

**Sosland Journal**  
**2016**



2016  
Sosland Journal  
of Student Writing

Craig M. Workman, Editor  
Ande Davis, Asst. Editor



Presented by the University of Missouri-Kansas City English Department  
through the generosity of Rheta Sosland-Huwitt and the Sosland family



2016  
Sosland Journal  
of Student Writing

All works copyright © 2016 by their respective authors and used by permission.

All rights reserved. This book is designed for educational use and may be used freely in classroom settings for educational purposes.

Submission is open to UMKC students in writing classes. Guidelines are available at our website.

[SoslandJournal.wordpress.com](http://SoslandJournal.wordpress.com)

# Table of Contents

Editor's Note . . . . .	v
Introductory Level	
Ilus W. Davis Competition Winner	
Found in Translation. . . . .	1
<b>Michele Yang</b>	
Unfolding Dreams . . . . .	9
<b>Maria F. Martinez Arevalo</b>	
The Contraception Misconception. . . . .	15
<b>Mackenna N. Kemp</b>	
Grades Above Learning . . . . .	25
<b>Remington Lamb</b>	
Intermediate Level	
Ilus W. Davis Competition Winner	
A Penetrating Truth . . . . .	31
<b>Audrey Wishall</b>	
The Representation of Women In <i>Heart of Darkness</i> . . . . .	39
<b>Willow Carr</b>	
Literacy and Fulfilling Expectations . . . . .	47
<b>Anne Crawford</b>	
The Effects of Japanese Colonization in Korea . . . . .	55
<b>Emma Dodge</b>	
<i>Heart of Darkness</i> and Imperialism . . . . .	67
<b>Debolina Kanjilal</b>	
Advanced Level	
Ilus W. Davis Competition Winner	
Love Versus Literacy: A Second Generation Story . . . . .	77
<b>Thea Voutiritsas</b>	
From the School Yard to The Jail Yard: An Analysis of Zero-Tolerance Policies and the Pipeline to Prison for Black Youth. . . . .	93
<b>Jordan Davis</b>	
A Man's Pride . . . . .	105
<b>Que Trang Tran</b>	
Contributor Notes . . . . .	117



## Editor's Note

Greetings! It is my sincere pleasure to present the 2016 edition of *The Sosland Journal*. This year's issue contains the best of the best of English and Discourse sections' academic prose on UMKC's main campus, in addition to our HSCP scholars' written work. With such a diversity of author foci, stances, and creative and rhetorical approaches to their craft, it was certainly a joy to serve as this year's editor. This year's entries dealt with topics ranging from *Heart of Darkness* and Imperialism, to Albert Einstein, to literacy narratives and issues of social justice, both at home and abroad, and we found the final decision-making process a challenging task. No matter the motivation for composing prose of any kind, everyone wins. The products of academic inquiry are unequivocal in their ability to cause us to question, to reposition our worldview, and to regard our sense of Self in a new light, and these entrants serve as brilliant exemplars of that fact.

This project could not have been possible without the steadfast work of so many others. First and foremost, profound thanks go to Rheta Sosland-Huwitt and the Sosland family, our benefactors and true devotees of the written word. Further, I'd like to thank Dr. Daniel Mahala, our Director of Composition, our readers, Desiree Long and Jane Blakeley, as well as our



final judges, Dr. Jennifer Frangos, Pr. Ben Moats and Pr. Shelia Honig. Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my Assistant Editor, Ande Davis. His expertise in print-editing, layout, academic prose, and pretty much everything else dealing with words on pages are unparalleled, at least on Planet Earth. Undoubtedly, his transition to Editor next year will be as apropos as it will be productive. Happy reading, all!

Sincerely,

Craig M. Workman  
Editor, *The Sosland Journal*

# ESSAYS



**INTRODUCTORY CATEGORY WINNER**

# **FOUND IN TRANSLATION**

**Michele Yang**

When I was little, I couldn't sleep at night without a story. I grew up listening to old cassettes tapes of Chinese folk tales, and when my parents weren't busy they recited Chinese parables before I went to sleep. I was learning English by day and coming home to a rich Chinese culture encased in my familial bubble. My bilingualism was an informal thing; my Mandarin knowledge was cribbed together from various TV shows, whispered scoldings in public, and bedtime stories. To me, English and Mandarin are so intertwined that neither I nor my parents remember what my first language was.

But it's not my actual bilingualism itself that shaped my literacy the most—it was the context in which it was formed. As long as I can remember, I've had to serve as an interpreter for my parents. By third grade, I was translating my mom's work emails and proofreading her responses. It was a strange thing to have my parents relying on me from such a young age, but this was when I first gained confidence in my skills as a communicator. I was forcibly made more mature and knowledgeable; even when I didn't know how to translate something, I still had to fake my way to understanding. Obviously, I had the vocabulary of a child and my writing was still very simplistic, but I had enough information to get the job done. It was during this stage of my

life that I learned that getting the point across is more important than how the language is packaged.

Yet, while I was learning to become an effective communicator, I began to notice that the “packaging” of language was still significant. My mother, who was a doctor in China, struggled to complete her job as a nurse here. People who interacted with my father often assumed that he was unintelligent and patronized him, when in fact he studied his way out of deep poverty to receive his PhD here in America. Nevertheless, because they had accents and stumbled over grammatical rules, they were easily dismissed. My parents vowed that I would never have to face these problems. They signed me up for theater productions, drilled me with reading comprehension books, and pushed me out of my writing comfort zone. In hindsight, I am incredibly grateful that my parents did this. Although I had already developed confidence in my abilities to get the point across, these experiences taught me how to structure my knowledge to persuade and impress. I learned how to speak in front of crowds, to be unafraid of challenging books, and to experiment with my writing.

However, as I entered my middle school years, shame began to catch up with me. I grew up in a wealthy, conservative, and predominately Caucasian community. Every time I had to translate my mom’s broken English to yet another confused cashier, I became more resentful of my Chinese heritage. I felt embarrassed that I had to stand in for my parents. And for the first time, I became acutely aware of the stereotypes surrounding me. It didn’t help that I was the perfect depiction of the model Chinese girl—I was over-competitive and an overachiever in everything from math contests to volleyball games. This also meant I didn’t have very many friends. So as I entered my early teens, I became determined to be “truly American”. I hid my heritage: I joined cheerleading teams, started buying clothes

from Old Navy, and replaced my rice lunches with PB&J. When the occasional joke about being Asian came up, I laughed it off with the rest of my new friends. But I could never hide how my home life was so vastly different than those of my friends. No matter how much I assimilated into American culture, I still had to return every night to my Chinese family. It was a dizzying, confusing period of my life. At this time, my confidence in my reading and writing decreased. I stopped experimenting and pushing myself to become a better communicator and reader. Finally, I began to refuse to speak in Chinese and translate for my parents. My informal education as a result of my constant translation stopped abruptly, and my reading and writing skills stagnated.

It was many years before I learned to embrace my Chinese heritage in my literacy again. In those intermediate years, I continued to develop my literacy the “American” way—through my formal education. My Chinese background meant that my first introduction to advanced literacy was purely practical. I was so used to directing my words for a specific purpose that I wasn’t sure how to read and write “unnecessarily”. But this mindset worked very well for me in school. I would analyze rubrics to write essays that would get good grades, but I never wrote essays that were true to my personal opinions. My parents’ drilling on reading comprehension also worked. Even though I never read very extensively, tests showed that I was reading at a college level by sixth grade. Despite my adeptness, I never really found joy in my literacy. To me, reading and writing were a chore necessary for boring “adult” tasks, not something that could make me happy; they were only means to achieve an end.

Luckily, I still somehow stumbled my way into enjoying literacy. My sisters were a lot older, and they began to bring home and talk about their required readings for school. Of course, many of their conversations went far over my head. But

because I was bored, and because I wanted to engage in those conversations, I soon began reading with them. It was during that time that I was first introduced to the emotional and social power of literacy. I first cried over a book when reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I read *The Lord of the Flies* and felt intense satisfaction when I was able to realize its symbolism without being instructed by a teacher. Later, I branched out and started to read young adult series like Harry Potter and Percy Jackson. I had finally found joy and meaning in reading. By reading, I learned— first through imitation—how to show my voice and my beliefs in my writing. I doubt I would have been able to do so if I was still constantly trying to balance and translate between my two languages. Of course, I regret neglecting my Chinese heritage during these years. But during this break I was able to establish my literacy in a personal context rather than a broader cultural context.

However, I could never completely ignore my culture. I was still ashamed of my heritage and shied away from Asian stereotypes. At this point, I felt like I had two identities. I still retained the lessons I gained while translating, but I also had new experiences that taught me how to enjoy reading and writing on a personal level. When I took a gap year in China, I found a way to reintegrate my culture and literacy. During that year, all the constants in my life flipped. I was the one who was so dependent on others and had to struggle through rudimentary tasks. Only then did I realize how much I had taken my literacy for granted and only then did I begin to understand my parents' struggles. I had to work at mastering a language, and it was one of the most difficult experiences of my life so far. I had neglected translation for so many years because I wanted to distance myself from my heritage, but in doing so I also felt like I had neglected my connection and duty to my family. My situation is not uncommon among minorities in America; for example,

Barbara Mellix had similar experiences as a black woman. Like me, she grew up having to balance between two languages: black English and proper English. Like me, she used her two languages in different contexts and felt a sense of “otherness” in language. I used English to talk about myself, but I used Chinese to convey the thoughts of others. During my gap year, if I wanted to bond with the people I was surrounded with, I had to express my feelings in Chinese. But I couldn’t break down a lifetime of linguistic memories in a few weeks. Mellix shared my struggles in communicating in proper English, saying, “I couldn’t think and feel genuinely in that language, couldn’t make it express what I thought and felt” (264). She was only able to overcome this barrier by, “learn[ing] to imagine myself as a part of the culture of that language, and therefore somewhat free to manage that language, to take liberties with it” (267). Likewise, I was able to break down the lines that separated my two languages by fully immersing myself into Chinese culture and by learning to disregard my mistakes. It wasn’t easy, but after a year of persisting in faltering conversations about myself in China, I managed to make Chinese the language of myself rather than the language of others.

My struggle was also exacerbated by a family crisis that occurred during my gap year. Over the span of just a month, I watched my grandmother’s health deteriorate and she became almost paralyzed and bedbound. I felt helpless. At first, I thought this feeling was due to a language barrier, and I resolved to improve my Mandarin. However, as the days went by, I discovered that nobody in my family understood my grandmother’s condition despite accompanying her to multiple doctors’ visits and staying with her through a hospitalization. Was it diabetes? Was it old age? I felt frustrated and wished many times that I had the ability to help. It was during this time that I had a realization about literacy and communication.



Although the doctors knew exactly what was going on, they had only shared things in abrupt, jargon-filled terminology. At this time, I had already decided to study science for the rest of my life. But this experience taught me that the true value of scientific expertise is the way in which it is shared. I switched from wanting to enter academia in Chemistry to wanting to become a doctor. I found that medicine was like translating science to common terminology, and I had been translating my entire life.

I had been torn between viewing my literacy as a practical asset to my community and as a personal way to express myself and empathize with the stories of others. In that year, I learned how to use my practical applications of literacy—translating—to connect with others and to better understand and express myself. As I made these connections about my literacy, I also applied this philosophy to my life on a larger scale, and this led to my studying medicine today.

My Chinese heritage greatly influenced my literacy. But it was be misleading to say that it was solely influenced by my culture—I was constantly influenced by the way society reacted to my ethnicity, and in turn influenced by how I chose to react to society. Through my Chinese background, I was forced to become an effective communicator, a good mediator, and a precise interpreter for my family and community. And through my American background, I learned how to enjoy and use reading and writing on an individual level. Finally, through my experiences as a Chinese-American, I learned that words have the dual power to enact change in both myself and my community.

#### Works Cited

Mellix, Barbara. "The Georgia Review." *From the Outside, In* 41 (1987): 258-67. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 Oct. 2015.

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

### **Content**

1. What points does the author make about the use of language and perception of intelligence?
2. What ways does the writer describe as how she moved beyond language to remake her identity?
3. How do the events in the author's life play into her struggle for identity?

### **Style**

4. How is the essay organized? Why do you think the author would organize it this way?
5. How does the author rhetorically connect her early experiences with language with her career choice later in life?
6. How does the author use examples in the essay? How do they affect the argument being made?
7. How would you evaluate the author's use of her outside source in this essay? What does it add to her argument? How effectively is it used?



# UNFOLDING DREAMS

**Maria F. Martinez Arevalo**

It was October 1999 and my mom was nervous. Her hands were clammy as she handed our passports and boarding passes to the TSA agent. My mom, brother, and I began to board the plane. We found our way to our seats and sat down. My mom took a deep breath. She had a million thoughts and questions flying around her head, “Am I making the right choice for my kids?” “Is this worth moving my family 1,780 miles to Blue Springs, Missouri, and starting our lives completely over?” Seventeen years later and her questions have been partially answered. She tells me how she believes she made the right decision for us and that she knows we are doing bigger and better things living in the United States versus living in El Salvador. I was only two at the time and my brother was one. We don’t remember anything from that day. That decision had set a precedent for our lives in the United States. Our lives as illegal immigrants had only begun to unfold. Now, as a child I remember being very carefree and feeling normal amongst my peers. Elementary and middle school were what I would consider normal. Once I moved on to high school, I started to notice that there was a really big but small and isolated difference between myself and my peers, our citizenship status.

As an individual becomes older, they go through many rites of passage that eventually unfold into adulthood. For example, at age 16 teenagers get their license and many will also get a first job, at age 18 teenagers are legally adults in the eye of the law and many will begin to apply to college to further their education after they finish their senior year and graduate high school. For illegal immigrants, that is not the case. Many will argue that this is justified when immigrants do not follow the necessary steps for a path to legal citizenship. On the other hand, children who were brought here by their parents and had no part in the decision making process are subject to a stereotypical view in society as a result of actions not committed by them. As a result, many of these high school aged immigrants will not be able to pursue a higher education, receive their license, or even work a minimum wage job like the average American teenager does which sets them up at a disadvantage from the start.

The biggest obstacle that high school aged illegal immigrants face in today's society is that they are not able to apply to a post-secondary institution to continue their education and pursue a career. As a result, many of them are subject to jump right into adulthood without receiving proper training to have a chance at a real career. Many of them will become a walking stereotype that will work in a field such as housekeeping or construction. On the other hand, a handful of those immigrants will qualify for President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, and will be able to pursue a higher education. DACA is temporary relief for children who were brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents. While there are many qualifications you have to meet to be able to apply for this deferred action, it is very much worth it. With DACA, illegal immigrants will be given the opportunity to pursue what many have looked forward to their entire lives, a chance at a higher education. Now that they are able to apply to college many will face a challenge that

many Americans face as well, the financial side of pursuing a higher education.

Legal citizens of the U.S. have the ability to apply for federal student loans, Free Assistance for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Pell Grants, and other types of federal government aid. Students on DACA are not eligible to receive any of the financial assistance listed above. This limits their financial aid opportunities significantly and makes it harder for them to lessen the already extremely high cost of tuition. DACA recipients are still eligible to apply to privately funded scholarships or grants that do not come from the federal government. Even then, some states may have different bills or regulations in place that limit what DACA recipients can do financially.

In some states, such as Missouri, students on DACA are barred from paying in state tuition at state-funded universities. Meaning even if students have resided in Missouri for their entire life and have graduated from a Missouri high school, they will have to pay the out of state tuition rate. Tony Rothert, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri stated, “It is shameful to treat DACA students like outcasts, when they have lived, worked, and gone to schools in this country since they were children” (qtd. in May). Even while meeting all the eligibility requirements many Missouri students on DACA will in no way be able to afford to go to school in their own state. With tuition rates doubled, some almost tripled, and not qualifying for federal financial aid Missouri DACA recipients are being driven away from state universities and the pursuit of a higher education. Jeffrey A. Mittman, Executive Director of the ACLU of Missouri said, “Our Missouri public institutions of higher learning exist to open doors of opportunity to hard-working students striving to get ahead. Now, there are extreme financial burdens being put on the backs of students already struggling to achieve their goals of higher education” (ACLU). The financial

burden of college is something that many people who plan to attend college will have, DACA recipients will now face this problem and seeking education in a different state.

If students don't qualify for in-state tuition rates in the state they reside in, many are forced to seek education out of state. Which in turn, may save them some money on tuition but they would spend that saved money on moving themselves to a new state, i.e., gas, moving trucks, longer trips back and forth from college to their hometown, and spending money on room and board that they might otherwise not spend if they were able to go to school closer to home. Jose Godinez, a DACA recipient who earned a law degree from Florida State University, stated, "It's going to be a state by state fight, it's not enough. It's not going to be and never will be enough. We are still seeing a lot of struggles" (Llenas). Godinez is referring to the fact that although there are many minor temporary solutions to this one problem, there is still no absolute solution and everything that has been stated is only a temporary escape for these students.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals is still a new program, which can change at any time. As stated before, this is only temporary relief for these students. Until a more permanent solution can be found, many DACA recipients will have to rely on as many privately funded and non-federal grants and scholarships as they can find and qualify for. Influential people in our society that believe strongly in aiding these students have donated to the cause. Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, has donated 5 million dollars to give scholarships to undocumented immigrants. He states, "America was founded as a nation of immigrants. We ought to welcome smart and hardworking young people from every nation, and to help everyone in our society achieve their full potential. If we help more young immigrants climb the ladder to new opportunities, then our country will make greater progress" (Foley). If more

people thought like Zuckerberg and would embrace the fact that undocumented immigrant students, who at no fault of their own were migrated here, would like to pay society back, aiding the country in furthering their advancement in the global economy.

Seventeen years after being brought to the United States, my parents' dreams for me are unfolding into reality in front of their eyes. I will be graduating in May 2016 from high school. I will no longer need to worry about what I will do after high school as a result of my illegal immigrant status. Even though I will be attending college, I will be doing so in the state of Kansas due to Missouri barring DACA recipients from paying the very much-needed in-state tuition rates. DACA has helped me, as well as many other students in similar situations, to find a temporary pathway to accomplish what our parents have dreamed for us. Including the entire reasoning behind the big decision that is migrating to the United States illegally, a chance at a brighter future and a real chance to succeed in this country. While this has given me temporary relief and an unexpected chance to succeed at a dream that was unreachable 5 years ago, I know that this is only the beginning of a much needed reform for illegal immigrants. This temporary solution to an ongoing problem, has paved the way for immigrants to change the future. Isn't that what our country was founded on from the beginning?

#### Works Cited

ACLU "American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri."

*Immigrant Students Sue Missouri Schools* :: N.p., 13  
Oct. 2015. Web. 11 Nov. 2015.

Foley, Elise. "Mark Zuckerberg And Priscilla Chan Donate \$5 Million For Scholarships For Dreamers." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2015.



Llenas, Bryan. "Undocumented Youth With Work Permits Seek Professional Licenses." *Fox News Latino*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2015.

May, Caroline. "Illegal Immigrants Sue, Seeking Lower Tuition in Missouri." *Breitbart*. N.p., 15 Oct. 2015. Web. 11 Nov. 2015.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### Content

1. According to the author, what issues do illegal immigrants face as they grow up?
2. What issues does the author point out surrounding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program?
3. What hopes and fears does the author convey about her own life and experiences?

### Style

4. How does the author rhetorically incorporate her own experiences as examples in the essay? What does this add to the essay?
5. Besides the author's own experiences, how are other sources used to help advance the argument being made?
6. What people and public figures are being used as citations in the essay? What effect does using these people have on the ethos of the author's argument?

# THE CONTRACEPTION MISCONCEPTION

Mackenna N. Kemp

The rise in popularity of television shows such as *16 and Pregnant* and *The Secret Life of The American Teenager* has many parents and educators quaking in their boots. The prospect of having a child or student partaking in premarital sexual intercourse is daunting, and the possible consequences are unfathomable. Families want to protect their children's innocence for as long as possible, although suppression may not be the best form of education. Despite the rise in teen pregnancies over the last few decades, many federal policy makers continue to push for increased funding for abstinence-only programs; these programs ignore youth's basic human right and the fundamental public health principle of accurate, balanced, sex education. Abstinence-only sex education leads to higher rates of underage unprotected sex, and consequently higher rates of teen pregnancy and STD/STI's. Federally funded abstinence-only sex education programs should be eradicated and replaced with medically accurate and inclusive classes that place focus on safe sex practices, such as using contraception.

Parents and educators convince themselves that abstinence-only sex education works, yet the majority of teens and young

adults have intercourse before they marry; this naiveté aids in the development of stigmas that prevent students from accessing proper health care. Although many parents believe that the programs are working, they are fundamentally flawed, as “the median age of sexual initiation among Americans is 17 and the average age of marriage is 25.8 for women and 27.4 for men” (“Truth”). The facts show that these programs do not prevent youth from engaging in sexual activity; they only prevent them from practicing safe sex and accessing proper health care. The interval between the time an adolescent female starts sexual activity and seeks health care services is approximately 12 months (Keefe). Ignoring the evidence that teenagers are having premarital sex does not prevent them from doing so; we must provide comprehensive sex education in order to prevent inaccurate statistics from being perpetuated and to comply with public preference.

Despite the opposition of public opinion, “the federal government has invested more than \$1.5 billion in state and federal dollars since 1997 into abstinence only programs” (“Abstinence”). Federal policy makers are ignoring the wants and needs of the American public by continuing to proliferate such harmful programs. Unfortunately, these programs are expanding steadily along with their funding. Students’ access to accurate information is rapidly declining as, “In 1999, 23 percent of sex education teachers in secondary school taught abstinence as the only way to prevent pregnancy and STIs, compared to the only two percent who had done so in 1988” (Keefe). Unlike most school subjects, few improvements have been made in regards to sexual health courses. Students are more likely to have inadequate sex education classes now than they were in the 1980’s. In fact, “between 1995 and 2002, the proportion of adolescents who received any formal instruction about birth control declined significantly (from 81% to 66% of males and

from 87% to 70% for females). By 2002, one third of adolescents of each gender had not received any instruction about birth control methods” (Keefe). Abstinence-only sex education has been expanding its reach since 1988 due to increased funding from Christian extremist groups, and in turn is negatively affecting more young students.

Although they are a minority in the United States, Ultraconservative Christians offer the main sources of support in Congress for abstinence-only education, which creates a gap between majority opinion and religious agenda. Against popular opinion, “The impetus for abstinence education came from evangelical Christians who tend to have very different views from other Americans about sex and sexuality” (Keefe). These minority-driven ideologies are extremely prevalent in abstinence-only curricula; many programs utilize disturbing metaphors in which non-virgins are compared to sticks of chewed gum or used tape. Students are taught that if they have sex before marriage, they are tainted or dirty (Hellerstein). This sort of moral degradation can be extremely harmful to those who are sexually experienced or those who are victims of sexual assault. The irony of this brand of program is that, without exception, Republican majority states have higher rates of divorce, teen births, and abortion than Democratic states do, despite the perception of liberals as, “sex-crazed infidels and homo-sympathizers” (“Abstinence”). So why do these conservative states continue to linger on such antiquated views? Perhaps it is religious dedication, but “a more insightful explanation is that these socially troubled communities cling onto absolutes in the abstract because they cannot live up to them in practice” (“Abstinence”). Although Conservative Christian Congress members continue to push for federal funding for abstinence-only sex education programs, the majority of Americans don’t agree with their stances and reject their distorted reality.

Abstinence-only programs are full of false information, intended to scare young adults; however, these so-called 'preventative actions' lead to the improper use of contraception among teens. Shockingly enough, "One national study found 'false, misleading, or distorted information about reproductive health' in more than 80% of the most popular abstinence-only curricula" ("Abstinence"). Due to their limited access to proper sex education, methods such as using two condoms or coitus interruptus, or the "pull-out" method, are still popular among teens. However, these methods are still very unsafe; using two condoms can cause the latex to tear, and the withdrawal method "is estimated to have a 27% failure rate annually among typical users" (Fu). Such misconceptions are extremely common in youth culture, and limiting students' access to unbiased information by teaching false material only makes the problem worse. Although disproven by numerous studies, some programs still teach that "a 43-day-old fetus is a 'thinking person', that HIV can be spread through sweat and tears; condoms don't prevent HIV transmission, women who get abortions are more prone to suicide, and 10% of women who have abortions will be unable to conceive again" ("Truth"). These falsities can range from slightly incorrect to downright offensive, but they are being taught as fact. Teachers are made to force-feed inaccurate information to students, which causes their pupils to search for outside information and often suffer from the consequences. Abstinence-only programs limit students' and teachers' freedom of speech by restricting their access to accurate and unbiased information (Keefe). Students are unable to voice their questions and concerns, and teachers are not allowed to answer truthfully. So although teachers and parents may assume that their children aren't engaging in sexual activity but, seeing as more than half of teens engage in premarital intercourse, sex education programs

should be based on unbiased, medically accurate information (Keefe).

Many abstinence-only programs also implement virginity pledges, or commitments made by teenagers and young adults to refrain from sexual intercourse until marriage. However, virginity pledges make no significant difference on when youth begin having intercourse, and can actually increase the rates of unprotected and oral sex in teens. Concernedly, “A 2004 review by Advocates for Youth found that abstinence-only programs showed little evidence of sustained impacts on attitudes and intentions. Worse, they showed some negative impacts on youth’s willingness to use contraception, including condoms” (“Truth”). These pledges become guilt-trips that assume that all their participants want to get married, or that they haven’t already engaged in sexual activity. The only impact virginity pledges seem to be making is “that the “no sex” pledging teens were less likely to use contraceptives- thanks to the sex ‘education’ they received” (“Abstinence”). Even those who insist they kept their virginity pledges, seem to have done so conditionally. Not surprisingly, “a majority of college undergraduates who took and claimed to have kept virginity pledges later admitted to having engaged in oral sex” (“Abstinence”). Vows of abstinence simply encourage youth to redefine “sex” in order to fit their own terms, but exclude those who have already participated in sexual activity, whether consensually or not. Somewhat limiting, “Virginity pledges are particularly problematic for teens that have been sexually assaulted or sexually abused and for teens who are gay and lesbian. In addition many see virginity pledging as a faith-based message trying to be a secular health message” (“Truth”). Despite their good intent, virginity pledges implemented in abstinence-only programs cause higher rates of unprotected sex and fail to educate youth on the effectiveness of contraceptives.

Abstinence-only programs can also negatively impact LGBT+ youth, as well as sexually experienced youth. Currently, programs that are federally funded have to follow a strict eight-point outline that stresses the possible psychological dangers of premarital sex, and pushes monogamous marriages before sexual initiation. These eight points are not based upon facts and exclude sexually experienced youth, as well as LGBT people (Keefe). By not teaching LGBT inclusive programs, schools alienate and fail to properly educate an entire group of their students on safe-sex measures. Public schools should provide accurate and diverse sex education to all of their students, including minority groups, in order to create a more equally educated youth. Unfortunately, most abstinence-only programs do not teach inclusively. For example, “one commonly used textbook addresses only “traditional marriage,” defined as “an emotional, spiritual, and legal commitment a man and woman make to one another” (“Report”). These methods stress hetero-centric lifestyles and frown upon LGBT youth, calling them “deviant and immoral” (Keefe). In the process of pushing fundamentally Christian morals, “programs ignore the emotional and health needs of LGBT youth, degenerating them to a dauntless choice- pretend to be straight or remain celibate forever” (Keefe). Also, abstinence-only programs don’t teach how to use certain methods of contraception, such as dams, that can help protect those who are gay or transgender. Those who are part of the LGBT community and those who are sexually experienced are undeniably discriminated against in abstinence-only sex education programs, due to the conservative influence on sex education curricula.

In sharp contrast with conservative Congress members, the majority of the American populous supports accurate and inclusive sex education programs while “only 15% of American adults believe that schools should teach abstinence from

sexual intercourse and should not provide information on how to obtain condoms and other contraception” (“Truth”). The federal government should be obligated to reform sex education to reflect the opinions of the majority of its citizens, and “the public supports a broad sex education curriculum that stresses abstinence but that also conveys complete and medically accurate information about contraception and condoms” (Keefe). The United States Government has the responsibility to spread accurate information regarding sexual health in order to discredit misinformation, as sex education programs that are honest with students have greater levels of success of decreasing rates of teenage pregnancy and STI/STDs.

Some parents and educators discourage teaching contraceptive methods in fear that it will increase the frequency at which youth are engaging in sexual activity, and that it will cause too many awkward questions in the classroom. Despite the brief discomfort it may cause teachers and parents, providing accurate sex education courses actually decreases the percentage of teen and young adult pregnancy and increases the average age of initial sexual intercourse. Teenagers that are knowledgeable about matters of intimate health are more likely to wait until they are out of high school (“Abstinence”). Access to unbiased information allows young adults to culminate their personal limitations, but restricting their education to misinformed scare tactics can harm students in the long run. Also numerous studies have shown the benefits of accurate sex education: “Programs that include information about both abstinence and contraception can work to help teens delay sexual activity, have fewer sexual partners and increase contraceptive use when the begin having sex” (Keefe). In order to protect them from the risks of unprotected sex, such as teen pregnancy and STI/STDs, students should be provided with comprehensive classes that emphasize contraceptive use.



Despite what many abstinence-only sex education programs state, contraceptives, such as condoms and birth control, are extremely effective when used properly. If a woman consistently and correctly uses condoms when engaging in intercourse, her chances of getting pregnant within a year are less than 3% (“Truth”). Many parents refrain from discussing contraceptives with their children to prevent uncomfortable questions; however, “teens whose mothers talked to them about condoms before their first sexual encounter... were 3 times more likely to use condoms than teens who either never discussed condoms... or who discussed condoms only after initiating sexual activity” (“Patterns”). Condoms in particular are exceptionally effective at preventing the spread of HIV and other STI/STDs. As found “in a two-year study of sero-discordant couples (in which one partner was HIV-positive and one was HIV-negative), no uninfected partner became infected among couples using condoms correctly and consistently... versus 10 percent of those using condoms inconsistently” (Alford). Other methods of contraception, such as dams or diaphragms, should be taught in classrooms alongside condoms and birth control in order to allow teens to protect themselves in a way that works for them. Also, public schools should implement condom availability programs in order to encourage students to be safe when they engage in sexual activities. These “programs encourage sexually active teens to use condoms more often and more consistently than do their sexually active peers who are without condom availability programs” (Alford). Contraception, when used consistently and properly, provides effective protection for its users, and should be taught accurately in sex education classes.

Abstinence-only sex education is harmful to teens as it denies the commonality of premarital sex, and disregards public preference to proliferate ultraconservative views of sexuality. Students who are limited or refused access to accurate and

unbiased information are susceptible to higher rates of teen pregnancy and STI/STDs. Abstinence-only programs also repress sexually experienced, as well as LGBT students and other minority groups. The federal government should eliminate funding for abstinence-only sex education and replace these outdated programs with medically accurate and inclusive sex education classes.

#### Works Cited

- “Abstinence-Only Sex Education.” *Consumer Health Complete [EBSCO]*. Explora Secondary School, 17 Dec. 2004. Web. 10 Dec. 2015.
- Alford, Susan. “Condom Effectiveness.” *Condom Effectiveness*. Advocates for Youth, Sept. 2005. Web. 10 Dec. 2015.
- Fu, Haishan, Jacqueline E. Darroch, Taylor Haas, and Nalini Ranjit. “Contraceptive Failure Rates.” *Contraceptive Failure Rates*. Guttmacher Institute, Mar.-Apr. 1999. Web. 10 Dec. 2015.
- Hellerstein, Erica. “This Is How We Are Spending Billions On The Sexual Mis-Education Of America’s Youth.” *ThinkProgress RSS*. N.p., 01 July 2015. Web. 10 Dec. 2015.
- Keefe, Marilyn. „Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage.“ *Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage*. Advocates for Youth, July 2007. Web. 07 Dec. 2015.
- “Patterns of Condom Use Among Adolescents.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. American Journal of Public Health, 8 June 2009. Web. 10 Dec. 2015.
- “Report: Birds, Bees and Bias.” *Report: Birds, Bees and Bias*. New York Civil Liberties Union, 2012. Web. 10 Dec. 2015.
- “The Truth About Abstinence-Only.” *The Truth About Abstinence-Only*. Advocates for Youth, 7 Mar. 2007. Web. 10 Dec. 2015

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

### **Content**

1. What central argument is the author making in this essay? Against what position is the author situating this essay?
2. What are the negative effects of abstinence-only programs the author points out?
3. What positive arguments does the author make for the benefits of safe sex education?

### **Style**

4. What types of information are incorporated from the sources used in this essay?
5. Looking at the sources being used, how would you characterize their effect on the ethos of the essay?
6. Besides citing information from sources, what other kinds of argument are employed by the author in making the argument?

# GRADES ABOVE LEARNING

Remington Lamb

As I sit in my second row seat staring at the geometry end-of-semester review, my mind is a cloud of confusion. I stare at the sixty-something questions and can remember how to do maybe ten of them. I'm frustrated because I know I learned the skills to complete these problems just months ago, and yet they look like Egyptian hieroglyphics to me now. I remember taking tests over those skills, I remember the very grades I received on those tests, and yet, I cannot remember how to answer the questions. I had retained the knowledge needed to solve those equations just long enough to receive the grade I needed to get an A in the class. I didn't care about retaining knowledge; I cared about getting an A in the class. The great stress I have put upon me to do well on tests has made it so that the tests are all I focus on instead of the actual retention of knowledge. The focus public education has placed on standardized testing has turned its students into nothing more than cynical grade collectors.

I was born in West Jordan, Utah, a suburb of Salt Lake City. I attended kindergarten through third grade in the rather progressive Utahnian education system. Kindergarten consisted of creating intricate castles out of blocks, writing small reports on my favorite animals and listening to my teacher, Mr. Mednick, play songs on his homemade guitars. We had many class

discussions, we hardly took tests, and we learned a ton. This free-structured learning environment created an environment that bestowed a love of learning in me at an early age. Throughout first, second, and third grade, my love for learning only grew. My teachers challenged me but also found fun, creative ways to teach the class new concepts. When we learned to write a fictional story, the teacher split us into groups and we began our essay by writing for five minutes. When the five minutes were up, we passed our papers to the student to the left of us and read what they wrote. We then had five minutes to write on their essay and continue their story. When the essays rotated back to us we had a finished story. The next step was editing. Instead of teaching us the intense and strict grammatical rules of punctuation, our teacher advised us to put commas where we would naturally pause. My elementary school "... [emphasized]... language arts [through] emphasis on creative writing" (Anyon 174). This style of teaching and lack of emphasis on state testing allowed me to cultivate a love of the core subjects before getting into the hard parts of the learning. This was so important because when students find a love of learning early, they are more likely to excel in school. People do well at and push themselves in things they love.

When we moved to Missouri my educational experience shifted drastically. On my first day in Mrs. Parker's third grade class, the main topic of discussion was the MAP test. I found it unnecessary and rather obnoxious to be talking about standardized testing so early in the year. Utah schools had standardized tests, but we focused on making learning fun throughout the year, so when the test did come, we already had the knowledge to do well on it. That was not the case at James Lewis Elementary. Instead, we learned the material that would be on the MAP test and only that material. We were constantly reminded that we needed to learn certain concepts a certain way because that's how it would

be presented on the MAP, not because that learning or type of execution of a problem was the easiest, most logical way to solve a problem, but because that method is what would help us get the highest scores. For example, when learning how to properly answer a short answer question we were taught to ALWAYS restate the question. This is a logical teaching because it ensures the student read the question carefully and answers all parts of the question. But instead of the teacher explaining this to us, she simply said, “You must always restate the question because if you don’t, you will be counted off on the MAP.” The school promoted ways of teaching that, “[involved] rote behavior and very little decision making or choice” (Anyon 167). I began to resent my teachers and school for implementing this detached, mechanical way of teaching and my love for learning diminished: I was slowly morphed into a student who couldn’t care less if I retained knowledge as long as I got a good grade on the test.

My disdain towards my learning experience grew and grew during middle and high school. I “learned” from test to test. As soon as I received the grade I wanted, I forgot the information that earned me that grade entirely. To make matters worse, my teachers did nothing to reverse this negative attitude I had towards learning; in fact, they encouraged it. If I scored advanced on my EOC’s, I didn’t have to take my finals. If I got an A on a test, I got a homework pass. And they never encouraged me to delve deeper into their curriculum. Once, while listening to a lesson about cellular respiration, I asked my teacher to further explain the production of four ATP during glycolysis. My teacher paused and sternly replied, “That is not on the test so don’t worry about it.” I was astonished by this answer for I had always believed that my teachers wanted me to ask questions and learn more about the subject than what I would be tested on. At first I blamed these curt answers and seemingly unmotivated attitudes on what I thought was the laziness of my teachers, but I came

to understand that because of the amount of reward schools get for good test scores from their students, teachers are pressured by their superiors to teach the test material and not waste time on anything else.

Admittedly, standardized tests, although overemphasized, are important. They provide the means for our government to make sure that the student population is learning at least the basics in core subjects. They make American education more uniform across the country, so as to help create an overall educated society, and they help the government gauge how well certain school districts are teaching their students. Although they are important, standardized tests should not be the focus of the entire curriculum. Rather, teachers should go throughout the year teaching in-depth knowledge of the subjects and cultivating a love of learning in their students. They should do this not by assigning busy work to their students but by promoting class discussion, finding creative ways to help students not only learn but retain skills such as bringing in guest speakers who are experts in a subject or doing hands on projects, and building personal relationships with their students. When teachers and schools do not foster these elements of a good learning experience, students will not make the effort to love learning. When teachers practice detached, mechanical methods of teaching, they “... [encourage] our best and brightest to become cynical grade collectors and ... [develop] an obsession with evaluation and assessment” (Rose 164). The American education system should strive to create students who do well on tests because they genuinely know information on the subject and because they have retained knowledge over the school year not students who study only the information on the test for five hours the night before. Students who fall into this trap of educational indifference will be the students who become idiotic, robotic products of a standardized schooling system. If America’s students do become these

indifferent, uniformly educated citizens then its democracy will cease to exist because all its people will be the same. They will have learned how to restate questions, give three examples in a long answer question, conjugate all decimals into fractions, and believe that tests are a true depiction of knowledge. They will possess the same way of thinking and problem solving so their opinions will also be the same. There will be no need for voting or electing because everyone will think the same way. The American lifestyle will evolve from one of vibrance, spontaneity, and creativity to one of uniformity, dullness, and conformity.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

#### **Content**

1. What argument is the author making about grades in the educational system and their effect on students?
2. What methods of learning does the author advocate as useful in building lasting knowledge?
3. In what ways did the author note differences in classroom interactions between school districts?

#### **Style**

4. How does the author's tone and voice affect the ethos of the essay?
5. What methods does the author use to connect his personal experiences to the broader point being made?
6. How does the author incorporate sources to help relate the essay to a broader academic context?
7. Where does the author make claims? How are they supported through evidence or examples?





## INTERMEDIATE CATEGORY WINNER

## A PENETRATING TRUTH

Audrey Wishall

*Heart of Darkness* is a book that has received both praise and criticism. One who has criticized it is Chinua Achebe, well-known author of the novel *Things Fall Apart*. In “An Image of Africa”, a response essay to *Heart of Darkness*, Achebe renounces the novella as racist and a disgrace to the talent of its author. While Achebe highlights some legitimate points of concern within *Heart of Darkness*, such as the uncivilized manner in which both Africa and its people are described, his obsession with these negative aspects of the book causes him to overlook some crucial elements within *Heart of Darkness*. The novella also describes the Europeans in an unflattering manner and highlights many similarities between them and the Africans. These similarities—combined with the insightful revelations of the tormented Mr. Kurtz—result in a deeper truth running throughout the book: the darkness at the heart of all men. Therefore by deploring this book as a racist text, Achebe misses its true meaning.

Although Achebe’s strong convictions keep him from noticing some important details in *Heart of Darkness*, he makes some insightful observations as well. According to Achebe, *Heart of Darkness* depicts Africa as “a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril” (9). Continual references to

Africa's mysterious nature and the negative effect it has on all who enter it are indeed made throughout the book. The African jungle is described as "a black and incomprehensible frenzy" (Conrad 32), and as having "the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention" (Conrad 30). Before the narrator, Marlow, sets out on his journey for Africa, he meets with a doctor who measures the heads of all men who go into the Congo. While measuring Marlow's head, the doctor hints at the negative mental effects that this journey has had on all who have taken it previously. Prior to boarding the ship that begins his fateful voyage, Marlow has a moment's hesitation in the street, something that he describes as being out of character for him. These factors contribute to a sense that something is wrong in this African jungle.

After discussing this observation, Achebe devotes the majority of his essay to his concerns regarding *Heart of Darkness*' portrayal of the African people, or 'savages', as they are often called. He quotes an entire page describing the African world and its inhabitants, highlighting a particular passage: "What thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—like yours...Ugly" (Conrad 32). Achebe references the novella's portrayal of an African fireman aboard Marlow's ship as an "improved specimen" (Conrad 33), and recalls a dying African helmsman making eye contact with Marlow in his last moments, a look that Marlow recalled as being "a claim of distant kinship affirmed in a supreme moment" (Conrad 46). Achebe rebukes *Heart of Darkness* for describing this man as kin, not brother, and for referring to his look as a claim of kinship, rather than the reality of it. Achebe also reveals that while the Europeans have numerous conversations, the Africans are only recorded speaking twice throughout the entire novella. Based on Achebe's argument alone, the intentions that the novella has towards the Africans are indeed troubling.

However, as Hugh Mercer Curtler writes, “There is considerable truth in *Heart of Darkness* – beginning with the uncertainty about whether the ‘savages’ are black or white” (Curtler 276). Whatever objections may arise regarding *Heart of Darkness*’ intentions toward Africa, the same objections could be held regarding its intentions toward Europe. Achebe reveals numerous negative statements that the novella makes regarding Africans, but he neglects to notice the novella’s many unflattering passages regarding white people. On numerous occasions the book’s main narrator, Marlow, states his utter confusion regarding the people in charge of his journey and the citizens of Europe. While stopping briefly at his company’s headquarters in Europe, Marlow meets with their accountant. Marlow notes a complete contradiction of reality as this man obsesses over maintaining correct entries, while fifty feet below his doorstep lies the ‘grove of death’, a gathering of trees where African slaves lay practically dead. Marlow continues on and meets his general manager, a man whose smile he describes as making the meaning of his words inscrutable, a man who Marlow says, “inspired uneasiness” (Conrad 18). Later Marlow observes his coworkers’ fixation on ivory, an obsession so great that “the word...rang in the air...You would think they were praying to it” (Conrad 20). As a result of all these experiences Marlow simply remarks, “I have never seen anything so unreal in my life” (Conrad 20). Therefore, before Marlow embarks for the Congo, he exudes a sense that not only is something wrong with the African jungle he is headed for, but that something is wrong with the country he is leaving as well. Once encountering the Congo and its people, Marlow continues to notice upsetting details regarding his own culture. These observations reach their climax when Marlow meets the famous Mr. Kurtz, the very man who Marlow had been sent to find and bring home.

When Marlow meets Mr. Kurtz, he is both awed and horrified. As Caryl Phillips asked in her article “Was Joseph Conrad Really a Racist?,” “What happens to this one individual who imagines himself to be released from the moral order of society and therefore free to behave as ‘savagely’ or as ‘decently’ as he deems fit? How does this man respond to chaos?” (62). Phillips poses a fascinating question. What happened to Mr. Kurtz? Marlow describes Mr. Kurtz as having “no restraint,” a trait which Marlow had admired in the African cannibals he employed (Conrad 46). While Achebe attributes Kurtz’s madness to Africa, stating that this is yet another example of *Heart of Darkness*’ disrespect for his country, Marlow describes Kurtz’s words as a “deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness” (Conrad 43). Later he states, “All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz” (Conrad 45). Additionally, Marlow describes Kurtz’s encounter with the Congo jungle: “I think it had whispered to him things about himself which he did not know – things of which he had no conception till he took counsel with this great solitude” (Conrad 53). These occasions imply that not only was there darkness already within Kurtz, but that this darkness was largely encouraged by his country, and was simply revealed by the isolation Kurtz encountered in Africa. Despite his deteriorated state, Kurtz exposes one of the most insightful meanings running throughout all of *Heart of Darkness* with his final words: “The horror, the horror” (Conrad 64). While it may be interpreted that these words are referring simply to the horror within the African jungle, the novella’s inclusion of negative statements regarding both Africans and Europeans and the numerous similarities shown between them can lead to a different conclusion.

*Heart of Darkness* presents fascinating similarities between the African and European cultures. While Marlow puzzles over the Europeans’ fixation upon ivory, he later points out

the Africans' obsession with Kurtz and their idolization of him. Amidst these Africans is a Congolese woman, with whom it is implied that Kurtz was involved. Kurtz was also betrothed to a European woman in his own country. Upon losing Kurtz, the Congolese woman "opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head" (Conrad 56). Later, Kurtz's fiancée "put her arms out as if after a retreating figure" (Conrad 71). Marlow witnesses both of these occasions, and describes the gesture of Kurtz's betrothed as "resembling...another one, tragic also" (Conrad 71). He sees two women mourning the same man, in the same manner, and for a moment sees no difference between them, only their tragedy. In addition to this startling parallel, Marlow continually implies that something about both Europe and Africa feels outside of reality. The European city he visits seems to him "a cleared speck on the earth", surrounded by a "silent wilderness...great and invincible, like evil or truth, waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion" (Conrad 20). Upon arriving in the Congo, he recounts a sensation of being "cut off forever from everything you had known once—somewhere—far away—in another existence perhaps" (Conrad 30). Distracted by his many duties aboard their ship, Marlow says, "the reality—the reality, I tell you—fades. The inner truth is hidden...But I felt it all the same" (Conrad 30). He constantly hints at this truth, this realization about life that all cultures seem to be either ignorant of or just simply ignoring.

However, Kurtz's gaze is described as embracing the entire universe, and his final words depicted as "the appalling face of a glimpsed truth" (Conrad 65). Had the Europeans been described with great reverence and only the Africans been portrayed in an unseemly manner, perhaps this truth could have been perceived as the supremacy of whites over blacks. If the general manager's smile had inspired tranquility, and his city represented as one in possession of this valuable truth, it could be said that Kurtz's

final words described “the horror” of Africa. The complicated part is that, while incomplete, this conclusion is not entirely untrue. However, what is missing from this assumption and what Chinua Achebe failed to note is that while the Congo jungle is described as “the heart of darkness” (Conrad 31), the witness to Marlow’s narration, sitting in a boat on the Thames River reports sailing into “the heart of an immense darkness” (Conrad 72). The truth that Kurtz glimpsed, the enlightenment he offered to Marlow with his final breath, is a worldwide darkness, a universal sickness. Kurtz discerned his own corruption amidst the solitude of the jungle, and confirmed what Marlow had in fact suspected throughout his entire journey: regardless of their color, darkness pollutes the hearts of all men.

Chinua Achebe is not wrong in his argument that *Heart of Darkness* contains racist comments regarding his people. However, as Cedric Watts states in his article, “A Bloody Racist’: About Achebe’s View of Conrad”, “Conrad [was]...influenced by the climate prejudice of [his] time...What is interesting is that [his] best work...seems to transcend such prejudice” (Watts 208). Achebe, blinded by his own anger, missed the true meaning of this book. It reveals insights about the nature of all men, of all races. He claimed in one of his own interviews that “a visitor can sometimes see what the owner of the house has ignored” (Phillips 65). Had Achebe been willing to look beyond the negative statements made regarding Africans and their country, he may have seen the revelations that *Heart of Darkness* offers both African and European culture, and their ultimate flaws. Had Achebe chosen to think further on what his “visitor” observed, he may have glimpsed the truth that Kurtz, Marlow, and the narrator of this penetrating novella uncovered.

### Works Cited

- Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa." *Research in African Literatures* 9.1 (1978): 1–15. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Feb. 2016.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. 1902. Mineola: Dover Publications, 1990. Print.
- Curtler, Hugh Mercer. "Political Correctness and the Attack on Great Literature." *Modern Age* 51.3/4 (2009): 272-279. *Academic Search Elite*. Web. 14 Mar. 2016.
- Phillips, Caryl, and Chinua Achebe. "Was Joseph Conrad Really a Racist?." *Philosophia Africana* 10.1 (2007): 59-66. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 14 Mar. 2016.
- Watts, Cedric. "A Bloody Racist': About Achebe's View of Conrad." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 13.1 (1983): 96–209. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 Mar. 2016.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

#### Content

1. What is the author's overall analysis of *Heart of Darkness*?
2. How does the author's argument relate to Achebe's essay? What positions of Achebe's does the author agree with? What is being argued against?
3. What comparisons is the author making between representations of Africans and representations of Europeans in *Heart of Darkness*?

#### Style

4. How does the author rhetorically frame the essay's main arguments against those made by Achebe? What phrases and structures are used to help show how the arguments engage each other?



5. What role do the other sources play in the author's argument? How are they used in the context of the argument being made?
6. How does the author incorporate textual examples from *Heart of Darkness*? What role do they play within the structure of the argument?
7. How does the author provide commentary on the texts being used in the essay? What are the strategies being used to differentiate between what the author thinks and what the sources have to say?

# THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN *HEART OF DARKNESS*

Willow Carr

Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* has been discussed in depth by scholars and students alike on its merit as a great piece of fiction and its seemingly problematic topics. Some—such as Chinua Achebe—argue that the text is racist and should therefore not be seen as a great piece of work, while others defend Conrad's text by arguing that the novella investigates the racism during the time period instead of endorsing it. Another topic that has been touched on is the presence—or lack thereof—of women in the novella. In the following sections, the intention is to display why the portrayal of women in *Heart of Darkness* differs greatly from the portrayal of men in the novella, and how this portrayal is ultimately sexist.

Though some may say that the view of women during the time period in which *Heart of Darkness* was written would justify the characterization of women in the novella, the presence of challenges to the populace's perception of women throughout the mid-to-late nineteenth century counter this view. These challenges were presented as part of the women's suffrage movement and rising feminist ideas in Great Britain—of which

Joseph Conrad became a citizen in the late nineteenth century—and introduced the public to new perspectives regarding the autonomy of women and the gender roles assigned to them. Due to the presence of these perspectives—and the difficulty in ignoring them due to their controversy—Conrad’s text can ultimately be found sexist due to its portrayal of women as non-complex figures for the male gaze despite the author’s likely introduction to the contrary. From Marlow’s perspective throughout the novel, women are treated as fanciful figures stuck in an idealistic universe of their own creation and are therefore not treated as competent compared to their male counterparts. In this essay, the underlying sexism of *Heart of Darkness* will be discussed by three main concepts: Marlow’s view of women’s competency and grasp of reality, the lack of female narrative voice and names, and Marlow’s characterization of the African woman versus Kurtz’s Intended.

Near the beginning of the novella, the main narrative voice of our journey states, “It’s queer how out of touch with truth women are” (Conrad 10). These words from Marlow set the stage for how the mental state of women will be approached throughout the story and begin the stream of sexism that flows throughout the text. Marlow’s view of women as being out of touch with the realities of the world appears to come from growing in a time period where the view of women as sentient, capable human beings was a struggling concept. This view of females as being inherently less grounded may also come from Marlow appearing to have no close female figures in his life. Apart from his Aunt—who he treats with little respect in regards to intelligence—Marlow appears to have no feminine ties whatsoever. This lack of familiarity with the opposite sex may lead him to conform to the stereotypes regarding female intelligence associated with his peers during the time period, and lead him to make assumptions that he carries with him throughout the novella.

This lack of respect towards the female mind may have also ultimately led Marlow to be untruthful to Kurtz's Intended about Kurtz's utterances before death. At the end of the novella, Kurtz's Intended asks Marlow for her beloved's final words and in seemingly a moment of uneasiness, Marlow responds that his final word was her name. This omission of Kurtz's actual final words could be seen as Marlow simply not wanting to relive the moment or not wanting to further upset Kurtz's Intended, but this lie could also be viewed as Marlow's opportunity to alter Kurtz's legacy—and his own—to a more ideal one. This sentiment appears in Susan Hagen's, "Gender, Intelligence, and Good Sex in *Heart of Darkness*." In this text, Hagen introduces the idea that although Marlow does not value the female mind, he still appreciates the alternate reality that women live in because "someone must be there to believe [the men's] lies and give [the men] the mission to live them out" (Hagen 51). Through Marlow's belief that the female mind is more easily molded to idealism, he and his peers are then able to live morally unjust lives on their travels and face no consequences when they arrive home. The men sent to the Congo can continue the journey to further ignite their insatiable desire for ivory and Kurtz's violent actions can be buried along with him while his Intended praises his "noble heart" (Conrad 70).

Another way in which the novella is sexist is that the female characters have little to no narrative voice. As Marlow states, "They—the women, I mean—are out of it—should be out of it", and with how the novella approaches the influence of women in the story, they truly do seem to be pushed aside of the story's proceedings (Conrad 44). Compared to the male figures in the novella, the desires or purposes of the female characters are never truly written to inspire further inquiry. These women clearly have some influence—such as Marlow's Aunt assisting Marlow in receiving his job to sail the Congo, or the African woman's and

Intended's contributions to Kurtz's actions or mindset—but the novella never explores these influences in a way to make them more than an implication. Through this denial of influence or intent, female characters in *Heart of Darkness* do not become more than a vague shadow in terms of characterization.

Additionally, the female characters are not named in the novella and are only referred to by station or their relation to a male character—Kurtz's Intended, Marlow's Aunt. Though it could be argued that the omission of names for female characters is not entirely stark when compared to the lack of learned male names in the novella, it still remains that the only characters that do have names are singularly male. This omission of names seems to imply that the merit of the women in the story relies entirely on their relation to men and not as singular individuals. As pointed out by Gabrielle McIntire in "The Women Do Not Travel: Gender, Difference, and Incommensurability in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," the only traditionally feminine name that appears in the novella is placed on an object: Marlow's ship, the *Nellie*. While McIntire includes that the naming of vessels under feminine names was common for the period, she concludes that naming the ship a traditionally female name "nevertheless underscores the fact that he leaves every *woman* of his text unnamed" (McIntire 257). Based on the fact that Marlow only takes the time to mention the feminine name of his ship, it appears that Marlow places more value and respect into an inanimate object than female human beings. The action of naming something—or someone—implies that the person creating the name places value in the object or entity, or that there is a connection felt between the individual and the object or entity. By deciding to create a name for his ship, Marlow displays a connection felt with the object that supports him on his travels. However, by never naming the women he encounters—especially his Aunt, who can be seen as supporting

him by providing him with work—Marlow displays a lack of general connection and appreciation.

Although Marlow takes no time to state the names of the women he encounters, their physical appearance is something that is apparently worth mentioning. Upon first encountering the African woman in the Congo, Marlow wastes no time to comment on her physical appearance. As she first appears, Marlow comments that she is “a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman” (Conrad 55). Upon comparison to the European women that he has encountered, Marlow seems to find the African woman otherworldly due to her attractiveness despite her heritage and apparent lack of refined culture. He goes on to say that, “she was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent,” further displaying an appreciation of her appearance but defining her as “savage” because of her skin color (Conrad 56). To Marlow, she may be pleasing to the eye, but she is still African. Therefore, while she may inspire a type of desire, she is as uncultured and dangerous as the rest of the Africans in his mind. This mixture of fear and desire that Marlow approaches her with appears representative of the mixed emotions associated with the men traveling through the Congo. The desire for ivory and wealth mixed with the fear of traveling through the unknown. As discussed by Pouneh Saeedi in “Women as Epic Sites/Sights and Traces in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*,” the language Conrad uses in describing the African woman displays her as a figure that is one with the earth and “she assumes the monstrous features which Marlow had earlier attributed to the territory he had set foot on” (Saeedi 540). These words further paint her as a representation of the alluring and unsettling Congo. Her skin color mirrors the darkness Marlow associates literally and figuratively with the Congo and her eyes are “wild” because they hold a knowledge and a culture behind them that Marlow can only imagine but never truly understand. However, her

attributes—as foreign as they are—elicit a desire within him similar to his response to the Congo itself. Marlow, a traveler by trade, appears to find the unknown the most exciting, resulting in a confusing and fearful desire for foreign lands and those that inhabit them.

When compared to how Marlow describes the African woman, his characterization of Kurtz's Intended becomes quite severe in contrast. To Marlow, Kurtz's Intended is an image of purity and good faith, a woman steadfast in her devotion to a man who no longer lives. But she is never described as "gorgeous" or "wild." She is a pure, familiar European woman who inspires no confused desire. Perhaps no desire at all. When compared to the savageness of the African woman, the Intended is described as having a "mature capacity for fidelity, for belief, for suffering," and this capacity to stay in her culturally expected mindset may ultimately be the element that makes her more agreeable to Marlow (Conrad 69). She is also granted the power of speech—along with Marlow's Aunt—which the African woman is never allowed in the company of Marlow. The African woman also appears to represent a literal and figurative darkness, while Kurtz's Intended represents a lighter figure. She is dressed in all black when Marlow encounters her, but he describes her lightness in instances such as, "this fair hair, this pale visage" (Conrad 69). Her paleness and lightness is then mentioned further throughout their encounter, displaying Marlow's preoccupation with it. While this lightness appears to dampen Marlow's fear and desire from his encounter with the African woman, it still does not appear to have the power to change his view on the female mind, as exemplified by his lie to the Intended.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is sexist because it fails to represent women as competent human beings and fails to provide them with names. The focus on the appearance of female characters rather than their narrative voice is also a

disservice to women in the novella. Arguing that Conrad himself lacked respect for women would be difficult to prove absolutely. However, the fact remains that through this novella, he created a character that does not respect women. Furthermore, Marlow's views on the female mind and his focus on feminine appearance rather than feminine influence or intent prove that he is a narrator unable to provide a story welcoming towards women. Through this inability, *Heart of Darkness* solidifies itself as not only a novella heavily controversial for its approach to race, but also as a novella that lacks the respect needed to give its female characters justice.

#### Works Cited

- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. 1902. New York: Dover, 1990. Print.
- Hagen, Susan. "Gender, Intelligence and Good Sex in *Heart of Darkness*." *Furman Studies* 37 (1995): 45. Web. 13. Mar. 2016
- McIntire, Gabrielle. *Modern Fiction Studies: The Women do Not Travel: Gender, Difference, and Incommensurability in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*. 48 Vol. Johns Hopkins UP, 2002. Web. 13. Mar. 2016.
- Saeedi, Pouneh. "Women as Epic Sites/Sights and Traces in Conrad's Heart of Darkness." *Women's Studies* 44.4 (2015): 537. Web. 13. Mar. 2016

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

#### Content

1. Why is the author reluctant to allow the sexism in *Heart of Darkness* be a symptom of the time in which it was written?



2. How does the sexism being argued by the author overlap with issues of race?
3. In what ways does the argument in this essay relate to those being presented elsewhere in this issue—the ideas about Europeans and Africans in “A Penetrating Truth” or about colonial rule in “*Heart of Darkness* and Imperialism?”

**Style**

4. How does the develop the textual examples in relation to the outside sources?
5. What does the author do rhetorically to progress from the text to a larger point?
6. How does the author draw distinctions between Conrad and the male characters in the book? What effect does that have on helping support the argument being presented?

# LITERACY AND FULFILLING EXPECTATIONS

Anne Crawford

My high school teachers, counselors, and principals tried their best to prepare me for college. They provided me opportunities to study for the ACT, fill out applications, and ask for recommendation letters. They reminded me to submit financial aid forms and helped me apply for scholarships. However, the most important step towards college admission in the eyes of my school district was a heavy load of Advanced Placement courses. They were supposed to help students prepare for college coursework and become better readers and writers. The Advanced Placement classes my family and school system encouraged me to take had the single largest impact on my literacy and they helped me prepare for college, but they also took away much of the creativity I had applied towards my literacy in the early years of my education.

My lifelong fascination with books and writing started long before I could read. My mother loved books and would read to me every night, and I would follow along with intense concentration, trying my best to make sense of the words. By the time I finished kindergarten, I was reading chapter books by myself; in particular, *The Magic Tree House* series helped to introduce me to this new reading level. Moreover, I started stuffing short, often silly pieces of writing into colorful journals and notebooks,

the items that were always first on my Santa wish list. My imagination would overflow into them, and I would tell stories of magic, beasts, recess at the playground, or whatever suited my fancy on a given day. As an energetic child who was prone to daydreaming and fantasy, my creativity needed an outlet, and writing provided a way for me to express my imagination in a way that offered an escape from everyday life.

There were many opportunities in elementary school for me to build a strong foundation for the creativity that I had already started applying to my literacy. I was encouraged to make frequent trips to the library to expand my literary knowledge. At the library, I encountered a wide range of opportunities to learn about literature and the world. I delved into new genres and concepts, and my creativity blossomed. Moreover, I took pride in the knowledge that I was gaining. I received several recognitions from my school for being a steadfast bookworm, and I took satisfaction in my teachers' approval. It felt great to be the first in my grade to independently read all the *Harry Potter* books. By combining creativity with my growing literacy, I was able to gain a broader imagination and greater self confidence.

A similar pattern in the development of my literacy carried me through middle school. Like in elementary school, I was recognized for my bookishness by my teachers and was able to continue to write in my spare time. Sometimes I was picked on for being a "nerd," but this never really bothered me; the esteem and personal satisfaction that came from reading and writing made these insults seem unimportant. I thought that, once I got to high school, I would take advanced classes and my peers would respect my love of books and my creativity. Dreams of book club and thick textbooks danced in my head, and I was convinced that my approach to reading and writing would continue on the same path as it had for the first nine years of education.

As a student who had high grades and a strong work ethic, I was encouraged from the start to challenge myself in high school. I was placed in advanced classes in my freshman year and enjoyed them; I was introduced to new academic texts that challenged me, and this helped to advance my development as a reader and writer. Because of my success in these classes, my counselors actively encouraged me to enroll in Advanced Placement classes in English and the social sciences, the subjects I liked most. Advanced Placement classes were an important part of the college preparatory curriculum, so I assumed that enrolling in them was the logical next step in my education. I knew that Advanced Placement classes were difficult, but I was excited for the challenge.

It was not long before I learned that Advanced Placement classes were much more intense than the advanced classes I had taken as a freshman. Under the Advanced Placement curriculum, literacy was no longer about promoting my creativity and expressing my imagination. Reading and writing in Advanced Placement classes was all about jumping through designated hoops; success required following the guidelines set by the College Board and nothing more. This was true for all the Advanced Placement classes I took, regardless of subject, so there was no way to escape this restrictive approach to literacy. For example, in my Advanced Placement English Language course, I had to rapidly read through passages and try my best to answer pages of multiple choice questions without time to enjoy or consider the text. In another class, Advanced Placement United States History, I churned out so many essays that writing became more of a mechanical, isolating process. My most important objective was efficiency, not enjoyment.

By giving me these kinds of assignments, my teachers in Advanced Placement classes presented me with a workload that more or less eliminated any free time I had. My evenings and

weekends were filled with textbook readings and study guides, and there was no time for writing stories in colorful notebooks. Gone were the days when I could read novels that were not on assigned reading lists or write a story for my own enjoyment. In order to succeed in Advanced Placement classes, I had to give up these activities. While I was working to meet the expectations of the College Board and increase my chances of entering the college program of my choice, I was losing a lot of the creativity and happiness that had contributed to the development of my literacy.

In this way, my experience with Advanced Placement classes reflects the kind of systematic, robotic learning that John Cheever describes in his essay, "Expelled." As one of his teachers says, "I shall answer questions if they are important. If I do not think them important I shall not answer them, for the year is short, and we must cover a lot of ground in a short time" (Cheever 180). My Advanced Placement teachers believed that important questions were those that pertained to the content provided by the College Board and nothing more. Therefore, mastering this content became my main motivator for reading and writing. In order to win the praise of my teachers, I had to be more than just a bookworm. I had to devote my reading and writing to my Advanced Placement classes, so my writing style and my reading habits changed to reflect the expectations of the College Board.

However, it is important to note that my experience as an Advanced Placement student was not an entirely negative one. While it represented a change in the path of my literacy from that of creative writing to academic writing, this had its practical advantages. All of the Advanced Placement classes that I took required an enormous amount of difficult reading and writing. Because of this, I had to learn how to read and write efficiently in classes other than English, and this prepared me for the kind

of work I would eventually do in college. Advanced Placement classes also helped me gain entrance into the program of my choice and earn scholarships. Most importantly, the respect that my teachers gave me for taking these classes and doing very well helped me build my confidence in college-level writing. My Advanced Placement teachers truly wanted to help me be successful in college, and they believed that encouraging me to take these classes was the best way to prepare me for a collegiate environment.

This encouragement is an important part of my cultural background. The staff in my school district felt that a college preparatory curriculum was best for all students regardless of their long-term goals. The culture of my school and my classes was one of competition for academic achievement, and those that stood out as especially successful in this realm were treated like superstars. My teachers were still praising a student who earned a perfect score on the ACT years after she had graduated. Those who did not take Advanced Placement classes were not necessarily left behind academically, but they were constantly encouraged to enroll in Advanced Placement classes even if they would have been better off in an environment that did not push them so hard. It seemed that taking Advanced Placement classes and having high grades determined the worthiness of students.

Another part of my culture that encouraged me to make a detour in the path my literacy had taken was my family's influence on my education. I was always told that I would go to college, and doing everything I could to get into college and earn scholarships was a top priority. My mother came from the first generation in her family to attend college; her realization that education made a huge difference in our economic lives and her professional happiness played an enormous role in defining the expectations I placed on myself. Because I had come to think that the best way to prepare for college was to challenge myself

through Advanced Placement courses in high school, my family encouraged me to be successful in these classes, and I further tailored my reading and writing to satisfy those expectations. Therefore, my creative writing and love for reading fell to the wayside while my work in Advanced Placement classes took on the leading role in influencing my literacy.

As a college student, I realize that I have lost almost all of the creativity that played such an important role in my early literacy. Reading for pleasure often seems foolish and unimportant to me now, and creative writing is an activity I never take time out of my day for. I realize now that my engagement in Advanced Placement courses marks a very significant change in my academic priorities. I took joy in writing stories and poems in elementary school, and I wrote for the simple reason that I wanted to. My reward for achievement in Advanced Placement courses was much shorter lived; once I graduated from high school, nobody cared how many high scores I got on Advanced Placement exams. The gratification these classes had once given me was gone.

Despite this, I know that I will continue to read and write in the way that my Advanced Placement class taught me to. I do not resent this. One of my most important jobs as a student is to get good grades, and the approach I learned in Advanced Placement courses tends to meet the expectations of my professors. However, in my private life and maybe in some college courses, I hope that I can learn how to incorporate creativity into my literacy again. Cheever describes this desire perfectly when he writes, “I knew about the trees from the window frames. . . . I wanted to go outdoors and see the spring” (183). I want to get personally acquainted with the creative side of my literacy again. I want to be able to build a stronger connection between my own creativity and the world.

Advanced Placement classes changed my approach to literacy. Because of the cultural influences my school and family provided, my focus was shifted from writing for my own personal enjoyment to writing in order to meet expectations. The administrators and counselors of my school district, and my teachers, did what they thought was necessary for my success without really considering the unintended consequences of their approach. I was encouraged to stay within the bubble of academic writing, and time constraints prevented me from exploring literature that strayed from the rigorous coursework of Advanced Placement courses. My family encouraged me to work towards fulfilling the standards of the Advanced Placement curriculum to prepare for the lifelong advantages of education and, even though these influences were based in good intentions, they solidified the changes in my approach to literacy. I intend to use the skills I learned in Advanced Placement courses to achieve success in college, but I am also determined, in time, to tap back into and use the creative literacy that I first learned to love as a child.

#### Works Cited

Cheever, John. "Expelled." *Life Studies: A Thematic Reader*. Ed. David Cavitch. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983. 180-183. Print.

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

##### **Content**

1. What does the author point out as influences on her literacy?



2. What positive impact does the author say Advanced Placement courses had on her literacy? What negative impacts?
3. What importance does the author seem to suggest there is in “creativity?”

### **Style**

4. How would you describe the author’s voice in this essay? What effect does it create in your reading of it?
5. What moves does the author make in transitioning from one idea to another? How do these transitional devices help convey the logical relationship between thoughts and ideas?
6. In what ways does the introduction help create the context for the author’s argument before moving into the first body paragraph? How does the author establish the ways ideas are to be related?

# THE EFFECTS OF JAPANESE COLONIZATION IN KOREA

Emma Dodge

The Japanese colonizers caused a long lasting impact on the Koreans. During World War Two, with the permission of America, the Japanese used the Koreans as pawns in their army. If you compare the deaths in relation to other cases of colonization, there weren't that many, but the results have caused millions of deaths. After World War Two, Korea was split into the North and South, which caused the Korean War, killing millions of soldiers from all sides of the war. The Korean War ended in a truce, but both sides are constantly living under the threat of war starting again. Under the rule of Kim Jong-un, North Koreans are stripped of their rights and are malnourished, causing even more death. Even though only a few thousand died during the Imperial Japanese Rule, modern day Koreans are forced to live in the aftermath. One could argue that after the Japanese left, America took over and continued their colonization, eventually causing the split between the North and South of Korea.

Between the years of 1910 and 1945, Korea was under colonial rule from the Japanese. Korea used to be one country instead of split up into the North and South. The split happened after Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945, ending World War Two. The Soviets and Americans could not decide on a government system for Korea so the United States took the south and the

Soviet Union took the north, splitting the country on the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. Five years after World War Two ended, North Korea attacked South Korea, resulting in the three year long Korean War. Nothing was resolved after the war ended in a truce and the country still remains split (Asia for Educators).

For the first ten years of Japanese rule over Korea, they were incredibly strict. They ruled through their military and forced the Koreans to fight on their side in the war and work in their factories. On March 19, 1919, the Koreans had a nationwide protest that ended with the Japanese allowing more freedom for the citizens. As a result of the Japanese rule, Korea became the second most industrialized country in Asia, the first being the Japanese themselves. They become more modernized as the Japanese began to industrialize Korea by building roads, new buildings and factories (Asia for Educators).

The Japanese were only doing this to help distinguish themselves against their western allies such as Germany and Italy. "Japan's response to the penetration of the western powers in eastern Asia was to 'modernize', to strive to achieve the same military and economic standards as the nations imposing their rule on Asia" (Grayson 439). Along with forcing the Koreans to fight in the war, they banned the Korean language in schools, pressured 80% of the country to change their names to Japanese names, and used Korean women as sex slaves calling them "comfort women". There were an estimated 20,000 to 200,000 women that were taken from their families. The women were forced to be taken advantage of by hundreds of Japanese soldiers each over the period of many months.

The comfort women have been something the Japanese have been refusing to acknowledge until very recently. For many years they have been ignoring the fact that the comfort women even existed. In 2007 the United States demanded an apology and compensation for the victims of this sexual abuse from Japan's

prime minister, Shinzo Abe. “It came in the form of an ‘I express my sympathy toward the comfort women and apologize for the situation they found themselves in’” (Park 204). By saying this he avoided responsibility and put it on the comfort women themselves, blaming them for the actions they were forced to do. Inuhiko Yomota agrees and blames the Koreans for what happened to these women, but there are many testimonies from the victims that make it clear it was Japanese authorities that forced them into these situations. Maria Rosa Henson was only 14 years old when she was taken to Angeles after being arrested by Japanese authorities. Henson was forced to have sex with hundreds of men over the course of nine months. “Sometimes 12 soldiers would force me to have sex with them and then they would allow me to rest for a while, then about 12 soldiers would have sex with me again” (qtd. in “Testimonies of the Victims”). Comfort women were forced to have hysterectomies to avoid pregnancy. They were not given any treatment for STD’s, were physically abused by the soldiers, and sometimes left to die.

On December 28, 2015, Fumio Kishida, the Japanese foreign minister, and Yun Byung-se, the South Korean foreign minister, met in Seoul to discuss the comfort women. Japan officially apologized to the comfort women and offered around 8.3 million dollars in compensation to the 46 victims remaining in South Korea. Japan’s prime minister, Shinzo Abe called South Korea’s president Park Geun-hye later that day to also apologize. Abe said “Japan and South Korea are now entering a new era; we should not drag this problem into the next generation” (Calamur). Japan says it took so long for them to apologize because they thought the 800 million dollars in grants and loans Tokyo gave the South Korean government was enough of an apology, but South Korea did not agree. Lee Yong-soo, a past comfort woman, says “We’re not after the money. If the Japanese committed their sins, they should offer direct, official government compensation” (Calamur).

Both sides of the feud are nervous that this was not enough of an apology. Japan has given half hearted apologies before and some people think this was not meant for the comfort women but rather just something to make themselves look better. According to the BBC, “(The comfort women) say past expressions of regret have been halfway and insincere” (Calamur).

The Japanese were able to take over Korea with the support of America. In 1905, the Taft-Katsura agreement was signed, which allowed Japan to have Korea in exchange for America to have influence over the Philippines. This exchange happened between Secretary of War, William Howard Taft and Japan’s Prime Minister Taro Katsura. This agreement remained a secret until 1925. In America there was propaganda inaccurately portraying the situation happening in Korea. In a newsreel from 1931, Siam to Korea 1931, the voiceover often uses the words funny, strange, silly and curious to describe the Korean way of life. They describe Korean men wearing traditional white robes and horse hair hats as “Korea personified” saying “he bows to the dominion of Japan but declines to admit the superiority of Japan’s intellectual and moral culture over his own” (Siam to Korea 1931). Although America did not actively show support for Japan, through the Taft-Katsura act, they played a large role in the colonization of Korea.

The rule of Japan over Korea ended approximately 70 years ago but there is still anger between the two countries. Martin Fackler comments, “the conflict is rooted in grievances going back to Japan’s brutal colonization of the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945 and its attempts to extinguish the Korean culture” (Japan’s colonial rule of Korea was ‘moderate’ qtd. in Sato). But George Akita and Brandon Palmer rebuttal by saying “relative to the era of colonialism, Japan’s rule of Korea was ‘moderate’, even ‘almost fair’” (Japan’s colonial rule of Korea was ‘moderate’ qtd. in Sato) while Shin Yong-Ha, a professor in Seoul, Korea, says

that “Koreans lived under the most ruthless colonial rule ever known to history” (Japan’s colonial rule of Korea was ‘moderate’ qtd. in Sato). Statistically the colonialism in African countries killed millions of more people than the Japanese killed despite the discrepancies between Japan’s and Korea’s figures. The Japanese claim to only have killed around 553 people where the Koreans claim the number to be around 7,509. Inuhiko Yomota, the writer of this article, argues that “Japan only committed one extensive brutal act after it annexed Korea” (Japan’s colonial rule of Korea was ‘moderate’ qtd. in Sato) and it only lasted about a year and the Comfort Women were managed by other Koreans. He also compares it to the French colonizing African countries and how they advanced Korea much more. “France didn’t even bother with infrastructure in Madagascar... in contrast Japan first thought was sanitation, education, and infrastructure in its colonies” (Japan’s colonial rule of Korea was ‘moderate’ qtd. in Sato).

When Japan surrendered, ending World War Two the Americans came to try and help the Koreans by trying to find a government system that would work best for them. One could argue after the Japanese left Korea, Americans, to an extent, replaced them. “While the Japanese chronicled the end of the empire... the Americans were drawn into governing a portion of a country with which they had little experience” (Watt 166). This was what sparked the separation of North and South Korea because America and the Soviet Union could not agree on a government. The Japanese never had the respect of the Korean citizens but the Americans did. The Americans were the ones that helped the Koreans achieve freedom from Japan while they simultaneously “adopted some Japanese colonial practices” and kept a lot of the structures the Japanese created (Watt 167). In some ways the Japanese colonization ended but the Americans

continued it, or at least did not allow the Koreans complete freedom of leading themselves as a country.

After World War Two America and the Soviet Union separated the North and South with the intention of bringing them back together eventually, but the Soviet Union ruled the North using fear and violence. Eventually the North invaded the South with the approval of Joseph Stalin, which triggered the Korean War (Millett 1).

The Korean War started in 1950, with American and the United Nations supporting the South and the Soviet Union and China supporting the North. Over the 3 years of fighting, around 2.5 million people died before it ended in a truce in 1953. This total includes one quarter of North Korea's population. Both nations tried to negotiate in 1954 with no success (Millett 2). The country is still in an armistice, a temporary suspension of hostilities by agreement of the warring parties. This means even though there is not any active fighting, the threat of war is always there.

After the split many families were not allowed to see each other anymore. After about 60 years both sides allowed a small group of people to visit their families on the opposite side. People were chosen for this trip through a computerized lottery. These visits have only happened twice and due to them being so rare, the family members will probably never see each other again. North Korea uses the possibility of these visits as a tactic to get their citizens to do what they want. There have been instances of North Korea promising people visits and then canceling them (BBC).

Between North and South Korea there is a demilitarized zone that is 151 miles long. People from both sides are not allowed to cross into this area but there are tours from the South Korean side where you can walk over the line under close watch of North and South Korean guards. The demilitarized zone was created

under the Armistice Agreement but both sides have violated this agreement by running drills and firing arms. In the demilitarized zone there is the North Korean “propaganda village” also called the “peace village” which is a fake city. There are buildings there made to look like a city, but they are completely empty. The purpose is to try to lure South Koreans into the North, by attempting to make North Korea look better. For a few years they had speakers playing North Korean propaganda (Pike).

Both armies are actively trying to build up their military and flaunt their weapons. Both sides are aware of the others ability. There have been many instances of one side testing weapons and military exercises without the other’s permission, and the other side retaliating. One example of this is when North Korea bombed Yeonpyeong Island in South Korea in November 2010. North Korea fired a few dozen rounds of artillery rounds at the island, killing two South Korean soldiers and setting around 60 houses on fire, forcing the small population of 1,300 to evacuate the island (Foster).

North Korea also claims to have tested a hydrogen bomb in January of 2016, which the United States thinks might have been a lie. Regardless, tensions have been high as Kim Jong-un wants to “make the world ... look up to our strong nuclear country” (Botelho and McKirdy). The United States and South Korea have been running military drills and are “poised to act against North Korea” (Botelho and McKirdy).

North Korea runs under a Military-First policy called Songun, which puts the military’s needs as a priority over the citizens needs. This is helping with North Korea’s nuclear development but it is also having negative effects on the citizens. This means the military gets fed first, causing famine and starvation in the country. In the 1900’s, between 2.5 million and 3.7 million people died from mass starvations. In 2005, The World Food Programme found the average North Korean was only getting 50% of the



daily recommended calories and around 70% of children were having health problems related to malnutrition. Sanduk Ruit, an eye surgeon from Nepal, says “blindness magnitude—induced by malnutrition – is one of the highest in the world” (North Korea Now). This famine is not because of the country’s farming issues or flooding, like the North Korean government claimed in the 1900’s, but it is caused by the government itself. The government prioritizes who gets food based on who is most favorable to the state. Amartya Sen, a professor from Harvard University claims “famines are, in fact, so easy to prevent that it is amazing that they are allowed to occur at all,” it is purely the government’s doing (North Korea Now). North Korean citizens are dying, going blind, and having their bodies ruined due to starvation because of their government. This could cause problems for North Korea if they do go into war again because their soldiers will not be strong enough or healthy enough to last long in war.

It is hard to estimate how long the tension between North and South Korea will continue, especially with the constant threat of another war. Korea is understandably upset with Japan since their actions during World War Two have led to even more war and inevitably the splitting of their countries. Anger against Japan is still incredibly prevalent in South Korea and there are examples of it everywhere. Many South Koreans are waiting for a sincere apology from Japan before they are willing to let go of the hatred. America has given no public apology for the Taft-Katsura agreement, but after helping South Korea after the World War Two and during the Korean War, the Koreans are appreciative despite America’s contribution to the issues in Korea. Compared to other cases of colonization, Japan did not kill as many people as the European countries but the effect has been long lasting and has caused more war, deaths, and the

separation of families. As shown in the news and media there is no clear sign of the feud ending anytime soon.

### Works Cited

- Asia For Educators. "Korea as a Colony of Japan, 1910-1945." *Key Points In Developments In East Asia 20th Century*. Columbia University, 2009. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.
- BBC. "Second Korean Family Reunion in North." *BBC News*. BBC, 24 Oct. 2015. Web. 25 Apr. 2016.
- Botelho, Greg, and Euan McKirdy. "U.N. Poised to Act against North Korea after Latest Nuclear Test." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 7 Jan. 2016. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.
- Calamur, Krishnadev. "Japan Says Sorry for Its Crimes Against Wartime 'Comfort Women'." *The Atlantic*. The Atlantic Monthly Group, 28 Dec. 2015. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.
- Ford, Dana. "North Korea Threatens Nuclear Strike over U.S.-South Korean Exercises." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 7 Mar. 2016. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.
- Foster, Peter. "North Korea Bombs South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island." *The Telegraph*. Telegraph Media Group Limited, 23 Nov. 2010. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.
- Grayson, James. "Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power By Alexis Dudden." *History (London)* 91.303 (2006): 439-440. Web. 7 Apr. 2016.
- Millet, Allan R. "Korea War." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 5 Aug. 2014. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.
- North Korea Now. "Mass-Starvations in North Korea." *North Korea Now*. North Korea Now. Web. N.D. 25 Apr. 2016.
- Park, You-me. "Compensation to Fit the Crime: Conceptualizing a Just Paradigm of Reparation for Korean 'Comfort Women'." *Comparative studies of*

- South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*. 30.2 (2010): 204-213. Web. 7 Apr. 2016.
- Pike, John. "Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)." *Global Security*. Global Security, 5 July 2011. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.
- Sato, Hiroaki. "Japan's Colonial Rule of Korea Was 'Moderate'." *Japan Times*. 29 June. 2015. Web. 7 Apr. 2016.
- Testimonies of the victims." *Digital Museum the Comfort Women Issue and the Asian Women's Fund*. N.d. Web. 7 Apr. 2016.
- Travelfilmarchives. "Siam to Korea 1931." Online video clip. *Youtube*, 21 Apr. 2008. Web. 7 Apr. 2016.
- Watson, Ivan, and K. J. Kwon. "South Korea, U.S. Deter North Korea with 'largest Ever' Military Drill." *CNN*. Cable News Network, 12 Mar. 2016. Web. 20 Apr. 2016.
- Watt, Lori. "Embracing Defeat in Seoul: Rethinking Decolonization in Korea, 1945." *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 74.1 (2015): 153-174. Web. 7 Apr. 2016.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### Content

1. What historical context is provided to understand the situation in North and South Korea?
2. What evidence is provided by the author for America's role in Korea's history?
3. What role does the author argue "comfort women" played in the political turmoil?

### Style

4. In addition to statistics, what is presented from the sources to support the author's argument?

5. How would you describe the organization of the argument? How is the logic of the argument created through the essay's structure?
6. How does the author transition between historical information and the main arguments being presented in the essay?
7. How do the sources being used affect the ethos of the argument?



# *HEART OF DARKNESS* AND IMPERIALISM

Debolina Kanjilal

In a corruption of the very ideals that define our humanity, humans often don the cloak of civility and shed it when no one is looking. The truth of our human natures lies in our animalistic traits and tendencies. When we are faced with situations and settings that are uncivilized and beyond the scope of modernization we revert to our violent survival and greedy instincts. This notion, this theme, lives on within the teachings of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The setting of the novella, imperialistic 19<sup>th</sup> century Africa, presents the perfect environment for one to shed the cloak of civility and in essence lose their mind. But ultimately it is the imperialistic dynamic created in the heart of Africa that leads to the loss of civility and by extension humanity.

At the start of the novella, the narrator places the audience upon a ship on which an introspective fellow tells the narrator and their shipmates of his visit to Africa. The storyteller is our main character, Marlow, who has traveled all around the world, but only one specific journey has really stuck with him to this day: his journey into Africa through the Congo River. Conrad quite brilliantly uses the literary device of a frame story, a story within a story, to allow the readers to see how Marlow interprets his own narration. Our protagonist starts off by talking about the

Romans who had come to conquer England more than a thousand years ago. He states that the conquerors' administration was "merely a squeeze, nothing more" (Conrad 8). To him, they were nothing more than brutes blindly killing and robbing for the sake of robbing. The English who have also invaded a foreign land, Marlow says, are different than the Romans because they are colonists, not conquerors. He believes that what saves the English as colonists is "efficiency" and an "idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea—something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to" (Conrad 8). There are two forms of imperialism that are being compared here—colonialism and the conquest of the land. Marlow argues that colonizing, unlike conquering the land, is excused due to "efficiency" and an unselfish "idea". This essay will argue that neither conquering nor colonization are "excused" from the consequences that occur, because ultimately the outcomes for the two are the same. The outcomes of both forms of imperialism are detrimental to both parties of the imperialistic dynamic. The conquerors, as well as the colonists, destroy the land, the natives, and themselves as they begin to lose their humanity. The novella exemplifies the dreadful outcomes of imperialism through the eyes of Marlow as he encounters slavery and extreme human greed take over a subcontinent of Africa. The novella casts a shadow of doubt to the point of accusatory imagery on Marlow's defense of colonization utilizing the very atrocious occurrences of his own experiences. Ultimately, the novella introduces a critical stance on all forms of imperialism and rejects the idea as irredeemable. The title, *Heart of Darkness*, can also be interpreted as the moral decline of the colonists consciences into darkness as the novella illustrates heinous deeds done by men, specifically the colonist Kurtz, as their mental health is corrupted and their humanity is lost. Fundamentally, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* dismisses imperialism by exemplifying the horrific outcomes that occur to

both the colonists, as well as the native people, as the audience follow Marlow into his own heart of darkness.

According to Marlow, colonists are better than conquerors, and he uses the Romans to clarify his argument. As Marlow puts it, the Romans were “no colonists” but conquerors as their administration “was merely a squeeze” that only used “brute force” to invade England (Conrad 8). On the other hand, our storyteller seems to believe that the English have an administration that is “efficient” and therefore the English are colonists instead of conquerors of Africa. Marlow states:

What saves [the English colonists] is efficiency –the devotion to efficiency. But [the Romans] were not much account, really. They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze...they were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force – 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. (Conrad 8)

Conquering foreign land is associated with violence and aggravated murder while colonization is associated with efficiency—which is what Marlow believes “saves” or excuses the English’s invasion of Africa. But the very notions of robbery, violence, and aggravated murder can be found in Marlow’s own tale as not only accepted actions but practically the law. Furthermore, the English’s “strength” is also accidental like the Roman conquerors’. The English’s “strength” arises from the fact that they have industrialized weapons and the Africans do not. The English would not be able to face an opponent that is highly weaponized. Robbery, violence, and aggravated murder can all be found in “colonized” Africa through the institution



of slavery that the white men implement in Africa as law. The slaves are robbed of their future, endure harsh punishment, and are killed if they rebel. One of the first things Marlow notices at the Company's chief station are "six black men [advancing] in a file....[he] could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain" (Conrad 23). As slavery is considered completely normal and within the restrictions of the law, no one around Marlow (including Marlow) protests at this gross dehumanization and treatment of the indigenous people. The "civilized" and "efficient" dehumanization is an oxymoron and the "law" of the white man supports this.

The novella is very quick to portray the legalization of slavery, which is known to be associated with imperialism. It is evident that the novella is not regarding slavery in a great light and is in fact highly disapproving of one of the outcomes of imperialism by using negative connotative phrases such as "iron collar" and "[Marlow] could see every rib" giving way for the imagery of a sickly, malnourished African being dragged with an iron collar (Conrad 23). David Ray Papke states that "law plays a role in both the political and economic aspects of imperialism...The law's function seems largely to assist imperialist control...imperialists do more than merely use the law. They seize the very 'right to define the law'" (590). The laws of governing are created by the invaders with an obvious intention of making the laws in such a fashion so as to accommodate their own desires. This can also be viewed as a form of "accidental strength" allowing the English to subjugate the natives to their form of "civilizing" or in other words extortion and slavery. Furthermore, murder is quite a normal occurrence in the setting of colonized Africa. The uncle of the manager points out that the manager can have a trader, that has been giving the manager some trouble, hung because no one will challenge his authority here. Kurtz also proves this point

as his fence is decorated with the heads of “rebels” that dared to defy him. Ultimately the novella tells the readers that there is no significant distinction between colonization and conquering land in respect to the violence, murder, and dehumanization that occurs. It seems the English are no different than the Roman conquerors who were also thieves and murderers back in the day.

Marlow goes on to speak about an “idea” that might also be the saving grace of the English. He says, “the conquest of the earth, which mostly means taking it away from people with different colored skin or flatter noses, is not a pretty thing when you think about it. The only good thing about it is the idea behind it....a real and powerful idea that men will unselfishly sacrifice themselves for—something that men will bow down to and worship” (Conrad 8). Even Marlow realizes that the idea of “the conquest of the earth” is not very agreeable but what he believes redeems it aside from “efficiency” is an “idea”. This “idea” essentially makes the conquest into colonization, which Marlow believes is a more “civilized” form of imperialism. The idea is not expounded upon further but is left to be interpreted as the reader wishes. But as Hunt Hawkins points out, “readers of *Heart of Darkness* in *Blackwood’s Magazine* in 1899 would have readily understood this meaning of the ‘idea.’ The notion of the ‘civilizing mission’ was already well established, and in that year Kipling provided it with a catchy title in his poem... ‘The White Man’s Burden’” (288). Kipling’s “The White Man’s Burden” has gone from being a catchy title to a Western racist emblem that is, to this day, still used to argue in the defense of imperialism. The white man’s burden is the notion that it is the white man’s duty to civilize the “savages” of other countries and thereby it is permissible for western countries to invade countries that are deemed uncivilized. Unfortunately, we do not see any form of “civilizing” occurring in Africa nor is it truly

necessary for the Africans to be “civilized” as no one can simply determine one way of life is the “correct or better one”. It should be noted, however, that Marlow grew up in the era where the concept of “white man’s burden” was praised and therefore it is likely that Marlow simply fell into the orthodox way of thinking in regards to colonizing other lands. Thus, Marlow’s culpability for excusing imperialism should be lessened as his way of thinking was simply an extension of the period in which he lived. However, this does not mean Marlow was correct in his thinking because ultimately, the white men in the novella are not “civilizing” the Africans but exploiting their manual labor, their land as well as their beliefs.

This brings us to our final and most crucial point, the slow mental collapse and the loss of humanity that inevitably occurs in the colonizers and the greatest example in the novella is the legendary Kurtz. The title of the novella itself, *Heart of Darkness*, can be taken to mean the moral indecency of one’s heart faced with tempting situations with power, specifically in relation to the colonizer Kurtz. Kurtz’s mental degeneration can be seen through his complete obsession with ivory and his apathy towards his own violent and murderous acts. Ivory does not only affect Kurtz but most of the colonizers as they all grow a very unhealthy obsession with it. Ivory begins to represent far more than the actual material. As Jonah Raskin points out, “there is the religion of ivory as well, the ivory to which the white traders pray” (127). Ivory has taken on a life of its own as it starts to symbolize economic freedom, social advancement, and an escape from being only an employee. The reverence with which the white men in Africa hold ivory can be understood from this quote: “The word ivory rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it (Conrad 18)”. The “religion” of ivory represents the greed associated with all forms of imperialism whether it is colonizing or conquering a

foreign land. The greed that is generated from this imperialistic society ensures that the white colonists will commit murder and more to attain the source of their greed which in this case is ivory. The Russian trader who becomes Kurtz's friend tells Marlow that "[Kurtz] wanted to shoot [him] one day" because the trader "had a small lot of ivory the chief of the village near [his] house" had given him but "[Kurtz] wanted it, and wouldn't hear reason. He declared he would shoot [the trader] unless [he] gave him the ivory and then cleared out of the country, because [Kurtz] could do so, and had a fancy for it, and there was nothing on earth to prevent him killing whom he jolly well pleased" (Conrad 94). A shocking truth is revealed. Kurtz, as well as any white man, can kill, maim, and torture whomever and whenever they please. No one is watching. Society is no longer holding them back from committing heinous acts at the mercy of their own greed. Ivory holds such control over Kurtz that he has no problem making extreme violent threats to his friend. It is also very probable that carrying out those violent threats would be no hassle to Kurtz as he has most definitely killed before. After talking with the Russian trader, Marlow idly gazes out his binoculars and sees something very interesting. He tells his audience that he was not particularly surprised to make the discovery that what he mistook for ornamental balls on the tops of fence posts outside Kurtz's house are actually severed heads. However, Marlow is very displeased with his findings. As the story is told from Marlow's perspective, the heads on the posts are regarded in a condemnatory fashion as Marlow tells his audience, "I want you clearly to understand that there was nothing exactly profitable in these heads being there. They only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts" (Conrad 96). This is another example out of many, where the novella regards another outcome of imperialism, falsely justified murder, as dehumanizing and unforgiving. It

also illustrates how imperialism has affected and twisted the mind of one of the invaders himself, Kurtz. The Russian trader explains that the heads are those of rebels used to demonstrate to the indigenous what will occur if they dare to defy Kurtz. At this point, it is more than likely that Kurtz has lost his humanity and sanity completely and surrendered to his heart of darkness. All the colonizers, like Kurtz, harm themselves almost as much as they harm the indigenous people. Greed, which is the direct result of imperialism, becomes the downfall of the colonizers' humanity and mental health. The colonizers inevitably destroy themselves because they become overwhelmed with their own "heart of darkness" as a direct result of the imperialistic setting in which "no one is watching".

Through a thorough analysis of the novella as well as the utilization of scholarly journals critiquing *Heart of Darkness*, we come to the conclusion that Marlow is incorrect in stating that the England's invasion of Africa is "excused" and the novella itself, utilizing Marlow's own experiences, is attempting to express the same proposal. Marlow is wrong in saying that "efficiency" and an unselfish "idea", that this paper interprets to be the racist emblem "white man's burden", are enough to excuse a country from sending men into an inhabited land as lawmakers to murder, torture, kill, and act on the whims of their greed within the foreign land. There is no form of imperialism that should be excused or accepted. All forms of imperialism lead to the destruction of the land, the natives, and the imperialist agents themselves. Using Marlow's own experiences we find that "colonialism" causes just as much irreparable damage as the "conquest" of the land. Both parties of the imperialistic dynamic are hurt as one loses their humanity and the other loses their way of life. This can be seen in the novella through the legendary Kurtz who exploits the natives and integrates himself into African society as almost a God-like figure. But alas, Kurtz's murderous actions finally

catch up with him as we see him lose his physical health along with his mental health at the very end of the novella leading to his own end. Kurtz as well as all the other white colonists fall victim to their own greed as they commit atrocious acts upon the indigenous. Essentially, the novella criticizes imperialism in regards to its effects on the invaders themselves. Imperialism foretells the destruction of the mental health of the invaders as the audience learns how the act of wreaking havoc on the natives ultimately changes Kurtz's perception on the value of another person's life. Imperialism creates a society in which the ones who are "accidentally" stronger lose their moral decency in favor of greed and the weaker are left to cope with being enslaved, exploited, and killed. The novella exemplifies this in the story and the audience realize the indigenous will be left to accept the loss of their way of life, their people, their futures, and possibly their own lives. Ultimately, *Heart of Darkness* should be read and understood as a critique of all forms of imperialism as it is portrayed within the novel as derogatory and unjustifiable. However, the novella's protagonist Marlow, even with all his experience, fails to correctly interpret imperialism in a darker context because of the era that he was born into. Finally, in the jungles of 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialistic Africa, Kurtz and all the other white colonizers, fictional and real, are left to face their own heart of darkness.

#### Works Cited

- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. 1902. Mineola: Dover Publications, 1990. Print.
- Hawkins, Hunt. "Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in Heart of Darkness". *PMLA* 94.2 (1979): 286–299. Web.
- Papke, David Ray. "Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness: A Literary Critique of Imperialism." *Journal of Maritime Law and Commerce* 31.4 (2000): 583-592.

Raskin, Jonah. "Imperialism: Conrad's Heart of Darkness".  
*Journal of Contemporary History* 2.2 (1967): 113–131.  
Web.

## Questions to Consider:

### Content

1. What argument is the author making about imperialism and its consequences?
2. According to the author, what ideas about "humanity" does *Heart of Darkness* convey?
3. How does the author address the idea of the "white man's burden?"
4. How does this author's argument compare to the one being made in "A Penetrating Truth" from earlier in this issue? Where do the authors disagree, interpret ideas differently, or not address ideas in a way that creates openings for new arguments to be made?

### Style

5. How does the author organize the essay? How does that affect your understanding the argument being made?
6. How does the author incorporate textual examples from *Heart of Darkness*? To what end are they being used?
7. How does the author set about rhetorically drawing larger points out of the analysis of a literary work?

ADVANCED CATEGORY WINNER

# LOVE VERSUS LITERACY: A SECOND-GENERATION STORY

Thea Voutiritsas

Although virtually all children in a literate society have numerous experiences with print before coming to school, race, social class and cultural linguistic background play a role in children's sense-making of those literacy practices.

S. J. McCarthey, *Journal of Literacy Research*, 1997

It wasn't until recently that I realized my experience with literacy may be very different from my peers'. In class, we were asked to recall an experience with literacy from before we started school. I could not. I was embarrassed not to raise my hand with the students who remember learning to read or write before age five. The only things I can remember is learning the alphabet, and learning how to write my name. I've always considered myself a proficient reader and writer, but had never thought of the origins of those skills. Though I consider myself a "normal" college student, I am beginning to realize that my experiences with literacy may not be the norm, and are in fact as greatly shaped by my upbringing as by my academic world.

At first, I wanted to blame my parents for that embarrassing moment in class. I felt like they should have taught me more about reading and writing when I was a child, even though they probably couldn't have. They both immigrated to the U.S., and learned English as their second language. They worked long



hours to make sure I was provided the life they did not have available to them growing up. They attempted to put me through a private, Catholic school from kindergarten to fifth grade. They wanted to get me educated, and that would be my ticket out of the working class. Whether they consciously knew it, they believed this was how they were going to give me a good life.

I started kindergarten with a thick Filipino accent. I was so accustomed to hearing my mother's voice that I had never realized she had an accent. I got into arguments with the other children at school about how to pronounce certain words. Time and time again, I lost the argument. Without realizing, I began to assimilate. My accent faded and I started to speak like my friends did. By the end of the year it was gone. Unbeknownst to me, it was my first step into the middle class and away from my parents. In my school, I was surrounded by students from the white, middle-class. As I got older, my speech patterns changed more and more. I didn't sound like my parents anymore. A piece of them was lost in me, among many other traits they had passed along. Today, when my father asks me to read the instructions to him for his new coffee machine, I feel almost guilty. I feel like he should be taking care of me, not the other way around. Linda Brodkey talks about a similar moment in her life in *Writing on the Bias*, when she comes home from college and says her father cannot understand her anymore. Her diction had changed so much while she was away that she became separated from her father. I would imagine that this feeling of separation is experienced by many other first-generation students.

Often their parents send them to school, not realizing the separation that is to come. There are parents who lose their children to the middle and upper classes, as more second-generation students, like myself, go through school and are socialized in a totally different way than our parents were. But I don't think my parents grieve over it. They've both said they

never noticed my childhood accent, and they never noticed my speech patterns changing. They believe I'm just becoming older, and more educated. My father said, "You've always sounded good to me because I'm less educated in language. You've always sounded accurate to me." My mother's eyes light up when she says, "You're gonna be the first Voutiritsas to finish college."

But my older brother's upbringing was quite different than mine. He did not go to private school during his formative years. He received most of his schooling in the Kansas City, Missouri, public school system. He was one of the few "white-looking" kids in a predominantly black school, which he refers to as "one of the most 'hood schools in KC." Desperate to fit in, he fell in with the wrong crowd and started skipping school. When he was in seventh grade, he went as far as joining their gang. For a long time, our parents had no idea. Finally, the school called his parents and explained that he hadn't been present in three months. Our father hardly tolerated the 90s youth, gang violence subculture and quickly intervened. My brother was sent to live with our grandparents in Greece for three months. At the time, he was livid. Today, he says that it was probably the best thing that ever happened to him.

But why did my brother and I have such different experiences growing up when we came from the same parents? He is 32 now, married with two children, and runs a restaurant with our father. Sometimes I feel like people talk about him and all of the things he could have been or should have been. I've heard, "With that brain, he should have been a lawyer." Or "He could have made an excellent businessman." But it's all in the past-tense. They don't see that capability in him anymore. Was all of his potential lost in poor schools and poor teachers? What would he be if the tables were turned?

I am continually left with more questions than answers. There are multiple and diverse variables to consider when comparing

two lives. I want to refrain from depicting my brother's life as unsuccessful. That is not my goal. Rather, it is to analyze the forces that exist and propel us in certain directions that lie in the educational system. One of the greatest pitfalls I see in both my brother's and my own experience is a lack of parental involvement in the school. Though both of my parents report attending parent-teacher conferences about once every quarter, they agree that this tapered off over time, and contact with mine and my brother's teachers decreased to nearly nothing around or after elementary school. And even when they did attend parent-teacher conferences, the actual in-class material we were covering was rarely discussed. My father explained that he talked with my teachers about my behavioral expectations, but never the academic expectations. As Flora V. Rodríguez-Brown explains in *The Home-School Connection*:

If teachers and school staff think of children as only students, they will also think of the family as a separate unit that is not involved in the education of the students. However, if they think of the students as children, they will more often consider both the family and the community to be potential contributors to the children's education.

(Rodríguez-Brown 1)

Rodríguez-Brown also states that access to literacy has been "socially and culturally channeled, favoring the white, middle-class ways of making meaning at the expense of others... For students who are not members of the middle class, learning at school might be more difficult" (1). This obstacle that non-white, non-middle class students face is further complicated by the barriers that exist for minority families who attempt to get involved in their child's school. For example, there are contextual constraints, language differences, cultural beliefs and lack of knowledge, among others that can prevent a parent

from feeling confident, accepted or welcome when entering a predominantly white school. This experience is not limited to just black or Latino families, but must be extrapolated to include those of mixed race.

Such is the case with my parents. On reflecting on my school experience, I can find many times that my parents were excluded by, or even were unaware of the customs associated with school and adolescence normally observed by middle class, white families. For example, my parents were unfamiliar with the idea of “senior pictures,” in which high school seniors have their pictures taken by a professional, then distribute them to family members and friends. I never told my parents this was a thing that kids do, hence I never had senior pictures taken. When prom season came around, my parents did not understand why I wanted to buy a dress, why I wanted new shoes, or why I had to have a date. This example is just one of many, in which my parents were removed from my school. Though I was active in multiple extracurricular activities, such as journalism and cheerleading, they knew very little about it. This is in part because the school did very little to reach out to parents, but also because I was afraid or ashamed of my parents and their accents. I wanted my family to be like everyone else’s, but they weren’t.

As for my brother, my parents were rarely involved in his school as well. We are 12 years apart, and I can remember only one event that my parents took me to his high school for. When I was about four, he was in a play at his high school. He invited my parents to come see it, so they brought me along. This may very well have been the first and last time my parents set foot in his high school. Perhaps much like me, he felt embarrassed to have his parents tag along at big events. They did not look, or act like anyone else’s parents. They did not fit the mold.

But for him, there was also a major failure of the school. As I mentioned, when he was in middle school he did not appear in class for over three months and the school waited that long to contact my father about it. My father had no idea that every day when he dropped my brother off at school, he only pretended to go up the steps. Once my father drove away, he would walk down the street to the bus stop and go to a friend's house instead. This major lack of communication resulted in an unsupervised gap during my brother's day, which he, of course, took advantage of.

This is one of many cases in which parents and/or guardians are willing to help their child, but do not know exactly what to do. Rodríguez-Brown explains on page nine that surveys showed parents in general wanted the school to show them specific ways to get involved. She explains, "Less educated parents are not familiar with the curriculum and procedures of American schools; they are less comfortable interacting with the educational system. However, [this] does not mean that they do not care about their children's education" (Rodríguez-Brown 11).

A case study found in *Linguistic Diversity and Teaching* by Nancy L. Commins depicts a similar moment of parental effort that teachers can often fail to recognize. Commins comments on the story of junior high student, Marisa. Marisa's teacher Jane begins observing that Marisa's once hardworking and timid behavior has "taken a turn for the worse" (Commins 27). Jane describes Marisa as "moody and has trouble getting along with other students" (Commins 27). At first, Jane is seeing Marisa as only a student, but then visits her home and finds the problem is much deeper than Marisa's surface behavior. Jane finds that Marisa has been having trouble understanding the material because English is not her first language.

On talking to Marisa's mother, Jane finds out that Marisa has been translating her assignments into Spanish, then her mother attempts to help her. Then Marisa attempts to translate

her assignments back into English using a Spanish-English dictionary. For Jane, this explains why Marisa's assignments tend to "miss the point," and sort of dance around an answer, and often use the wrong vocabulary for the context. Marisa's mother explains that this takes them several hours to accomplish and it makes Marisa very tired, explaining her moodiness in school.

Her mother also expresses her worry because, "the material is also getting harder and less familiar for her and her husband. She is afraid that they will not be able to help their daughter much longer" (Commins 30). Marisa's parents explain that they want to keep supporting her, but don't know how else to stay involved. Her father adds, "Marisa is a very smart girl. We want her to have better than we have in life. We want her to continue in her school" (Commins 30). As shown here, foreign parents often begin to struggle when their child's homework surpasses their English-speaking knowledge, and they tend to have difficulty finding new ways to support their child's academic growth. My parents and I reached a similar point in my academic career, around the fourth grade, when my homework began to require a more complex knowledge of the English language that non-native speakers often do not have.

The next problematic area that traditional American classrooms tend to facilitate is what Peter Elbow may call, a loss of the mother tongue. Elbow asserts that as a teacher, he feels "an obligation to give all [his] students access to the written language of power and prestige" (641). But as the conventions of Standard Written English are forced upon students of diverse and multicultural backgrounds, students will continue to find themselves between a rock and a hard place. In it, the school's Standard Written English (SWE) and the child's mother tongue clash. The student must then choose to either give up their first learned experiences of language, i.e., the mother tongue, or to stunt themselves in school and essentially discredit their lessons.

In my opinion, my brother and I both faced this fork in the road, but chose different paths. For me, I threw away my mother tongue. I gave up my cultural roots to assimilate to the white middle-class's Standard Written English. This was likely the easier route for me because I went to school in predominantly white populations. My Catholic school in Kansas City was predominantly white, then my high school experience in Joplin was predominantly white. As I continued in my education, English became one of my favorite subjects. I began taking advanced English courses in high school and I wrote and read on a daily basis. I had talented teachers who had the tools and the skill to teach me the best and most artful ways to use the English language. Though my great teachers could teach me great English, they could not teach me how to retain and respect my mother tongue.

I learned to use the English language with comfort and poise, and slowly became more distant from my parents. Because of my education, the lens through which I read the news and see the world is completely different from my parents'. When they watch CNN, there is so much chaos on the screen; the news anchor is talking, the ticker is scrolling across the bottom, and new stories are breaking on the top right. So much English is being thrown at them at once, and they can only catch and process chunks of the news. For me, watching CNN in my native tongue, I can absorb it all quickly and efficiently. The same lag occurs for them in all forms of media. Though they are fluent in English and communicated well, they will always run into new words they must struggle to find context for.

In my brother's case, Standard Written English was not an option. He went to predominantly black schools during his childhood, in which Standard Written English was not the mother tongue for many, if any, of the students. For him to choose Standard Written English would mean to alienate himself from

the other students. He took Elbow's, "take me as I am" approach. His "bad English" and "trash talk" earned him low marks on most of his schoolwork. John Baugh and Aaron Welborn put forth in chapter three of *Affirming Students' Right to their Own Language*, "non-standard dialects are accorded lesser worth... Because Standard English proficiency is a matter of social acceptability and power, children should be encouraged to learn it. However, their vernacular dialects should be respected as part of their identity" (Scott 44).

This respect that Baugh, Welborn and Elbow talk about was not employed in my brother's school, or even mine. But my brother held on to much of his mother-tongue through different means. First, by resisting the mentioned Standard Written English-centered English curriculum. Second, by intervention of my father, who sent my brother to Greece for three months to live with our grandparents. Of course, the Greek language was also not my brother's mother tongue, but it put even more distance between my brother and Standard Written English. In that time, my brother learned a new appreciation for my father's language, and for his culture. Two things that were not previously accepted by his school or his peers.

My brother continued to visit Greece several times over the following years. He eventually learned to speak Greek fluently, and now he and my father often speak Greek together at home. Having a language in common, other than English creates a bond between the two of them that may not exist otherwise. My father says he feels they have a "larger level" of communication, and speaking both languages helps to make up for my father's lack of English knowledge and my brother's lack of Greek knowledge at the same time. He says they have more words to choose from than if they only had one language. The bond that they share is one I wish I wouldn't have given up. My father also sent me to Greece when I was a teenager, but I was not open to learning the



language. I didn't yet appreciate my culture and I didn't know what I'd be missing.

Another obstacle that stood in the way for my brother and I, among other multicultural students was Guofang Li's idea of culturally contested pedagogies. Often, mainstream teachers' lessons battle with immigrant parents' teachings. In Li's book, *Culturally Contested Pedagogy*, he points out a very complicated but true facet of teaching in culturally diverse American schools:

Literacy is no longer thought of as the technical ability to read and write, nor the ability of individuals to function within social contexts associated with daily living. Rather, beyond these capacities, it is an ability to think and reason, a way of living, a means of looking at the world we know and how we behave in the world...Literacy is therefore inseparable from culture. (18)

According to Li, learners' discourses can be categorized into two domains: The primary discourse of the home and community, and the secondary discourse of the public sphere - institutions such as the public schools. As I previously stated, I believe that my brother and I, among other multicultural students, were torn between these two types of discourse. The home and community, or mother tongue; and the public sphere, or Standard Written English. But if literacy is inseparable from culture as Li suggests, then why is it that my brother and I got to "choose" so to speak?

This is because the schools we attended did not recognize this symbiotic relationship between language and culture. We were taught that there must be a right or wrong answer in proper English. We believed that learning language was static rather than harmonious. And all of the strict lessons in grammar and usage conflicted with our home and community discourse, deepening our confusion in what is the "right" way to speak, and the "right" way to learn.

Li uses a story of two Canadian teachers' experiences with Chinese parents as an example of this miscommunication and misplaced expectation that both parents and teachers are guilty of when it comes to teaching students of multicultural backgrounds. Mrs. Haines and Ms. Dawson both observed that often parents of Chinese students brought in hot lunches during their lunch period because the Chinese believed that consuming cold food was harmful to one's health. Many of the parents that visited during lunch did not greet the teachers or acknowledge their presence in the school. Instead, they remained distant and watched their children eating from far away and then left the school. Those who came back to pick up their children after school did not enter the classroom, but waited outside and did not engage in conversation with any of the teachers.

One of the Chinese parents, Mrs. Chan, explained that being a Chinese immigrant in Canada was like going to a friend's house. "You don't jump in and take over," she said. "You don't complain and you don't want to take charge." The Chinese parents were also reported to believe that "education was their children's ticket to counteract discrimination" (Li 67). Almost all parents expected their children to pursue higher education in the future, and becoming proficient in English was the top priority in their children's education. At the same time, they wanted their children to be able to speak Chinese. These double aspirations posed challenges for the two teachers, who were held accountable for the children's English instruction. Mrs. Haines and Ms. Dawson concluded that English immersion would be the best way for the Chinese students to become proficient in English, but they must still have regard for the parents' goal to retain their child's Chinese language as well. The children often defied Mrs. Dawson's attempts to create an English-only classroom. She expressed her frustrations at length:

I really think that children need to feel comfortable speaking their first language ...but there has to be a time, I feel, that it's agreed that you speak English...because for some of those children their English is not improving...and I'm accountable for that. I don't want to be construed as being a teacher who punishes children for speaking their first language, because I really value that first language. But I'm accountable for teaching them English. (70)

On top of the language barrier many teachers and students encounter, they must also deal with a cultural one. Li touched on this briefly when he described why the Chinese parents at this particular school do not interact with the school staff, but English teacher Clara C. Park explains this phenomenon in more detail in her book, *Asian and Pacific American Education*. Park points out that "Asian Americans, Chinese and Koreans...and to a certain extent Filipinos and Vietnamese, have distinct cultural values, such as conformity to authority, respect for elders...and a high emphasis on learning which are deeply rooted in the Confucian tradition." These values Park mentions were instilled in my household by my mother, who is from the Philippines. Park says that Asian American parents tend to encourage their children to be reserved and humble rather than expressive.

Because of this, Asian American students tend to be "passive and non verbal and rarely initiate class discussions until they are called on." This behavior was certainly facilitated by my mother in our home. In school, I was often docked points for a lack of participation because I did not speak up during class discussions. Even into high school, I transferred out of a class because I was uncomfortable with the rapid-fire type of class discussions the teacher often used. It took a long time for me to break this habit and fear of speaking up, and it would have been

useful to have teachers who understood that I did not speak up in class because culturally this was not permissible, and not because I did not understand the class material.

Another classroom style gap that Park points out is different cultures' affinities for certain types of learning. She categorized the styles of learning as auditory, visual, kinesthetic, tactile, group or individual. Her research showed that white students tended to prefer visual learning the least, while Korean, Chinese and Filipino students showed a minor preference to visual learning. On the other hand, students showed the greatest preference for Kinesthetic learning, while the other students did not (Park 87).

As the struggle for teachers to find a middle ground between native cultures and Standard Written English continues, so does the struggle for multicultural students to find a community to identify with. Because both my brother and I are mixed, we find it hard to fit in with any one particular culture. A similar situation is found in a case study done by William Alfred Sampson in *Race, Class and Family Intervention*. Sampson tells the story of Anita, a 10-year-old fifth grader in Evanston. Anita's grandmother says that she believes race is a factor in Anita's life. Anita is biracial and "describes her upbringing as 'confusing'" (Sampson 26).

My brother and I both struggled to find a group to fit in with. For me, I didn't feel as quintessentially "Asian" as the students in the Asian cliques, but the majority white students still viewed me as Asian or non-white, in partly because of my looks and partly because of their lack of exposure to different cultures while living in a small town like ours. I was the butt of several Asian jokes, from light-hearted to downright derogatory. Perhaps many of the white students thought that I wouldn't be offended because I wasn't "that Asian." To them, I was only a little part Asian, but never white. It took a long time for me to adjust and be comfortable in my skin, which did not fit into any

category. Even when taking surveys and state-wide aptitude tests, I had trouble choosing which box to check under the race category. In my brother's school, he was considered white. His school was predominantly black, but also had a small Latino population. Since he did not figure into either category, he was deemed "the white guy." Being labeled an outsider by his peers, he struggled to make friends and fit in. The race-based issues he wrestled with were a large part of why he began to skip school and why he agreed to join a gang. It took him quite awhile, as well, to feel comfortable in his background and diverse culture. Because we don't fit neatly into culturally prescribed boxes, our peers didn't know what to do with us. Both of us were casted as outsiders and had to learn how to cope with it.

Though my brother's life and my own greatly differ, we are the same in that we are a result of our experiences. The teachers, friends and loved ones we encountered as well as the traditions and standard procedures in place in our school schools worked as forces that pushed and propelled us into the people we are today. We both encountered good teachers, bad teachers, good programs, and bad programs that shaped us, our literacy, and our identities. I believe that our lives, along with the lives of the students in case studies I have mentioned would have greatly benefitted from further and more intense parental involvement with the school. A deeper mutual understanding between parents and teachers would largely improve the experiences of multicultural and diverse students in American schools. Regardless of students' races, languages, and cultures, they must have the shaping forces in their life cooperating in a way that is conducive to making a positive and rounded experience in school.

#### Works Cited

Brodkey, Linda. *Writing on the Bias*.

- Brown, Flora V. *The Home-school Connection: Lessons Learned in a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Community*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Print.
- Commins, Nancy L., and Ofelia B. Miramontes. *Linguistic Diversity and Teaching*. Mahwah: L. Erlbaum Associates, 2005. Print.
- Elbow, Peter. *Inviting the Mother Tongue*. CCT Reader.
- Li, Guofang. *Culturally Contested Pedagogy Battles of Literacy and Schooling between Mainstream Teachers and Asian Immigrant Parents*. Albany: SUNY UP, 2006. Print.
- Moore, Wes. *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*. Print.
- Park, Clara C. *Asian and Pacific American Education Learning, Socialization, and Identity*. Greenwich: Information Age, 2006. Print.
- Sampson, William A. *Race, Class, and Family Intervention: Engaging Parents and Families for Academic Success*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. Print.
- Scott, Jerrie Cobb. *Affirming Students' Right to Their Own Language: Bridging Language Policies and Pedagogical Practices*. New York: Routledge, 2008. Print.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

### Content

1. What are some contrasts the author points out between her and her brother? What are the ramifications of these differences?
2. In what ways does the author seem to struggle with issues of identity? What are some of the ways in which identity is conceived in this essay?

3. How does the author use cultural differences to approach differing ideas about education?
4. What responses does the author give to racism or racially-tinged biases? Why do you think this is?

**Style**

5. In what ways does the author use personal narrative throughout the essay?
6. Where does the author use sources to help support the ideas being presented?
7. Where does the author seem to disagree with the sources she cites? How does the author set about arguing these points?

# FROM THE SCHOOL YARD TO THE JAIL YARD: AN ANALYSIS OF ZERO- TOLERANCE POLICIES AND THE PIPELINE TO PRISON FOR BLACK YOUTH

Jordan Davis

## **Introduction**

From the inception of America as a country, Black Americans have been marginalized, outcast, and treated as the racial “other” in contrast to the majority white population. Historically, this racism has been blatant in forms such as Jim Crow laws and acts of physical violence against blacks. Though the civil rights movement of the 60s helped to quell some of this racism’s outward appearance, it left behind the institutionalized aspects of racism that continue to operate even today. Institutional racism—as the name implies—is racism that occurs at the level of an institution, rather than at the level of the individual. A more complete definition is given by California State lecturer Terry Jones when she defines institutional racism as “...(1) establishing and sanctioning unequal goals, objectives, and priorities for blacks and whites and (2) sanctioning inequality in



status as well as in access to goods and services” (Jones, 1974, 219). Also included in this idea of institutionalized racism is the geographical constraints that have historically been placed on Blacks in America, and that continue today. These constraints mean that blacks make up the majority of the urban population in America, making this not only a racial issue, but also an urban issue. A primary example of institutionalized racism today is that in the education and prison systems, especially due to zero-tolerance policies. Zero-tolerance policies in schools serve as active agents in the pipeline from education to prison, especially for blacks. As such, the solution for this problem lies in the reformation or complete replacement of school discipline policies.

### **What Is a Zero Tolerance Policy?**

Before a person can understand discipline in the education system, and the pipeline from the education system to the prison system for Black Americans, it is first necessary to understand what zero-tolerance policies are and the role that they play on the initial end of this pipeline. A zero-tolerance policy—as the name implies—deems certain acts of deviance in schools as intolerable. The primary reason for the existence of zero-tolerance policies is to eradicate deviance in the education system. Nathan L. Essex, former professor of education law at Memphis University, mentions that zero-tolerance policies were first enacted in the 90s to combat concealed drugs and weapons in schools (Essex, 2000, 37). Zero-tolerance policies under this context were widely enacted through the Guns Free Schools Act of 1994. This act held that schools receiving funding from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—an act itself targeted toward urban schools – had to enact a policy that mandated an expulsion of not less than one year for any student found with a gun on school grounds (GSFA). This proved a starting point off of which

state-level education acts, like the Missouri Safe Schools Act, would build. As with the Missouri Safe Schools Act - in which disciplinary authority is given to “the local board of education” (Safe Schools Act of 1997)—these state-level education acts tended to follow the constraints of the Guns Free Schools Act only in the most basic form, and to allow local educational institutions great freedom in their applications of zero-tolerance policies. In many cases, though the original intents may have remained, many zero-tolerance policies have evolved to include fighting, the carrying of other weapons, and a variety of other acts deemed deviant.

The nature of zero-tolerance policies is to dish out punishments without taking the situation into account. This is the reason that they seem fair and impartial, and why they have remained in schools for the past 20 years. The reality of zero-tolerance policies however is that though they seem to be fair and impartial, the schools in which zero-tolerance policies are applied, and the students to which they are applied, have already been prescreened by the social factors that will ultimately place these preselected students in a pipeline to the prison system.

### **The Preselection Process**

Zero-tolerance policies target the urban Black American student. Though urbanness and Black America cannot be used synonymously, there is a doubtless relationship between the Black American and the urban environment. To cover the history of Black American migration patterns very briefly, Black Americans—as slaves—started their journey in the rural American South. There they remained largely until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, at which time industrialization was in full effect and jobs were moving to northern cities (Trotter, 2000). These northern cities provided not only a means of employment but also an escape from the racially charged tensions in the south.

As a result large numbers of Black Americans moved to northern cities, which would then set them up for the position of urban residence that many occupy today. Only a few decades after this great migration whites were exiting cities in large numbers in a phenomena called white flight. This left a minority-majority underclass in cities, and caused the inner city schools that educated the minority-majority student population to receive inadequate funding, which was the root of the bias that zero-tolerance policies stem from.

Zero-tolerance policies are at their root biased in the schools in which they are applied, and therefore the types of students that they affect. This occurs mainly a result of two factors: the policies that led to the creation of zero-tolerance policies and the means by which specific zero-tolerance policies are created now. The policies that led to the creation of zero-tolerance policies were in themselves targeted toward certain demographics of the overall student population. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was the first of these policies. Its main goal was to provide funding for schools that served low income populations (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965). This specialization of the policy as being for urban schools is what allowed later policies to target these same urban schools for zero-tolerance policies. The next policy that came about in the formation of zero-tolerance policies was the Guns Free Schools Act of 1994 that was elaborated on before. Because only entities receiving ESEA funding were forced to comply with this early zero-tolerance policy, it can be seen how even at this point zero-tolerance policies were not evenly distributed across all student bodies. Even beyond this, zero-tolerance policies have continued to evolve with ever more bias against Black American students.

The ways in which zero-tolerance policies are created is the second reason for their biased nature. As a result of the Missouri Safe Schools Act and other state-level acts that delegate

disciplinary action, the main entity for the creation of zero-tolerance policies are school boards and/or school administrators. Not only did this allow different educational entities to deem various different acts as intolerable, but it also caused the unintentional side-effect of bias against Black American students. First and foremost, Black American students are much more susceptible to suspension/expulsion than any other race of student—with or without zero-tolerance policies. According to Gordon, Piana, and Keleher – who observed a study looking at suspension/expulsion rates by race in 12 different cities—Black American students are suspended/expelled at rates from school “in numbers proportionately much greater than those of any other group” (Gordon, Piana, and Keleher, 2000, p. 8). This already places Black American students under the disciplinary spotlight. Zero-tolerance policies further exacerbate this issue by instituting policies are culturally dissonant with the cultures of many of these students. Rather than operating within the norms of the student populations, zero-tolerance policies are based upon the norms of the more dominant culture—the traditional white-centered culture. As a result, non-white students and students who haven’t been socialized into this culture are the students generally targeted as the most deviant. Since Black American students are also already more prone to suspension/expulsion, this serves as a two-fold attack on the rights of Black American students, and sets them up for the pipeline from the education system to the prison system.

### **The Pipeline**

The pipeline from the education system to the prison system is an invisible pathway made up of social factors that affect education, prison, and the transition from one to the other for Black Americans. The initial education end of the pipeline has already been established through zero-tolerance policies, but

zero-tolerance policies have effects that reach far beyond the confines of a school. Punishment for violating an act prohibited under a zero-tolerance policy—as mentioned earlier—can vary greatly. In Kansas City Public Schools, which has a zero-tolerance policy for drugs, requires a 10 day suspension with referral to School Discipline Office which could result in 175 day suspension (Code of Conduct). Los Angeles Unified School District requires an investigation and possible “suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement” for a list of thirteen acts including bullying, drug possession/sale, and graffiti (Parent-student handbook). The Los Angeles example presents the wide array of punishments that each put African American students in this pipeline. The most direct method would be the referral to law enforcement. This takes the societal middleman out of the pipeline and places students directly from the education system into the prison system. Since African American students are predisposed to punishment by zero-tolerance policies, they are also naturally more represented in these referrals to law enforcement. This is often not a temporary interaction with law enforcement though. National Institute of Justice statistics show that 76.6% of prisoners are rearrested within five years of their release (National Institute of Justice). This shows how the initial referral to law enforcement because of already biased zero-tolerance policies can lead to a life of interaction with the prison system for many Black Americans.

The more indirect ways in which zero-tolerance policies place Black American students into the pipeline-to-prison is through expulsions. In a nation where education and success are often linked, removal from the education system not only affects a student’s immediate learning capability, but also their life-long opportunity. 2014 Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that those with no high school diploma will—on average—make only \$488/week and face an unemployment rate of 9%

as opposed to the national average of 5% (Bureau of Labor Statistics). These lowered life chances are what drives many of these African American students who have been affected by zero-tolerance policies into illegitimate means of earning money as a mode of survival. Rather than struggling to survive in a system that has done them harm, many decide to operate beyond the confines of the system (ex. through selling drugs or prostitution). Unfortunately, this leads them to be imprisoned for breaking the rules of the system that left them with little other choice in the first place. Data collected by Western, Pettit, and Guetzkow in 1999 (as cited in Simmons, 2009) found that 41.2% of African American male dropouts were in prison. This number is high in itself, but also again shows how this entire process disproportionately affects Black American students. The corresponding number for white males was 7.2%.

Critics of this pipeline-to-prison idea often cite alternative education options as the reason why the theory doesn't hold up. It is true that many schools offer alternative education options to students suspended or expelled under zero-tolerance policies. As a result it is easy to see how some come to the conclusion that this is a viable solution. It seems as though deviant students are being allowed to continue with an education, while simultaneously being justly punished for their deviance. Alternative education, however, is not a viable solution for two main reasons. The first is that alternative education options do not always affect students in a positive manner. Though they are supposed to keep "deviant" students in the education system yet away from their "non-deviant" peers, alternative education options do not always provide the same educational experience as the student would get in a traditional school. After observing a report about the criminalization of schools in Oregon, Thalia Gonzalez remarked that "the growing use of zero-tolerance discipline, disciplinary alternative schools, and

juvenile arrests [contribute] significantly to student dropout rates (Gonzalez, 296, 2012). This demonstrates how alternative education options do not provide the same quality of education as traditional schools, and in fact can serve the same functions as zero-tolerance policies themselves.

The second reason that alternative education options are not a viable solution to the pipeline-to-prison is because they fail to address the pipeline's inherent bias. To see this, one must only look back at the suspension/expulsion rates mentioned earlier. Again, Black American students are suspended/expelled at higher rates than any other race of student, and this occurs despite the presence of alternative education options. So though alternative education might allow students to maintain some type of education, Black American students are naturally also more represented in these alternative schools. This exhibits how alternative education options work as a safety net for the effects of pipeline-to-prison rather than cures of it.

### **The Solution**

Though there are a potentially vast array of solutions to the pipeline-to-prison, most of them stem from policy change either at the level of school boards or at the state or national level. As a result, I am proposing one solution in detail that I believe would not only help solve the pipeline-to-prison, but that would also make schools safer for all student populations. This would entail exchanging zero-tolerance policies for a restorative justice discipline model. Restorative Justice is a discipline model that focuses on keeping deviants out of the justice system yet allowing the victims of deviance to receive reparation for their losses. Rather than forcing deviant students out of schools and/or into the juvenile justice system, a restorative justice model would call for disciplinary action that was situationally considerate and that focused on reintegration of the student into

the larger school population (Gonzales, 2012). This would still allow deviant students to be disciplined (thereby fulfilling the goals of zero-tolerance policies) while simultaneously disrupting the flow of the pipeline-to-prison. If students are not being kicked out of schools for acts that hardly warrant such action, then the pipeline from the education system to the prison system becomes null not only for Black American students but for all students. A school could institute a tiered system of punishment where repeat offenses would coincide with severe punishment up to a point where counseling would come before intervention by law enforcement was necessary. This would deter deviance as punishments would get worse as the number of offenses increases, but it would also still allow the student to remain in school and to get help with any issues they have that is fueling the deviance.

Feasibility for a plan such as this is dependent upon a school's resources. If a school has too few counselors for the size of the student population, then this plan could easily become a burden as these already overworked counselors are now also tasked with rehabilitating deviant students—each with their own needs. As a result some schools would need to hire more staff to take on these new duties. For this reason, the enactment of a restorative justice system of discipline would also need to be coupled with larger national change that allowed for understaffed schools to receive subsidies for hiring new staff members for this purpose. If it was possible to enact this change—through lobbying and voting—then the benefits of disrupting the pipeline-to-prison would be greater than the initial cost of these subsidies.

## **Conclusion**

Zero-tolerance policies and the policies that allowed for their creation interact in complex ways that serve to place many Black American students into a pipeline from the education system



to the prison system. For this reason, it is imperative that we abolish zero-tolerance policies in exchange for discipline systems that better serve not only the Black American student population, but students as a whole. Those of us who are fortunate enough to see this problem are the only ones that are able to visualize a solution.

### References

- Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014). "Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Educational Achievement." Retrieved from [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_table\\_001.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_001.htm)
- Essex, N. (2000). "Zero tolerance approach to school violence: is it going too far?" *American Secondary Education*, 29(2), 37-40. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41064424>
- González, T. (2012). "Keeping kids in schools: Restorative justice, punitive discipline, and the school to prison pipeline." *Journal of Law and Education*, 41(2), 281-335. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1008167526?accountid=14589>
- Gordon, R., Piana, L. D., & Keleher, T. (2000). "Facing the Consequences: An Examination of Racial Discrimination in U.S. Public Schools." Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED454323.pdf>
- Guns Free Schools Act 1994. 4 U.S.C. § 4141 (2004).
- Jones, T.. (1974). "Institutional racism in the United States." *Social Work*, 19(2), 218–225. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23712909>
- Kansas City Public Schools. (2015). *Student Handbook and Code of Conduct*. Retrieved from <http://www.kcpublicschools.org/studenthandbook>

- Los Angeles Unified School District (2013). *Parent-Student Handbook*. Retrieved from [http://home.lausd.net/pdf/Families\\_Forms/2013-2014\\_Parent\\_Student\\_Handbook.pdf](http://home.lausd.net/pdf/Families_Forms/2013-2014_Parent_Student_Handbook.pdf)
- Missouri Safe Schools Act of 1997. 6 RSMo. § 160.261.1 (2015).
- National Institute of Justice (2014). “Recidivism.” Retrieved from <http://www.nij.gov/topics/corrections/recidivism/pages/welcome.aspx>
- Trotter, J. W.. (2000). “African Americans and the Industrial Revolution.” *OAH Magazine of History*, 15(1), 19–23. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25163396>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2015). Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/esea>
- Western, Pettit, Guetzkow (2002). Cited in Simmons, L.. (2009). “End of the Line: Tracing Racial Inequality from School to Prison.” *Race/ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, 2(2), 215–241. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25595013>

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

### **Content**

1. How does the author define “institutional racism”? How is it delineated from other ideas of racism?
2. According to the author, what are the root causes of the bias implicit in zero tolerance policies?
3. Does the author believe alternative education to be a viable aspect of disciplinary actions? Why or why not?
4. What does the author see as a rational alternative to zero tolerance policies? Why?

### **Style**

5. How does the author set about contextualizing the issue at hand?
6. What are the sources used to support the author's argument? How do those contribute to the essay's ethos?
7. Does the author seem to be addressing all the important aspects of the issue in giving a solution to the problem? Why or why not?
8. How does the author use the sources in the essay? What strategies are used to incorporate the sources? Where are things summarized? Quoted? Paraphrased? How does the author give the reader an idea of how to interpret these sources?

# A MAN'S PRIDE

Que Trang Tran

*Under the bright full moon, a beautiful soprano voice of an angel puts all in awe in the Paris Opera. Infatuated with the angel's voice, a mysterious, masked man kidnaps the angel and locks her away from the rest of the world. Rumors say that he is the phantom of the opera. The phantom asks the angel to love him, but the angel hesitates. She reveals his mask. What she sees is not of a handsome face, but it is a face that terrifies anyone who dares to look at it. Ashamed and angered by such reaction and rejection, the phantom chooses to end his life in loneliness.*

Pride! Shame! These are the usual weaknesses in people's minds. Like the prideful phantom from the musical "The Phantom of the Opera" by Andrew Lloyd Webber, people put on different masks to hide what they call their "ugliness." People pride themselves when others recognize their importance and accept their presence in society. They build their masks based on their pride, and what others will see from those masks are greatness and perfection. However, like the phantom, people will choose to destroy themselves out of shame if their masks are broken. Like any other normal human being, Alan Turing

chose to hide his weaknesses behind the mask, so other people could only see his achievements and accomplishments. He was the man who cherished pride above all. As the consequence, he committed suicide out of shame because he was prosecuted as a homosexual man in a society where homosexuality was treated as a mental sickness and plague.

First of all, who is Alan Turing? Most people will probably say that he is the genius from *The Imitation Game* movie who breaks the Nazi Enigma machine's coding. Yes, Alan Turing was definitely a brilliant man. He mastered variety of fields such as the computer science, mathematics, theoretical biology, and cryptanalysis. He was also called the father of computer science. In computer science, Turing made and developed a hypothetical machine called the Turing machine in 1936, which he believed could *think* and follow every command of its user (Copeland 15). With the Turing machine, he conducted a theory test called the Turing Test in 1950, which determined if a computer was capable of thinking like humans based on a computer's reply to a human evaluator's question.

Turing was already famous in his works with computers like the Turing machine and mathematics before he was hired by the British government to break Nazi Germany's Enigma codes along with other famous cryptanalysts, mathematicians, and scientists. German engineer Arthur Scherbius invented the Enigma machine after WWI for the sole purpose of commercial use like the stock market (Copeland 31). Because of its effectiveness in coding the messages, the Nazis used it for military and government services such as radio messages for U-boats. The first Enigma code was already broken by a secret group of Polish cryptologists in 1932 (Copeland 35). Unfortunately, the Nazis renovated their Enigma machine from 3 rotors to 4 rotors in World War II, which greatly increased the combinations of the random letters. Alan Turing figured that the combinations are far

too many to decipher by hands, so together with his team Hut 8 (Joan Clarke, Hugh Alexander, Michael Arbuthnot Ashcroft, and other members), he decided to build a machine called the Bombe that would match the speed and go through the combinations of the Enigma machine more adequately (Copeland 50). With the deciphered radio messages of the Nazi's navy attacks leaked to the Allied Powers and U.S. government by team Hut 8 and Alan Turing, the Allied Powers and U.S. Army were able to defeat the Nazis and the Axis powers easier, which reduced the war years and the number of civilians killed.

However, the titles of father of computers and a war hero in WW II as mentioned before were just other discourses that Turing took to make himself appear admirable and well respected in front of his scientist peers and society as a whole. Turing was not just a genius man who could break every code or come up with an ingenious theory that computers can think. He was also a shy boy who was afraid to confess his love to his best friend named Christopher Morcom. At the age of 13, Turing was considered to be a very stubborn and troublesome student by his masters and headmaster at Sherborne public school. Turing would often ignore the subjects like English literature, Latin, and French and work on something else such as algebra or chemistry. As a result, his masters and headmaster would often criticize Turing. For example, his literature master Ross caught him doing algebra during time devoted to religious instruction, and wrote at half term:

I can forgive his writing, though it is the worst I have ever seen, and I try to view tolerantly his [illegible] inexactitude and slipshod, dirty, work, inconsistent though such inexactitude is in a utilitarian, but I cannot forgive the stupidity of his attitude towards sane discussion on the New Testament. He is ought not to be

in this form of course as far as form subjects go. He is ludicrously behind. (Hodges 30)

In this comment to Turing for the grade evaluation, Ross and the other school masters felt very displeased with him due to his different perspective of thinking from the usual traditional knowledge set out by the schools. Most of the masters considered the classics and traditional knowledge as necessary and utmost important in a student's education. Because of his straightforward and honest personality, Turing would often ignore the old traditional knowledge and come up with his own ideas and ways to solve the problems. As a result from the failure to conform to the standards, Turing was isolated from his peers and his schoolmasters. Fortunately, Turing was able to find a true friendship in an older boy named Christopher Morcom who he met in another boarding house – Ross' house in 1927. Morcom was surprisingly small in his appearance compared to his age with a very fair complexion and fair hair. Turing was truly attracted to Morcom either by his small appearance or his shared passion for science. The boys would often share their ideas and opinions on a scientific theory and decipher codes during their free time. Soon, Turing found that Christopher Morcom had become a part of him, the part that he couldn't live without. Morcom was Turing's first love.

Unfortunately, before a love could blossom and Turing could declare his love for his best friend, Christopher Morcom passed away in the summer of 1927. Morcom's death was believed to be from his contraction of bovine tuberculosis from drinking infected cows' milk as a small boy. It was like the whole world turned to black and white again when the headmaster broke the news to Turing. On the day of the Morcom's funeral, Turing wrote a letter to Morcom's mother:

Dear Mrs. Morcom,

I want to say how sorry I am about Chris. During the last year I worked with him continually and I am sure I could not have found anywhere another companion so brilliant and yet so charming and unconceited. I regarded my interest in my work, and in such things as astronomy (to which he introduced me) as something to be shared with him and I think he felt a little the same about me. Although that interest is partly gone, I know I must put as much energy if not as much interest into my work as if he were alive, because that is what he would like me to do. I feel sure that you could not possibly have had a greater loss.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Turing (Hodges 47)

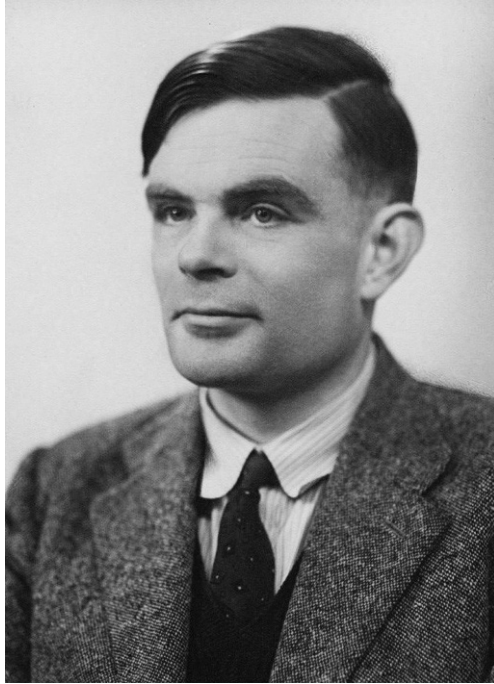
In this letter to Morcom's mom, Turing hid away his true feelings for Christopher Morcom where he only regarded him as a "brilliant companion" in sharing interest like astronomy, instead of how Morcom was his first love. The whole letter was the usual and polite form of what a normal friend's letter would be as a tribute to his friend's funeral. However, the phrases like "something to share with him and *I think he felt a little the same about me*" gives away Turing's true feelings of romantic love for his friend. Turing tried to suppress his true feelings because he knew that it was not the standard for boys to fall in love with boys. If he were to write his true feelings, he would be considered sick or mentally ill. This was the first step for Turing to code switch into a normal young heterosexual man in order to hide his real sexual orientation, which then took a toll on him in his last moments of life.

After World War II, Alan Turing continued to work on his theory on the computer's ability to think like humans or even more advanced than humans. Turing wanted to design a *universal* computer that would "replace not only Bombes and



Colossi, decision trees and all the other mechanical Bletchley tasks, but the whole laborious work of the computation into which mathematicians had been constricted by the war” (Hodges 293). Turing theorized a single machine that could do infinite works of different machines combined. During this time, Turing would work with many scientists and mathematicians on the theory of a universal computer and one of them is the ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator And Computer). ENIAC was the first electronic numerical integrator and computer developed by the University of Pennsylvania. Turing would regularly attend the ENIAC team meetings and gave advice on what the computer needed. At this time, Turing was pretty a big name in the world of scientists. With his reputation in mathematics and computer science, Alan Turing was soon elected to Fellowship of the Royal Society in 1951. Royal Society is a fellowship founded in November 1660 that recognizes and promotes the achievements of the world’s greatest mathematicians and scientists. Some of its members were Isaac Newton, Benjamin Franklin, and Karl Pearson.

As previously stated, Turing took his achievements very seriously and being elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society meant a lot to him. The Fellowship represented the other scientists’ and mathematicians’ acceptance and recognition of Turing. It made Turing feel powerful and proud of who he was. This power and pride can be seen perfectly in his profile photograph taken in 1951 on his election to Fellowship of the Royal Society. In the picture, Turing’s face poses side ways with serious eyes looking straight ahead. This pose makes Turing to appear powerful and confident, which makes people admire this great genius. Feeling powerful is a fantastic feeling to many people, and Turing was no different. With this mask of a successful man, Turing was invincible. This feeling of invincibility made him forget his other self’s fear. This fear lies in Turing’s hidden other self: the



**Fig. 1.1—Alan Turing Royal Society Portrait, 1951**

little, innocent Turing who fell in love with his first best friend, Christopher Morcom.

Christopher Morcom! It was the name that haunted Alan Turing throughout his life. The sudden death of his first love seemed to trap Turing in his own sexuality. Because it was a love that never blossomed and his many years of trying to suppress the feelings, Turing became blind in finding his own love. Turing would naively and easily give his love away to any man he had associated with even though he knew that deep down none of them actually loved him. One of these naïve loves was his relationship with Arnold Murray, a boy who was 19 years old. Turing met Murray in late 1951 when he was walking along the Oxford Street. When Turing met Murray, he was an undernourished young boy with very thin hair and blue eyes. The fair features and small stature of Murray reminded Turing of his first love, Morcom. Trapped by his old love, Turing strongly approached

Murray, offering him job opportunities and education. Murray was a boy from a lower class who was desperate for better things such as the luxury of the upper class. Soon, they began a romantic relationship. Unfortunately, Turing's love with Murray, like his love with Morcom, didn't last very long.

There was a burglary case in Turing's house, which he then later reported to the police without realizing that the burglars were Murray and his accomplice. The detectives found the fingerprints of Murray's accomplice, who confessed Murray of having business at Turing's house. The detectives asked Turing about the descriptions of the burglars, in which Turing realized that it was actually Murray, lied that the burglar was about "twenty-five years of age, five foot ten inches, with black hair" (Hodges 457). Suspicious of the obvious lie, the detectives interrogated Turing on what is his actual relationship with Murray. Surprisingly, Turing was honest in his answer, which he answered that they were lovers. As a result, the detectives charged Alan Turing with the "indecent acts of homosexuality" in 1952.

In 1952, Alan Turing was prosecuted with the criminal act of homosexuality in which the court gave him two choices, either two years of imprisonment or chemical castration. With the two choices, Turing was put in a dilemma. One choice would take away his freedom of continuing his scientific computer work, which ties in with his feelings, and intelligence, while the other choice impairs his body. As a stubborn person, like he was as a teenager, Turing chose chemical castration over the two years of imprisonment. Due to his great pride in his achievements, Turing was not willing to let go of his research. Turing felt that if he were to let go of it, then he would lose all of his credentials that he had built through out his career life. This is evident in his letter to one of his colleagues and friends, Norman Routledge:

My dear Norman,

I don't think I really do know much about jobs, except the one I had during the war, and that certainly did not involve any travelling. I think they do take on conscripts. It certainly involved a good deal of hard thinking, but whether you'd be interested I don't know. Philip Hall was in the same racket and on the whole, I should say, he didn't care for it. However I am not at present in a state in which I am able to concentrate well, for reasons explained in the next paragraph.

I've now got myself into the kind of trouble that I have always considered to be quite a possibility for me, though I have usually rated it at about 10:1 against. I shall shortly be pleading guilty to a charge of sexual offences with a young man. The story of how it all came to be found out is a long and fascinating one, which I shall have to make into a short story one day, but haven't the time to tell you now. No doubt I shall emerge from it all a different man, but quite who I've not found out.

Glad you enjoyed broadcast. Jefferson certainly was rather disappointing though. I'm afraid that the following syllogism may be used by some in the future.

Turing believes machines think

Turing lies with men

Therefore machines do not think

Yours in distress,

Alan (Hodges preface xxix)

In the letter, Turing was trying to hide his mental state of slowly becoming unstable when he casually wrote about the jobs and joked about his trouble with charge of sexual offences with a young man. But then, the syllogism in his letter about machines thought gave away his true feelings of the whole situation. In the syllogism, Turing felt anger, at the same time, hopeless of his

credentials being taken away from him because of his sexuality. As he continued with his Turing Test theory on the computers, his body became weaker and weaker due to the side effects of drugs on his hormones. With a hidden hopeless mentality and a very weak physical body, Turing soon turned insane. Because he couldn't take anymore, he poisoned himself with an apple laced with cyanide in 1954.

Like in the stories of the Greek where the egoistic heroes end in tragedy or in the French play where the phantom of the opera die out of pride, the prideful Alan Turing also chose death rather surrendering to the society's standards. As a prideful man who cared tremendously for this research, Turing felt angry and committed suicide because society had stripped him naked with shame by prosecuting his homosexual way of love as a disease and discrediting all of his research works out of disgust for homosexuals. If this selfish way of the society's need to conform continues, then no genius and hero will live long, especially the ones with a very strong man's pride like Alan Turing.

#### Works Cited

- Copeland, B. Jack. *Turing: Pioneer of the Information Age*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.
- "History." *The Royal Society*. Royal Society, n.d. Web. <<https://royalsociety.org/about-us/history/>>.
- Hodges, Andrew. *Alan Turing: The Enigma*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983. Print.
- Turing, Alan M. "Dear Mrs. Morcom." *Alan Turing: The Enigma*. Ed. Andrew Hodges. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983. 46-47. Print.
- . "My dear Norman." *Alan Turing: The Enigma: The Book That Inspired the Film "The Imitation Game"*. Ed. Andrew Hodges. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014. Preface xxix. Print.

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

### **Content**

1. What is the central issue for the author in this essay?
2. What achievements was Turing responsible for during his lifetime?
3. What led to Turing's arrest and the filing of charges?

### **Style**

4. What role does the passage at the beginning of the essay play?
5. How does the author use voice as an effect in this essay? What does it do to the ethos and pathos of the essay?
6. How does the author use the picture of Turing to make a point?
7. How are sources used in the essay? Do they back up the author's argument or serve some other role?



# Contributor Notes

## INTRODUCTORY:

**Michele Yang (Illus W. Davis Writing Competition Winner)** is in her second year at the UMKC six-year B.A./M.D. program and is majoring in Chemistry. Although science and medicine is her first love, she would also be majoring in classics and mathematics if she could. In her free time, she enjoys playing volleyball and tennis and reading any book she can get her hands on. She is a determined advocate for ending the stigma around mental health issues and strongly believes in the power of vulnerability and compassion as tools to do so. (Taught by Sheila Honig)

**Mackenna Kemp** is a freshman at William Jewell College. As a senior at Blue Springs High School, she was involved in A Capella Choir, Chamber Choir, and Theatre. (Taught by Mary Humphries)

**Remington Lamb** is captain of his school's dance team and is involved in Hi-Step, DECA, NHS, and Choir. He enjoys singing, dancing, drawing, and reading, and he is obsessed with mountains and space. His dream is to stand on the edge of the Grand Canyon while the sun rises. His true talents are being friendly and drinking large amounts of Dr. Pepper. (Taught by Tara Edwards)

**Maria Martinez Arevalo** attends Pittsburg State University and majors in Nursing with a minor in Spanish. At Blue Springs High School she was actively involved in Student Senate and Hi-Step. She enjoys writing on controversial topics and believes writing has helped her grow as a person. (Taught by Sara Crump)



## **INTERMEDIATE:**

**Ashley Wishall (Ilus W. Davis Writing Competition Winner)** is a sophomore at UMKC. She is uncertain what career path is ahead, but excited to work with people and help them. She is the youngest of six kids and inspired by her parents and siblings to work hard and put a piece of herself into everything. As a Christian, she draws inspiration and strength from God in all aspects of life. (Taught by Ben Moats)

**Willow Carr** is a junior majoring in Psychology at UMKC. She intends to continue her education after graduation by pursuing a Master's in Counseling and Guidance. Her career aspiration is to become a mental health counselor. (Taught by Ben Moats)

**Anne Crawford** is an undergraduate student at UMKC majoring in English and History. She is also a student in the UMKC Honors College and is the 2016-2017 Editor-in-Chief of the undergraduate research journal *Lucerna*. Anne hopes to further her studies in graduate school or attend law school. In her free time, Anne loves to read, write, and spend time with her two collies. (Taught by Sheila Honig)

**Emma Dodge** is a sophomore at UMKC studying Theatre Design and Technology with a focus on Stage Management, and also minoring in Art History. (Taught by Natasha Okonta)

**Debolina Kanjilal** is a second-year medical student at UMKC's six-year medical program and is very interested in pursuing a career in neurology. Previously, she had been working at UMKC's School of Pharmacy under Dr. Mridul Mukherjee and co-authored a research paper on the angiogenic properties of Honokiol. She loves playing the piano and violin and is very involved in cultural art, singing, and dancing. (Taught by Ben Moats)

## ADVANCED:

**Thea Voutiritsas (Illus W. Davis Writing Competition Winner)** is a fourth-year undergraduate student working on a B.A. in English Language and Rhetoric with a minor in Print Culture and Editing. She firmly believes that every student has a unique story and unique factors that have contributed to their understanding of literacy. As a consultant in the UMKC Writing Studio, she has had the privilege of working with students from a variety of backgrounds, ages, races, and experiences. In addition to the Writing Studio, Thea works as an undergraduate assistant and blogger for the UMKC Women's Center. (Taught by Daniel Mahala)

**Jordan Davis** is a third-year undergraduate from Topeka, Kansas, currently pursuing a double major in Sociology (with an emphasis in Cultural Anthropology) and History. He serves as an orientation leader for incoming freshmen and is also highly involved in UMKC's conservatory choirs. He is inspired to write by his passion for education and plans to attend a graduate program for Sociocultural Anthropology with the ultimate goal of becoming a tenure-track Anthropology professor. (Taught by Henrietta Rix-Wood)

**Que Trang Tran** is a sophomore at UMKC majoring in Biology. Her favorite novels are *The Giver*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *Island of the Blue Dolphins* because she likes to read fictional, adventurous, and satirical works. She also has a bad habit of writing essays in the middle of the night. (Taught by Kaitlyn Stunkard)







UMKC