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**THE ATLANTIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

AND HUMANITY STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTIC STUDIES

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PROGRAMME: MASTER’S DEGREE IN LINGUISTIC STUDIES

COURSE TITLE: EMPATHY THE KEY TO SUCCESS

QUESTION:

Write an essay of 5 to 10 pages (double spaced) about the topic.

**Description of Course:**  
Study the material below. Write an essay on the topic of the article. Develop the points to make in your essay to summarize and analyze the topic. What do you learn from the article? How can you apply the knowledge to study better at AIU? What are the specific details in the article that are highlighted?

**Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how one can be successful in a society that seems to be more individual every day. It also explains what lessons can be learnt from other people’s feelings. In addition, it clarifies how this knowledge can be applied in order to study better at AIU. Therefore, more specific examples are also highlighted in relation to the topic under discussion.

To start with, many people have asked many questions which include the definition of Sociology and how to be a Sociologist. According to www.wikipedia.com, sociology is defined as, “a social science that focuses on society, human social behavior, patterns of social relationships, social interaction, and aspects of culture associated with everyday life. It uses various methods of empirical investigation and critical analysis to develop a body of knowledge about social order and social change.” For this reason, a sociologist studies how people act within societies and other groups. Those who are interested in issues like gender roles, crime, or the way families interact, may want to be sociologists. Therefore, sociology is a social science that examines the way people work in groups, and sociologists are scientists who practice sociology. Any topic that is connected to society falls under a sociologist’s expertise, including social class, family structures, religious customs, war and conflict and much more. The word sociologist comes from sociology and its Latin root *socius*, “associate.”

However, while it is appreciated that sociology can be defined in many different ways, but Sam Richards defines it as, “the study of the way in which human beings are shaped by things they do not see.” For one to be a sociologist, he must begin with empathy. Empathy means taking oneself from own shoes and himself into another person’s shoes. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. It is the ability to sense other people’s emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling. Empathy means to take yourself out of your shoes and put yourself into the shoes of another person. A good example is that, a hundred years ago, China had been the most powerful nation in the world and they came to the United States in search of coal. They found lots of it right in the United States. Soon or later, they began shipping that coal, boatload by boatload, back to China and elsewhere in the world. They got fabulous wealthy in doing so, and they built beautiful cities all powered on that coal.

It is said that in our lives, a hundred years ago, China had been the most powerful nation in the world and they came to the United States in search of coal. And they found it, and, in fact, they found lots of it right there. Pretty soon or later, they began shipping that coal, ton by ton, railcar by railcar, boatload by boatload, back to China and elsewhere around the world. They got fabulously wealthy in doing so. They built beautiful cities all powered on that coal. At that time, back in the United States, people saw economic despair, deprivation. They were seen struggling to get by, not knowing what was what and what was next. A question might have been asked that, how was it possible that they could be so poor there in the United States, because coal was such a wealthy resource; it was so much money? The answer to the question was that, because the Chinese ingratiated themselves with a small ruling class there in the United States, who stole all of that money and all of that wealth for themselves, the rest of them, the vast majority of them, struggled to get by. The Chinese gave this small ruling elite loads of military weapons and sophisticated technology in order to ensure that ordinary citizens, or anybody else, would not speak out against this relationship. The Chinese did things like that in order to train Americans to help protect the coal. Everywhere, there were symbols of the Chinese, which were a constant reminder. This situation can be found everywhere in the world today.

However, back in China, they never talked about Americans and the coal. All they said was that they still needed the coal. Yes, it was hard to turn down the people’s thermostat. They could not expect that. So, they got angry and pissed, as did lots of average people. When Americans fought back, and it got really ugly, and the Chinese responded in a very ugly way. Before they knew it, they sent in the tanks and they sent in the troops. Lots of people were dying. It was a very, very difficult situation.

We can therefore imagine what it would feel if we were in the shoes of Americans and imagine that people were walking out of the building and had seen a tank sitting out somewhere, or a truck full of soldiers. We could also imagine what it would feel, because people knew why they're there and what they're doing there. They just felt the anger and they felt the fear. Where possible that’s empathy. They've left their shoes, and they've stood in others’. They've got to feel that.

Nevertheless, the real radical experiment is not different from what has so far been stated above. It must be understood that empathy is empathy, everywhere in the world.

On the other hand, with empathy, we can still put ourselves in the shoes of an ordinary Arab Muslim living in the Middle East, in particular, in Iraq. In Iraq, as members of this middle-class family in Baghdad. What is wanted is the best for the kids for them to have a better life. People watch the news and pay attention. They read the newspapers from around the world. Sometimes, even watch satellite, CNN, from the United States. In Iraq, people have a sense of what the Americans are thinking. There are Arab Muslims living in Iraq, who want a better life for themselves.

The ordinary Arabs might be thinking of a lot of things which include the following: In the first place, to have experienced incursion into their land for the past 20 years and before. All this has come about because the United States is interested in their land, and particularly the oil. Everybody knows that. Even the people in the United States know it's about oil. They have a design and have their eyes set on it because they have an entire economic system that's dependent on that oil -- foreign oil from other parts of the world that they don't own.

The Arabs think that Americans are rich. They live in big houses and have big cars. They all have blond hair, blue eyes and they're happy. It may not be true, of course, but that's the media impression, that's what we get. Americans have big cities, and the cities are all dependent on oil. Back home in Iraq, there is only poverty, despair and struggle. They don't seem to live in a wealthy country, Iraq. People are struggling to get by. It's not easy; there is a lot of poverty.

Something else is that Americans don't talk about this, but there's militarization of the world, and it's centered right in the United States. The United States is responsible for almost one half of the world's military spending. Back when Saddam Hussein was in power, the Americans didn't care about his crimes. When he was gassing the Kurds and gassing Iran, they didn't care about it. When oil was at stake, somehow, suddenly, things mattered.

The United States is the hub of democracy around the world, but they don't seem to really be supporting democratic countries all around the world. There are a lot of countries, oil-producing countries, that aren't very democratic, but supported by the United States. These incursions, these two wars, the 10 years of sanctions, the eight years of occupation, the insurgency that's been unleashed on our people, the tens of thousands, the hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths. All because of oil. We can't help but think that. We talk about it. It's in the forefront of our mind, always. We say, "How is that possible?" This man, he's everyman -- our grandfather, our uncle, our father, our son, our neighbor, our professor, our student. Once a life of happiness and joy and suddenly, pain and sorrow. Everyone in our country has been touched by the violence, the bloodshed, the pain, the horror -- everybody. Not a single person in our country has not been touched.

However, there's something else about these Americans which they don't see themselves. They are known to be Christians, who worship the Christian God, they have crosses and they carry Bibles. Their Bibles have a little insignia that says "US Army" on them. Their leaders, before they send their sons and daughters off to war in our country, they go to a Christian church, and they pray to their Christian God, and they ask for protection and guidance from that god. When people die in the war, people are told that they are Muslims, they are Iraqis -- they're not Americans. Americans do wonderful things. They're there to build schools and help people. They do wonderful things, but they also do the bad things, and people can't tell the difference.

For example, we get a guy like Lt. Gen. William Boykin, who says that the Muslim god is a false god who is god's an idol; his god is the true god. The solution to the problem in the Middle East, according to him, is to convert us all to Christianity in order to just get rid of their religion. He was one of the leading commanders in the second invasion of Iraq. George Bush called this war a crusade, which means a holy war against Muslims. Muslims think that Christians are coming to kill them. Of course they feel frightened.

From the Christians, Terry Jones is a man who wants to burn Qurans. He's a former hotel manager; he's got three dozen members of his church. Of course this is how Americans think. So people all over the Middle East, not just in Iraq, are protesting. "He wants to burn Qurans, their holy book. These Christians are so evil. This is what they are thinking as Arab Muslims, and as Iraqis. These Christians are nuts! They're training their little kids to be soldiers for Jesus.

The Americans don't see it that way in the United States, but those in Iraq, see it that way. One might say generalizing is wrong. It's not a Christian invasion. Americans are not just there for oil; they're there for lots of reasons. And of course, most of us don't support the insurgency; we don't support killing Americans; we don't support the terrorists. And this is a perspective.

Regarding a Chinese woman receiving a Chinese flag because her loved one has died in America in the coal uprising. The soldiers are Chinese, and everybody else is Chinese. As an American, one feels very sad as empathy is a cross cutting issues. Empathy knows no colour, no race, it cuts across all human society. Empathy is empathy, whether in America or in China, the feeling is the very sad. This is because it deals with one putting himself in another’s shoe. It would still be the same to an American, American soldiers, American woman who lost her loved one in the Middle East, in Iraq or Afghanistan. The point is about how it feels to lose a loved one. In this case, a woman who has lost a husband. The woman is looking at a husband who was also a provider and a comforter. The one who showed love in and out of the wife. The woman is really heartbroken.

In the case of the insurgents, who were caught by the American soldiers, trying to kill Americans, the American soldiers who caught them did not feel comfortable because no one likes death and no one wishes to die by force. Insurgents are people who rise in forcible opposition to lawful authority, especially those who engage in armed resistance to a government. Dealing with such, may leave much to be desired. While the insurgents might feel that they are patriotic defenders, it would not be regarded as such by the American soldiers who catch them. That can be the source many more deaths and excessive destruction in the country.

However, one can walk a mile when it comes to understanding why that person's driving 40 miles per hour in the passing lane; or your teenage son; or your neighbor who annoys you by cutting his lawn on Sunday mornings. It requires that one steps inside of the tiny, little world of somebody else. Suddenly, all these tiny, little worlds, come together in this complex web and build a big, complex world. And suddenly, without realizing it, we're seeing the world differently. Everything in one’s life has changed. That's, of course, what this is about, to attend to other lives, other visions. Listen to other people, enlighten ourselves.

**Bibliography**

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