



E3: EDUCATION, EXCELLENCE & EQUITY

The Drawbridge with Socially Constructed Lenses

Adapted from Judith H. Katz. (1978). White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training (pp. 70 – 72)

Objective

To explore how the realities of power, authority, and societal values influence our perceptions about how we see the world.

Instructions

- Divide participants into groups (recommended 3-5 people per group)
- Provide a copy for each group (provide a copy for each participant only if asked)
- Ask participants to read the story and identify the characters in the narrative.
- Have participants rank order the characters individually
- Ask participants to see if they can come to a group consensus on who was the 'most' and 'least' responsible for the death of the Baroness and rank order the characters below. This means you will have to discuss and talk with each other. (Rank orders may not use fractions, decimals etc. for this task.)
- Facilitate a class discussion.

Facilitation Questions (1st time around)

- What factors influenced your ranking decision?
- What feelings were provoked during this activity and your decision making process? Why?
- In attempting to reach a group consensus, were you convinced of a different ranking order? Why/why not?
- How does this exercise relate to societal values and norms?

Preparation for Part 2

- Ask participants how many read the actual document – why or why not?
- Ask participants how many reflected on their own perspectives/lenses?
- Ask participants if they were trying to convince others vs. inquiry of understanding others?
- Ask participants to reflect on how they may re-engage and focus on how they do consensus building?

Facilitation Questions (2nd time around)

- Provide the story as a handout to each participant and re-read the story to identify what socially constructed lenses they can you identify?
- What feelings were provoked during this activity and your decision making process? Why?
- In attempting to reach a group consensus, were you convinced of a different ranking order? Why/why not?
- How does this exercise relate to societal values and norms?
- What constructs do you think each of the characters represent (all 15 categories if possible)
- How does the protocol assist you in engage with each other?



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Original Key:

- Baron—white male, sets values
- Baroness—oppressed has little say in values, but expected to follow
- Gateman—authority, police, military, etc. - no say in rules, but must enforce
- Boatman—institutions (education, church, etc.) - service for a cost - if you have money, you have opportunity
- Friend—White liberal, good intentions - “my framework” mentality: “I’ll accept you, based on my value system” - diversity celebrated my way: “I’ll accept you as long as you act white/male”
- Lover—enticements, things we fall in love with but in reality or practice they don’t always help – ideological examples: U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights

E3 interpretation Key * edited by Dr. Suresh Apavoo & Dr. JuanCarlos Arauz

Baron:

- **The ruling class, the power structure, the rule makers; the concept of whiteness – not skin color**

Baroness:

- **The people subjected to the rules; the oppressed; people of color, socio-economically poor, no formal education, immigrants, religious minority, LGBTQ, women, children etc.**

The Gateman:

- **Enforcers of the rules; The police, the military, etc.**

The Boatman:

- **Institutions; social institutions like family, education, community organizations, etc.**

The Friend:

- **Critics who look for change outside of themselves; follow the “golden rule” instead of the “platinum rule”; society; social media, popular culture, etc.,**

The Lover:

- **Ideals, Values, Beliefs that eschew reality; U.S. Constitution, Freedom, Health, Education, etc.**

The Servant:

- **The invisible, marginalized that go unnoticed & contextual to each region; homeless, elderly, etc.**



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THE DRAWBRIDGE STORY (part one)

As he left for a visit to his outlying districts, the jealous baron warned his pretty viler: “Do not leave the castle while I am gone, or I will punish you severely when I return!”

But as the hours passed, the young baroness grew lonely, and despite her husband's warning, she decided to visit her lover, who lived in the countryside nearby. The castle was situated on an island in a wide, fast-flowing river. A drawbridge linked the island to the mainland at the narrowest point in the river. “Surely my husband will not return before me,” she thought, and ordered the servant to lower the drawbridge and leave it down until she returned. After spending several pleasant hours with her lover the baroness returned to the drawbridge. Only to find it blocked by a gateman wildly waving a long, cruel knife.

“Do not attempt to cross this bridge, Baroness, or I will have to kill you” he cried. “The baron ordered me to do so.”

Fearing for her life, the baroness returned to her lover and asked him for help. “Our relationship is only a romantic one,” he said. – “I will not help.” The baroness then sought out a boatman on the river, explained her plight to him and asked him to take her across the river in his boat. “I will do it but only if you can pay the fee of five marks.” “But I have no money with me!” the baroness protested. “That is too bad. No money, no ride,” the boatmen said flatly.

Her fear growing, the baroness ran crying to the home of a friend and, after explaining her desperate situation begged for enough money to pay the boatman his fee. “If you had not disobeyed your husband this would not have happened,” the friend said. “I will give you no money.”

With dawn approaching and her last resource exhausted, the baroness returned to the bridge in desperation, and waited to cross to the castle, and was slain by the gateman.



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THE DRAWBRIDGE STORY (part one)

Please rank the characters from 1 – 6 with 1 = most responsible for the death of the Baroness and 6 = least responsible. Ideally the group must arrive to a consensus in which everyone agrees to the ranking.

	Individual Ranking	Group Ranking
Baron		
Baroness		
Gateman		
Boatman		
Friend		
Lover		



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THE DRAWBRIDGE STORY (part two)

As *he* left for a visit to his outlying districts, the jealous *wealthy* **baron** warned his *pretty* wife: “Do not leave the castle while I am gone, or I will punish you severely when I return!”

But as the hours passed, the *young 20 year-old* **bareness** grew lonely, and despite her older *40 year-old* *husband's* warning, she decided to visit her **lover**, who lived in the *rural countryside* nearby. The castle was situated on a *gated island* in a wide, fast-flowing river. A drawbridge linked the island to the mainland at the narrowest point in the river. “Surely my husband will not return before me,” she thought, and ordered the *low-wage earning* **servant** to lower the drawbridge and leave it down until she returned.

After spending several pleasant hours with her lover the baroness returned to the drawbridge. Only to find it blocked by a **gatemen** who has a *physical disability* wildly waving a long, cruel knife. “Do not attempt to cross this bridge, Baroness, or I will have to kill you” he cried. “The baron ordered me to do so.”

Fearing for her life, the bareness returned to her lover and asked for help. “Our relationship is only a romantic one,” *she the lover said*. – “I will not help.” The bareness then sought out a **boatman** who is a *low-wage immigrant* on the river, explained her plight to him and asked him to take her across the river in his boat. “I will do it but only if you can pay the fee of five marks.” “But I have no money with me!” the baroness protested. “That is too bad. No money, no, ride,” the boatmen said flatly.

Her fear growing, the baroness ran crying to the home of a **friend** - who is not considered to be *attractive and very religiously conservative* - explaining her desperate situation begged for enough money to pay the boatman his fee. “If you had not disobeyed your husband this would not have happened,” the friend said. “I will give you no money.”

With dawn approaching and her last resource exhausted, the baroness returned to the bridge in desperation, and waited to cross to the castle, and was slain by the gateman.



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THE DRAWBRIDGE STORY (part two)

Step One: Next to each social construction category, circle and name the character's identities/social constructs. Next, mark a star next to the identities/social constructs that least often impact you.

15 Social Constructs of Dynamics Diversity

Race/Ethnicity
Class
Education
Assigned Sex Category
Gender
Sexual Orientation
Ability
Religion
Young (Age)
Old (Age)
Size: Height/Weight
Nationality
Language
Marital Status/Family Status
Environment/Geography

Rank the characters from 1 – 6 with 1 = most responsible for the death of the Baroness | 6 = least responsible

	Individual Ranking	Group Ranking
Baron		
Baroness		
Gateman		
Boatman		
Friend		
Lover		