the basis of his description of Africa as a barbaric nation. During that time period in history, it was normative for a European individual to encompass this ideology. And in *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad is making great efforts to display this egocentric mentality of his nation.

This colonial mindset is clearly evident in the starting pages of this novella. While conversing with the other individuals on the boat, Marlow says:

> Mind, none of us would feel exactly like this. What saves us is efficiency--the devotion to efficiency. But these chaps were not much account, really. They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect. They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute forces--nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind--as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only (4).

This not only gives us an insight as to what colonists were concerned with, productivity and profit, but also shows us how Marlow's experience in the Congo changed his perspective. He now sees what he and many others had set out to do in Africa was not all that praiseworthy; he realizes that his "mission" was not purely altruistic. And this is not the only place where we get to see Conrad exposing the European attitude towards Africa. When discussing the writing style of *Heart of Darkness*, Achebe claims that "it might be contented, of course, that the attitude to the African in *Heart of Darkness* is not Conrad's but that of his fictional narrator, Marlow, and

that far from endorsing it Conrad might indeed by holding it up to irony and criticism. …

Marlow seems to me to enjoy Conrad's complete confidence--a feeling reinforced by the close

similarities between their two careers" (7). If Achebe is to declare that Conrad and Marlow are

essentially the same person, then how can he neglect the times when Marlow came to realize the

horror behind colonization? Throughout the novella, Congolian natives have been portrayed as

savages and dangerous individuals. Beings that drove Fresleven to do things that were

completely out of his character in order to defend his dignity. "Fresleven was the gentlest,

quietest creature that ever walked on two legs. No doubt he was; but he had been a couple of

years already out there engaged in the noble cause, you know, and he probably felt the need at

last of asserting his self-respect in some way" (6). This "some way" refers to him beating an

older native while a group of his people watched. Perceiving these individuals as uncivilized has

led to justifying violence towards them. This only paints the colonizers, Europeans, in darkness.

Achebe's perception is among the few that is rarely interpreted by others when they

initially read the novella. However, he points out an interesting fact that "white racism against

Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely undetected" (9).

Many examples of this are presented within the novella when Conrad is describing the natives.

He utilizes terminology like "savages" or "black shadows" which are interpreted by readers as

normative methods of describing an individual, and not as what they actually are, derogatory

terms towards people of color. When the steamer arrives at the mouth of the Congo River,

Marlow heads towards a tree where he sees "black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees

leaning against the trunks...they were dying slowly...they were not enemies, they were not

criminals, they were nothing earthly now, nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation"

(14). When initially reading this, it seems quite obvious that Conrad is talking about these beings

as no longer retaining an ounce of humanity, but in reality he is attempting to display the excess labor that was enforced upon them by King Leopold II. Brantlinger seems to understand this intention of Conrad by stating that King Leopold's ambitions "forced the Belgian government to take control of Leopold's private domain. During this period the population of the Congo was reduced by ...one half; …6,000,000 persons may have been uprooted, tortured, and murdered through the forced labor system used to extract ivory...:" (365). The imagery of disease and starvation in the Congo was not implanted to dehumanize Africans, but to show how Europe's greed for power and wealth led to the extreme prejudice witnessed towards Africans.

The aspect of *Heart of Darkness* that deeply impacted Achebe was the vulgar language that was utilized to call into question the humanity of the Congolian natives. He loathes how Africa is being used as a mere backdrop, a prop in the novella. The fact that Conrad's most famous work is centralized around one individual, on top of Africa being painted as an uncultured nation works to fuel Achebe's targeted criticism. He is not particularly fond of how well known or celebrated this novella is, especially since it dehumanizes a portion of the human race. In his critique, he questions how a piece of writing that demoralizes an entire ethnic group can be considered a great work of art. Had Conrad written *Heart of Darkness* during any other time period in history, Achebe's argument would be highly persuasive, and would convince many that Joseph Conrad is, in fact, a "bloody racist." His irritation with this novella is more than justified, but the figure that he holds responsible for displaying Africa in such a manner is not at all accurate. For argument's sake, let's just declare that what is written in *Heart of Darkness* stems from Conrad's personal prejudice towards Africa. With regard to the time period during which Conrad inhabited the Earth, it is clearly evident that every other major European author during this time was also constructing literary works that portrayed various nations as

inferior to Europe. It is almost as if Achebe is criticizing Conrad for embodying what was the typical European mindset during this period in history; almost as if he is faulting Conrad for being a European during the Victorian Era. If one is to only critique *Heart of Darkness* based on the historical era during which it was written, they cannot arrive at the conclusion that the author possesses racist qualities. The time during which Conrad lived was one that classified, in the eyes of Europe, many nations, not just Africa, as uncivilized and its inhabitants as inferior.

To someone who reads "An Image of Africa," Achebe's critique of *Heart of Darkness*, it seems as if Achebe is the complete opposite of Conrad. The way that Conrad is portrayed in this criticism suggests that he fully supports colonialism and that he is not able to see the racism he displayed in his writing. Cedric Watts challenges Achebe by comparing key factors of *Heart of Darkness* and Achebe's novel, *Things Fall Apart*, a fictional story about the cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and lifestyles of the people of *Igbo*, a tribal community in Africa. When he had finished analyzing both literary works, he came to the conclusion that they are both fairly similar, yet Achebe does not seem to realize this. Watts states, "It is a cause for regret that Achebe was unwilling or unable to see this ethical direction; for really Conrad and Achebe are on the same side. Each man is most fully present in his own best literary work, and the Conrad of *Heart of Darkness* is the brother of the Achebe of *Things Fall Apart*" (204). What Watts is attempting to say is that the two works of fiction are practically identical, except one is written from a European perspective and the other from an African perspective. Conrad's great efforts to expose the imperialistic nature of Europe shows both the readers and the critics that the impression he is attempting to make is one that considers colonialism to be immoral, unjustified, and simply wrong. Achebe holds the same belief with regard to imperialism, but for some reason, is not able to comprehend this similarity.

In Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, white men take a journey to the center of the African continent to bring order and sophistication to a nation that, in their opinion, seems to display many signs of lacking civilization. In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, white men travel from village to village attempting to bring culture and "God" or religion into the lives of the *Igbo* people, neglecting to recognize that the villagers already had their own religious beliefs and values. Both Conrad and Achebe published works that attempt to display the flaw in European thinking, but one does so in terms of civilization and the other on the basis of religion. Both literary works display the closed-mindedness of Europeans and the horror that accompanies colonization. *Heart of Darkness* and *Things Fall Apart* are both works of literature that aim to accomplish the same thing, exposing European mentality, but they do so in slightly different ways. Achebe is too engrossed in the surface-level context to recognize these similarities.

As in any piece of literature, content is important, but when discussing works like *Heart of Darkness*, one *must* make efforts to empathize with the author in order to fully understand their motivation for constructing the literary piece. Chinua Achebe definitely provides textual evidence to support his interpretation of *Heart of Darkness*, but he neglects to accommodate how Conrad was influenced by his surroundings and in general, the era during which Conrad lived. It is factually accurate that prior to Achebe's critique of *Heart of Darkness*, there was a total of zero scholars who mentioned the racist nature of this novella. This, more than likely, had a major impact on Achebe when he carried out his critical analysis of what remains to be, to this day, one of the greatest works of art ever drafted. Achebe is not inaccurate in defining *Heart of Darkness* as a racist novella, this is an unquestionable truth. However, he wrongfully places the origination of this racism on what he deems to be the pro-colonial mind of the author. In reality, *Heart of*

Darkness is created from the standpoint of a European novelist attempting to creatively illustrate the ideology of an imperialistic nation.

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THE EVILS OF IMPERIALISM

Osama Ehtesham

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad is a book that deals with various aspects of imperialism. Imperialism has been ongoing for centuries. All world powers find a way to justify their imperialism. All imperialistic nations believe that in some form they are superior to others and their superiority gives them the right to rule over those who are inferior. These justifications can vary from having a superior religion to being part of a superior race. This allows the conquerors to make it seem as if they are going to help the less fortunate when in reality they are going for their own selfish reasons. The most recent form of imperialism has been Western imperialism, practiced by the United States and much of Europe. In *Heart of Darkness,* Conrad seems to tell us that people are often deceived into believing that imperialism is beneficial, when in reality it is not; in fact, it is downright evil and has very detrimental effects on both the colonizers and the colonized.

Many European nations were going to Africa in the 1800's due to the plethora of natural resources available and the lack of a strong resistance by the Africans. However, much of the European population believed that they were invading other countries to bring civilized culture to savage societies. Conrad describes this mentality when Marlow goes to visit his aunt before he leaves for the Congo. His aunt describes him as "Something like an emissary of light, something like a lower apostle" (Conrad 76). While she makes Marlow out to be some sort of holy figure, she demonizes the Africans and talks about "…'weaning those ignorant millions off their horrid ways'" (Conrad 76). However, through Marlow, Conrad points out that the purpose of imperialism wasn't to help those that were being colonized. Marlow scoffs at his aunt's thinking and thinks that since she is a woman, she can't understand how the world really works. In reality,

both men and women bought into this way of thinking. At the time, majority of the people in the West believed themselves to be better than others. Some thought it was Christianity that needed to be brought to have any chance of saving the savages while others thought that by being white, they were inherently superior to all other human beings. The famous English author and poet Rudyard Kipling was a believer of the latter ideology. In 1899, the same time *Heart of Darkness* was published, Kipling wrote one of his poems, *The White Man's Burden*, in which he tries to convince the Western nations to "Take up the White Man's burden" and go to civilize the rest of the world. Kipling made imperialism seem like a very noble act and was able to convince many people to believe that the West was doing a great service to the world through imperialism. While imperialism was motivated by power and greed, majority of the people at the time were convinced that it was helping to better the world.

Despite the fact that many held a distorted view of imperialism, there were some people who could see that imperialism was a method of exploitation and injustice. In spite of seeing the truth, majority of these people didn't look at the non-western populations as equals. While it can't be argued for certain whether Joseph Conrad thought of the Africans as beneath him, Marlow definitely thought of them this way. "…they shouted periodically together strings of amazing words that resembles no sounds of human language; and the deep murmurs of the crowd, interrupted suddenly, were like the responses of some satanic litany" (Conrad 145). Marlow doesn't view the language of the savages as human and goes as far to think of it as satanic. Conrad shows that even the moderate people thought of themselves as above the Africans. While some of the colonizers believed they were better than the Africans and treated the Africans accordingly, there were some who went even further. Kurtz was one of these people and was so obsessed with his greed that he believed it was correct to suppress the Africans. As

Hunt Hawkins notes "The 'idea' espoused by Kurtz that Marlow seems to admire, then, is not joining the natives but rather improving them" (Hawkins 288). In Kurtz's pamphlet, International Society of the Suppression of Savage Customs, Marlow reads, "we whites, from the point of development we had arrived at, 'must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings -- we approach them with the might of a deity,' and so on, and so on.' By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good practically unbounded" (Conrad 123). Conrad uses Kurtz as an example of people, like Kipling, who used their brilliant linguistic ability to convince others to follow their way of thinking. While Marlow isn't as extreme in his views on Africans as Kurtz is, Marlow can't help but be intrigued by what Kurtz has to say. Kurtz is able to mask his greed by presenting himself as a superior figure trying to help the less fortunate. It is not known whether Kurtz's pamphlet shows what he truly believes or is something he made to fool others into helping him. While it would be natural to assume that the natives detest being invaded, used, and abused, Kurtz blankets the feelings of the natives by saying they hold the same view as the whites. He goes on further to convince those who have any doubt in this mindset that what the imperialists are doing is beneficent. Imperialism involves deception and twisting peoples' views. Things that people care about such as religion and race are used to cover for darker motives.

Imperialism deceived many of the people in Europe and America but it had devastating effects on those who were involved in it. In *Heart of Darkness,* the colonizer who was affected the worst was Kurtz. In "At the Heart of Darkness: Crimes against Humanity and the Banality of Evil", Kurtz is described as "…a cultured man, gifted in music, art, and rhetoric, a born leader with great potential. There was every expectation that he would rise in corporation and in European society" (Maier-Katkin 588). Kurtz wasn't a bad person when he arrived in Africa. By

Western standards, he was an incredible man: well rounded, intelligent, and charismatic. He is described by others as one who "'Men looked up to…— his goodness shone in every act" (Conrad 156). His mistress thought of him as an incredible person, as did the manager of the company. "A first class agent…a remarkable man" (Conrad 84). This description by the manager was enough to ignite Marlow's interest in him. When Kurtz arrived in the Congo, he realized his brilliance and it corrupted him. When a person thinks of themselves as superior to another, it can affect their personality and treatment of others. Psychologist Philip Zimbardo conducted the Stanford Prison Experiment to prove this. He had one group pretend to be the guards of a fake prison and one group pretend to be the prisoners. He himself acted as the warden. Zimbardo found himself being too involved in the experiment and treating the prisoners horribly. The people acting as the guards started abusing the prisoners and the prisoners became afraid of the guards. Zimbardo wasn't even able to realize the change in himself and a friend needed to tell him to stop the experiment and the fake prisoners ended up needing therapy to return to normal. The experiment, which was supposed to last for two weeks, only lasted for six days before it was discontinued. With such detrimental effects after only six days of a fake scenario, we can only imagine the destructive psychological effects on both the colonizers and the colonized after going for years with a mentality of superiority and inferiority. Zimbardo's experiment proved that having power over someone else can bring out the worst in people. Kurtz was a brilliant man but when he started believing he was better than the savage Africans, he started turning into an evil person. He became greedy and started craving ivory. He was cruel to the savages and was willing to kill as many of them to get more ivory. Ironically, Kurtz himself was the one who turned into a savage. Through Kurtz, Conrad shows the extent of evil that imperialism can unleash.

While the colonizers were hurt, the people being colonized were hurt far worse. Many Africans lost their lives from the brutal treatment of the imperialists. According to Maier-Katkin, "…during the reign of King Leopold, when murder, disease, famine, forced labor, torture, maiming, and sadistic cruelties were elements of international trade in ivory and rubber. As many as ten million Congolese may have been victims of crimes against humanity in the period between 1885 and 1908…" (Maier-Katkin591). Further atrocities included the hands of children being cut off as punishment for their parents trying to resist the imperialists. As shown by Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment, there was bound to be a lot of psychological effects. A widespread fear and feeling of inferiority is bound to destroy the very core of any society. A once very proud people were reduced to people who were afraid of the imperialists. They felt degraded and ridiculed. Aside from being treated horribly and mass deaths, those being colonized lost their culture. Imperialism imposes the traditions of the colonizing country on the ones being colonized. This causes the people to lose touch with their own traditions. The future generations think their own culture is inferior to that of the colonizers. A lot of people were forcibly converted to Christianity which further removed them from their beliefs, traditions and culture. They also had their borders rewritten for them which caused very different tribes to come together, thus creating conflict among the indigenous people. When Great Britain created Nigeria, they grouped together three tribes: Hausa, Yoruba, and Ibo. The Hausa is comprised of mainly Muslims while the Yoruba mostly worship spirits. The Ibo also have their own god and rituals. All three groups are very different and struggle to get along. Nigeria is but one example of a country that was created to suppress the people long after the imperialists left. The imperialist powers purposely left the colonized nations in a state of chaos and ensured the chaos would continue for many years to come. This way, these countries would never be able to rise up

and eclipse the nations that once colonized them. Sadly, the horrendous effects of imperialism still affect much of Africa and other parts of the world to this day.

There are some people who will argue that imperialism has the ability to bring some good to the world. Marlow is one of these people. He thinks of how the Romans came to the uncivilized British Islands and civilized the people. It is argued that imperialism has the ability to connect the world together and is able to improve the countries being occupied. New technologies are brought to occupied countries through imperialism. When the British Empire took over many countries across the world, the built new roads, canals and railways. New medications were brought and so were new foods. However, this wasn't done because of the good will of the imperialists. It was done because colonizers would move from the imperialist country to the country that was being colonized. To help these people, the occupied countries were improved and in turn, the native people also benefitted. The construction of schools was quite possibly the most beneficial to the natives. It allowed them to see that they were being exploited and they were given the ability to voice their distress to the imperialists. However, the few benefits provided by imperialism pale in comparison to the destruction it causes.

Imperialism is a horrible system that has brought a lot of destruction, pain, and suffering throughout the years. People were deceived into thinking that imperialism was actually a force for good. Many influential authors were vital in convincing the majority of people into thinking this way. Imperialism had terrible effects on both the colonizers and the people being colonized. Many colonizers were initially good people but they became evil due to colonialism. The poor Africans who were being colonized were forced away from there peaceful lives. Many were killed and others were forced away from their culture. The dehumanization of the colonized ends up harming the colonizers, the colonized, and ultimately the world.

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TUTOR'S COLUMN: EBONICS IN THE WRITING CENTER

Amber Finley

In the 1970's, the NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) created a proposition statement entitled "Students' Right to Their Own Language" which declared that diversity in language should be accepted and considered as linguistically sound as 'White English.' However, because of the difficulty of enforcing these principles, as well as dissent among members of the NCTE and among language teachers, this proposition has never been implemented or accepted. Upon examination of the movement among writers and educators in the American school system to 'use one's own English,' which is complicated by racial and socioeconomic implications, I have found that the forerunner for controversy resides in the use and teaching of Ebonics, or African American English (AAE). To begin to understand the 'Ebonics Controversy' and the methods of creating a racially, linguistically, and ethnically diverse Writing Center, we must understand the history and rhetoric of the debate.

In response to a dramatic shift in populations in American high schools and colleges that took place in the 1960's, the NCTE was forced to take a stance on the use of dialects in education. Teachers, who were often of white, middle-class families, were unsure and unprepared to deal with students coming from a wide range of socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. One thing teachers did know was that the students spoke differently than the average schoolboy of the 1940's and 1950's. Upon many hours of meetings, the NCTE passed this resolution in 1972:

"We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language -- the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and

style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language."

From this declaration sprung hundreds of other resolutions from all across the nation. School boards wondered what this could mean for their own English departments and tutors for their Writing Centers. Some teachers condemned the resolution altogether, saying it was simply unrealistic and undermined their professions, i.e. the idea that if we believe all forms of English are correct, what should be taught and how will students' writing be evaluated? However, many teachers embraced the open-minded quality of the resolution and vowed to be sensitive to other dialects or versions of English. The proposition is most interesting in the fact that while many agree whole heartedly that it should be upheld, these same people do not uphold it because it is so difficult to quantify what counts as a 'dialect' and what is just 'incorrect.'

As Writing Center tutors, this brings up a whole new host of questions. At what point do we consider something a dialect? Are dialects a matter of scale; can they be specific to small groups; how do we quantify small and large groups? However, despite the many questions we may have surrounding the proposition, we are bound by our institutions and our positions to make a wholehearted effort to uphold the message outlined in the NCTE declaration. Consider, for example, that you are witnessing a

tutorial in the Writing Center. The tutor, a graduate student of Creative Writing and the student, an African-American undergraduate. The session begins normally, like any other, with the building of rapport. You notice that the student speaks in (or with a strong influence of) Ebonics. When he reads his paper aloud, his language does not change and he continues the use of the dialect. This leaves the tutor with a moral dilemma best described by Matsuda and Cox in "Reading an ESL Writer's Text." The tutor is able to take three stances when responding to the student's text: the *assimilationist,* the *accommodationist,* and the *separatist.*

The assimilationist route of action would be the tutor strongly encouraging the student to change his writing to sound more like 'White English.' The goal of the assimilationist tutor is to make the text (and also the writer) conform as much as possible to the dominant language and views deviations from accepted dominant language ideology as incorrect. Perhaps the student is unwilling to change his dialect, though. Maybe to him it serves as his 'voice' or an integral part in his linguistic self-discovery. Perhaps also the language serves a functional or rhetorical purpose such as in the prose of author Vershawn Young, who often uses Ebonics to appeal to a specific audience and establish authority within this discourse.

If that is the case, it may be that the tutor should take the role of the separatist. The separatist tutor views the differences in writing as unique declarations of individualism or cultural identity and seeks to maintain the language of the student in his or her writing. The separatist may even encourage the student to deviate further from the standardized norms of English and to become an advocate of linguistic freedom. A separatist tutor likely campaigns for upholding fully the NCTE declaration and

champions the belief that instead of changing the writers, we must change the system that punishes writers for not sounding 'White enough' or 'native enough.'

The final method of approaching a heavily accented text such as the writings of a speaker of AAE or and ESL student is the accomodationist. The accomodationist tutor attempts to teach the Dominant Language Ideology, but does not do so to infringe upon the linguistic and cultural freedom of the writer. The accomodationist tutor instead conveys to the writer that his or her method of writing may not be accepted in all discourses and discusses the writer's reasoning behind choosing to use Ebonics in the text. The accomodationist tutor is what I like to consider the realist tutor: they value linguistic and cultural differences but understand that change will not come all at once and that writers may be penalized for heavily accented writing or speech.

Feverously debated in recent years, the use of Ebonics in schools, Writing Centers, and the workplace becomes key in either destroying or preserving a society of systematic disadvantage to the speakers of these dialects. The problem is a difficult one: does allowing the use of Ebonics eliminate or preserve the systematic discrimination and disadvantage that Black Americans face?

The Ebonics controversy was born in December 1996 after the Oakland Unified School District resolved to recognize the legitimacy of Ebonics/African American English (AAE) among their students and implement a section of the curriculum dedicated to Ebonics. This decision was made in order to supposedly 'ease' young African American students into learning Standard American English by first showing the similarities and differences between AAE and SAE; the act was never intended to replace or be equal to SAE.

Even after the NCTE declaration that writers are able to 'use their own English' there has been little done to preserve this right. Students and teachers alike often are confused by how far to force students to conform to Standard American English, and what the future effects on students' lives this will have. While some cite psychological feelings of inferiority, many fear placing students at a disadvantage if they do not learn 'proper English' and worry that these students will be at a permanent handicapped in the competition for jobs, scholarships, college acceptances, and other valuable opportunities if they do not discard Ebonics as soon as possible and fully 'integrate' into the more socially accepted dominant society. Educators thus try to solve this problem by focusing more on 'correct techniques', and essentially condemn Ebonics as the language of the uneducated. However, some may argue that these educators are solving the wrong problem; instead of helping students to conform to a racist society, teachers and tutors should instead be educating employers and others about the validity and use of Ebonics in order to change the perception that speakers of AAE are uneducated, lazy, or ignorant.

Many tutors perceive 'error' from an assimilationist viewpoint. While most do this out of good intentions, it often has bad consequences. Because tutors know that not all professors are going to be open to the use of Ebonics in an assignment, they feel like they should protect the students and help them to write better from their specific audience. The assumption that the use of AAE is due to not knowing the SAE is unfair, as many students who speak AAE are familiar with the rules of SAE and decide that they better express themselves in another dialect. Though some tutors have read about the importance of preserving voice in ESL papers, many have not considered the connections between non-native speakers of 'foreign languages' and non-native speakers of SAE. Most tutors feel a moral obligation—if only a small one—to improve the paper that students bring to the Writing Center. For most tutors, who are clearly versatile and prolific

writers, knowing what the instructor wants is a simple task. Many may feel obligated to tell the student that their paper may seem uneducated to a professor who is not as open-minded as they are. However, this imbeds in students the idea that to 'write like a college student' (and thus like an educated person) is to write as white as possible. This only drives racial feelings of inferiority deeper in young African American students and creates unnecessary tension between their "educated" professional identity and their "natural" home identity.

Interestingly, many young African Americans—whom would be most affected by the mainstream acceptance of Ebonics—are stumped. I read numerous online articles and blog posts from young African Americans who condemned the Oakland USD decision stating that the classification of Ebonics as a unique language and not as a dialect of English will make young black children feel that not only are they being told they don't speak English *correctly,* but that they don't speak English *at all.* Aria, from *Black Youth Project,* cites this as one of her main concerns surrounding the movement. Later, she shares the concerns that many others voice, such as the hosts of *MSNBC* that, 'Ebonics will put them at an even larger disadvantage.' For young black men and women—who are already at a disadvantage in the hiring process and college admissions—the use of Ebonics may further hinder their success.

Regardless of the general perceptions surrounding AAE, linguists and most educators agree that Ebonics should be an accepted dialect—viewed no differently from the colloquial sayings from the deep South or the unique vernacular of Boston, Massachusetts. Educators argue, if those languages are accepted, why not this one? Historically, this is linked to the assumption that Black Americans are uneducated and unfit for education. Many linguists, including those involved with the Oakland USD decision, link Ebonics back to slave times and thus argue its historical validity as a long-standing dialect spoken by many people. This is

problematic as well, because making the connection between Ebonics and slavery implies that Ebonics arose from uneducated English and therefore lacks form or rules. Contrary to popular belief, Ebonics has many standards of usage and rules that make it a unique (and complex) dialect worthy of study. It is also probable that Ebonics/AAE has evolved a considerable amount since its humble beginnings.

The American classroom is the primary site for academic and linguistic negotiation for American youth. The classroom constructs systems of negotiation that students will carry with them for the rest of their lives. In these formative years, every time teachers insist on Standardized English they are fueling the idea that this is the only acceptable form of rhetoric. When teachers continuously place one discourse over another—in this case 'Standard American English'—they perpetuate academic and linguistic hierarchies in the hearts and minds of the young people. (Canagarajah 587.) The movement represents a shift in traditional thinking about education to a Burkean Parlor method of education—where students lead the discussions and are 'experts' in their own right. In a traditional classroom, the teacher (or tutor) is the 'authority' and imparts knowledge to the students through lectures and lessons. The students, then, are graded on their ability to repeat and apply the lessons imparted to them, especially through the methods of standardized tests, quizzes, or assignments that ask them to repeat the new information in a vacuum. The problem with the traditional style of teaching is that knowledge does not exist as a singular fact or piece of data—knowledge exists among a multitude of other parts of knowledge, statistics, beliefs, and systems of understanding. The Burkean Parlor theory of teaching is that of "unending conversation" and attempts to place the knowledge in the context of the discourse around the topic. The metaphor, named after its creator, Kenneth Burke, is as follows:

"Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress."

The Burkean Parlor idea is that teaching must emulate the metaphorical parlor. Students are entering the conversation around a certain point or topic. At first, they must listen and learn from more experienced players (such as the instructor or tutor) but then they must be confident enough to make an argument and be disputed. It is arguable that they learn more from the active discussion than they ever would from the memorization of facts. When a student states a belief such as, 'This event should not be allowed because it is against the Constitution' and another disagrees—especially a more experienced learner—with, 'That's not true because the Constitution also says this' then the student has not simply learned a word-for-word version of the Constitution, but they have learned the meaning behind the words and how to apply them in an argumentative form. Thus, the Burkean Parlor method also allows for students to practice rhetoric and form a defendable argument.

In a world that is becoming increasingly more focused on argument, the Burkean Parlor method prepares students for academic writing, job interviews, and civic life. The belief that

students have a right to their own language indicates a shift in the teaching of language and writing. Instead of copying sentences down to emulate the voice and the style of the teacher as was the case in the schools of our grandparents, students now are (more) rewarded for finding their own voices in papers. Whereas students traditionally sought to master the correct, concise, and clear writing of their instructors, there has been a recent movement to empower the students to enter discourse and learn in a trial and error method that allows students to partake in academic discourse and not write essays that are purely informative or written 'in a vacuum.'

The movement among many teachers and linguists to value the right of the student to experiment in his or her use of dialects, audience, and voice demonstrates the beginning of a larger movement away from conservative education. While most linguists and teachers seem to agree that the use of AAE or Ebonics in schools would not trigger a linguistic revolution but instead allow students to code-switch between speech communities in a way that will allow them to negotiate differences between these discourses, many also believe that this is not an achievable goal. To not perceive 'error' as variations from the SAE norm and instead focusing on logical fallacies or understanding of topic and audience may bring up further issues of educational bias—perhaps one student *seems* more believable than another. Despite the issue of relative grading, many fear that the movement will prove disadvantageous for speakers of non-standard dialects when applying for jobs due to the subconscious assumption that speakers of non-standard dialects are inadequate or unintelligent.

Writing Centers can act as catalysts for social change by promoting student's individual voices in their writing and facilitating conversation around the topics of using dialects in academic writing. They may, in fact, be the perfect places to begin these conversations, as they often serve as a middle ground between the institution and the students. Tutors are students, but

they are also placed in positions of authority—where they get to make small but meaningful choices about what is acceptable and unacceptable discourse. Tutors also have the unique opportunity to enter the conversation with peers and instructors alike, hopefully promoting cross-cultural and cross-lingual acceptance. Finally, Writing Center administrators can act by educating their staff on the various arguments surrounding the use of AAE and other dialects in writing and encourage students to form their own opinions on the topic. Administrators can also use their connections with other departments to talk to faculty about student writing and the use of dialects in academic discourse. In the end, though, it falls on all of our shoulders to strip back our dislike for AAE and examine the deep-rooted biases we may have. In the end, it is our responsibility not to throw out that resume, our responsibility not to cringe and turn away when we see an essay written in AAE, and our responsibility to enter the parlor discussing racism in our universities, workplaces, and societies. It's not all work, though. I can promise we will drastically reduce our red-pen budget.

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A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO LITERACY: DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT SOCIAL SKILLS CAN INFLUENCE LITERACY SKILLS

Wailani Ronquillio

Introduction

Literacy has become one of the most widely talked about issues in today's political and educational world. Educators, government officials, sociologists, and researchers seem to be imposing statistics about literacy rates, skills, and development on the general public making us aware of the importance of reading and writing. At our fingertips are a vast amount of studies proving that our level of literacy as well as our attitude towards literacy can be influenced by innumerous variables: the school we attend, the teachers we get, the type or quantity of books we are exposed to—even the types of classes we take play a role in determining our literacy. But what if there was another factor of our literacy that we're missing? What if our entire outlook on reading and writing was already determined before we entered the classroom, before we even picked up our first book? What if literacy were bigger than the books we read or the teachers who teach us? Perhaps a person's social connections in life—their social skills and bonds with their friends, families, and classmates—also have big an effect on their literacy. In the words of Jennifer Gerdes, Tonia Durden, and Leanne Manning, authors of the article "Materials and Environments that Promote Learning in the Primary Years", which was published by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2013, "Learning social skills, emotion identification, and coping skills are some of the most important factors influencing the ability to learn academic concepts and generate new ideas. Children must feel safe, connected to others, and valued in a classroom to learn" (Gerdes). According to the article, if students develop strong social skills and

learn to create close relationships with those around them, they will be equipped to learn in all areas including reading and writing. In my study, I wanted to see for myself if there was truly a correlation between social skills and literacy. Is it possible, for instance, that simply feeling included in group activity, or in contrast, feeling isolated by a clique, can really affect our outlook on something seemingly unrelated, such as reading and writing? Increasingly intrigued by the relationship between social bonds and literacy attitudes, I posed the question for my study, "Do a person's social skills affect their outlook on literacy?" or, in other words, do people who exhibit close bonds within their communities and thrive in their social lives tend to have a better attitude towards literacy than those who feel excluded in their communities and have poor social lives? For the purpose of clarification, "communities" will be defined as "a social group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common". Such communities could include their family members, friend groups, or co-workers. A person's "outlook on literacy" will be defined as their "feelings and attitudes towards reading and writing in general".

Background

While there have been many studies conducted about literacy development, fewer have studied the idea that literacy is a socially fostered skill. In my research on the subject I found that surprisingly enough, it is pre-school and kindergarten institutions that seem to be the most on board with the idea that literacy—and learning in general—have everything to do with social skills. For example, many preschools and kindergartens are implementing the idea that in order for students to successfully learn they must first develop strong relationships with their teachers, parents, and peers. These relationships will then encourage them to be motivated learners in all aspects of schooling, including reading and writing ("Social"). In the University of Nebraska-

Lincoln's "Materials and Environments that Promote Learning in the Primary Years", the authors even list numerous tactics that teachers can use, including:

- The provision of materials such as blocks, board games, and card games that encourage children to work together

- Arranging the physical environment to create peer interactions

- Using materials that promote cooperation and sharing, such as rocking boats, large pieces of paper for many children to draw on, and dramatic play props

all of which are meant to help children develop socially and emotionally. Using materials such as these will "teach math, science, and reading concepts" ("Gerdes"). Furthermore, James Paul Gee, author of *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*, argues that while many people strictly focus on reading and writing when thinking about literacy, it is not as black and white as it seems. "Many people in 'literate' societies, when asked to define literacy, almost always do so in terms of reading and writing abilities . . . Within the past ten years, however, a large body of multidisciplinary research has begun to undermine the authority of this perspective by situating literacy in larger social practices" (Gee 139). Gee suggests that a person's literacy cannot be examined or explained without taking into account that person's social relations with the people around them; that human relationships can and do influence areas of reading and writing.

In my study, I examined English Discourse papers as well as conducted a survey to see if there truly was a correlation between a person's social bonds and their attitude towards literacy.

Methodology

Methodology 1: Autoethnography Essays

First I decided to examine my Discourse II class's Autoethnography papers in which the students were assigned to write about their own acquisition of literacy. The papers varied in focal points—from talking about their family's influence on their literacy to discussing their own reserves or interests in reading and writing. Most students made references to different literacy sponsors such as their teachers, siblings, or parents, while some focused on discussing the act of writing itself. All of the students' papers used in my research used pseudonyms to protect their privacy. While examining the papers, I focused on two things: *1) does the student exhibit strong bonds with their community? And 2) does the student have a positive or negative outlook on literacy?* For the first point, I looked for times where the student made references to someone such as their grandparents, siblings, or teachers. Most of the papers brought other people into consideration when discussing their literacy so it was not hard to find a decent sample of references. After finding the reference to someone in their community, I determined whether they had a strong bond with that person or not. Knowing that the strength of that student's relationship with the other person could be seen as subjective, I looked for key phrases where their feelings were very clear, such as "My sister and I were very close to each other" (Student A).[1]

Once I had determined whether that person had a "strong bond with their community" or not, I looked to see what their attitude towards literacy was. In order to determine this, I again looked for key phrases in the papers such as "Learning the Literacy of a new language is very important" (Student A), which I considered as having a "positive outlook on literacy", or "I have

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[1] Editor's note: The names of students have been replaced with "Student A," Student B," etc. to protect the privacy of study participants.

lost a passion to read and write" (Student B), which I considered as having a "negative outlook on literacy". In the papers I looked to see if the students who had "strong bonds with their community" also had a "positive outlook on literacy", and also to see if students who had "weak bonds with their community" similarly had a "negative outlook on literacy".

Methodology 2: Survey

Because the students' papers were written prior to my study and about a variety of topics related to literacy—not specifically about their bonds with their community, I felt that solely examining the papers would not provide me with sufficient data. Therefore, I decided to conduct a survey as well. The survey focused on the same two points I was concerned with in the autoethnographies*: 1) does the student exhibit strong bonds with their community?* and *2) does the student have a positive or negative outlook on literacy?* The survey itself consisted of 10 questions, 5 of which asked about the respondent's social bonds within their community, and 5 of which asked about their outlook on literacy. I made the survey anonymous and posted it on Facebook in order to allow for a more varied group of respondents. After all, on Facebook I figured it would be able to reach students of all levels, including middle school, high school, college, and home school, whereas if I had conducted the survey on campus, I would have only reached a limited, less varied group of students. The survey, which is included at the end, asked the students to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 how strong they felt their relationships were with their co-workers and parents. They were also asked to list any extracurricular activities they participate in, and were questioned about their relationship with their teachers and classmates. All of these questions provided me with the information to determine whether or not they had close social bonds in their community. Respondents who rated the strength of their relationship with co-workers and parents 5 or above, were involved in extracurricular activities, and felt that

they were well liked by their teachers and classmates I considered to have "strong social bonds with their community". Any who rated the strength of their relationships to be below 5, were not involved in extracurricular activities, and did not feel that they were well liked by their teachers and classmates I considered to have "weak social bonds with their community".

For the following 5 questions, I asked the respondents to rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, how much they enjoyed reading and writing. Also, I asked how important they considered reading and writing skills to be, and if they had any literacy life outside of class assignments (such as keeping a journal, writing music, or keeping a blog). By asking these questions I hoped to gain a perspective of their outlook on literacy. Any respondents who rated their interest in reading and writing to be 5 or above, thought these skills were important, and had a literacy life outside of class assignments I considered to have a "positive outlook on literacy". Any respondents who rated their interest in reading and writing to be lower than 5, did not think these skills were important, and did not have a literacy life outside of class assignments I considered to have a "negative outlook on literacy". In examining the results of the survey, I looked to see if the people who had "strong social bonds with their community" also had a "positive outlook on literacy", and vice versa to see if people with "weak social bonds with their community" also had a "negative outlook on literacy".

Discussion of Findings

Discussion of Findings 1: Autoethnographies

After examining all nine papers, I found that eight of them sufficiently provided me with evidence concerning the strength of their social bonds and their outlook on literacy. The ninth paper strictly talked about the format of an essay, without any references to people in their community, therefore I could not include it in my findings. To organize my findings I divided the

eight papers into four groups: Group 1) Those who had strong social bonds and a positive outlook on literacy, Group 2) Those who had strong social bonds but a negative outlook on literacy, Group 3) Those who had weak social bonds and a positive outlook on literacy, and Group 4) Those who had weak social bonds and a weak outlook on literacy. The results are as follows:

Group 1-Strong Social Bonds and a Positive Outlook on Literacy

~~7~~

Group 2-Strong Social Bonds and a Negative Outlook on Literacy:

0

Group 3-Weak Social Bonds and a Positive Outlook on Literacy:

0

Group 4-Weak Social Bonds and a Negative Outlook on Literacy:

1

Interestingly enough, there was only one paper in which the author exhibited feelings of weak social bonds within their community—they provided multiple accounts of their friends making fun of them, not feeling encouraged by their teacher's advice, and not being encouraged by their family members. However, despite the fact that only one author showed weak social bonds, this same author overwhelmingly had a negative outlook on literacy. "My reading skills have always been underdeveloped compared to all of the other kids in school", and "after school, I feel like I have lost a passion to read and write due to my surroundings and the environment I grew up in" (Student B) are just a couple examples of the author's feelings toward his own reading and writing.

In the remaining seven essays, the authors showed multiple signs of strong social bonds. Phrases such as "Ms. Fudge. She was a friend, a teacher, and an older sister . . . she was always there to answer all my concerns and questions" (Student A) and "Jesse would often take over the mother role . . . which made us very close" (Student C) showed that these authors felt very close to the people in their own communities. Accordingly, all seven authors also showed signs of a positive outlook on literacy. "Writing, to me is . . . joy and passion, love and anger, adventure and mystery, and so much more!" (Student D) and "I quickly gained a love and appreciation for literature and my reading level increased" (Student E) provide a couple examples of their enthusiasm towards reading and writing. While the sample size is fairly small, all the authors that fell under the category of having strong social bonds similarly had a positive outlook on literacy, while the author that fell under the category of having weak social bonds similarly had a negative outlook on literacy, thus supporting Gee and Gerdes' opinion that a person's attitude towards literacy is indeed connected in some way to their social bonds within their community.

Discussion of Findings 2: Survey

For the survey, I received a total of 17 respondents. Similar to my organization of the papers, I divided each survey taken into the four groups: Group 1) Those who had strong social bonds and a positive outlook on literacy, Group 2) Those who had strong social bonds but a negative outlook on literacy, Group 3) Those who had weak social bonds and a positive outlook on literacy, and Group 4) Those who had weak social bonds and a weak outlook on literacy. The results are as follows:

Group 1-Strong Social Bonds and a Positive Outlook on Literacy:

13

Group 2-Strong Social Bonds and a Negative Outlook on Literacy:

2

Group 3-Weak Social Bonds and a Positive Outlook on Literacy:

2

Group 4-Weak Social Bonds and a Negative Outlook on Literacy:

0

There was a bit more discrepancy in the outcome of the survey than there was in the outcome of the papers. For example, the papers only fell under Group 1 and Group 4 while in the survey's respondents, Group 2 and Group 3 had two tallies each while Group 4 had none. Overwhelmingly though, Group 1 had the most tallies, indicating that 13 out of the 17 respondents had strong social bonds in their community as well a positive outlook on literacy. Many of the respondents who fell under Group 1 rated their relationship with their parents to be higher than 6, and many had literacy lives outside of class such as keeping a journal or a blog. Some outliers rated their enjoyment of reading and writing to be less than 5, but their belief that reading and writing are very important as well as their confidence in their own ability to read and write showed they had a positive outlook on literacy and therefore kept them in Group 1. I found it very interesting that there were no respondents who fell under Group 4 (having weak social bonds and a negative outlook on literacy). It is possible that there would be respondents in this group if I had gotten more than 17 responses, which is a relatively small number. Also, it might have had to do with the fact that the survey was only available to those who are friends with me on Facebook—who, for the most part, I know have access to good educational institutions and supportive families. Perhaps if given another trial, I would survey people who I already knew

have a bad attitude towards literacy, and then proceed to see if they also happened to have weak social bonds in their community.

Over all, students with stronger social bonds in their community had a better outlook on literacy. While the survey did not have sufficient evidence to prove that students with weak social bonds are more likely to have a negative outlook on literacy, the Autoethnography paper that fell under Group 4 displayed very strong, negative feelings about literacy that were directly related to their relationship with their peers and teachers, causing me to believe that with a more in depth study one might find evidence to better prove such correlation.

Why Does this Matter?

So, why go to all the trouble to conduct a study on the matter? Well, if developing good social skills *are* in fact an important variable in determining our attitude towards literacy, then this means a child's literacy begins long before their formal education even starts, and is affected by much more than the classroom itself. For, if a child's ability to socialize and develop relationships can potentially affect areas of their education down the road, perhaps parents and teachers should be implementing tactics that will nurture students' social and emotional development alongside their academic criteria. We can see the negative effects of social relationships in Student B's Autoethnography, whose passion for reading and writing was lost because of the isolation he felt from his peers and teachers. However, we also see positive effects in Student F's Autoethnography, in which she contributed her passion for reading to her supportive church and family members. As Pre-schools and Kindergartens are implementing new tactics to induce social development and foster better learning habits, maybe parents, family members, and even friends should be aware that their social connections in life have the potential to influence other areas of their life; namely their literacy and education.

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JOHN VENN: EXAMINING THE LOGIC BEHIND "THE LOGIC OF CHANCE"

Amanda Kelly

John Venn (1834 – 1923) was born in Hull England and came from a family of distinction. Not only was his father Henry a member of the clergy, but also his grandfather John (for whom he was named). Both men were prominent in the evangelical Christian movement of the time, which was influential in terms of both societal reform and missionary work. Given this family background, Venn had a strict upbringing and there was little doubt he would follow the family tradition into the priesthood. While Venn did indeed enter the priesthood shortly after graduating from Cambridge University in 1857, serving as curate briefly in two parishes, he held a wide range of interests. Venn, upon graduating earned the position of 6th "Wrangler" (6th among the First Class winners) on the famous Mathematical Tripos examination and in 1883 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of London. [1] Though he maintained his vows for over 20 years before stepping away from the clergy under the terms of the Clerical Disabilities Act of 1870, he was already back at Cambridge by 1862 where his title was Lecturer in Moral Sciences. There he studied and taught Logic and Probability Theory and also developed an interest in Philosophy and Metaphysics. Interestingly, he never viewed his exploration of these interests to be at odds with his religion. [3]

His son, John Archibald Venn explained the position in writing his father's obituary:

"It had long ceased to be regarded as an anomaly for a clergyman to

preach the then circumscribed evangelical creed and at the same time, without

the slightest insincerity, to devote himself actively to philosophical studies; yet ...

finding himself still less in sympathy with the orthodox clerical outlook, Venn

availed himself of the Clerical Disabilities Act. Of a naturally speculative frame

of mind, he was want to say later that, owing to subsequent change in accepted

opinion regarding the Thirty-nine Articles, he could consistently have retained his

orders; he remained, indeed, throughout his life a man of sincere religious

conviction." [4, pp. 869-870]

While Probability obviously involves numbers, and determining probability is generally regarded as a mathematical exercise, Venn's approach in his 1888 3rd edition of *The Logic of Chance* is straight-forward and purposely non-mathematical. This approach is taken not only in the interest of making it accessible to those without an extensive mathematical background, but also due to his belief that treating the subject as a "portion of mathematics" sells it short. Instead, he argues that the study of Probability is more properly a branch of the general science of evidence that happens to make *use* of mathematics. [5, p. vii]

Venn does however acknowledge from the outset that the study of processes and laws (such as Probability) is indeed more challenging by its nature than the study of sciences dealing with physical objects, regardless of approach. For instance, if the reader is generally familiar with the objects being studied, referencing them can at least give a tolerable understanding of the direction and nature of the study. Conversely, the study of a process or law with which the reader is not already familiar presents little opportunity to provide prior information. The reader must be "taken in hand" and directed to an initial, basic understanding of the subject matter before getting into the details. [5, pp. 1-2]

While Venn's approach is indeed "approachable" for those uninitiated in Probability, Frequency Theory does rely more on calculation and computation compared to Classical Theory,

which is driven largely by the Principle of Indifference (events are equal and indistinguishable; probability of each is 1/n). Frequency Theory on the other hand defines the probability of an event occurring to be its actual observed relative frequency based on a large number of trials. A standard example of the type of problem to which the Principle of Indifference can be effectively applied is a dice problem. Assuming symmetrical six-sided dice, there is no reason to believe that any number (1-6) would come up more often than any other number. On this example: [2 p. 643]

> *"In certain types of games, the early practitioners were able to work out efficient ways of counting successes and failures and thus to determine the expectation or probability a priori* [before hand]. *In most realistic situations, however, it was much more difficult to quantify risk, that is, to determine the degree of belief that a "reasonable man" would have. How could one determine a "reasonable" price to pay for insurance?" ... Jakob Bernoulli, in his study of the subject over some 20 years, wanted to be able to quantify risk in situations where it was impossible to enumerate all possibilities. To do this, he proposed to ascertain probabilities a posteriori* [afterward] *by looking at the results observed in many similar instances, that is, by considering some statistics."*

As detailed below, this is the exact direction Venn headed with his work. That is to say, an approach that was comfortably ignorant of the details, but secure in the averages…particularly over a large number of trials.

This type of natural symmetry also supports the leaps of Inductive Inference associated with Classical Logic. Venn's position, as touched on below, considers Induction simply as adjunct to Probability.

Venn begins by addressing classes and clarifying the classes with which the science of Probability is concerned. On the one hand, there are situations where a general proposition can be equally true of both the whole and the component parts – if all cows ruminate (the process of chewing food for a second time, also known as "chewing the cud"), then any particular cow or group of cows ruminate. On the other hand, if we know that only some cows ruminate, it is not possible to infer the general from the particular in the same way. Though it would be reasonable to assume that an individual cow might ruminate, it cannot be logically inferred. However, one could more assuredly infer that in a given herd of cows, some are ruminant – basically, there is uncertainty about individuals of the class, but certainty about the class as a whole increases with the size of the class. This latter larger class of things being the focus of the science of Probability. [5, pp. 2-3]

This concept carries over to his explanation of a particular kind of series, a series combining individual irregularity with aggregate regularity. As well, he speaks to the key distinction between absolute irregularity and relative irregularity. The well-known example of tossing a coin serves to illustrate both. For instance, when observing a small number of tosses, the series often appears to be random and chaotic (3 tails, then 1 head, then 2 more tails, etc.) This is individual irregularity. But, as the number of tosses increases, order begins to emerge and the number of heads and tails begins to equalize. This is aggregate regularity. And, we know that over a large number of tosses the relative irregularity is negligible – i.e. the proportion of each will be very near 50%. At the same time, as the number of tosses increases so does the absolute irregularity - i.e. the *numerical* difference between total heads vs. tails. Finally, series in this sense does not denote consecutiveness, but rather a number of observations (order of observed

occurrences is immaterial), with order emerging out of disorder as the number of observations increases [5, pp. 4-13]

In examining the "logical superstructure" underlying the physical foundations Venn has established, he begins with consideration of the vital role of belief and how it supports drawing inferences. He describes this consideration as a shift in focus from the objective measurement of things to the subjective manner in which we contemplate them. One immediate impact of our subjective consideration is generalization – a process of substitution and idealization by which series are described in terms of their aggregate regularity at the expense of recognition and visibility of individual irregularity. An example of the type of *immediate* inference that a high level of belief allows: "All men are mortal, therefore any particular man or men are mortal." [5, pp. 119-121]

Next, with regard to the ultimate impact of belief, Venn points to the proposition that while belief is variable (sometimes highly), it cannot be accurately measured. This position is in contrast to that of a number of his contemporaries, who seem to suggest that belief is measured by Probability as opposed to being a determinant in how we go about forming inductive inferences. He specifically cites a Prof. Donkin (Phil. Mag. May, 1851):

> *"It will, I suppose, be generally admitted, and has often been more or less explicitly stated, that the subject-matter of calculation in the mathematical theory of Probabilities is quantity of belief."*

Regarding a specific measurement of the amount of belief, Venn notes the impact of strong emotions (passion), as well as the effect of extreme complexity and variety in the evidence upon which beliefs depend. As a basic example of this he suggests the phenomenon of lotteries and the

fact that an individual's related beliefs and actions (e.g. buying a ticket) are not consistent with the underlying Probability assigned by theory. [5, pp. 123-128]

From the type of inference discussed in relation to the discussion on belief – inferences regarding particular propositions based on the general propositions that include them, Venn moves on to the rules governing inference more broadly. That is, an examination of the cases in which one general proposition can be inferred from another. He begins by drawing a distinction between what he calls the formal, or fundamental, rules governing inference in Probability and those rules that are more experimental, or experiential, in nature. He deems the latter the subject of Induction. The fundamental rules, those based on the mere application of arithmetic, fit into two categories.

The first category dealing with exclusive or incompatible events, governs inferences drawn based on addition or subtraction. For instance, if $\frac{36.4}{100} = \frac{3640}{10000}$ infants live to over sixty and another $\frac{35.4}{100} = \frac{3540}{10000}$ die before they are ten, then out of a group of say 10,000, it can be inferred that approximately $2,820 = 10,000 - (3640 + 3540)$ will live between ten and sixty years. The general algebraic rule for the probability of one or the other of two incompatible or mutually exclusive events happening is $\frac{1}{m} + \frac{1}{n} = \frac{m+n}{mn}$ where $\frac{1}{m}$ and $\frac{1}{n}$ are the probabilities of the respective events. This can also be applied when only one said event will happen by subtraction instead of addition resulting in the expression $\frac{1}{m} - \frac{1}{n} = \frac{n-m}{nm}$. Also when talking about the probability of an event not happening you would subtract the chance of the event happening from one, $1 - \frac{1}{m} = \frac{m-1}{m}$. [5, pp. 167-171]

The second category dealing with dependent events, governs inferences drawn based on multiplication or division. For instance, if $\frac{25}{1000}$ London inhabitants will die in the course of the

year and $\frac{1}{5}$ of those deaths will be due to fever, then it can be inferred that $\frac{1}{200} = \frac{1}{5} \cdot \frac{25}{1000}$ of the

inhabitants will die of fever in the course of the year. The general equation here would be the

chance of one event happening and a second event happening as well is $\frac{1}{mn}$. It then follows that:

> *This rule, expressed in its most general form, in the language of*
>
> *Probability, would be as follows: - If the chances of a thing being p and q are*
>
> *respectively $\frac{1}{m}$ and $\frac{1}{n}$, then the chance of its being both p and q is $\frac{1}{mn} \left[= \frac{1}{m} \cdot \frac{1}{n} \right]$, p*
>
> *and not q is $\frac{n-1}{mn} \left[= \frac{1}{m} \cdot \left(1 - \frac{1}{n} \right) \right]$, q and not p is $\frac{m-1}{mn} \left[= \frac{1}{n} \left(1 - \frac{1}{m} \right) \right]$, not p and not*
>
> *q is $\frac{(m-1)(n-1)}{mn} \left[= \left(1 - \frac{1}{m} \right) \left(1 - \frac{1}{n} \right) \right]$, where p and q are independent.*

Venn's primary focus, as described above, is on the type of inferences that are calculated,

as opposed to those based solely on Induction. However, he does not as a result simply ignore

Induction – he recognizes it for what it is and clearly defines where it does (and doesn't) fit into

his approach to Probability. Without getting too deeply into something that is a subject unto

itself, a couple of statements really sum up where he draws the line: [5, p. 208]

> *"It would be more correct to say, as stated above, that Induction is quite distinct*
>
> *from Probability, yet co-operates in almost all it inferences. By Induction we determine,*
>
> *for example, whether, and how far, we can safely generalize the proposition that four*
>
> *men in ten live to be fifty-six; supposing such a proposition to be safely generalized, we*
>
> *hand it over to Probability to say what sort of inferences can be deduced from it."*

So, Induction not a part of the science of Probability, but complementary and a useful "place to

start" in many instances.

When it comes to reconciling his take on the science of Probability with the seemingly

incompatible concepts of causation and design, Venn takes a position that seems to indicate at

least some level of surprise that they are viewed as incompatible. He starts off with what he refers to as a very old Theological objection – something he should have some intimate perspective on! While noting the religious perspective on attributing matters to chance is actually centuries older than the Theory of Probability itself, he notes: [5, p. 235]

> *"If we spelt the word* [causation] *with a capital C, and maintained that it was representative of some distinct creative or administrative agency, we should presumably be guilty of some form of Manicheism (a religion based on dualism)."*

Venn states matter-of-factly that the science of Probability is actually mute on causality, "making no assumption whatever" about the way events come about. Instead, the concern of Probability is establishing a set of rules, with those rules applicable to classes of cases where making definitive inferences about the individuals comprising the classes is not possible. So, the chance (odds) of an event occurring is simply a statement regarding the average frequency with which it would be expected to occur, not a statement that the event is brought about *by* chance (meaning lacking causation). [5, pp. 235-236]

In his analysis of the insurance example from the chapter titled "Insurance and Gambling" Venn convincingly shows that while it (insurance) is widely believed to be good and proper, compared to gambling which is seen as a moral shortcoming by many, they are very much the same as far as Probability is concerned. His initial supposition is, that at their core, they are clearly applications of the very same Probability concepts – individual irregularity and average regularity. Beyond the moral implications associated with gambling, an individual's attraction to one or the other is simply a matter of that individual's personal perception of, and level of comfort with risk. He goes on to point out how the diminishment of the general level of

risk in society, driven by various modern developments, amplifies not only the differences in perception, but also the consequences of the risk that remains. [5, pp. 370-371]

Using life insurance as a case in point for insurance generally, Venn frames it in simple terms. Those desiring relief from the uncertainty regarding length of life and time of death basically agree to "make up a common purse" with others sharing the same concern. Those individuals who end up having a longer than average life span effectively contribute to the support of the families of those who die earlier. The principle of average regularity dictates that the greater the number of individuals contributing to the purse, the greater the certainty of achieving the desired relief. He points out that the particulars, such as fixed annual premiums, are mere accidents of convenience and arrangement. Underlying the propositions is the knowledge and understanding that for one to gain, another must lose an equal amount (or many must lose a little). Thus, for the individuals involved, while it isn't "fair" in terms of the economic outcome, it's worth it. [5, pp. 372-373]

Venn's examples dealing with both insurance and gambling are fairly classic targets for the application of Probability Theory, particularly Frequency Theory. There are other matters however, where although there is a similar need to make a determination regarding the chances of occurrence, the event/subject does not lend itself to the large sample sizes seen with insurance or gambling. His chapter dealing with the "Credibility of Extraordinary Stories" addresses an example of this other, more ad hoc, class of events. He set it up as follows: [5, p. 406]

> *"It will be remembered that in a previous chapter (the twelfth) we devoted some examination to an assertion by Butler, which seemed to be to some extent countenanced by Mill,that a great improbability before the proof might become but a very small improbability after the proof. In opposition to this it was pointed out that the different*

estimates which we undoubtedly formed of the credibility of the examples adduced, had

nothing to do with the fact of the event being past or future, but arose from a very

different cause…"

This cause is identified as the *way* in which the conception of an event comes about. The first way being a mere guess of our own, which based on what we know from related statistics, would be right in certain proportion of cases. The second way being the assertion of a witness, which is indeed very different in that it is not an appeal to statistics, but rather to the veracity of the witness. [5, p. 406]

Venn continues by posing the question as to whether or not this transfer of focus then means that the probability or improbability of an assertion depends *solely* upon the veracity of the witness. And, if so, by extension, would any story told by a veracity of the person (truthful 9 of 10 times for instance) then be believed? What he suggests is, no, not without of bit of fine tuning. As with the case of life insurance, even though statistics and averages are the proper approach, going beyond the general average (incorporating occupational and lifestyle factors), when possible, will yield a more accurate result. So, in the case of a witness providing testimony on something extraordinary: [5, pp. 407-409]

"Cannot we, in almost any give case, specialize it by attending to the various

characteristic circumstances in the nature of the statement which he makes; just as we

specialize his prospects of mortality by attending to circumstances in his constitution or

mode of life? Undoubtedly we may do this; and in any of the practical contingencies of

life, supposing that we were at all guided by considerations of this nature, we should act

very foolishly if we did not adopt some such plan."

While one method of making the needed correction to a general average, one that Venn describes as a "conjectural correction" based on "practical sagacity" – essentially based simply on past experience and observation, might be more in keeping with the approach of Classical Theory, he expands on a second method focused instead on a more rigorous analysis of the nature and number of sources of error. This approach considers factors such as whether the testimony given requires a yes or no answer to a question (only one way to be wrong), as opposed to an open-ended response (many, possibly endless ways to be wrong). [5, pp. 409-411]

So, taking again the witness known to be truthful 9 of 10 times, Venn presents the following of an example of how to further determine the likely veracity of the witness's testimony in a scenario with one way to be wrong. Specifically, drawing balls from a bag, of 10,000 balls in which 10 are white and 9990 are black:

> *"In the 10,000 drawings the white ball would come out 10 times, and therefore he rightly asserted* [guess white correctly] *9 times out of ten* [based on his above mentioned truthfulness]*, whilst on the one of these occasions on which he goes wrong he has nothing to say but "black". So with the 9990* $[10,000 - 10]$ *occasions on which black is drawn; he is right and says black on 8991* $\left[9990 \cdot \frac{9}{10}\right]$ *of them, and is wrong and therefore says white on 999* $\left[9990 \cdot \frac{1}{10}\right]$ *of them. On the whole, therefore, we conclude that out of every 1008* $[999 + 9]$ *times on which he says that white is drawn he is wrong 999 times and right only 9 times. That is, his special veracity, as we may term it, for cases of this description, has been reduced from* $\frac{9}{10}$ *to* $\frac{9}{1008}$*."*

The generalized form of the above example follows that if he asserts that the event happened, the probability that it does happen is $\frac{px}{px+(1-p)(1-x)}$, where p is the probability of an

event and x is the veracity of the witness. Here both $0 \leq p \leq 1$ and $0 \leq x \leq 1$ where $x = 0$ means the witness is never truthful and $x = 1$ means that the witness is always truthful. $(1 - p)$ is the probability that the event does not occur and $(1 - x)$ is the probability that the witness is not truthful. In the example quoted above this appears as $\frac{9}{1008} = \frac{\frac{10}{10,000} \cdot \frac{9}{10}}{\frac{10}{10,000} \cdot \frac{9}{10} + \frac{9\,9\,9\,0}{10,000} \cdot \frac{01}{10}}$. Here $p = \frac{10}{10,000}$, $(1 - p) = \frac{9990}{10,000}$, $x = \frac{9}{10}$, and $(1 - x)\frac{1}{10}$. However, if the witness asserts that it did not happen the probability is $\frac{p(1-x)}{p(1-x)+(1-p)x}$. Where once again the same rules for $(1 - p)$ and $(1 - x)$ from above apply. [5, pp. 411-414]

Given Venn's family history and background, his work on Probability (particularly the Frequency Theory approach) is notable. At a time when the study, acceptance, and championing of such topics was seen as incompatible with Theology, he appears to have moved easily between the two. Regarding causation (including the possibility of intelligent design) he states: [5, p. 239]

> *"On the theory adopted in this work we simply postulate ignorance of the details, but it is not regarded as of any importance on what sort of grounds this ignorance is based. It may be that knowledge is out of the question from the nature of the case, the causative link, so to say, being missing. It may be that such links are known to exist, but that either we cannot ascertain them, or should find it troublesome to do so. It is the fact of this ignorance that makes us appeal to the theory of Probability, the grounds of it are of no importance."*

As noted earlier, John Venn was a man who enjoyed a wide range of interests. This brief examination of his work in the area of Probability Theory shows that he certainly had the intellect to explore these interests in considerable detail. As well, he seemed to have no real

difficulty reconciling apparent contradictions existing among those interests. The passage above suggests that ignorance of the details, including causation, drives us to the study of Probability to gain understanding. But, as he made clear in his chapter "Chance, Causation, and Design" (and as touched on previously above), this appeal to the study of Probability concerns chance as an indicator of the odds of event occurrence, totally separate from the concept of chance as a causal factor.

So, in conclusion, Venn is rightly acknowledged as a key contributor to the development of the Frequency Theory of Probability. Based on a more rigorous, mathematical approach, the theory certainly provides greater accuracy of prediction compared to Classical Theory methods, particularly when a large number of events are available for analysis. However, that's the "what" – Venn's work is arguably more influential, to this day, due to the "how" of his approach.

While Venn focused on sound computational methods, he was careful not to discount influences such as belief, intuition, and human emotion. Each of these factors he considered and took into account, largely without disparagement or dismissal. And, he did this in an era when there was a fairly distinct division between scientific thinking and religion which was a determinant of who Venn ultimately was. Perhaps more importantly, recognition of how methods such as Inductive Inference, borrow from Classical Theory and Formal Logic, could co-exist with, and be complementary of, Frequency Theory was key. Finally, as is the case with the famous Venn Diagrams, in the Logic of Chance he does it all in a way that is widely relatable.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Krishna Amin is a freshman at UMKC. He was born in India and moved to the United States when he was nine years old. Currently, he is pursuing a B.S. in Biology and a B.A. in psychology as a pre-med student with neurosurgery as his career goal.

Mallory Barnes is currently studying Spanish and hopes to get a master's degree in linguistics. Her favorite things are languages, traveling, Hobby Lobby, and, of course, Pinterest.

Alauna Christian is presently pursuing a career within the health care field at UMKC. Her future career aspirations consist of becoming a nurse anesthetist, therefore she is pursuing a bachelor's degree in pre-nursing. She is currently involved with Sister Circle and Jumpstart on campus. She hopes to evolve with an increase of her student involvement for the future years to come at UMKC. She recently completed Discourse 100 and 200 with two magnificent adjunct professors. She will be attending her sophomore year at UMKC in the fall of 2015.

Anne Crawford is a senior in high school ranked 21 out of 593 in her class. She is active in volunteer organizations like Youth Core and the Youth Advisory Council. She plans to attend college and earn a degree in secondary English education so she can show students how English can inspire them.

Osama Ehtesham is a freshman planning to major in biology. He has a variety of interests outside of science as well. He is an avid supporter of the Italian soccer team Juventus.

Corbin Emanuel is a United States Army veteran and former infantryman attending school for criminal justice. He owns his own private investigation company and intends to work for a federal policing agency upon completion of his degree.

Amber Finley is currently a sophomore at UMKC pursuing a degree in middle school education for language arts. She plans to teach ESL/ELL classes in an urban setting and has a passion for using language as a means of breaching barriers—both economic and social.

Brooke Horridge is a senior at Blue Springs South High School. Aside from attending school, she spends her time working at a daycare, dancing, and volunteering at K.C. Pet Project animal shelter. After graduation, she will be attending college (possibly UMKC) in order to get her BSN. She also hopes to one day be a CRNA at a KC-area hospital.

Amanda Kelly is double-majoring in mathematics and secondary education, with an emphasis in mathematics. She enjoys learning more and more about math and loves helping others find an understanding as well.

Wailani Ronquillio was born and raised in St. Louis, but loved to travel to all sorts of places growing up. She loved keeping herself busy in high school and participated in mostly musical ensembles—her favorite of which was the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra—but also some academic ones like NHS and DECA. She's really interested in music and has played clarinet for the past eight years, but once she got to college, she changed her major from music performance

to sociology and Spanish so that she could pursue and explore her other passions. She honestly didn't expect to enjoy sociology as much as she is, but she's finding out that life is just full of surprises like that when you take some chances. She's 19 years old and comes from a large family of five kids. In her spare time she enjoys running, going to church, traveling, eating, and anything outdoors.

TEACHERS

Sara Crump

Liz Jacquinot

Christa Wenger

Ande Davis

Ben Moats

Thomas Ferrel

Sheila Honig

Richard Delaware