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Editor's Introduction

By Jerry Stinnett

In the following pages you'll find wonderful examples of many different kinds of writing: argumentative essays, literary and cultural analyses, and studies of problems facing our world today. While their topics and aims differ, they are alike in their excellence. These eight essays were produced by students in Duquesne University's First-Year Writing program and the Honors Program, and they won top honors in our annual competition. Of the many essays submitted to this competition, these were the finest—and they truly are excellent examples of what motivated, talented, hard-working students can produce.

The faculty and graduate students of the English department teach the first-year writing classes ("Thinking and Writing Across the Curriculum" and "Imaginative Literature and Critical Writing"), but the students in the classes come from across the university. This year the prizewinners represent three of the University's nine undergraduate schools — Nursing, Liberal Arts, and Health Sciences — as well as the Honors Program. Our goal for the first-year writing classes is to provide a space where Duquesne's diverse students come together and have a common intellectual experience. The students here examined everything from what novels like *The Black Eyed* and Claudia Rankine's poem/art piece *Citizen* have to show us about oppression and resistance, to the ethical problems of cultural-political appropriation, to the creation of "tiny" villages as a means of empowerment for the homeless, to rapper Eminem's rhetorical construction of his identity, and a range of other important and interesting topics. Our students are engaging with the world, with creative texts, and with the conditions of their own lives. They are doing what students in a first-year writing class are supposed to do, and doing it impressively.

Although excellent, these essays are not *perfect*; I have declined to line-edit them because I want the Duquesne community to see what its first-year writers are actually doing—and to show our incoming freshmen what they can realistically aspire to produce. These essays show minds struggling with complicated issues; they are a snapshot of a *process* of thinking.

I'd like to thank all of the graduate students and faculty who undertook the task of judging these essays. This year, our judges were Rochel Gasson, Rebecca May, Emad Mirmotahari, Maureen Gallagher, Stuart Kurland, and myself. Thanks to all of the judges for their hard work, and particular thanks to Shannon Small and Shawntaye Sledge for their admirable administrative work. As ever, I'd also like to thank the Office of the Provost, whose support keeps this contest and journal going; Michelle Boehm and the staff of the Public Affairs office, who design and produce this journal; and of course all of the magnificent instructors and students in Duquesne University's First-Year Writing program.

AN AMERICAN FIESTA

By Sarah Mazeika, Rangos School of Health Sciences
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Holiday celebrations, no matter how big or small, are important to many Americans as they create traditions for families and offer a sense of unity. On May 5th of 2016, shortly after becoming the presumptive nominee of the Republican Party with his victory in the Indiana primary, Donald Trump shared his celebrations of the holiday Cinco de Mayo by posting a photo to both Twitter and Facebook that was captioned: "Happy Cinco de Mayo! The best taco bowls are made in Trump Tower Grill. I love Hispanics!" (Tatum). The photo, seen in Figure 1, shows Trump with a taco bowl on his desk at Trump Tower. The post was bombarded with criticism, as many were confused and outraged about the inaccuracy, hypocrisy, and offensiveness of his Cinco de Mayo celebration (Tatum). However, Trump's way of celebrating the original Mexican holiday is seen as normal for many Americans. According to José M. Alamillo, "It's customary for presidents to celebrate Cinco de Mayo on the White House lawn with margaritas flowing, mariachi music playing, and dancers in brightly colored traditional costumes," highlighting that the development of Cinco de Mayo from a Mexican holiday into a reason for partying for Americans is evident in our culture today. I argue that although Cinco de Mayo is widely celebrated throughout the United States, Donald Trump's celebration of the holiday, which is similar to how many other Americans today observe the holiday, is a form of cultural appropriation.

In Part I, I first describe the origin of Cinco de Mayo and what it truly is meant to celebrate. Excluding the town of Puebla, the holiday has lost much meaning in Mexico and has developed into an American observance. American celebrations like those of Donald Trump are concerned with consumerism, differing from those in Mexico. The influence of Cinco de Mayo on America's culture can additionally be seen in Corona's beer campaign. In Part II, I analyze two different definitions of cultural appropriation, the first from an introduction to a scholarly book written by Bruce Ziff and Pratima V. Rao and the second from an academic journal article written by Richard A. Rogers. These definitions will allow me to express how I was able to configure my own definition of cultural appropriation and set of criteria. Ziff and Rao reveal that cultural appropriation is a complex phenomenon, as both "culture" and "appropriation" are open-ended concepts. Through providing examples of various modes of cultural appropriation that fit criteria of a dominant group taking from a subordinate group and a distinct outsider and insider group,

Fig. 1. Sophie Tatum, "Pictured with Taco Bowl, Trump Proclaims, 'I love Hispanics!.'"

Ziff and Rao assert their argument that cultural appropriation is universally used as a form of empowerment to take something from another culture. Similarly, Rogers emphasizes that cultural appropriation is not a straightforward subject, as it occurs in various ways under various conditions; however, it is inevitable that when a culture comes in contact with another culture, one culture will begin to use a concept or item of the other, often times as exploitation. Thus, I define cultural appropriation as the adoption from

one culture to another culture of any physical or intellectual element that defines the culture that is being taken from, due to a concern for power. Finally, in Part III, I prove that Donald Trump's celebration of Cinco de Mayo, like many other mainstream American Cinco de Mayo celebrations, is cultural appropriation by intertwining my description of Cinco de Mayo in Part I and my definition of cultural appropriation in Part II. Since the holiday originated in Mexican culture, and was adopted and stripped of its meaning in current American culture, present-day American Cinco de Mayo observances, like those depicted by Donald Trump, are a form of cultural appropriation.

Part I

Even though Cinco de Mayo is mainly celebrated in the United States, the origin of the holiday is entirely Mexican. It all began with the election of Benito Juárez as the Mexican president in the early 1860s, a time at which the country was struggling financially and could not repay its debts owed to England, France, and Spain. French leader Napoleon III became too impatient and invaded the Mexican port city Veracruz in demand of land and money. While traveling to gain more territory, 6,000 French troops charged Puebla de Los Angeles, a town southeast of Mexico City. Juárez sent a group of 2,000 men to Puebla on May 5, 1862 in hopes of a victory. Even though the Mexicans were outnumbered and short of supplies, the battle lasted most of the day and ended with the French finally retreating. This win at the Battle of Puebla on May 5th became a symbol for Mexican courage and triumph throughout the rest of the Franco-Mexican War, which lasted until the French withdrew in 1867 ("Cinco de Mayo"). The celebration of the victory quickly traveled to the United States, as the Gold Rush led to a heavy population of Mexicans in California. David E. Hayes-Bautista recalls in his book titled *Cinco de Mayo: An American Tradition*, "those who could read shared the glorious details with their illiterate fellows, and up and down the state, Latinos savored the blow-by-blow reporting from the front lines of the conflict that had so riveted their attention" (72). This network of Latino groups kept the memories of May 5th alive and well in the country, as the next generation followed in their parents' footsteps and became connected to their history (186).

Although Cinco de Mayo became a national holiday in Mexico, it is only observed in Puebla and areas surrounding Mexico City. The holiday is often celebrated with military parades and recreations of the iconic battle in order to commemorate the success and courage of Mexican troops in 1862 ("Cinco de Mayo"). Despite its origin, Cinco de Mayo has developed into a more American than Mexican holiday. José M. Alamillo, a professor at California State University Channel Islands who grew up in Zacatecas, Mexico during the early 1970s, proves this with a personal account: "It was in my elementary school's bilingual education classroom in Ventura, California, that I first learned about the holiday, which had been incorporated into lesson plans and school assemblies on cultural diversity." Like Alamillo, many Mexicans were unaware of the holiday until they encountered Mexican-Americans throughout the 1940s to 1980s whose celebrations were based on ethnicity and pride of their identities, rather than the Battle of Puebla (Carlson). Most of these celebrations occurred in the American Southwest and California as an expression of migrant workers' desires for equal rights in the United States. Migrant workers believed that the power of Cinco de Mayo celebrations could change negative perceptions of Latinos, thus leading to support for their freedom and democracy. These holiday practices by Latinos living in California and the Southwest during the mid-twentieth century defended their Mexican heritage and encompassed its history, embracing Cinco de Mayo respectfully and appropriately (Hayes-Bautista 192-195).

Current, mainstream American celebrations of Cinco de Mayo differ from those in Mexico and the past celebrations in the United States because "virtually no American holiday has escaped some degree of commercialization" (Hayes-Bautista 195-196). In present day, many Americans erroneously believe that Cinco de Mayo celebrates Mexico's independence from Spain instead of an important battle against the French. Thus, American culture observes the holiday in ways similar to Fourth of July celebrations, but

centered on Mexican elements. For example, a typical Cinco de Mayo celebration will consist of parades, parties, mariachi music, tacos, sombreros, and alcoholic beverages ("Cinco de Mayo"). As a result of this, major corporations have begun using Cinco de Mayo as advertisement. The beer Corona relies on the holiday to kick off its "120 days of summer" campaign, contributing to its successful sell of 3.18 billion bottles of beer in 2016 (Kell). In 2013, the company spent around $91 million on advertisements in both Spanish and English that emphasized the beer as "the original party beer of Cinco de Mayo" (Alamillo).

This influence of Cinco de Mayo on America's consumer culture has promoted the holiday as one of drinking, eating, and engaging in anything considered Mexican, seen in Donald Trump's Cinco de Mayo post of last year. The photo posted was captioned: "Happy Cinco de Mayo! The best taco bowls are made in Trump Tower Grill. I love Hispanics!" (Tatum). The photo, shown in Figure 1, shows Trump smiling for the camera and giving a thumbs-up with a taco bowl on his desk at Trump Tower. The photo depicts Donald Trump as a Caucasian male of higher economic status, as he is shown wearing a polished suit in his own, private office. The post mentions nothing of the Battle of Puebla in Mexican history, which is the origin of the holiday, but rather focuses on him celebrating by eating a taco bowl. Trump also uses the word "Hispanics," implying that the holiday is celebrated all throughout Latin America, Spain, Mexico, or any other culture that speaks the Spanish language (Tatum).

Part II

Before Bruce Ziff and Pratima Rao present their compilation of essays on cultural appropriation in their scholarly book titled *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation*, they first analyze the definition of cultural appropriation and address the central issues and problems present in the current debate on the subject. They provide a working definition of cultural appropriation as "the taking—from a culture that is not one's own—of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowledge" (1). Ziff and Rao then reveal that cultural appropriation is a complex phenomenon, as both "culture" and "appropriation" are open-ended concepts, thus making the definition more intricate than the one they provided. To provide a better understanding of the term, Ziff and Rao state that a form of cultural appropriation usually meets specific criterion: a dominant group taking from a subordinate group, a relationship between an outsider and insider group, and a common, universal practice within a community. They also stress the importance of considering cultural appropriation as a way that "power and the relationships of power can be constructed" (5). This relates to how the current debate of cultural appropriation has become a political phenomenon, concerned with gaining power in order to regulate various forms of cultural production, cultural expression, and cultural creation. Ziff and Rao then provide examples of various modes of cultural appropriation that follow claims of cultural degradation, aesthetics and stewardship, material deprivation, and sovereignty. I found the claim of cultural degradation important to their argument, as cultural appropriation "can have corrosive effects on the integrity of an exploited culture because appropriate conduct can erroneously depict the heritage from which it is drawn" (9). Even though cultural appropriation is universally used as a form of empowerment to take something from another culture, Ziff and Rao emphasize that a culture's identity can be misrecognized and harmed through appropriated practices.

Similarly, Richard Rogers presents his argument by first defining cultural appropriation as "the use of a culture's symbols, artifacts, genres, rituals, or technologies by members of another culture" (476). He then emphasizes it is inevitable that when a culture comes in contact with another culture, especially through politics, one culture will begin to use a concept or item of the other. To further analyze the term cultural appropriation, Rogers divides it into four distinct categories: cultural exchange, cultural dominance, culture exploitation, and transculturation. While I acknowledge Rogers' definitions of cultural exchange and cultural dominance, and his grand emphasis on transculturation, I focus on cultural exploi-

tation to relate his argument to that of Ziff and Rao's. According to Rogers, cultural exploitation is "the appropriation of elements of a subordinated culture by a dominant culture without substantive reciprocity, permission, and/or compensation" (477). Like Ziff and Rao suggest, a dominant culture's appropriative acts towards a subordinate culture can lead to devastating effects for the latter. Rogers uses the example of the appropriation of Native American culture by non-natives to stress how the Native American identify has constantly been distorted and disrespected.

I draw on the similar arguments between Ziff and Rao's introduction and Rogers's scholarly article that I agree upon to define cultural appropriation as the adoption from one culture to another culture of any physical or intellectual element that defines the culture that is being taken from, due to a concern for power. Often times, the culture that is being appropriated from will be distorted and misidentified for the benefit of the appropriating culture. The key to understanding a form of cultural appropriation is to analyze the relationship between the two cultures, examine the true origin of the appropriated element, consider for what purpose or gain it was appropriated, and lastly, question if the identity of the appropriated culture has been harmed or dishonored.

Part III

Current, mainstream American Cinco de Mayo celebrations, like the ones depicted in Donald Trump's 2016 post to Twitter and Facebook, are considered cultural appropriation because they consist of a dominant group adopting and distorting a subordinates group's culture for their own personal gain. The United States of America had adopted a holiday from Mexico that defines Mexico's history and honors a victory for their country. Even though Mexican-Americans make up a large population of the United States, Cinco de Mayo is now seen as a day to celebrate anything considered Mexican, rather than focusing on the Battle of Puebla, which is the true origin of the holiday. Cinco de Mayo is only celebrated in Mexico in the town of Puebla as a day devoted to honoring their town's important role in Mexican history, highlighting how important the true meaning of May 5th is for them. Donald Trump's post mentions nothing of the success and courage of Mexican troops on May 5th, 1862 in the town of Puebla, but rather focuses on commemorating "Hispanics" by eating the best taco bowl.

Donald Trump's online post can additionally be classified as cultural appropriation because it shows that Cinco de Mayo has been distorted into a commercial holiday, rather than one honoring and respecting Mexico's history and culture. Unlike past celebrations of the holiday by Latinos in California and the American Southwest, which embraced Mexico's deep history, mainstream celebrations are focused on consumerism rather than supporting Mexican-Americans. For example, Trump Tower Grill uses the day to attract customers by serving taco bowls, a food many Americans consider Mexican and feel almost obligated to eat on Cinco de Mayo to observe the holiday. Like Trump Tower Grill, Corona beer relies on Cinco de Mayo celebrations for financial gain, attracting more and more customers each year by using the holiday to kick off its "120 days of summer" campaign. This commercialization of Cinco de Mayo can be contributed to the common misconception in America that that the holiday commemorates Mexico's independence from Spain, instead of the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War. Thus, Americans tend to celebrate Cinco de Mayo with parades, parties, music, food, and alcoholic beverages that stereotype the culture, similar to how they celebrate the United States' Independence Day. Trump's post also shows the common misunderstanding that any Spanish-speaking country pertains to Cinco de Mayo by his use of the word "Hispanics." The holiday has been altered to honor any people, nations, or cultures that speak Spanish, instead of a focus on Mexico's strength throughout the Battle of Puebla.

To end my argument, I turn to Daniel Enrique Pérez's untitled poem published in the journal *Confluencia* that contains a personal reflection on present-day Cinco de Mayo celebrations as forms of cultural appropriation. Pérez emphasizes Americans celebrating the holiday with "the tacos, the burritos, the

chimichangas, the beer and margaritas," which he claims leads to the American belief that Americanized Mexican food and drink is what Mexico is all about (210). He also states that "they believe it's Mexican Independence Day," highlighting that many Americans mistakenly believe that Cinco de Mayo is actually Mexico's anniversary of independence from Spain (210). Through this poem, Pérez addresses the misconceptions, stereotypes, and offensive practices that come about through American celebrations of Cinco de Mayo. In this light, it is easy to see why Donald Trump's Cinco de Mayo post of 2016 was hit with such criticism and disdain. These celebrations are forms of cultural appropriation that not only reveal how cultures adopt elements of other cultures, but also how easily a culture can misidentify another. It is important to remember that Cinco de Mayo is much more than gorging Mexican food and drink, and exclaiming to the world how much Americans love Mexican culture and heritage. The day can be observed with an appreciation of Mexico's deep history and strength throughout the war with the French, specifically in the Battle of Puebla. So before posting a photo of that taco bowl or bottle of Corona on May 5th, every American can remind themselves of the deeper, more accurate meaning behind their celebrations.

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WOMEN IN THE HANDS OF MEN: THE VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN BETTY SHAMIEH'S *THE BLACK EYED*

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The Black Eyed by Betty Shamieh presents a compelling dialogue of four (deceased) Arab women, all of which are from different time periods, as they interact with each other in heaven about their own trials and tribulations. While in heaven, three women seek the martyr room, in which each woman has her own reason for entry. The fourth woman, Aiesha, who greets the characters in front of the sought-after room of martyrs, was the first female suicide bomber. Delilah looks to reunite with her lover Samson, while Tamam comes in search of her brother who died during the Middle Ages, and the Architect hunts for the man who killed innocent civilians at the World Trade Center, including herself. In detailing each woman's story, Shamieh expounds the hardships, such as violence and oppression, against Muslim women at the hands of their religion and men. Shamieh utilizes an important aspect of plays—a chorus. As the chorus juxtaposes the different time periods from which each woman lived, readers experience a strong narrative about the lives of Muslim women throughout history. I argue that Betty Shamieh's *The Black Eyed* explores the mistreatment of Muslim women as their lives are embattled by oppression and violence, either in the name of love or religion. Ultimately, Shamieh suggests that no matter the era in which Muslim women live, they inevitably face the deeper dynamics of oppression and violence, in which their untimely fate lies at the feet of men in the name of religion.

Shamieh's *The Black Eyed* presents a compelling story of four Muslim women that depicts various levels of abuse, violence, and oppression that each one faced in their respective lifetime. Khyati Joshi, in regard to oppression, states that, "[As oppression] imposes the dominant group's cultural perspective on institutions and individuals, that perspective becomes the societal norm that is written into laws and inscribed on the daily thought patterns of the populace" (Joshi 122). Joshi goes on to suggest that in most cases, religion and culture were "conflated in the minds of the perpetrators" (Joshi 129). Joshi's evidence is relevant to Shamieh's own argument in that, when all forms of violence and oppression become colluded, it seems to become a daily norm for men to mistreat Muslim women. On the other hand, Marie Macey tackles violence amongst women head on, expressing, "It is not only actual violence, but *fear* of violence which constrains and controls women's behavior" (Macey 49). Macey includes sound, yet unfortunate, details about violence, stating, "[service providers] were accused of colluding in women's oppression, as manifested in mental breakdown, depression and suicide as well as disappearances and murders" (Macey 48). Muslim women were also gruelingly being "beaten to death, burned or grievously harmed by their kin" (Macey 48). Rauf and Macey's findings fuse together to form a narrative about how violence and oppression operate and how these injurious actions are hampering Muslim women. In collusion with Rauf's and Macey's findings and Shamieh's own text, readers are able to delve into the lives of Muslim women as they face a myriad of violence and oppression, as well as discovering the importance of the issue at hand. Shamieh's projection of this issue presents itself through the infamous chorus.

Shamieh's utilization of the chorus demonstrates the extensive behavioral commonplace of violence and oppression against Muslim women, ultimately exhibiting the existence of these detrimental forces throughout multiples eras. As Albert Weiner observed, "One hears somewhere along the way that the chorus exists to elevate commonplace details into universal verities" (206). Importantly, the chorus exists to represent a "collective character" (Weiner 206). In consideration of Weiner's suggestions, readers become aware of Shamieh's

incorporation of the chorus as means of voicing what millions of Muslim women have undergone, both past and present. Throughout the play, the chorus engages in dialogue with the main characters, seen when Aeisha states, "Waitaminute. I know you're Arabs but are you Palestinians" (Shamieh 191). The chorus responds, "Yes. We're here among our own kind. Even in heaven, you breathe more easily with your own people. Here we are and here we have segregated ourselves almost by accident it seems" (Shamieh 191). Their simple interaction demonstrates an intense dynamic with the use of "we" and "with your own people" that transcends beyond just the characters in the play. Shamieh intended to represent the Muslim women of the world and create a narrative of commonality amongst them. Even more, a potent function of the chorus in the play is the completion of the characters' sentences, and vice versa. As Tamam began, "We know what it means to be weak," the chorus finished, "to cement a settlement of resentment, brick by brick, in our own ravaged hearts and shell-shocked minds" (Shamieh 202). Shamieh once again engages the chorus as a medium between the characters and the community, suggesting that Muslim women as a whole have been grappled in hardships and, in the eyes of society, faltered under the grip. Specifically, Shamieh touches upon the facets of violence and oppression, with "ravaged hearts" and "shell-shocked minds" strongly implying the consequences of being victims to horror. Ultimately, Shamieh uses the chorus-character interactions as a powerful way of portraying the tribulations Muslim women have gone through, and in featuring these interactions amongst women of different eras, a historical and commonplace chronicle is presented. Shamieh furthers her overall argument with hints of psychological effects women have come to be familiar with.

The brutality of men transcends far beyond physical aspects, crossing into the psychological effects of violence and oppression that Muslim women so commonly have to endure. Often times in society, the psychological mind is a separate essence that tends to be overlooked, despite the equally vast importance in comparison to the other varying signs of violence. Shamieh incorporates this negligence through her characters and their dialogue when the chorus states, "The problems that are most pressing are the ones you tend to ignore" (Shamieh 175). Shamieh manages to generate a narrative about the victimized psyche of a Muslim woman and the way in which society, and Muslim women themselves, repress and avoid these daunting effects of violence. Shamieh furthers her suggestions, as Delilah questions, "What's the difference between a thing that feels like it kills you and the one that actually does" (Shamieh 179)? In Delilah's powerful question, Shamieh translates a deep psychological struggle paired with the very being that permits this struggle to evolve: men. As men batter and torture their victims, the Muslim women inevitably become traumatized—their life is changed and their psyche becomes fixated on this trauma. In many ways, this psychological trauma *feels* like it is killing them both psychologically and physically, with men being the root cause. With these women's sentiments, Shamieh is stressing the tie between men's violence and the degradation of the Muslim woman's psyche, where often times, the former necessitates the latter. Shamieh further explores the overall mental effects of violence as she comprises instances of emotional manipulation.

Beyond physical and psychological violence exists the oppression of Muslim women through emotional manipulation. Shamieh, throughout the play, communicates details of both subtle and apparent nods at manipulation, all of which suggested the subsequent result of Muslim women's oppression. The chorus and Tamam create an interesting dialogue as they voice their ideas of oppression through emotional manipulation, stating, "Oppression is like a coin-maker—you put in human beings, press the right buttons and watch them get squeezed, shrunk, flattened till they take the slim shape of a two-faced coin" (Shamieh 207). Through simile, Shamieh boldly confronts this oppression and the way it operates, indicating that as long as the oppressors—namely men—have the capacity to exploit Muslim women's "buttons" to their advantage, they can compress them into a futile being, forced to characterize two different selves. These selves would manifest as a version that appeases the oppressor, and the true self that becomes repressed. Emotional manipulation becomes even more evident when, once again, the chorus is positioned with a main character, the Architect, as together they state, "He said he believed in me,

that my work was exceptional. Men lie about such things when it suits them" (Shamieh 224). Shamieh takes a bolder approach to this observation of men, not allowing any sort of mistranslation between what was said and how it would be interpreted. Tamam and the chorus blatantly expose the way men control and oppress Muslim women, often using compliments and flattery to meander themselves into the path of a woman's desire. With the inclusion of these formidable occurrences, Shamieh supplements her exploration of the deeper dynamics of oppression under which Muslim women become victims. While she exhibits violence and oppression in connection to men, she manages to cover the basis of religion and oppression as well.

Shamieh's Biblical characters Delilah and Samson and her troubled character Tamam work together in conveying the conceived notion of a Muslim woman's expected image and position as a counterpart of Islam. Taha Rauf explained the Muslim woman's role in relation to her community, noting, "The notion that the honour of a community is represented by its women served as an impetus to violate Muslim women's bodies so as to prevent the extension of honour to successive generations the women could produce" (Rauf 71). Rauf's consideration of the standard to which Muslim women are held and treated because of this sought-after honor coincides with Shamieh's own representation of this communal component. Delilah detailed her experience, stating, "Like a snip of the lock from the hair where the power to slaughter my people lay nestled in his whorls... my people called me a whore. He didn't call me a daughter of an honorable man, or a good woman who loved her people—but a whore" (Shamieh 174). Delilah's testimony is especially rattling to readers in that despite acting justly for her people, they instead turned against her and berated her. Delilah essentially saved their lives and served as an honorable woman, yet due to their clouded judgment of Muslim women, they instead demeaned her and deemed her as something less than. Interestingly, Delilah observes that her people did not call her a "daughter of an honorable man," communicating a familiarity that her power and dominance, as well as her fellow Muslim women's, stems from and is owed to a man. Shamieh furthers this notion of honor and the Muslim woman's "duty" through Tamam as the character recounts, "And they raped me in front of him, forcing my brother's eyes open so he had to watch... They not only refer to us as the cockroaches, they examine us, experiment upon us, as if we were that predictable, that much the same, that easy to eradicate" (Shamieh 204-205). Tamam's body was used as a clear object for community dishonor, in both the rape and principally in her brother being forced to watch. Though her own sexual assault was singular, Tamam still uses "us" so as to represent the same dehumanizing experience men impose upon Muslim women due to their steadfast perceptions. In conjunction with the image of community and honor, Shamieh illuminates the role in which Muslim women are enforced to take on, both as means of power and dishonor. In doing so, readers also witness a linear pattern in the way men perceive these women and subsequently treat them.

Shamieh further explores the violence and oppression enacted on the women through the perspective of male characters, covering both physical and emotional bases. As Rauf explained, "The Muslim identity, superimposed on the physiology of women, constituted the female variant of the threat as an object of the fascination as well as disgust" (Rauf 71). Rauf presents a compelling point in regard to the basis under which many men seem to fall as they carry out their acts of violence—that Muslim women and their bodies are disposable objects, used for their own personal needs. As the chorus expressed, "It comes down to the basics. You knew the only power you had over men was sexual. Those were your means" (Shamieh 174). Shamieh's interesting use of the word "basics" fashions a realization amongst readers that these sexual means were common amongst the Muslim women community, and a seemingly accepted and fool-proof way of receiving men's reciprocation. The chorus presents this concept in such a manner that amplifies Shamieh's idea of commonality in oppression and violence, and that sexual means were something every Muslim woman was inherently familiar with. Even more, Tamam creates an emotional sentiment amongst

readers when she observes, "A birth of a girl is different from a boy. A girl is a gift that's too precious, a reminder that soft things don't last in our world" (Shamieh 203). The comparison between newborn boys and girls speaks volumes as it showcases the innate violent nature in which a Muslim girl is born into and subsequently endures. A particular double standard arises at the heart of a birth—one that subtly elucidates the importance of a newborn boy instead of a girl. The aforementioned double standard is reflected through the newborn girl's birth; that while her existence itself is a gift, her life ultimately follows a notably vicious and divergent path than that of the newborn boy. Shamieh's incorporation of this declaration and double standard deems itself as another aspect in which men manipulate and use Muslim women and their bodies, drawing them out of their embodiment of "soft things" and instead inflicting ruggedness. Essentially, in focusing on men's perspective of Muslim women, readers come to a particular awareness of how these perceptions become a reality for women, and ultimately, their demise.

Betty Shamieh's *The Black Eyed* addresses a longstanding issue in the community of Muslim women, which entails violence and oppression developing as a constant presence in their lives. Through violence and oppression, a historical and present-day narrative of commonality manifests itself as psychological abuse, emotional manipulation, violence and oppression due in part to the perception of women in Islam, and men's own perception of these women. Shamieh's powerful play comes to an even more potent end as Aiesha, Tamam, and Delilah come together in a chant of revolution, signifying the past generational struggle, yet shaping an important discussion for the future generations of Muslim women. With this strong closing—and the play as a whole—Shamieh creates a precise discourse about the past, present, and future for Muslim women. Violence and oppression had, almost innately, become an aspect twirled into Muslim women's lives, with men and religion consistently acting as a brute force for these components. Fundamentally, in one way or another, Muslim women became victims of their own reality.

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A True Feminine Identity

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Sally Kempton once said, "I became a feminist as an alternative to becoming a masochist," clearly presenting the vulgarity of the feminist argument: either be a feminist or accept a painful life ("Sally Kempton Quote"). Superhero characters, while representing a popular genre of movie and comic entertainment, also convey idealized versions of what we hope to be. The Wonder Woman character represents an idealized woman. In the comic book *Earth One: Volume One*, author Grant Morrison, along with artists Yanick Paquette and Nathan Fairbairn, offers a hypersexual portrayal of the Wonder Women character. They employ exploitative cover art, increasingly revealing costumes, and a power-centered approach to sexuality in their portrayal of the idealized woman. In Patty Jenkins' 2017 film, *Wonder Woman*, she portrays the idealized female as one who fosters hope, struggles with traditional femininity, and champions both idealized love and gender equality. Both present a woman struggling with her feminine identity, with one employing a hypersexual path to power and domination and the other representing subtle empowerment through both independence and equality.

Figure 1.

Morrison, in *Earth One: Volume One*, presents Wonder Woman as an adolescent boy's ideal: Diana Prince chained up, wearing a top four sizes too small for her breasts, looking into the eyes of those who pick up the book and capturing them with her seductive expressions. The drawing uses dark shading and light highlighting to emphasize certain areas of the image, pulling the viewer's attention to different parts of her body. The chains tied around her neck, twisted around the back of her body, and tying her arms together represent the BDSM-fueled-origins of the character and contribute to the promiscuous nature of the illustration (See Figure 1). The drawing represents Wonder Woman but shares a striking physical resemblance to Hollywood actress Megan Fox. Megan Fox is known for her sex appeal, and enhances the "male gaze" aspects of the movies she stars in. This cover image, focused on accentuating Diana's chest, gives readers a simple message: Wonder Woman is sexy and should be seen as a sexual object.

Wonder Woman discovers a man, Steve Trevor, washed up on the shore of her island in the Jenkins' 2017 film, *Wonder Woman*. Trevor, after engaging German soldiers he was spying on, takes Diana with him and escapes from the land of the Amazons. Diana's physical movement away from her home also foreshadows her struggle to maintain her identity in a male-centric culture. Trevor took her to a clothing store, and with the help of another woman, she was given modest period outfits to try on. However, with each new turtleneck or dress that fell below the knee, Diana's main concern was not how she looked in her new attire, but how well she was suited to fight (*Wonder Woman* 49:55). Her encounter with traditional feminine clothing is strange to Wonder Woman, and her questioning the clothing is strange to the traditional women trying to outfit her. As an empowered female, clothing was functional for her defense, not attire for at-

Figure 2.

traction. Her main costume in the movie resembles armor, representing her Amazonian heritage. Private body parts were covered with protective armor, all while looking fashionable, flattering, and appropriate for Amazonian weather. The genital area, unlike *Earth One*, was covered with a long flap, giving her a more comfortable and flexible suit to wear in battle. *Earth One* fails to meet even the basic requirements of covering a woman's chest but does serve a sexualized purpose.

The collective vision of Morrison, Paquette, and Fairbairn is one of gender-informed power exercises. Throughout the book, Diana and her mother, Hippolyta, make references about how much they despise men and do not see themselves as equal to men—they believe they are more powerful and dominant. Hippolyta serves as a teacher to Diana, and through her strong opinions, she helps Diana to believe the same evil that she sees in men. Hippolyta rants to Wonder Woman, "Their 'masculinity' is a sad, broken, aberration of nature. Genetically incomplete man, always yearning for what he cannot be or own" (Morrison and Paquette 27). Hippolyta directly emphasizes the greed in men; it shows her pride. In fact, it took until the end of the book for Hippolyta to admit to the fact that she needed a man to have a child: "I took the egg from my womb, and the seed from the loins of the man-god Hercules. Blended in my alembics, seasoned with my fury" (113). Men, then, serve a functional, even subservient purpose, for a powerful woman: biological procreation.

In Jenkins' 2017 film, Wonder Woman fosters collaboration and equality as feminist characteristics. Wonder Woman, while initially minimizing men as tools of procreation, eventually arrives at a softer belief of the value of men for a harmonious life. As she and Steve Trevor are sailing away to stop the war, she declares, "When it comes to procreation, men are necessary, but for pleasure, not necessary" (*Wonder Woman* 43:38). However, she begins to form an emotional connection with Steve, and they develop a mutually supportive, caring relationship far beyond one designed for simple procreation. Diana and Steve share an emotional moment while dancing in the snow. She asks him more questions about what life is like outside of the Amazon world, and he explains to her, "…they love to wake up and read the paper or go to work, they get married, make some babies, grow old together, I guess" (1:27:24*)*. This touching moment was followed up a couple minutes later by their long-awaited kiss. This introduces Diana to another importance of men in society and demonstrates the value of a relationship of equality. Steve, ironically, is the one who has to prove both bravery of morality to Diana when he agrees to sacrifice himself for the lives of others, drawing admiration from Diana (2:01:05).

Morrison employs sexuality as a major component and power source of Wonder Woman in *Earth One*. Diana, living amidst a population full of strong, sexually appealing women, was given a lesbian lover character of her own, Mala. Mala does not appear very often throughout the book, but when she does, she offers commentary on her distaste for men and her love for the land of women. She thrives in her utopian society, the chief characteristic being the absence of men. When Mala comes in contact with Beth, an overweight sorority girl from the man's world that befriends Diana, she is instantly disgusted by her lack of physical strength. She blames this entirely of the world of men: "This girl is sick-- her body mass grotesquely distorted. If man's world does this to women--" (Morrison and Paquette 95). Mala was drawn with a short and blonde haircut, giving into modern stereotypes about lesbian women. Her clothing and body language give off more of a masculine identity rather than a feminine one. She addresses Diana as "princess," showing dominance in their relationship (26). By introducing a lesbian character showing a masculine identity, Morrison plays into the modern-day stereotypes and subordinating the positive qualities of men. Men, in this world, are to be controlled through female sexuality, and the absence of men is a positive situation for women.

Jenkins' presents Wonder Woman's sexuality in a gender-neutral fashion. One of the hints she gives about her sexuality happens on the boat with Steve Trevor where Diana addresses how men are important

for reproduction but not for pleasure. Diana did not show any interest in Amazonian women, but nods to the ability for women to please women as equal to man. While intimacy beyond a kiss is not shown on-screen in *Wonder Woman,* Jenkins implies that Steve and Diana have sexual relations later on in the movie. Steve expresses his view of their relationship by saying, "It's not what you deserve. It's about what you believe" (*Wonder Woman* 1:38:38). This declaration gives Diana an indication that Steve is in the relationship for the sole purpose of teamwork and collaboration, and that he does not have any desire to dominate. As Diana grows closer with Steve, their relationship flourishes; he falls for her for reasons other than just her looks. He takes note of her innocent nature, her strength, and her love for others. Unlike *Earth One*, the film *Wonder Woman* offers a fair approach to her sexuality: her attractions to Steve Trevor are determined by his character traits, not explicitly his sex. Her attraction is an emotional one, not a gendered one.

Figure 3.

Yanick Paquette and Nathan Fairbairn exaggerate Wonder Woman's sexuality. Colors and shading were utilized to enhance the sexual nature of the drawings. An advantage that these artists had over movie director Patty Jenkins was that they were able to create exactly what they saw in their head. If they wanted to create a supermodel heroine, they could. No drawing in the comic proved to be a realistic representation of a female body. The artists of *Earth One* were also able to capture the story in snippets, rather than in a continuous film. By just giving the reader glimpses of certain actions, they were able to draw the characters and position them however they pleased. To maximize the sexuality of the book, they drew photos of Wonder Woman's butt facing the audience eighteen times as well as Diana in sexual stances (See figures 3 and 4). The portrayal of Wonder Woman in *Earth One: Volume One* was about as unrealistic as Paquette and Fairbairn's imagination.

Wonder Woman was accompanied by the composing and arranging skills of Rupert Gregson-Williams. Williams was able to offer the 2017 film an element that the comic book did not have: a soundtrack. The song "Wonder Woman Theme" was used to enhance Gal Gadot's intense character portrayal. The soundtrack is similar to those of other popular superhero movies; in no way was the music less mysterious or tough. Instruments such as the electric cello were used to create a melody full of dark tones. The song itself, mostly conducted in a time signature of seven beats per measure, gave the beat something extra to make it unique and exciting to listeners. This epic theme song does not point to femininity, instead, it is representative of Wonder Woman's strong character traits. Some other soundtrack hits include "Wonder Woman's Wrath," "Hell Hath No Fury," and "Lightning Strikes." All of these titles support Gal Gadot's

Figure 4.

character and do not give into female stereotypes. Captain America, Batman, and Superman all could be accompanied by this same theme song, pointing to the gender-neutrality Gregson-Williams kept in mind while composing. The soundtrack could have been written for any movie, it just so happens to be accompanying a movie about a woman superhero.

Earth One: Volume One's plot revolved around the author's inaccurate representation of women. The plot revolves around Diana Prince going on her journey throughout her Amazon land and then going to the man's world to help rescue Steve Trevor. As the story progresses, however, Wonder Woman's feminism is portrayed negatively. The authors essentially transform her into an ultra-feminine man-hater. For example, when she visits a hospital full of sick women, she exits with a newfound sense of fury and rage. This outburst leads her to hate the men surrounding her. Following her outrage, she saves a group of

sorority girls by lifting a massive bus over her head single-handedly. However, the focus does not shift towards her super human strength, but the concept of the sorority girls themselves. The *Beta Lambda* sorority girls give Diana a makeover after they befriend her following their accident. They feminize her. To make her more like a "proper woman" they dress her in a more revealing outfit, hoot and holler at her new look, and initiate her into their sorority. Her reward for heroism is to then fulfill a female stereotype.

In the 2017 film, Patty Jenkins emphasizes the equality between the genders as well as Wonder Woman's independence. Diana's past was outlined in the beginning, showing her as incredibly reliant on the other Amazon women for her training. As the story progresses, she gains both independence from them as well as strength. Her storyline, unlike *Earth* One's does not conclude with a glamorous sorority makeover. Instead, she goes to war, travels to a foreign world, and comes face to face with her enemy, the embodiment of male-dominated aggression, the war-god Ares. She physically confronts the worst aspect of male-dominated society, male-created war, and overcomes this force. She represents an evolved and idealized woman overcoming the worst of a stereotypical male world view.

In her first ever comic book appearance in *All Star Comics*, Wonder Woman says, "Fight on as before-- we will show those evil men that women fight for peace harder than men can fight to satisfy their greed" (Marsten et al. 66). The character was created to be a strong female character, but films like *Wonder Woman* have adapted this view to make Wonder Woman not just a strong, female character, but a strong character. By interrogating gender stereotypes through the advertising, costumes, sexuality elements, soundtrack, and plotline, Patty Jenkins and her team morphed Wonder Woman into anything but the sexual object *Earth One* creates her to be.

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Wonder Woman. Dir. Patty Jenkins. Perf. Gal Gadot, Chris Pine, and Connie Nielsen. Warner Bros. Pictures. 2017.

M & M: How Eminem Established Authenticity in Rap Despite His Race

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"Kiss my white ass" is a saying you can often hear Eminem proclaiming. Eminem or Real Slim Shady, whose given name is Marshall Mathers, was born and raised in Detroit with his mother and little brother Nathan, where they struggled for years as a family due to being poor and living in the slums. Drugs constantly played a huge role in Eminem's life as his mother often left him and Nathan alone at home because she needed to find her next fix. As directed in the autobiographical film *8 Mile*, Eminem was left to raise and guide himself throughout life where he was challenged by people in his primarily black neighborhood and school because of his race. Rap became not only a coping mechanism for Eminem, but eventually a chance for him to live a better life. Except, being white and being a rapper was considered ludicrous because hip-hop and rap was a black people thing. Hip hop and rap has been a way for African Americans to give voice to the injustices and discriminations they face on a daily basis. So, when one white rapper by the name of Vanilla Ice stepped into the rap scene and created a fake rags-to-riches story about himself in a bid to appeal to black people, Eminem's race became an even bigger target. In order to become a successful rapper and move out of the slums, Eminem learned to embrace his "whiteness" and find ways to legitimize himself within the black genre. I argue that due to the reaction of Vanilla Ice, Eminem had to employ different strategies in handling his race, as his skin color often impeded him from successfully pursuing a career in hip-hop and rap. Ultimately, being white and trying to rap was considered preposterous, but not impossible, and Eminem's music and film *8 Mile* showcases the demanded respect he is given today in the genre despite his skin color.

Eminem had a hard time breaking into the hip-hop and rap world due to his skin color holding him back. He was often seen as superior and privileged to many and breaking into the scene where the more struggled you are from the start, the greater success you'll have, Eminem struggled to overcome this stereotype due to being white. In order to cement himself as a rapper, Eminem needed to prove to everybody that he wasn't just a white person trying to overstep in black territory, but that he has the skills and talent to succeed in the genre. To accomplish this, Eminem had to employ different strategies when breaking into the rap scene to earn his authenticity because a "white man is not supposed to excel at rapping" (Fraley 38). Authenticity is crucial for an artist in rap as it defines who is credible and legitimate and who is a fraud. Authenticity can be described in three ways: "being true to oneself, local allegiances and territorial identities, and lastly the requisite relation and proximity to an original source of rap" (Armstrong 336). Eminem has constantly stayed true to himself and embraced who he was, where he grew up, and his family drama. He was respected by his inner group of friends and where they stood within their community as illustrated in *8 Mile* where Eminem, from the 313, battles rivals group The Free World. Staying true to your roots and valuing where you came from is crucial in earning respect in hip-hop and rap world.

Eminem also established legitimacy when an original source of rap endorsed and mentored him into success. One well-known and respected rapper by the name of Dr. Dre, "sought a white artist to appeal

to rap's largest consumer base –white middle-class suburban teenagers" (Armstrong 336). Some people were offended when Dr. Dre signed a white rapper because hip-hop and rap has been known to be a black dominated genre where "African American artists often extend this image of the authentic to frame hip-hop as a black expressive culture facing appropriation by a white-controlled record industry" (Hess 374). Rap was generally off limits to white people because it's seen that white people are given an opportunity to everything in the world, and rap was something that belonged exclusively to black culture. The narrative often associated with black culture is a classic story of rags-to-riches, where black struggle is the focal point. Vanilla Ice, a white rapper in 1980's, imitated the black struggle rags-to-riches story to commercially appeal to black people. And because of the backlash Vanilla Ice received from his fabricated story mimicking black struggle and his wishes for people to look past his whiteness, Eminem decided to embrace his whiteness instead and use the insults thrown at him to his advantage. He demonstrates this in the last scene of *8 Mile* where he embraces his skin color and troubled past and mistakes by announcing that he is white trash, that he does live in a trailer house with his mom, and that he is a bum. By staying true to himself, his past, who he is representing, and his race, Eminem established authenticity despite Vanilla Ice discrediting the idea of white rappers.

In *8 Mile*, Eminem's skin color often discredited himself as a rapper and was used negatively to describe him while trying to pursue rap. Growing up in the slums of Detroit surrounded by black people who took ownership of hip-hop and rap often left Eminem with closed doors. Before Eminem, "hip-hop music, with all its distinctive variants and styles, was recognized internationally as an African American contribution to world culture, much as reggae has been always recognized as a specifically Jamaican contribution, and salsa as Cuban and Puerto Rican" (Scott 137). Because of the significant history surrounding hip-hop and rap as a way for black people to demonstrate their injustices, Eminem's skin color constantly held him back and was the reason he was never taken seriously. In *8 Mile*, while driving with his friends and discussing his music Eminem voiced his thoughts on how he is often discredited as a rapper. His black friends reply, "Cause this is hip-hop, you don't belong here" while also saying, "They laugh because you're white with a mic" (8 Mile). Eminem "doesn't belong" in rap because of what his skin color represents: white privilege. White privilege is "the taken-for-granted benefits and protections afforded to whites based upon skin color; accentuates white power and domination" (Bonds, Inwood 717). Because of this generalization, throughout the movie Eminem is told to by black rappers to "Take his white ass all the way back to 8 Mile" (8 Mile) because they don't believe that he belongs in rap. Even though Eminem is in the same situation of being poor and sometimes homeless like many of the people around him, the fact that he is white and the history of white people against black people in general, which includes a long backstory of privilege, ultimately paints him as not relatable to black people. And because of this stereotype, Eminem's poor background was crucial for his career as a white rapper in obtaining authenticity.

As a white rapper, Eminem needed to solidify his legitimacy which stems from his upbringing of living in the streets. In order to be considered an authentic rapper one have to prove oneself. Throughout the movie, Rabbit, Eminem's on-screen nickname, was constantly challenged on the streets in rap battles. In one battle Rabbit is referred to as Vanilla Ice when his opponent says, "Fucking Nazi. Why don't you go form a group with Vanilla Ice" (8 Mile). Vanilla Ice was a white rapper in the 1980's who soared to the top of the charts for his hit "Ice Ice Baby" and is often referred to as the "Elvis of rap, a white performer who has capitalized on the most influential black music to emerge" (Bernard). In order to appeal to black people, he fabricated certain parts of his upbringing because "Any rapper, but especially a white rapper, needs a 'street' credibility that Vanilla Ice's suburban upbringing doesn't automatically confer" (Bernard). The backlash that Vanilla Ice's fake story created made it difficult for Eminem to establish himself as a white rapper. The fact that a previous successful white rapper lied about his life to make money lead

many to believe that Eminem was doing the same. Throughout *8 Mile,* Eminem is constantly compared to Vanilla Ice as "that white guy" or "C'mon Elvis" (8 Mile) in a bid to discredit his upbringing which is crucial in obtaining authenticity in rap. So, to establish himself in the genre, he embraces his whiteness and where and how he grew up instead of pretending to be something he is not like Vanilla Ice did. Even though Eminem is comfortable in his skin and who he is, his skin color often left him as the punch line of a joke in many of the rap battles.

Rival rappers of Eminem found every opportunity to use his race as an insult against him in order to discredit him as a rapper. In order to be considered a legitimate rapper in the streets, one had to be a worthy component in the rap battles. Because "much of hardcore rap is rendered in terms of the pugilistic since it is also an arena where black males perform ritualized aggression and metaphoric violence through language" (White 68), a rapper had to be willing to dish out insults and take them himself. Throughout *8 Mile,* Eminem's skin color proved to be one of the biggest insults used against him. In several battles, Eminem's opponents have said vile things about his race saying, "Fuck this white boy" (8 Mile) and "Take your white ass all the way back across to the trailer park" (8 Mile). Because of the history of white people against black people, by using the word "white" against Eminem during the rap battles, his opponents were able to create a barrier between the primarily black audience and the white rapper because they were highlighting the fact that he was different from them. His rivals have also used his skin color against him as a way to symbolize that he is not welcomed here in the industry by saying, "But the black guy doesn't die in this movie" and that they "have a better choice of joining the KKK" (8 Mile) than of him being a successful rapper. The aggression and force used to deliver these lines against Eminem in the film is a demonstration of the sheer unwontedness the genre of hardcore rap had against him. Because Hip-hop and rap originated from black culture, black people were extremely unwilling to allow a white person into the game. White people have always been given access to everything in the past and rarely allowed black people a chance to succeed in anything which was why Eminem had a hard time proving himself in the genre seeing as rap was considered off limits to him. But even as many try to undermine his talent, Eminem proves himself to be different from previous white rappers in the industry when he chooses to respond to the insults about his skin color by taking ownership of who he is and what he represents.

Eminem accomplishes authenticity and respect from his community when he embraces his whiteness instead of trying to hide it like previous white rappers in the past. Eminem decided to take a different route in terms of approaching his race by accepting his skin color and his upbringing and what it all stands for. Throughout *8 Mile*, Eminem is referred to as "white trash" repeatedly because he lives in a trailer park, still lives with his mom, and is very poor. By accepting his upbringing and his social class, Eminem is able to relate himself to his community seeing as many of the people also live poorly and struggle to make ends meet. Grealy states, "Eminem's success can in part be attributed to his utilization of class discourse. He inhabits a 'white trash identity which is one originally invoked by African Americans" (860). And that, "In citing such a phrase Eminem simultaneously aligns himself in respect to class with the contemporary poor in America in which black Americans are largely situated, and racially with black history, which in his apparent understanding is grounded in class struggle" (Grealy 860). In the ending scenes of the movie, Eminem delivers a verse that discredits all of his opponents by accepting and acknowledging his whiteness and then using it to his advantage. He raps, "I am white trash. I am a fuckin bum. And I do live in a trailer with my mum. Don't ever try to judge me dude, because you don't know what the fuck I've been through. Fuck ya'll if you doubt me, I'ma piece of fucking white trash I say it proudly" (8 Mile). By stating that he is white trash and taking ownership of the struggles he has had to endure to make it this far not only discredits his opponents but leaves them speechless with nothing to

use against him. By taking pride of where he lives, what he does for a living, and who his family is allows people in the audience to relate to his mess of a life and understand his struggle. This is something Vanilla Ice and previous white rappers had failed to achieve because they try to mask their whiteness instead of embracing it. After embracing his whiteness as a rapper and being accepted into the genre, many of Eminem's songs pay tribute to the struggle of trying to obtain authenticity.

After achieving authenticity within his hometown by accepting his skin color, Eminem's next step, with the help of Dr. Dre, was earning respect form the entire rap industry worldwide. Even though Eminem gained respect from his hometown in the last scene of *8 Mile*, in order to be a successful rapper and obtain authenticity legitimately he needed to gain respect as a white rapper from the rap industry itself –which proved to be very difficult. Many producers didn't take a second look at the white rapper either because it would look bad endorsing him or just because he was white and trying to rap. There was one producer however who looked past Eminem's skin color and judged him for his skills and talents instead. Dr. Dre, "a significant figure in rap music who is best known for being one of the early creators of 'gansta rap'" (Calhoun 268), brought Eminem onto his record and mentored him to greatness. Eminem often credits his success to Dr. Dre in many of songs by saying, "Until I met Dre, the only one who looked past. Gave me a chance and I lit a fire up under his ass" (White America –Eminem) as well as, "It was you who believed in me, when everyone was telling you don't sign me. You risked your career for me. Nobody wanted to fuck with a white boy" (I Need a Doctor –Eminem, Dr. Dre, Skylar Grey). Being endorsed by an original source of rap gave Eminem a popularity amongst black artists and an edge over previous white artists, such as Vanilla Ice, because they were unable to. Knowing the risk Dr. Dre took by taking him under his wing for the reason that he was a black man helping a white man become rich, Eminem cannot thank Dr. Dre enough and even goes on to say, "I owe my life to you" (I Need a Doctor –Eminem, Dr. Dre, Skylar Grey). Twenty years later after the initial turmoil of a black rapper endorsing a struggling white rapper, the two are still great friends and applaud each other on both of their worldwide success's. With the help of Dr. Dre and his guidance, Eminem has earned authenticity and is now one of the most successful rappers ever in the industry.

Eminem is considered one of the most successful rappers today because of the struggles he had to endure in order to cement himself in the hip-hop and rap industry. For a rapper to be successful and legitimate he has to not only earn respect for his name, but authenticity for his skill. Eminem was able to be a respected white rapper despite the backlash from Vanilla Ice and other previous white rappers before him because of his different approach to his whiteness. Instead of pretending to be black, faking a rags-to-riches story, and asking people to overlook his skin color, Eminem embraced who he was and the fact that he was white trying to rap in a black dominated industry. He was able to earn authenticity with the help of fellow black rapper Dr. Dre and by accepting where he came from, who he is as a person, and overcoming the hurdles his skin color brought on while trying to make it as a rapper. He learned to embrace whiteness and use the insults thrown at him to his advantage which often left many of his rival rappers in the dust. Eminem's road to success is a great story for people everywhere who have a dream and are told they will never achieve it. And that no matter what people say to bring you down, that you can overcome the hate and criticism and come out on top. Because even now years later, people are still hating on the underdog white rapper from Detroit, but you know what he says back to them? "Kiss my white ass".

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Unexpected Outcome of Unethical Experimentation

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During World War II, Germany was a rapidly growing society under the dictatorship of the Nazi party. In order to advance their military power and medical knowledge, the Nazis performed cruel medical experiments on prisoners in concentration camps and disabled people in asylums. These experiments included testing the human endurance in extreme conditions, sterilization, and euthanasia. The victims of these experiments suffered from extreme physical and emotional trauma due to the brutality of the procedures. After the war ended, the Nuremberg trials were held to prosecute the physicians who committed these heinous crimes. The Nuremberg Code was produced as a result of the trials that took place after these experiments to protect subjects of medical experimentation in the future. Although the Holocaust was an extremely traumatic event that affected the lives of many people, the Nuremberg Code is one positive outcome because it changed the laws of medical practice to protect future patients from being subject to unethical medical experiments and it developed the principle of autonomy in clinical care.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Germany was a developing society undergoing rapid advancements in science and technology. These advancements, "were also a result of an increasing standardization of medical training that was based on research and state funds being allocated towards health insurance" (Loewenau 421). However, many citizens during this time period, including the disabled and the 'racially undesirable' were considered a burden to Germany's blossoming society. These people were targets for physicians who, "were attracted to the Nazi party by promises that the National Socialists will remove the Jewish predominance from the profession and restore the prestige, honor, and dignity of the Aryan physicians" (Yehuda 139). Without anyone to protect them, these people endured terrible experiments conducted by German physicians in attempt to advance the German military forces. Due to these desires for advancement, "a range of experiments were developed and implemented in concentration camps, using the inmates as research 'guinea pigs,' as well as in psychiatric clinics where patients were subjected to dreadful tests of drugs and vaccines" (Loewenau 423). Tests such as these left victims physically and psychologically scarred from the torture. The two major crimes of the German physicians during this time period were "the participation of physicians in euthanasia and genocide and the horrible experiments performed on concentration camp prisoners in the name of science" (Jotkowitz 869). Euthanasia and unethical experiments were the two major crimes of German physicians because they violated the Hippocratic oath that these physicians took, promising to help people. These physicians subjected people to be victims of many heinous experiments to advance military abilities, such as testing poison, new drugs, and the limits of human endurance.

The physicians who performed these experiments argued that they were necessary for military advancement and defense. Their experiments fell into the two categories of, "survival and rescue projects that tested human potential for survival under extreme conditions . . . the second category of experiments was conducted to provide biological scientific evidence to substantiate the Nazi racist ideology" (Yehuda 140). However, their experiments were incredibly unethical and harmful to the victims. The survival and rescue experiments often put victims into treacherous situations to test their endurance. For example, experiments with low pressure were, "intended to simulate sudden pressure drops in pilot cabins when

airplanes had been shot down – were often conducted to the point of death for the test persons whose brains were later collected and pathologically examined" (Loewenau 425). Other experiments related to these tested "the results of starvation on the human body . . . His starving victims were put to death by intracardiac phenol injection and dissected" (Yehuda 140). These victims suffered slow and painful deaths, starving for days until they were finally killed and studied. One prisoner describes the experiment that he endured and states that:

I was taken by a doctor and placed in a chair, and the doctors started strapping my hands and arms to the chair . . . The doctors started pumping what they said was water into my bladder . . . I was feeling very uncomfortable and they started hurting me. I don't think they were succeeding in what they wanted to do. For the next week, whenever I answered nature's call I urinated blood. All the fifty or sixty men next to me underwent the same thing. I daresay it was an experiment (Smith 228).

The physical and mental effects of experiments such as these caused extensive suffering for victims. The second category of experiments that substantiated the Nazi racist ideology involved the euthanasia of different people and the studying of their brains to 'prove' that they were inferior to the Aryan race. Special departments received "blood, tissue samples, skeletons, and even amputated heads of victims" (Yehuda 140) that they used for comparative research. Experiments such as these killed many victims in an endless supply of patients, due to the lack of ethical boundaries held by German physicians.

Another type of medical experiment that victims endured were forced sterilizations. Physicians experimented with ways to sterilize as many people as possible in the shortest amount of time in order to expand the Aryan race and rid the population of people that were deemed as worthless members of society. One of the sterilization techniques used was called 'sterilization by X-ray.' During this treatment, "men, women, and children were exposed to high doses of pelvic radiation. Many developed severe radiation burns. Following the X-ray exposure, the victims frequently underwent surgical castration" (Yehuda 141). This method of sterilization was extremely traumatizing both physically and emotionally. Another method of sterilization included injections of chemicals into the fallopian tubes. During these injections, women "experienced pain that led to fainting or had to be treated with morphine. They had long-lasting labor-like painful contractions, developed vaginal discharge, bleeding, and pelvic inflammatory disease" (Hildebrandt 287). These women were unaware that they were being sterilized until after the procedure had already taken place. One survivor of these experiments states that, "the pain after each injection was the same and lasted for several days. I still have this pain today . . . I have not been able to have children" (Hildebrandt 288). The women that survived these experiments suffered from physical pain and emotional trauma for the remainder of their lives and left them unable to have children even after being freed from the camps. One of the physicians who performed these sterilizations claimed that "a doctor with 10 assistants could sterilize 1,000 women in 1 day" (Yehuda 141). These numbers could lead to entire populations of people being infertile in just weeks. Mass sterilizations such as these were ideal for the Nazi party to achieve their goal of eliminating certain groups of people from their society.

Euthanasia was another method that Nazis used to rid unwanted people from their society. Adolf Hitler decided to use euthanasia as a method to "cleanse the Third Reich's society from any 'unwanted elements,' specifically meaning the mentally and physically ill" (Loewenau 422). The euthanasia program began with the killing of disabled children, but soon was implemented for disabled adults, as well as people of other races. These extermination efforts, "were carried out with the active cooperation of physicians and nurses, many of whom had participated in the sterilization programs" (Gonzalez-Lopez 257). These nurses and physicians typically selected people from asylums and concentration camps to be killed. Many victims of euthanasia were killed by starvation and lethal doses of drugs or injections. One prisoner describes watching someone be euthanized. He states that the doctor, "opened a little cabinet,

took out an injection tube which held half a litre, opened a bottle of gasoline and filled it. The SS pushed the needle between the prisoner's ribs and pumped the gasoline into the heart. Then the SS waited, tried his pulse and the prisoner was dead . . . on that day he killed about three dozen people" (Smith 227). This method was a quick way to murder unsuspecting people, who believed that they were being seen by the doctor for a simple medical exam. Another quicker, but less common form of euthanasia that they used was shooting. In order to hide or justify their work they "framed in such medical terms as 'healing work' and 'death assistance,' German health practitioners carried out the murder of thousands of the 'unfit'" (Hildebrandt 55). This practice was widely accepted throughout the medical field in Germany and very few German physicians opposed this euthanasia because most viewed it as "being potentially beneficial to their own research agendas since the euthanasia programs guaranteed unlimited research material, such as brain specimens" (Loewenau 423). Physicians killed innocent people for selfish reasons, as well as compliance with the government. Although Hitler ended the euthanasia program in 1941 due to public opposition, 70,000 individuals had already been killed. Although the official program ended, individual physicians continued euthanasia in hospitals and asylums until the end of the war. (Kessler 12). Countless innocent people suffered and died at the hands of these physicians, who had taken the Hippocratic Oath to 'do no harm.'

Many different groups of innocent victims were targeted by these German physicians for different reasons. Most of the victims were German, Austrian, or Polish. These victims were much more susceptible to these experiments and were mainly imprisoned in Dachau (Loewenau 427). However, the religion of a majority of the victims from the asylums is difficult to determine because it was not recorded when they were admitted. The gender distribution of the victims of these experiments is mostly even because, "males accounted to 60 percent of all victims, versus female victims, who accounted for 40 percent" (Loewenau 428). Although these experiments were performed on victims of all ages, "the vast majority of the victims . . . were between four and 14" (Loewenau 429). These innocent children were killed by Nazi physicians in order to cleanse their society of people who were considered unwanted or unfit to live. The perpetrators of these experiments fell into a much narrower category. For example, "the number of women who were involved in coerced medical experiments was relatively low at 7 percent, which equaled approximately 18 women for every 243 men" (Loewenau 430). In addition, the perpetrators of these crimes were often much older than the majority of the victims. The physicians who committed these crimes were "approximately 25-60 years of age when they began their subject experiments" (Loewenau 431). Due to the age that they started their experiments, many of these physicians continued their lives after the Holocaust. Out of all of the physicians that were involved, only 28% of them stood trial, and a shocking 62% of them were not prosecuted. (Lowenau 434). A broad array of people were victims or perpetrators of these medical experiments, but certain demographics, such as German, Austrian, and Polish youth were more susceptible than others.

After World War II ended, the world responded with sympathy for the victims of these atrocities. They desired to protect and assist the victims for the trauma that they had suffered. The two main ethical responses to these crimes were "the protection of research subjects and the paradigm shift from paternalism to autonomy" (Jotkowitz 101). In attempt to protect the victims of these experiments, the world took a paternalistic approach and prevented survivors from healing in their own ways. However, a shift from paternalism to autonomy took place and allowed the victims to take control of their own lives again and seek help as they needed. Also in response to these crimes, was the Nuremberg military tribunal, which was held to punish the physicians who participated in these procedures. Out of this trial, the Nuremberg code was established as, "one of the first significant human rights documents" (Jotkowitz 869). During these trials, "twenty-three Nazi physicians and administrators were accused of organizing and participat-

ing in war crimes and crimes against humanity by way of medical experiments and procedures to which prisoners and civilians were subjected unnecessarily, and prosecuted between 1946 and 1947" (Nelson 101). However, only sixteen of these defendants were convicted, while seven defendants were acquitted. The defendants were indicted on these four specific counts of "conspiracy to commit war crimes against humanity, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and membership in a criminal organization" (Nelson 101). Although the physicians tried to justify their experiments by claiming that they were necessary for German warfare, this argument did not prevail at trial. The descriptions given during this trial "detailed the horrific nature of the research conducted primarily on Nazi concentration camp inmates" (Nelson 101). The most beneficial part of the Nuremberg trials, was the establishment of the Nuremberg Code, which "established ten principles of ethical conduct in medical research . . . Foremost among them was the need for voluntary consent of the human subject and that the experiment be conducted to avoid all unnecessary physical and mental suffering" (Jotkowitz 869). This code set boundaries for all future medical experiments in attempt to protect people from being subjects of unethical human experimentation again. It is also considered the "marker of the birth of American bioethics and has shaped the development of human research protections in the ensuing decades" (Nelson 103). This reiterates how influential the code has been for modern medicine in protecting patients and ensuring ethical clinical research. It benefitted the medical field by developing the ethical principle of 'voluntary consent' and extending it to clinical care. The Nuremberg Code also made autonomy, "the guiding principle of modern medical practice" (Jotkowitz 869). Health care practice in the future will benefit from this code by ensuring that patient treatment is ethical and patient autonomy and consent is valued. The Nuremberg Code already prevented unethical experimentation twice when it, "intersected both the sexually transmitted disease study in Guatemala and the Tuskegee syphilis study" (Nelson 103). This code has already protected people and will continue to protect patients in the future. Although the victims of these experiments suffered enormously, the Nuremberg Code impacted the medical field in a positive way because it prevents tragedies like this from occurring in the future. It also developed the code of ethics that are still used in clinical practice today to protect patients from unethical experimentation.

Although prisoners in the concentration camps suffered great physical and psychological trauma at the hands of physicians, they did not suffer in vain because the Nuremberg trials led to one positive outcome of the Holocaust, the Nuremberg Code. This code protects patients in the future from enduring what victims of the Holocaust suffered, such as unethical experimentation on human subjections, forced sterilizations, and euthanasia. It creates a guide for health care professionals to follow in their practice in order to protect future patients from suffering the trauma that victims of the Holocaust endured. It also developed and protected the patient's right to informed consent and autonomy. The Nuremberg Code has already intersected two unethical human research studies that have taken place and will continue to do so in the future. Despite the terrible conditions that led to it, the Nuremberg Code will continue to protect participants in research studies in the future to ensure that they never have to endure the treatment that victims of the Holocaust medical experiments faced. Patients in the future can feel safer knowing that the Nuremberg Code will protect them from unethical treatment by physicians.

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TINY HOUSES, BIG CHANGES FOR MANY

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You see people on city corners all the time, living in sleeping bags and under store awnings. Sometimes, you toss a few coins into their cup with heavy hearts and the hopes that they will 'better themselves.' What if there was more you could do for these people? As a citizen of your town, you have the unique opportunity to change the lives of the chronically homeless. Unfortunately, eradicating homelessness is a tricky situation our country has been dealing with for a long time, but tiny houses and tiny villages could be the cure for the cycle of chronic homelessness.

In Madison, Wisconsin, Betty Ybarra helped build her own 99 square foot tiny house "after surviving two long, cold Wisconsin winters on the streets" (Goldberg). Living in a tiny house was life changing for her as she was finally able to live with "shelter and security" (Goldberg), and she says she even happily "[checks] on her flowers [and can] now try to live a normal life" (Goldberg). For Betty, the tiny house movement gave her another shot at life, and can be a second chance for many other chronically homeless people around the United States.

In this essay, I will cover the definition of chronic homelessness and how a sense of community is more important than just building houses for these people. I will also discuss how tiny villages can be a successful alternative to other methods to ending homelessness because they promote a sense of community, are financially reasonable and are ultimately more sustainable than other methods. I will then touch on the concerns of people in the cities where tiny villages for the homeless have been implemented, and then give tips on how you can be a part of the movement towards a better life for the chronically homeless in your own city and the nation.

The Issue

On any single night while you're sitting at home with your family watching television, there are about 550,000 people on the streets in the United States. Not only is this number astronomical, but in 2016, there were around 77,000 homeless individuals who were considered chronically homeless, which is 14 percent of the total population of homeless individuals. People who are chronically homeless are those who typically have "complex and long-term health conditions such as mental illness, substance abuse disorders, physical disabilities, or other medical conditions" (Chronically). Due to this array of problems a person could be facing, it is difficult for him or her to find a steady job or a safe place to live. Nearly 70% of chronically homeless individuals live in unsafe situations, such as in cars, on the street, at parks, and many other unimaginable places. The chronic part of this homelessness comes from the fact that it is supremely difficulty for these folks to find steady jobs. Even if they are lucky enough to be of the employed minority, they are living paycheck to paycheck with little money to pay the down payment on an apartment or home. This causes a cycle of issues for those who are chronically homeless, and this ever-growing cycle of homelessness is extremely hard to break out of for individuals and communities as a whole. The penal system adds to that cycle of homelessness. "Homeless people spend excessive time in jail or prison, often for petty offenses such as loitering" (State). A lot of the time, going to prison is a purposeful act that ameliorates the daily problems that they face. It is an emergency act as a way out of starvation

and cold for the chronically homeless. Although this is a quick fix for these people, it costs a lot more money than alternative efforts, as the annual average taxpayer cost is $31,286 per inmate with the highest state being New York at $60,000 per inmate (Santora). While it is an extremely expensive alternative to homelessness for the taxpayers, it is also a lot less restorative to the individual and the homelessness epidemic than the alternative cure to homelessness: tiny villages. Being in jail typically only causes a person to learn unsuccessful efforts like robbery, drugs, and violence, and once he or she is released, he or she is starting back where he or she came from.

The Answer

The answer to curing homelessness does not necessarily mean building more homes, but rather building a sense of community for people who have been ostracized from their cities for so long. The main issue of the various ways that have been used to *temporarily* fix this dilemma of homelessness is that there is no change in the person's behavior when he or she transitions from the streets into a home. One society cannot "operate a problem (and definitely cannot do so cost effectively) if progress is not made on behavior goals" (Nahro). This behavioral progress could be seen through volunteer work, community participation, sharing, and following community rules. Although these things seem elementary to us, people who have been on the streets for many years have been in survival mode for so long and have lost many 'regular' social constructs that we all find easy. It is not hard for these people to go back to their old ways when there is no support behind them. Alan Graham, CEO of Austin-based Mobile Loaves & Fishes, agrees with this and "got the idea that [they] could lift a chronically homeless individual up off the streets into a gently used recreational vehicle." From this crazy idea came "an RV park on steroids," which supports many once-chronically-homeless people (Brooks). This was the beginning of Austin's tiny house village: *Community First!*

Tiny houses have been in the news lately, and their uses vary from retirement homes, houses-on-the-go, or a way of minimalistic living. These no-mortgage homes have been trending on HGTV, Travel Channel and all over YouTube as the next way to live. What hasn't been discussed as much is how great the tiny house movement could be for eradicating chronic homelessness in cities across the United States and the globe. This movement not only creates inexpensive homes, but also builds a sense of community for the homeless.

Tiny Villages – A Very Real Alternative

Tiny Villages are little communities of miniature houses (100-400 square feet) which are typically just one bedroom and all other necessities are communal throughout the village. Tiny homes are a great alternative to other methods of dealing with the issue of homelessness because they are extraordinarily less expensive than other methods, create more of a community, focus on decreasing negative behavior, and finally, are more long-term and sustainable than many other methods.

Sustainability: Tiny villages are a very sustainable method because they break the cycle of chronic homelessness by decreasing the negative behavior of participants. Other methods used to decrease homelessness are "without goals and performance expectation, [and] over the long run, will suffer a loss of program integrity and support" (Nahro). This is a fact that housing authorities are aware of but have found it difficult to maintain integrity within a program before the tiny house movement. The goal of tiny villages is clear: to keep people off the streets, to teach them how to be self/community sustainable, and to better their lives from the inside out. Two programs that have succeeded in working with participants to decrease negative behavior are the *Bridge to Housing Program* and the *Medical Respite Model*. "Residents with point violations for breaking house rules and program requirements could 'earn their way back' by

doing volunteer work and participating in their own program" (Nahro). This allowed for a first step to recovery and sustainable stability as they were given an opportunity to better themselves in a safe and supportive environment. In other communities, tiny houses are used as interim housing to support people as they work to gain the financial and social footing to be able to move into more permanent rental housing. An 8-year pilot program in Utah, called *Housing First,* has reported a 74 percent success rate. In all of these tiny-home-situations, people are expected to get better and are supported by a community as they do so.

Community: Tiny homes create a sense of community by enforcing the act of sharing with each other, living together, and following community rules and regulations. Sharing is an important part of the community living because these people have not been used to accommodating to others, and the village allows them to learn these skills. In the *Community First!* village, "the residents share everything [from] the state of the art communal kitchens to laundry and bathroom facilities. There's a dog park, volunteer nurses, a market, gardens, chickens and goats, a fish farm and an art gallery" (Brooks). As long as residents follow the only three rules: paying rent, obeying the law, and following the community rules, they are allowed to stay in the village. In other villages, they meet "twice a week in the evenings to discuss problems or concerns and to share a common meal that they take turns cooking" (Saez). Working together and being a part of a true community can help participants to become acclimated to the real world because they now have a place where they are accepted, heard, and given responsibility. This helps people because "where there's stability and a home base, safety and normalcy, the mental health issues some people have are alleviated... It's not cured but it's easier to manage" (Frederico). This is an exciting push for a better life for these people as a result of such a solid feeling of community. "One of our residents has been homeless for about 25 years," says Severn, the creator of *Quixote Village.* "He told me he's excited to start a little rose garden. It really touched me to hear that," she says (Saez). *That* is the better life these people are so grateful to have the opportunity to have.

Financially: Tiny houses are known across the world for being mortgage free and inexpensive. In a tiny village for the homeless, this situation is even more the case. The "cost per unit is one of the lowest and most flexible [homeless rehabilitation] models currently in use" (Nahro). While taxpayers are annually paying up to $60,000 per inmate, tiny villages cost about $5,000 per home and seldom use the government's money. The typically fully functional tiny home with a bed, toilet, and tiny kitchen (Frederico) costs about $5,000 and tiny house village *Occupy Madison* utilizes this and depends primarily on volunteer labor and community donations. Gregory Kloehn, a California artist, found an even cheaper way to build tiny homes. He has "singlehandedly build small portable homes using salvaged materials [for] less than $100 each" (NBC). Although these are not a part of a true community, they are much less expensive than other alternatives and are practical as they are "strong and watertight" (Frederico). Any safe place for a person to live keeps him or her off the streets and out of jail, which is the main goal of the tiny house movement, therefore, even these super inexpensive ideas which are not a part of a village are indeed substantial alternatives.

The Concerns of the Area

There are many concerns that people of the cities have as these communities are being created. Two concerns that have been raised are safety and property values. The main response to this is that "these people were already living in [the] community" says Konkel from *Occupy Madison Village* (Frederico). City governments also have issues with tiny houses like that of Rochester, New York and stalled the project of *Rochester Greenovation* with "a whole bunch of maybes" (Frederico). Thankfully, tiny villages have actually helped the towns they have been built in as they take people off of the streets and into jobs while keeping the tiny villages clean and tidy due to the strict village rules. The city of Austin is glad that the tiny village *Community First!* was implemented. Graham even has "neighbors that [he] runs into periodically through-

out the city that are going, 'Thank God that you're out here'" and he remarks that *Community First!* is "going to be an asset and far, far, far from a liability" (Brooks).

How to Help

Tiny villages and homes are the best way to end homelessness in cities around the United States. Now it is time to discuss how you can help your community and the homeless people who live among you to live better lives off of the streets. There are a few things necessary from a community to make tiny villages possible. These things are engaged volunteers, fundraising efforts, and the political push for better laws about tiny homes for the homeless.

Engaged volunteers are necessary to a tiny village because homeless people do not often have access to resources such as lessons on how to cook and clean or medical resources. Volunteer nurses are in high demand in tiny villages so if you have a background in the medical field and are interested in donating some of your time, make sure to look into those opportunities. Also, volunteers to help with fundraising and educating the community are important because citizens are typically the most fearful of what they do not understand, so educating folks around your city on how tiny villages could help the city to thrive would be very beneficial to the overall acceptance of this new and exciting method to end homelessness.

Fundraising is important to a tiny village because these villages seldom receive any money from the government and money is necessary to the building and maintenance of tiny homes. The more money donated, the more tiny homes there are, and the more people can move into these homes for the homeless. Look into ways you can donate money or influence others to donate to the tiny village community in your city.

Finally, a push on the political sphere is important to the overall support of tiny homes and tiny villages for the homeless. Because "zoning prevents tiny houses from being considered livable based on square footage" it is hard to find a place to build these homes especially when the government isn't backing the movement. Speaking to representatives can only help this situation as the more people in a community who back up such a beneficial movement, the more the government will consider allowing its implementation. Dialogue within the community is extremely vital when addressing the need for legal places for homeless people to safely live.

In Conclusion

Tiny villages are the way to a safe, sustainable, and enriched living situation for people who have been homeless for so long. They keep people off of the streets for good by teaching them how to live as a part of society, the importance of following the rules, and staying involved with each other. They are less expensive than most other methods used to rid of homelessness and keep the city they are found in safer and cleaner than before. Most importantly, tiny villages and the tiny house movement as a whole give the once chronically homeless a secure place to live and a better way of life.

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THE GENDERING OF OLIVER TATE

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Joe Dunthorne plays the line for laughs: "Treat 'em mean, keep 'em keen." He intends the audience to laugh as they recognize Oliver's inexperience and foolishness in believing this advice given to him by his equally inexperienced friend Chips. *Oh, silly Oliver Tate,* we are meant to say, laughing along at both the youthful innocence and ridiculousness of this character who thinks he knows everything. But this line joins a canon of other common adages, phrases we have culturally come to accept as normal, even expected from young men: "She's a ten;" "you run like a girl;" "boys will be boys;" and, of course, the infamous "locker room talk." These phrases stand as vestiges of a patriarchal system and reflect how, even after the suffragettes, the women's movement, and the sexual revolution, boys are still socialized from a young age to adopt a harmful form of masculinity. In Joe Dunthorne's novel *Submarine,* the narrator, a young teenage boy by the name of Oliver Tate, navigates the world of late-nineties Welsh adolescence armed with only his wit, shaky internet connection, and a learned set of gender norms that colors his view on sex and relationships. The learning of gender, sociologists report, most strongly occurs during childhood and adolescence and continues to impact how a person views themselves and others through his life. Nowhere is this more evident than in Oliver Tate, whose early experiences and influences on gender have led him to exhibit examples of patriarchy and masculinity in his close personal relationships.

Even before Freud burst onto the scene, people, almost universally, assumed the masculine to be the dominant and default gender identity. From the days of hunter-gatherer societies, in which women played a critical role as nurturers and providers, still the male groups of hunters and warriors took priority and control over the women and land (Forisha 44). Through the Middle Ages, the Industrial Revolution, the Victorian Era, and beyond, men retained political, social, and economic power over women as they ascended to the forefront of society as the assumed "natural" breadwinners, fighters, and leaders (Forisha 46-49). Social norms regarding "proper" male and female attitudes and actions grew into rigid gender roles to which people were expected to conform or risk social alienation and discrimination. Gender roles became ingrained in society, pervading the majority of thought surrounding identity and gender, ultimately becoming institutionalized in schools, the family, and the government (Romer 19 & 37). For centuries, these gender roles when largely unchallenged. The assignment of appropriate masculine and feminine activities were, after all, a fact of life; women were simply—biologically, inherently—gentle, fragile caregivers, and men were just aggressive go-getters responsible for bringing home the bacon.

One of the most prominent theories that changed the perception of gender was Judith Butler's notion of performative gender. Butler postulates that the notion of gender develops not from unchangeable, biological fact, but from the repetition of unrelated acts, which only after repetition become characterized as "masculine" or "feminine." Gender, therefore, is nothing more than "[a] constructed identity...which the mundane social audience...[comes] to believe and to perform in the mode of belief" (Butler 520). Butler's ideas, inspired by feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, completely discarded the idea that gender was something biological, definite, and unchangeable. Researcher Joseph Pleck takes this idea a step further with his model of gender identity, arguing that these transient gender roles get passed on to children through their environment. Pleck asserts that children, in their early years, grow aware of gender and learn what is acceptable expression for men and women based on the child's social environment. Upon learning from parents, friends, and authority figures the "rules" of a gender, a child tries to force himself and others to fit the appropriate gender role. Ultimately, Pleck theorizes, chil-

dren should begin to understand the ability to exhibit both "masculine" and "feminine" qualities sometime in their adolescence and recognize the necessity to exhibit both as a functioning adult (Davidson & Gordon 15-16). Pleck's work, combined with that of Walter Mischel, John Money and Anke Ehrhardt, and Lawrence Kohlberg, emphasizes that a person's understanding of gender comes from the environment and influences he experiences in his formative years (Davidson & Gordon 13-14). Children, having been exposed to a variety of gender-stereotyped roles in their families, schools, social groups, and media, begin to censor themselves in order to adhere to the "correct" behaviors for their genders (Parsons 32-33). In this manner, gender roles and stereotypes persist despite a changing landscape of sexual freedom. Thus, children and young teenagers like Oliver Tate still express notions of antiquated gender roles. Despite the knowledge that gender roles and stereotypes are not as rigid and genetic as previously thought, decades of compounded cultural norms exposed to the child through both informal personal channels and formal institutions during his or her formative years result in children and teenagers—particularly young men— who perpetuate sexist ideas of gender and sexuality well into adolescence and beyond.

Thus enters young Oliver Tate into the narrative. At the start of *Submarine,* Oliver, at fourteen years old, struggles to find his place in his family, his friend group, his Welsh high school, and his world. From the first few pages of the novel, Dunthorne marks Oliver as a rather unusual, very observant boy. "What [my parents] don't seem to understand is that their problems are already my problems," Oliver remarks, immediately identifying one of the biggest influences on a child's socialization (Dunthorne 6). Yet Oliver, despite his startlingly sharp social observations, remains a perpetuator of gender stereotypes. How Oliver relates to Jordana, his parents, and Zoe all follow a pattern of casual sexism; when the woman in these relationships exerts her power, Oliver feels threatened and acts out in retaliation. This problem is not an individual one; such actions are not isolated, one-off experiences that can be ascribed simply as results of Oliver's well-documented eccentricities. Rather, Oliver's aggressive masculinity and latent misogyny are products of the society in which he was raised and the culture found throughout the halls of high school. Even young men not nearly as absurd as Oliver act in similar ways, suggesting a larger cultural, rather than individual, problem. Oliver learned his sexist tendencies from somewhere, and the society and which he raised taught him.

The kind of company Oliver keeps explains a great deal about his socialization regarding gender and sex. Though a child's first and most formative introduction to gender roles may come from the parents, once the child enters adolescence, the strongest influence on a person's ideas of gender and sexuality comes from the child's friends and peers (Romer 64). Throughout the novel, Oliver frequently cites his friend Chips' advice as it pertains to sex and relationships, particularly those with women. Several times, when faced with a difficult emotional situation, Oliver recalls one of Chips' favorite phrases, "Treat 'em mean, keep 'em keen" (Dunthorne 166). The phrase refers to the idea that ignoring a woman's emotional needs will keep her interested, and Oliver follows this advice wholeheartedly. Chips' advice is not only inaccurate, but reeks with the vestiges of outdated gender norms. Chips's advice follows the stereotype that men should not express emotions, and that expressing signs of affection is womanly and shameful (Romer 66). Furthermore, the phrase "treat 'em mean, keep 'em keen" expects that the man holds the position of power in a relationship. By shrugging off a woman's advances, the man both maintains his appearance of aloofness and keeps the woman in the dark, depriving her of the power that comes with knowledge and forcing her to continue trying to please the man. As a result of Chips' advice, Oliver pays special attention to the dynamic of power in his relationship with Jordana. After Jordana emails him, Oliver notes, "It strikes me that the recipient of the e-mail is the one in a position of power in the relationship" (Dunthorne 166). Chips' influence has taught Oliver to take pride in having the upper hand in a relationship. From the details Oliver mentions, it is clear that Chips, along with having a rebellious streak, harbors a

lust for power and control, and not just in sexual relationships: he attempts to frame his father for possession of child pornography, and, in his torment of Zoe, Oliver remarks that Chips would want to "see his name immortalized" in her diary (Dunthorne 32 & 135). As a teenager's peers become his strongest influences regarding sexuality and gender as he enters adolescence, it comes as no surprise that Oliver has adopted some of Chips' toxic socialization.

Chips also instills in Oliver problematic ideas about sex. Given that teenagers cite their peers as their major source of information regarding sex, Chips' toxic influence strongly socializes Oliver in a way that teaches him to view women as sexual objects (Zellman & Goodchilds 54). In one instance, Oliver, musing about the future, wonders:

"I wonder whether [Chips and I] will get together when we are forty and go through his porn magazines, just like old times, and I'll have to keep saying, 'Oh my fuck!' and 'Look at her minge!' and so on, just like I do at the moment." (Dunthorne 137)

Oliver's phrasing here suggests an indifference towards Chips' pornography, but he goes along with Chips' ogling anyway. In order to win the acceptance and respect of Chips, who Oliver envisions as the ideal of adolescent masculinity, Oliver passively participates in the active objectification of women. His comments both result from and contribute to a culturen that considers women little more than exotic objects of sexual desire. Philosopher Simone de Beauvoir refers to this phenomenon as "Othering," in which women are viewed only as that which is not male. This state of being subjects women to being viewed only through the lens of men, de Beauvoir states, wherein women are only valued for their worth as sexual objects (de Beauvoir 143 & 186). In this instance, Oliver, by going along with Chips' lewd behavior, continues a sexist cultural tradition wherein men view women only for their sex appeal. In this mindset, women become reduced to sex objects, existing only for male gratification. The viewpoint robs women of the opportunity to be anything more than sex objects for men, denying them the ability to give or receive a fulfilling emotional relationship. The behavior is learned, of course; pervasive ideas about sex and gender, repeated over time, become considered established fact (Butler 522). But young people, particularly young men, continue to be socialized to accept antiquated gender roles. Chips's advice perpetuates these sexist attitudes, strongly impacting Oliver's socialization regarding gender and sex.

The effects of Oliver's sexist socialization appear in several of his personal relationships. Most notably, Oliver acts jealous, controlling, and haughty both during and after his relationship with Jordana. In the early days of their relationship, Oliver seems steadfastly focused on having sex with Jordana, even going so far as to push the issue even after she initially denies him twice (Dunthorne 86). This aligns with the long historical tradition that the man should instigate sex, and the woman should submit to his will without question (McCormick & Jesser 80). But, after they sleep together, and Jordana discovers her mother has cancer, Oliver grows indifferent, distant toward her until she eventually leaves him. Yet Oliver will not accept this. He continues to pursue Jordan, even long after she has clearly told him to leave her alone. Oliver acts as if he owns Jordana, and acts appalled when she rebuffs him in the park: "Go away!" she yells at him for the third time, and he thinks, "I don't have to say I'm sorry because she was the one who cheated on me and she was the one who dumped me" (Dunthorne 292). To Oliver, Jordana is the one in the wrong for leaving him, not himself for continuing to harass her even after she clearly expressed her discomfort. He views her as something to be owned, a piece of property he has lost to a rival. De Beauvoir writes, "for the lover the act of love is conquest," expressing that, for men, a woman is viewed as a victory to be won or a triumph to be claimed (De Beauvoir 375). Oliver, in believing he has lost Jordana and growing shocked and defensive when she rebuffs him of her own accord, perpetuates the sexist belief that a man can conquer and own a woman, and that she cannot possibly refuse him of her own choosing.

The casual sexism Oliver experiences in his adolescence also contributes to his disdain towards his

parents' marriage. After hearing his mother discuss Graham on the phone, Oliver immediately grows suspicious, suspecting his mother of infidelity, and, by extent, betraying and shaming his father. As his mother's relationship with Graham progresses, Oliver grows increasingly angry. He begins imagining his father rescuing his mother from Graham in various heroic, dramatic situations: ripping off his vest and stealing his mother away; kicking down the door of a church and fighting Graham; shouting, "If you ever put your tree-loving hands on my wife again, I'll massage your face with my fists" (Dunthorne 121, 186, & 230). In these moments, it is clear Oliver has learned some of this behavior from media. The lines are obviously cliche, and the scenes he describes read like a 1920s silent film. Television and media programming has a strong impact on children, most of which includes passive, submissive women and aggressive, strong men (Romer 25-26). The consumption of gendered media in his early years has led Oliver to believe his father must assert his ownership over his wife and physically take action against Graham, his perceived rival. However, when his father does not, Oliver expresses frustration, even anger and disappointment, at his father. He vandalizes Graham's house himself and tries to orchestrate a confrontation between his mother and father. "What they need is a really good blowout," Oliver decides, acting out in his usual fashion in order to spark his father's temper (Dunthorne 242). Oliver's father, however, still does not express the anger Oliver believes the situation warrants. Oliver seems almost stunned; after all, he has been socialized by the media he has consumed and the friends he has made that a man must fight for his respect and his property, both of which Oliver's mother has damaged. Oliver falls into Pleck's model of gender identity development here, as he, still stuck in the second stage of development, attempts to try and force others to conform to the gender norms he has learned (Davidson & Gordon 15). To Oliver, the only correct "manly" response to his mother's infidelity is violence and anger, as he has been socialized to believe that real men solve their problems with aggression and do not tolerate their women evading their authority. Even outside of his own personal relationships, Oliver still exhibits a need to enforce proper gender roles. He cannot come to terms with the fact that his father does not act as a man "should" act, and so, in Oliver's mind, he must not be a "real" man.

The problem with *Submarine,* despite what this essay might at first glance suggest, is not with Oliver Tate himself. It isn't even the sexist socialization Oliver experienced, though they are certainly nothing to be lauded. Rather, it is author Joe Dunthorne's handling of Oliver's sexism that makes *Submarine* such a problematic novel. Dunthorne makes a joke of Oliver's latent misogyny, playing lines like "treat 'em mean, keep 'em keen" for laughs. He instills the novel, even during the most startling instances of Oliver's sexist attitudes, with a lighthearted tone that suggests Oliver's actions should not be taken seriously. Oliver is written as an intentionally ridiculous character, yes; but, by invoking a silent laugh-track behind Oliver's absurd and sexist behavior, Dunthorne downplays the seriousness of sexism and normalizes Oliver's damaging behavior. The audience is, perhaps, meant to laugh at Oliver's sexism rather than with it; but, in doing so, Dunthorne and the audience trivialize an issue that negatively impacts young girls throughout society. Dunthorne employs the literary version of shrugging one's shoulders and saying, "Well, boys will be boys." By writing Oliver's sexism off a joke, a funny bit of boyish humor, Dunthorne marginalizes the issue of the casual misogyny that children learn and perpetuate. Oliver never sees the error of his ways. Dunthorne takes the audience merrily along through Oliver's bumbling adolescence, stopping to laugh at the universal awkwardness experienced in high school like entering your first relationship; discovering your parents are people; and refusing to respect your girlfriend's feelings, forcing her to come to the beach in the middle of the day, and continuing to pursue her even after she has expressly told you to leave her alone.

But, sadly, even this *is* a relatable experience. By shrugging off Oliver's behavior, by playing it as a joke, Dunthorne reinforces the idea that such behavior is acceptable. In this manner, young men are taught to

think that a woman who turns him down doesn't mean it, and young women are told that, if they must go out at night, it is safest to do so in large numbers. Dunthorne uses Oliver's sexism as the punchline of a joke, but the only people really getting hit are the generations of young people to come who will, like Oliver, be socialized by their media and their peers to think that such behavior is acceptable. And, frankly, until artists begin realizing the ways their own underlying socialization about gender and sexuality impacts their work, and how these themes might impact the larger cultural narrative as a whole, such behavior *is* acceptable. And it will continue to be, until we as individuals and as a society begin taking responsibility for our own roles in the grand schema of large-scale interpersonal relationships.

Submarine presents a tale of adolescence, that, though perhaps exaggerated, rings with a significant amount of accuracy. Oliver acts up and acts out, trying to assert his masculinity in his relationship with Jordana and attempting to impose upon his father the socially "correct" attitudes of manhood. As gender, most sociologist agree, is a learned concept, taught to children in their early years by their parents, their peers, and their media, it comes as no surprise that Chips' misogynistic attitudes have rubbed off on Oliver and contributed to his outdated notions regarding sexuality, gender, and power. Oliver perpetuates gender roles and sexist attitudes due to the culture in which he was brought up, attitudes which, in his youthful ignorance, he tries desperately to apply to a modern world. The attitudes Oliver expresses, though toxic, only become a real problem since Dunthorne treats his casual sexism as a joke. Though Oliver is understood to be an absurd character, Dunthorne, by having the audience laugh at his sexism rather than critically engage with the way young men—of whom Oliver, in his treatment of women, is no outlier—think and speak about women, perpetuates a passive sexism that is permitted to continue because our society, as a whole, is unwilling the engage with the insidious vestiges of "the way it's always been." Since Oliver learns almost nothing from his harmful behavior, Dunthorne, in effect, shrugs off Oliver's most deplorable attitudes, giving a generation of young boys a pass on their reprehensible behavior by allowing it go by unquestioned. In this manner, Oliver is very much the average teenage boy: he may treat women as he likes, and nobody will say anything about it.

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"George Bush doesn't care about black people:" *Citizen*, Race, Class, and the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

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In August of 2005 Hurricane Katrina tore through New Orleans, destroying property, lives, and flooding an estimated 80% of the city when the storm surge overwhelmed the levees. The damage was most prominent in the lowest lying, poorest portion of the city- an area inhabited predominantly by people of color. Despite the devastation, government aid to the area was virtually nonexistent. In Rankine's "Citizen", the racial and class dynamics present in the relief effort are brought to light through a poem comprised of a collection of CNN quotes regarding the devastation in the aftermath of the hurricane. The audience is asked several times "Have you seen their faces?", which brings to light two issues. First, many people purposefully ignore tragedy, particularly when there is a class or racial issue at play- being forced to confront one's privilege can be difficult. Second, the repetition of this phrase illustrates both urgency and disbelief- the person asking the question is highlighting the horror that people have gone through, and how it is conveyed in their facial expressions. It is as though the author is suggesting that the magnitude of the issue cannot be fully comprehended by just a passing glance, or even one good look. I argue that this serves to establish an atmosphere of shocked ambiguity so as to demonstrate the systemic and deliberate disregard for the safety and physical well-being of people of color. Ultimately, Rankine brings to light the racial and class division that became apparent before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina, and shows that the government response was part of a much larger cycle of disregard and deliberate wrongdoing towards people of color.

It had been known for years that the poor, black victims portrayed in Citizen would be hardest hit in the event of a hurricane in New Orleans. The black population comprised 67% of the total population in New Orleans, 84% of those living under the poverty line (Katz), and was highly concentrated in areas of extreme poverty (defined as areas where >40% of the population is living below the poverty line) (Katz). In Citizen, these population demographics become clear when someone left anonymous remarks that "so many of these people almost all of them that we see, are so poor, someone else said, and they are so black" (Rankine 85); the victims portrayed earlier in the poem are now revealed to have been not only poor, but black as well. Fussell points to the establishment of a biracial society in New Orleans as the cause of these disturbing population demographics, the origins of which lie in the 1900's, when employment, housing, and social discrimination forced people of color to remain in the lower lying city as whites left for the suburbs (Fussell 851). During Hurricane Katrina, the safety implications for those living in the low-lying city (below sea level in many cases) included "no electricity, no power, no way to communicate. We are drowning here" (Rankine 85). After the hurricane, some portions of the city had flooding up to 20 feet deep (National Geographic). Perhaps most disturbingly, this devastation had been forecasted years ago. In 2001, when FEMA ranked the top 3 most catastrophic disasters likely to occur, a hurricane in New Orleans was second only to a terrorist attack in New York City (Bullard 768). In short, they deemed it not only catastrophic, but assigned a high likelihood of occurrence. Environmental scientists warned

that the coastal wetlands that had previously served as a buffer for flooding had been destroyed by erosion, drilling, and urban development. Should a storm surge occur, they said, the most low-lying parts of New Orleans (and the poorest at that) would be in terrible danger (Bullard 768). While entirely aware of this information, neither FEMA nor the government initially went to New Orleans to provide direct humanitarian relief, as shown in Citizen by the remark that "FEMA said it wasn't safe to be there…they all want to stay in Texas" (Rankine 84). The poor distribution of aid and services persisted in the relief effort. Lakeview and other such wealthy suburban areas have now been given and increased 5.5 feet of levee protection, whereas no such promise was made to lower lying areas that dealt with the most flooding (Bullard 777).

The repetition of phrases like "have you seen their faces?" (Rankine 83) and "I don't know what the water wanted" (Rankine 85) is used as a metaphor for the constant discrimination faced by people of color beyond what was seen during Hurricane Katrina. The juxtaposition of the phrase, "Have you seen their faces" (Rankine 83) to the reporter's musing "as if the faces in the images hold all the consequences" demonstrates two ideas. First, seeing these "images" through the news will never have the same impact as being at the scene of the disaster. Secondly, it concedes that even the emotion conveyed in their faces, giving her "chills", can only convey the result of the disaster, be it trauma, fear, or anger. While the images and their faces are powerful, they do not tell the story of the systemic injustice that gave rise to those emotions. The second passage to which the phrase "have you seen their faces?" (Rankine 83) is juxtaposed is the narrator's remark that "this assumes ignorance, lack of intention…" (Rankine 83). We are told that their faces show "the fiction of the facts": the victims somehow know that deliberate malintention is at play. This lack of hope suggests that this disregard for their safety wasn't new to the poor, black population of New Orleans depicted in the poem. They were used to having a government that was elected to protect their needs actively harm them instead. The phrase "I don't know what the water wanted" (Rankine 85) is frequently repeated as well, juxtaposed most notably to two phrases. Her first response is that "It wanted to show you no one would come" (Rankine 85), pointing to the water as the catalyst for, rather than the cause of the indignation that followed the tragedy. It personifies the water, and paints the damage it caused as being purposeful, just as the ignorance of the victims was no accident. While damage was done, it exposed the true malintention of the government. This malintention is further revealed via the juxtaposition of the phrase "I don't know what the water wanted" (Rankine 85) with the retort "As if then and now weren't the same moment" (Rankine 86), suggesting that inaction requires the same choice, regardless of how immediate and obvious the turmoil is. Whether it's denial of humanitarian aid in the wake of a category 5 hurricane on an already vulnerable city, or denial of humanity through poverty and discrimination, the same deliberate choice to strip someone of their dignity is required.

In the poem, the reporter's demeanor and determination to bring the immense suffering to light forces the audience to consider how such devastation came to fruition. Perrow hypothesizes that the media played a crucial role in bringing the crisis to light because "the continued broadcast of these images reinforced the conclusion that this tragedy should not have happened in the United States" (Potter 5). The poem itself is a compilation of quotes from a CNN reporter. Given this, the fear and shock displayed become even more poignant- as a reporter, she should be used to covering disasters of all sorts. In the poem, however, she is repeatedly asking the reader "have you seen their faces?" (Rankine 85). The purpose of this is twofold; first, it illustrates her own shock at the extent of the trauma to survivors, particularly when she states that "you simply get chills every time you see these poor individuals" (Rankine 85) just before. The repetition of this phrase shows that their expressions have affected her profoundly, as they merit more than a passing observation. Moreover, it implores the reader to meaningfully consider not just the damage to property that was so often portrayed in the news, but the impact on the psyche of those that survived. What's more, it acknowledges that even these images are an insufficient portrayal of the di-

saster at hand. She says, "we are drowning here...still in the difficulty...as if the faces in the images hold all the consequences" (Rankine 85). This imagery provides insight into just how abhorrent the situation was: she has stated that their faces give her chills, and yet she knows that their expressions still don't reveal the full extent of everything these people have gone through. An element of fear is present as well: when her coworker gives her a flashlight in a dark area, she notes "I didn't want to turn it on. It was all black. I didn't want to shine a light on that" (Rankine 84). Previous scenes tell us that "that" is likely a slew of disembodied people, rotten infrastructure, and traumatized victims. She's a reporter, and yet is afraid that whatever she is about to see is worse than the faces that gave her "chills". Despite that, we see a certain determination that most clearly illustrates her character's role as the activist At the end of the passage she commands her colleague to "Call out to them." (Rankine 86) When he replies, "I don't see them." (Rankine 86), she responds by telling him to "Call out to them anyway" (Rankine 86). This final line in the poem implores the audience to actively search out and assist the vulnerable. The initial fear that she conveyed has been dwarfed by her desire to ensure the safety of the victims. Through her, Rankine is suggesting that we find that same bravery to help others most in need.

The continuous lack of reference to specific people and places serves to craft an atmosphere of ambiguity, which in turn allows the text to serve as a metaphor for racial dynamics more broadly. The reporter remarks that "you simply get chills every time you see these poor individuals, so many of these people almost all of them that we see, are so poor, and someone else said, and they are so black" (Rankine 85). Those in the arena are referred to as a collective. Even when one of the men is being interviewed, nobody is speaking in first person. He says that "we never reached out to anyone to tell our story because there's no ending to our story" (Rankine 84). The reasoning behind why they've "never reached out" likely stems from just how systemic these discriminatory conditions are; continuing to remind people of the daily struggles they face would be exhausting. Use of the words "we" and "never" illustrate his belief- one he states "we" (presumably the black community) share in the futility of speaking out. A more disturbing idea implicit in the previous statement is the belief that even if they are to share their story, nothing will come of it. There is "no end", perhaps because they feel no one is listening. The scene laid out for the reader, one in which the houses are "peeling apart, the yellow foam, the contaminated drawl of mildew, mold." (Rankine 84), can be seen as a metaphor for the culmination of this systemic discrimination. The living conditions from the beginning would have to have been subpar- mold can't overtake a house in mere days, even after flooding from a hurricane. The area was known to be a flood risk, and yet the houses were neither reinforced nor elevated; they were left to peel apart, because evidently nobody cared about preventing collapse and respiratory conditions in the poorest of the poor communities. The hurricane tearing apart the buildings, revealing the safety hazards and poor constructions, can be seen as a metaphor for the culmination of racial issues. Flooding did not create this social division, in the same way that it did not create structural instability: it merely exposed the two. That said, the repetition of the phrase "Still in the difficulty" (Rankine 83) juxtaposed with phrases such as "we are drowning here" (Rankine 85) and "climbing over bodies" (Rankine 83) emphasizes the horror that persists, even when people are made aware of the victims' plight. They are still literally climbing over bodies, but they are also still dealing with the same social inequality that left them trapped in the lowest social caste in the lowest lying parts of the city in the first place. Even in the case that people are armed with the details of the situation, that information is useless until an overhaul of the social narrative that allowed that to persist is pursued.

The narrator's continuous emphasis on the idea that "the fiction of the facts assumes randomness and indeterminacy" furthers the idea that the government purposefully ignored the plight of black victims before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina. The reporter states "the fiction of the facts assumes randomness and indeterminacy" (Rankine 85) and "the fiction of the facts assumes innocence, ignorance, lack of

intention, misdirection" (Rankine 83). Both variations assert that this was a deliberate denial of aid, not an "innocent" or "random" misallocation of resources. What's more, those who survived remain trapped in the city due to the lack of transportation: "someone said where are the buses?" (Rankine 84). This idea of entrapment extends beyond being trapped in the city after the hurricane ruined most people's homes. They are trapped in a cycle of poverty and discrimination, to the point where there are limbs floating around the city and most homes have been destroyed and the government is neither trying to help them leave nor make the city fit for them to stay in. The situation is so dire, that even FEMA didn't show up. In the arena, a woman says, "What I'm hearing, she said, which is sort of scary, is that [FEMA] wanted to stay in Texas" (Rankine 84). Note that the role of FEMA is to provide emergency aid during or after a disaster, or to assist the state government in doing so where possible. Given that the state and local governments were incapacitated due to the widespread destruction of infrastructure, FEMA going into New Orleans and bringing the necessary equipment for aid. FEMA presence was the last line of defense, and they failed to provide assistance. What's most disturbing about this failure was the justification for it: New Orleans was too dangerous. Just this past year, FEMA deployed personnel prior to Category 5 Hurricane (Maria) in both Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands (FEMA)- a much more dangerous situation than a post-hurricane clean-up. This blatant inconsistency regarding what is deemed "too dangerous" suggests the designation of lower safety standards and priority to black lives further cementing their actions as morally abhorrent at best. The systemic nature of this disregard is implied in the following exchange between the female reporter and her colleague: "I don't know what the water wanted... It wanted to show you no one would come...as if then and now were not the same moment". This comparison between then and now sets up a divide between the past and the present, only to tear it down and state the circumstances are no different; they're "the same moment". In past, even at their most vulnerable, people didn't come to offer assistance. Now, it may have been FEMA, but "they" can also be seen as to be part of the population (Whites) that for decades have sought to separate themselves. They are the same moment because each time their cry for help has been ignored by those with the power to alleviate their suffering.

Rankine repetition of the phrase "I don't know what the water wanted" (Rankine 85) highlights our tendency to remove personal responsibility in events where racial dynamics are at play. Dyson points to an inability to properly empathize with black victims as a reason why we can express sympathy for them, yet not feel guilty about abdicating our responsibility to help. In the poem, the phrase is spoken several times by a man (likely a reporter) while viewing the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina on the poorest parts of New Orleans, Bodies are everywhere, flooding persists, and the living are traumatized- an unsettling scene for any onlooker. What is notable, however, is this individual's inclination to attribute any and all damage to "the water". The devastation was caused in the first place by the levees breaking- a situation that humans could have entirely prevented via fortification prior to the hurricane. Even the degree of devastation observed in the aftermath could have been mitigated to some degree had the government, FEMA, the National Guard, or other humanitarian organizations opted to allocate manpower or resources. This shifting of blame to the water, an inanimate force that moves with no deliberate malintention, is in fact nothing more than a pervasive attempt to absolve oneself of any possible wrongdoing. Directly afterwards, when the narrator commands "call out to them" (Rankine 86), the structure implies the man says, "I don't see them" (Rankine 86). Given that the narrator has emphasized in detail how profoundly seeing the victims has affected her, it seems strange that he can't see them as well. As such, this serves as a metaphor for a degree of purposeful ignorance, as he fails to see the devastation to individuals in the wake of a humanitarian disaster. Finally, the emphasis on the individual, "I", sets the speaker (or society more broadly) up to look innocent every time- even in the case that one proves white people contribute to institutionalized racism, this separation from the collective allows the individual to put their mind at

rest, and continue to live in blissful ignorance of their own privilege. Ultimately, this individual's comment depicts the absolution of guilt that allowed the poor of New Orleans to suffer long before the hurricane.

Rankine's use of repetition, ambiguity, and narration technique furthers the idea that this was not a natural disaster: it was a virtually unprecedented, government perpetrated crisis fueled by societal indifference and targeted towards the most vulnerable in society. From the beginning, poor black residents of New Orleans had been relegated to the lowest lying parts of the cities, and their concerns ignored. It was only when they were subject to conditions so undeniably inhumane that we were finally forced to question "Have you seen their faces?" (Rankine 83), and consider the conditions and organizations that allowed for such poverty to exist, and such devastation to go ignored. Even in acknowledging the role of the government in purposefully disregarding the needs of a minority, it is demonstrated that many still blame the water instead of looking at the role their own actions and privilege play in perpetuating the widespread employment, housing, and social discrimination that allows for such horrors to continue. As one of the victims says, "there is no end to our story" (Rankine 84)- without a radical paradigm shift, the situation will not improve. To use the term natural disaster is to exonerate the government of the role it plays in setting up people of color to facial, and then ignoring them when they need help most. Ultimately, Rankine suggests that the hurricane was not the source of this destruction; perhaps it was our response that set the scene for a humanitarian disaster.

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