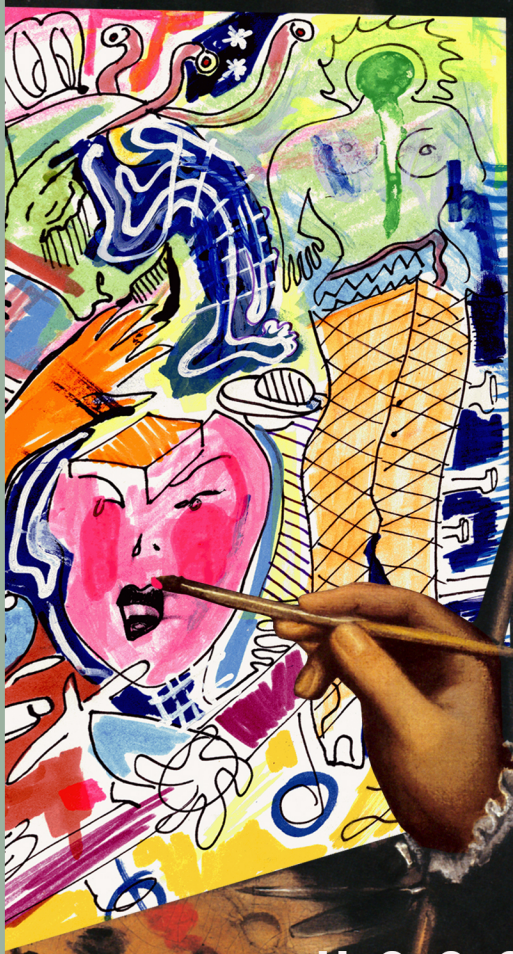
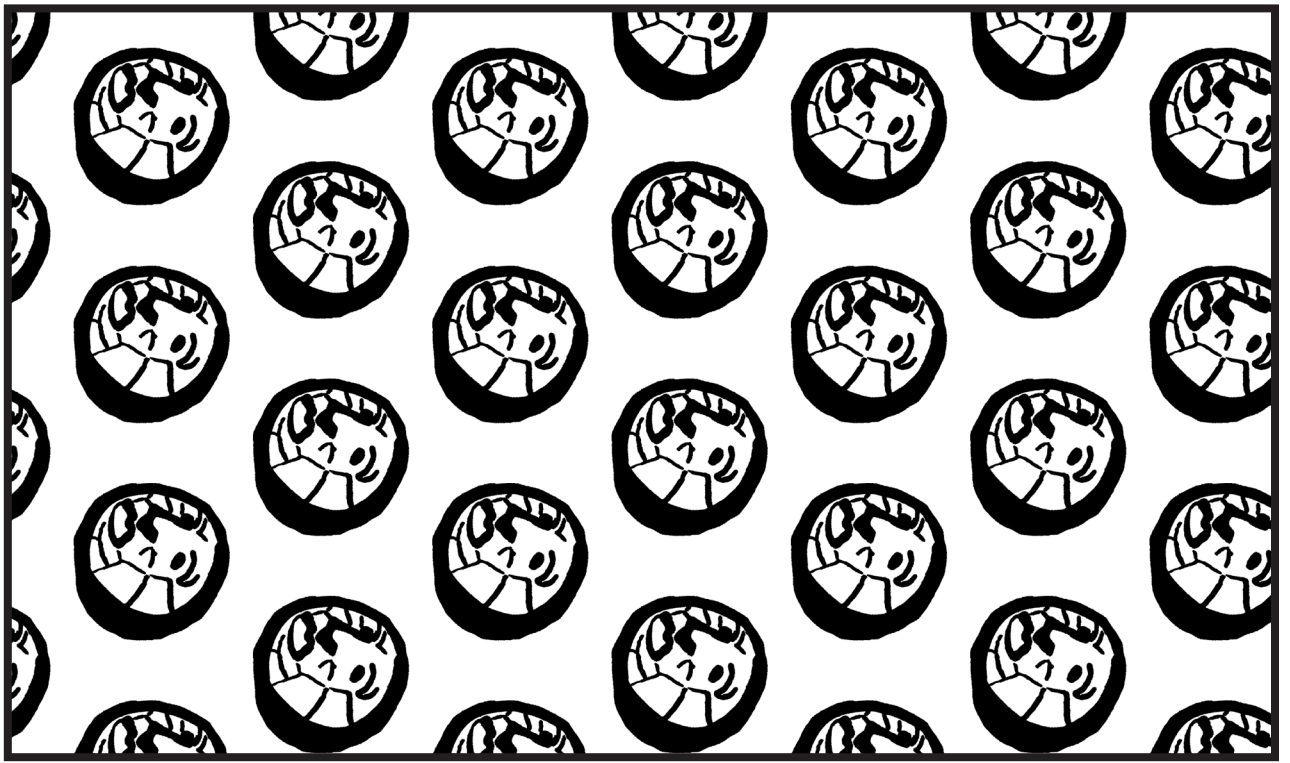


HOOCHIE reader

2018



front cover feature art: Stripper Dreams // *sal daña*

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We dedicate this second issue to all the individuals spotlighted in our #FeministFriday posts this year on our Instagram account: *@hoochiefeminist*

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The cover art is adapted from *Self-portrait at the easel* (1556) by Sofonisba Anguissola (1535–1625) and *Stripper Dreams* by Sal Daña. Endpaper art by Cat Dossett. Doodles throughout the issue by Anto Rondón and Cat Dossett.

Connect with us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram as *@hoochiefeminist*.

The editors welcome submissions, creative or critical, which pertain to women's studies, feminism, or gender. For complete submissions guidelines, please visit our website, *blogs.bu.edu/hoochie*.

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Editor's Note

In the past year and a half, I have spent a lot of time wondering what it is to be a good human being. In pondering about the question, I think I've got the beginning of an answer: It's about our values and principles—respect, equality, empathy, honesty, and love. These are the values and principles I have learned to hold close to my heart. Along with my personal identity they make me the human being I am today.

And today, I am proud to be a Venezuelan woman, trying to be self-aware and conscious. I'm proud of how I try to read and learn every day, and seek out new heroes to follow and be inspired by. I'm proud to be a woman, too, of course, and proud to be a human being devoted to the defense and pursuit of those endeavors I have discovered have universal value. But particularly, I am proud to have been the head of the Hoochie Media Project this year.

It has been a privilege to work with this team of diverse and queer women to put together this platform for others to voice their thoughts, express their art, and share their stories. Dozens of contributors and staff gave something of their human selves to bring about this new issue of Hoochie Reader. The only thing I ask of you, is that you respect the value of that work and the principles behind it.

Allow me to send you off and into the following pages with a parting thought in my mother tongue: *Que esto ayude a alguien a entender que debemos ser y dejar ser, siendo en conjunto—*

"May this help someone understand we must be and let be, while being together."

Enjoy!

Anto Rondón
Editor-in-Chief

Brooke Toubeau, Quincy College

RED

She looks at me from the corner
on the floor.

Dark eyes with no reflection.

"Will I ever be beautiful?"
she asks without speaking.

She has no breath.
She has no tongue.

Her lips, unfinished.

I could make her beautiful
with just a few strokes

but my brush is dry
and I have no red.

It took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent.

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT

Fulsome Panegyric:

Queer Erasure in Shakespeare Scholarship

Cory Willingham, Boston University

William Shakespeare is one of the most widely-read and spoken-about literary figures of all time. He was a prolific playwright and poet. He was also queer. That, broadly, is the focus of this essay: Shakespeare's queerness. In making this argument, I am not breaking new ground. In fact, there are those in the queer scholarship community who would argue that I am beating a dead horse. While it is true that many have accepted Shakespeare's queerness in essays written specifically on that topic, a far greater number of writers have fallen prey to something which is passively harmful to the queer community, and which often goes unnoticed by those writers: heteronormativity. This essay, more narrowly, will focus on two common problems in interpretations of Shakespeare. The first is the blatant homophobia present in early conversation surrounding Shakespeare, which colored interpretations for centuries to come; the second is the modern conversation, which is often guilty of a passive but still harmful heteronormativity.

John Benson was a publisher in London from 1635 until his death in 1667. According to Plomer's *Dictionary*, he was "chiefly a publisher of ballads and broadsides" (Plomer). However, his most famous work is the edition of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* that he published in 1640. From a poetic perspective, this edition was, in a word, garbage. Benson rearranged the order of the sonnets and excised certain parts he deemed inappropriate or not artful. Keevak described his edition as "bowdlerized," meaning it has been harshly edited for "appropriateness" and that the editing made it worse overall (Keevak). More relevant to this essay, however, is not the skill with which he edited the poetic language, but the way he altered it to change

Shakespeare's original intent. Many of his sonnets—most of them, in fact—are addressed to a male subject. He speaks at lengths about the beauty of this subject, and, as I will explore later, makes some terribly unsubtle implications about his narrator's relationship with that subject. Essentially, the reader might easily argue that Shakespeare, or at least his narrator in the *Sonnets*, is queer. This was unacceptable to Benson, and must have seemed to be a mistake, seeing as he edited certain sections to change masculine pronouns to feminine ones (Keevak).

This wouldn't really be a problem if Benson was a "nobody" in the poetry community. Prior to his publication of the *Sonnets*, he was. Unfortunately for generations of queer readers, his edition of Shakespeare became widely famous. Keevak points out that his edition was the basis for all new versions of the work for a century and a half, and influenced every other edition published during that time (Keevak).

We may take solace in the knowledge, however, that Benson is not widely considered a modern authority on Shakespeare. In 1950, a scholar named Hallett Smith thoroughly discredited Benson in only four pages. Smith, who is himself an Elizabethan scholar, pointed out that Benson rearranged the sonnets, provided "jejune" titles, and even added pieces not written by Shakespeare to fill space (Smith). This, in addition to his bad editing and alteration of pronouns, should be enough for modern scholars to decide not to take him seriously. Smith goes further and reads the introduction to Benson's edition to see whether there is any merit in it. There is not. His famous phrase, which insists that there is no "cloudy stuff to puzzle the intellect" in the *Sonnets*, is both plagiarized and inaccurate. Although Benson's homophobia has clearly impacted most readers of the *Sonnets* for 150 years, we are fortunate that, today, he is something of a joke.

Two literary giants, Malone and Steevens, published an edition of the *Sonnets* with an attached commentary in 1790. In fact, they published a massive compilation of edited work which included Shakespeare's entire extant corpus. Their efforts were painstaking and should not be understated. Both men had a lot to say about the

Sonnets, and their edition, according to Keevak, was the first new edition of Shakespeare to have an impact rivaling that of Benson's (Keevak). The edition was technically Malone's, with Steevens invited to contribute, but Steevens made notes as frequently as Malone did. Generally speaking, Steevens played the villain to Malone's calm and collected attitude. Steevens' first comment on the *Sonnets* is a lengthy denunciation of the sonnet as a literary form, calling it "the contrivance of some literary Procrustes" (Steevens). Procrustes was a robber bandit who would kidnap people and strap them to an iron bed. If they were too tall, he'd cut their legs until they fit the length, and if they were too short, he'd stretch them until they fit the length (Lotha). The comparison is as clear as it is unflattering. But what do these men have to do with the conversation regarding Shakespeare's queerness?

Malone's and Steevens' work is still quoted today. The two men know a great deal about poetry, and add insightful commentary to many lines that helps elaborate on metrical and thematic choices. That said, Steevens is unapologetically vitriolic when it comes to Shakespeare's queerness. Oddly, he makes no effort to deny it. He says that it is impossible to read Sonnet 20, a "fulsome [panegyric], addressed to a male object, without an equal mixture of disgust and repulsion" (Steevens). Steevens' homophobia doesn't come in the form of queer erasure, but instead in that of vicious criticism. There is no question to him (or, really, to any serious reader) that some of the sonnets are queer. His admission does not excuse his homophobia. Malone directly responds to this comment, but his response is not entirely unproblematic: he defends Shakespeare, but only to insist that Shakespeare was definitely straight. He said that "such addresses to men, however indelicate, were customary in our author's time, and neither imported criminality nor were esteemed indecorous" (Steevens). Notably, this "defense" has been proven inaccurate—Stapleton, a later Shakespeare scholar, remarks that the words Shakespeare uses to describe the male subject are generally reserved for female love interests (Stapleton). Keevak remarks that this is one

of the first major appearances of the now-common "platonic love" defense, and I will examine the sonnet in question later in this work to provide an opinion of my own (Keevak). Thus, the first major edition of the *Sonnets* after Benson's irresponsibly homophobic version is written by two men, one who hates Shakespeare's queerness, and one who will go to great lengths to deny it.

After the editions of Benson and Malone/Steevens, editions of and commentaries on the *Sonnets* became much more frequent. I will break here to discuss another important contributor to the discussion of Shakespeare's queerness, George Chalmers. To understand Chalmers' perspective, one must first understand two things: the hysteria raised by the forgeries of William Henry of Ireland, and the rise of bardolatry. William Henry of Ireland was, bluntly, no one. He was an eighteen-year-old with no claim to fame. So, he decided to write several works and pass them off as Shakespearean texts which had been lost until he discovered and edited them. For months, these works were thought to be legitimate by the educated English community. Eventually, however, he was discovered, and much discourse was had on how so many intellectuals had been so thoroughly fooled by what now seemed to be an obvious forgery. Chalmers was one of those smart people thoroughly fooled (Keevak). Bardolatry is what it might sound like—idolizing the Bard, capital B. Laporte defined bardolatry rather succinctly as "the excesses of romantic and Victorian Shakespeare enthusiasm," with the key work being "excesses" (Laporte). People were desperate to idolize Shakespeare.

Chalmers, who had been shaken by the forgeries of William Henry, was driven by a need to prove that he still loved the real Shakespeare as much as he ever had. He wanted to defend Shakespeare against the terrible charge of queerness which had been levied against him by Steevens, and he wrote in direct response to the Malone/Steevens edition. His theory, which sounds absolutely preposterous to modern readers but which apparently held water to his contemporaries, was that Shakespeare's *Sonnets* were all addressed to Queen Elizabeth, and therefore couldn't have been evidence of queerness (Keevak). In

this way, Chalmers got his cake and ate it too: he could celebrate the *Sonnets* without any complicated homophobic explanations.

According to Chalmers' theory, Shakespeare uses coded language to refer to the queen, which, if taken at face value, appears to be homosexual. One of the phrases which Steevens found to be so disgustingly repulsive was "master mistress," found in the contentious Sonnet 20. For Chalmers, the explanation is obvious. Queen Elizabeth is, of course, Shakespeare's master, because she is his queen, but she is also the object of his love, his mistress. His defense of this argument is stretched and circular at best, and Keevak does his best to follow it. Chalmers argues that Shakespeare must be read in light of Spenser's poems, which were almost certainly addressed in part to Queen Elizabeth. He claims there is nothing to suggest that the sonnets are written to two different people (which is an absurd claim that Chalmers does not support) and that the only way one person can be both male and female is if they are the queen, because the queen also holds the title of prince. There is much to be said about the problem of this statement, but I have included it to show the extreme lengths to which people go to keep their idol a straight one. I also want to emphasize again that Chalmers was not a loon according to his contemporaries. His ideas were regarded with as much respect as were those of Malone and Steevens. Queer erasure and homophobia were the natural responses to Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.

The final older author I will examine in this essay is one who will probably be better-known to modern readers: Samuel Coleridge. Coleridge was a prolific commentator on Shakespeare—Leinwand points out that hundreds of pages of Coleridge's *Collected Works* are dedicated to his "notes, comments, reflections, marginalia, and letters on Shakespeare" (Leinwand). Of course, writing a lot on a topic does not necessarily make one an authority on it. Samuel Coleridge was an established and accomplished poet in his own right; we might expect to be able to trust him. This is why it is so very disappointing to read Coleridge's central tenet on studying the *Sonnets*: "The sonnets could only have come from a man deeply in love, and deeply in

love with a woman" (Coleridge). Thus, Coleridge returns to Malone's defense that the relationship with the male subject is platonic, while the relationship with the female subject is romantic.

Up to this point, we have seen arguments of all varieties to "rescue" Shakespeare from the charge of queerness. Benson simply changed pronouns to make his poorly-edited edition suit the norms of his time, thus erasing queer Shakespeare for 150 years; Steevens violently attacked Shakespeare for his apparent queerness, and Malone responded to this by insisting that any apparent queerness was in fact platonic love. Chalmers came out of left field by positing that the object of the *Sonnets* was in fact only one person, and that it was the Queen of England. Finally, Coleridge flatly stated that his romantic love was only for the female subject, not bothering to provide a nuanced argument to support that claim. Up to now, I have provided others' arguments without using any of my own. Allow me to examine Sonnet 20 and provide some examples of Shakespeare's obvious queerness.

Sonnet 20 is famous for its risqué nature. The subject of this sonnet is a male. The male has a woman's face, and a woman's gentle heart, but none of a woman's deceitful nature (Shakespeare's misogyny deserves to be discussed elsewhere). However, he is "a man in hue," meaning that he looks like, or at least has the color of, a man. This isn't a definite proclamation of gender, but it is one hint, and several others are provided. The subject was first created for a woman, which seems to imply that he is male, but the clincher comes in perhaps the most scandalous phrase: "Till Nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,/And *by addition* me of thee defeated,/by *adding one thing* to my purpose nothing./But since she *pricked the out for women's pleasure*…"(emphasis my own). Subtlety is not the watchword for Sonnet 20. The subject of the poem has the hue of a man, was created for woman, and was given one thing by nature for which another man might "have no use", and which might be described, crudely, as a "prick." This is the sonnet against which Steevens protested so violently, which Malone justified so hastily, and which

Chalmers focused on especially. This sonnet's second line includes the phrase "master mistress." Sonnet 20 is one of the most studied poems of Shakespeare's *Sonnets,* and is usually analyzed specifically to disprove Shakespeare's queerness–right in the epicenter of his queer poetry. It seems like everyone who reads this sonnet intuitively knows what Shakespeare means, and for that reason, many homophobic or heteronormative scholars have felt the need to "defend" the poet from accusations of queerness. Often, the very existence of those defenses serves to prove that Shakespeare's queerness is obvious for everyone to see.

Before moving on to modern literary critics, there are a few points which are prudent to address. The language of this essay is anachronistic; the ideas are not. In the 1600s, and indeed well into the 1900s, no one would have used words like "homophobic" or "heteronormative." Homophobic literary critics would have been "normal" critics, and "heteronormativity" would have been "normativity." That said, the lack of use of those terms does not negate their validity. The reason so many arguments exist surrounding the *Sonnets* is that literary critics did not want to admit that Shakespeare was queer. They were, in a word, homophobic. Homophobia surrounding Shakespeare still exists, but fortunately, many modern authors have written essays like this one. In fact, many authors have written full books on the subject. If I may recommend a work which was recommended to me by Professor Susanne Sreedhar of Boston University's Philosophy Department, "Shakequeer: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare" edited by Madhavi Menon. It is a wonderful edition of Shakespeare's corpus which notes, painstakingly, the influence of Shakespeare's queerness on his work.

To return to the matter at hand: while homophobia surrounding Shakespeare's *Sonnets* has faded, heteronormativity is still in full force. I will preface this short discussion by noting that it is not supported by empirical evidence, but by experience. I will not provide a list of names or cite sources to defend my claims as I have previously. I will instead recount my experience writing about Shakespeare's

queerness for a class I took in the fall of 2017. The class itself was perfectly fine; the professor was as inclusive as she could be, and my classmates were receptive to the idea that Shakespeare, or at least the narrator of his *Sonnets*, was queer. The problem arose during my research.

The vast majority of commentaries on Shakespeare that I found which were not directly related to the discussion of Shakespeare's queerness were heteronormative. The authors of these commentaries, presumably without thinking, referred to the male subject as Shakespeare's "male companion," and the female subject as his "lover." Time and time again I saw variations on these phrases—the authors, without malice, without intent, were making Shakespeare seem straight. They were negating his romantic relationship with the male subject of his sonnets, but I don't think they were actively homophobic; they were influenced by the heteronormativity which is in such force today. If a writer is straight, their basic assumption is that the person they are writing about, without overwhelming evidence to the contrary, is straight. I will admit that I've been influenced by heteronormativity as much as they have, and I'm bisexual. I assume that most people are straight, although that assumption is realistically baseless. I assume this because I see myself as abnormal. I am part of the queer community, a community which exists apart from the "main" community of people. I am, to my subconscious mind, one of the weird ones. This does not make me full of malice any more than it does those heteronormative commentators on Shakespeare, but heteronormativity is a genuine problem.

Young people growing up in a heteronormative world will often be confused by their sexuality, and they may, like me, grow up to consider themselves to be the "odd ones out." Heteronormative commentaries on Shakespeare are an excellent illustration of this problem. Growing up, I never read Shakespeare as a queer text; even when I realized that I was bisexual, rereading Shakespeare, I never considered his queerness until my freshman year of college. This is in large part because I never read any commentaries that suggest-

ed that Shakespeare was queer. Yes, once I began actively searching for queer commentaries I found them, but that's not the point—the point is that Shakespeare is, upon even a slightly close reading, so obviously queer, and everyone subconsciously ignores that, because it's not "normal." Homophobia is not the only mindset which is damaging to queers reading Shakespeare. Heteronormativity, a far wider problem today than homophobia, is also damaging.

To address a small point of miscellany here, the narrator of the *Sonnets* is not necessarily Shakespeare himself. Perhaps the narrator is some third party, not representative of Shakespeare. That said, I will note that for a straight man to write a queer narrator without any indication that the narrator was not himself would have been madness in Elizabethan England. In this time, queerness was avoided at all costs because it was, in Malone's words, "indecorous and criminal." I will also note that Shakespeare rather famously did not want the *Sonnets* published, and that they were only made famous after his death. This almost seems like Shakespeare had something to hide, which he feared the *Sonnets* would make public. While it is true that Shakespeare was not *necessarily* the narrator, it is likely that he was.

The point of this essay was to establish two ideas: first, that older critics and commentators have gone to extreme lengths, driven by their homophobia and their bardolatry, to erase Shakespeare's queerness, and second, that modern commentators, even in our more enlightened age, continue to subject Shakespeare to queer erasure through their passive heteronormativity. Fortunately, queer interpretations of Shakespeare, which I do believe must be correct interpretations of Shakespeare, are becoming more and more popular as time passes. People are becoming increasingly aware of the problematic nature of heteronormativity in literary criticism, and while we have yet eradicated neither homophobia nor heteronormativity, we come closer every year to giving Shakespeare the lofty title he so deserves: Queer Icon.

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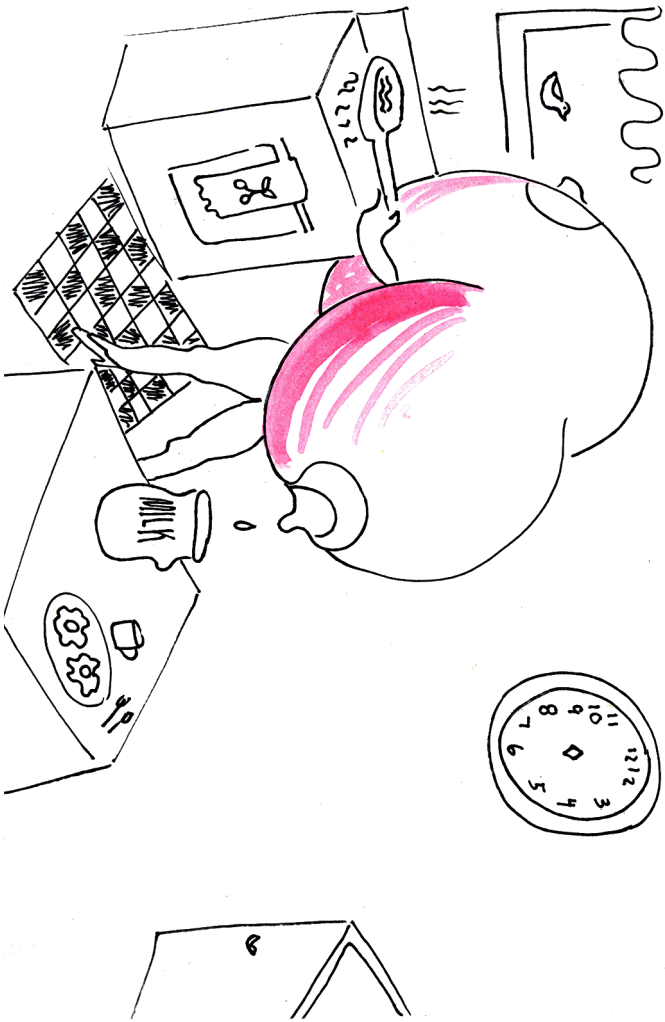


Breakfast Boobs // *sal daña*

Two Prose Poems

Dev Blair, Boston University

These two texts are centrally concerned with my experience as a queer, black, non-binary femme. In the first, *Curls*, I draw parallels between my hair's relationship to relaxers and my relationship to men, using the comparison to analyze the ways that I've been mistreated by the men in my life. While the terms "queer" and "non-binary" don't feature in the poem itself, the experiences I describe within are inextricably tied to those parts of my identity, by virtue of how these things influence which men I interact with and how I am seen by them.

In the second poem, *My Gender and Sexuality 1: An Intersectional Introduction (or DS101)*, I examine my relationship to the aforementioned labels I use to describe my experience of identity to others. In it, I take the stance that I am the only expert on my specific experience of life and I challenge the antiblackness I find to exist in the labels of queer and non-binary (specific to how these terms have been whitewashed).

Paired together, these poems tell a part of the story of a young femme wrestling with the ways in which they meet the world and the ways in which the world meets them.

[Content warning: for mentions of depression]

Curls

For a long time, I didn't quite understand the term "natural."

See, I knew that curls grew from my scalp naturally and I also understood that I could see my curls intertwine and loc beautifully—if I ever stop tryna cop Britney's '07 hairdo every time I have a breakdown.

But what I didn't get was how we could name our curls—something so deeply personal and meaningful—"natural," as if to make them sound normal, mundane, or palatable.

See, I don't want my curls to be something you can stomach, another vaguely ethnic dish for white eyes to consume.

My curls are something your combs cannot tame, your brushes cannot beat back, your razors cannot cut down.

My curls are twisted and kinky and they like to play rough.

Relaxers hide their faces in shame when they see my curls, gettin' clowned on in their workplaces for lack of game, their own failure to play aces, ultimately to blame for their inability to run bases and tame my militant curls.

Like men disappoint me, so too do relaxers disappoint my curls. Inviting them in with promises of beauty and a future, they leave them desolate and lifeless after extracting every ounce of magic and joy from their being. Slinking down the drain, they take my curls' hopes and dreams and parts of themselves with them.

Capitalizing on my curls' labor and my curls' abuse, relaxers are like

men to me, suitors that preach and preen over how faithful they'll be, only to treat our "unruliness" as a liability.

White cream slathered on black curls, like white men slobbering over black girls, suffocating them with their emotional unavailability, then leaving them a little more broken than they were found, even though it's been years since they were chained and bound to Eurocentricity's straight and narrow Middle Passage.

Postcolonial as in post relaxer as in post heart break post break up postmodernism, this is a poem posted like a notice on every door and Facebook wall saying that I'm better off without them. And so are my curls.

My beauty is achieved, not defaulted. My strength is earned, but not exalted unless it can be used to turn a profit.

My pretty smells of hard work and healthy routines learned from unhealthy habits and a history of hurt. My curls shine with a radiance not natural nor innate but learned from every trial that turned out to be a mistake. She must learn to love themself, because others don't care to take the time to learn how to love me.

My curls have got it on loc because when I unlocked my heart for you, instead of with it you ran away with the key and so now only rage spills out, with no kiss to fix it or stop it up.

With each beat of my thoroughly disappointed heart, the rage rushes to my ears, breaking every part of myself I curated like fine art. As I crumble into sadness, the blood pounds with the barking madness of hell hounds bounding after their-query for you: "did it feel good to waste my time?" Before the answer can be found, my innocence dies like the Virgin Hairy, killed by sounds in my head

of "you're undesirable," and "you'll never marry," and I am left limp and wet and barely recognizable.

Solange wrote a catchy song about it, so y'all get it already, right?

But see, you don't. Because my curls are not just the feelings I wear, but the product of the pain I bear and the parts of myself I refuse to share and the things that I talk about in prayer.

I am not natural. Neither are my curls. We are more than you could ever hope to call natural—after all, what is natural about a body ravaged by the politics of desirability?

See, love is a battlefield and my body is the site of war. Y'all come into my life, fuck shit up, then call me whore so now I can't sleep. I can't rest or lay down and neither can my curls, and girls, that's how we all got our razor-sharp edges-from pain so intense, we can't even weep. That's why I shave my head like I'm shearing a goddamn sheep, so if you want my curls, know that the price is steep. Don't hurt me so deep that I can't keep myself together.

If you can avoid that and ease my bleeding heart, help me heal from the times I fell apart, then and only then do you deserve to look at my curls.

My Gender and Sexuality 1:

An Intersectional Introduction or, *DS101*

Three white ladies once tried to teach me about gender and sexuality. That's the set up and the punch line.

Queer. Non-binary. Femme. Somehow, these three words are supposed to represent my whole experience, somehow, they can tell you what I've been through, how long I'll live, how likely I am to get HIV.

I storm out of the halls of sociological academia with a question: how can I find freedom within a label that wasn't created for someone like me? Can "queer," "non-binary," or "femme" describe what kind of person I'll be?

I say those three words, and y'all think that y'all know me, you've got all the stats on someone who just wants to be free.

White people have done something with language that I think is truly disgusting; they've denied us the space to create words that allow us to acknowledge our blackness alongside our sexual behavior or gender identity.

See, the biggest flaw of human language is that we dared to believe that organized sound could capture the smell and taste of my grandmother's gumbo on the second day.

Before we got colonized, I was that gumbo. I was food for the soul. I was magic, a healer, a prophet.

Asushunamir saved Ishtar, bitch, but y'all threw us in the ditch and when you heard our cries you decided our language was a glitch.

When you came you brought violence—your actions and your words. You cut out and discarded our tongues, shoved a White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant's nest down our throats with your English and told us what we could call ourselves.

Y'all labeled us black, poor, developing, and forgot to create words for the most magical among us. Or maybe you tried, but when you did, your dictionary caught fire as it experienced the rage of our ancestors.

See, the truth is we're too much for you. Too hard to define, too mystic to categorize. You reduced behavior to identity, and in our hearts our former selves cried. I'm the fucking Avatar. The last me on Earth.

I hate queer. I hate non-binary. I hate these terms painted with a white veneer that we call umbrellas but refuse to acknowledge me, standing here at an intersection steeped in years and years of history, tradition, and culture, all erased out of fear that you couldn't control them.

Nowadays, we talk about reclaiming my time, but how do I reclaim what was never mine?

How do I reconcile within me an identity that was never made for me?

There aren't even words for this feeling I'm experiencing, right now as I speak.

I'm jealous of indigenous people, native cultures. At least they can

remember their words, connect to their language, and know what to call themselves. Hijra, two-spirit, fa'afafine… People still try to call me a drag queen, okay?

When I speak of all these labels as things that I hate, it's because my black ass ain't wanna assimilate. In prayer, my ancestors are the ones I venerate, thanking them for the years of good gumbo I ate and the wealth of stories I must demonstrate to the world to keep the colonizer from obliterating my history.

I don't want to abolish labels coz I think that we're all the same, I just want to rid myself of the labels that reduce me to less than a name.

What's in a name? Queer is: "the Alyssa Edwards tongue pop," like hood girls didn't come up with that shit first. Like anything popped louder than when Ms. Marsha and her friends popped officers upside the head with bricks for trying to interfere with lives they never had any claim over.

Non-binary is: "this thin, white male just destroyed gender by wearing a one-inch boot heel!" Headlines screaming, loud as hell, only I can't hear that shit over the sounds of black, trans bodies being destroyed at the hands of our own lovers.

Dev Blair is: this. Dev Blair is: me.

I am Dev Blair, I will ascend to the nomenclature, a bold claim made true because people like me CREATE the culture.

My name will become synonymous with what you call queer, non-binary, femme, and black as hell too.

I'm not saying Sam Smith made me not non-binary, but how can

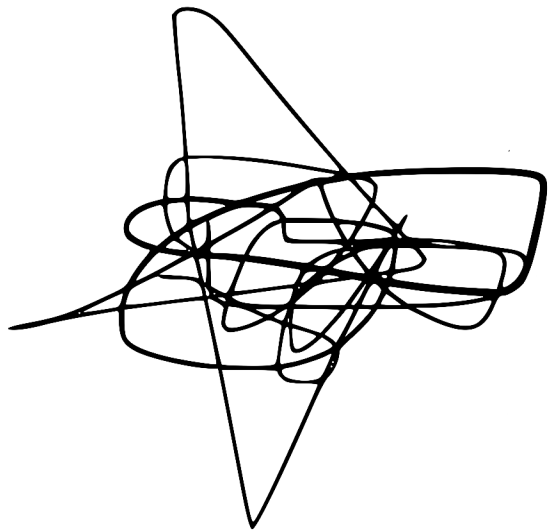
you look at their experience and use the same word to define mine?

I gotta postcolonial language barrier, goddamn. The concept of postcoloniality says I can't unstir the jam, and fam… I'm tired of pretending that's good enough.

Yeah, so, that gender and sexuality class? I dropped that shit after three weeks.

Feminism isn't about making women strong. Women are already strong. It's about changing the way the world perceives that strength.

G. D. ANDERSON



Untitled (S) I-V

18" x 24" van dyke brown prints, 2017

Ana Luisa Bernárdez-Notz, OCAD University

Throughout the history of art, and more specifically Western Art, men have been almost expected to admire, study and depict their spouses, lovers, models and "muses." Rarely do we encounter female counterparts who appraisingly look at men (or women).

It would've been impossible to make this series on my own. These photographs would not exist without the great influence, time and patience of Sebastián. Made with a pinhole camera, taking up to fifteen minutes to expose, and contact-printed with his help in times of great frustration, these images stand as a proof of his trust in what I do, his disposition, love, and faith in that we're creating images that matter. The process was and the result remains, essentially, a collaboration.

I

II

III

IV

V

Sebastián Rodríguez y Vasti

An Afterword by the Photographer's Model

It was not until I stood for the first time in front of these prints laid out in a hallway that I gained a specific, important and new understanding of what making images entails. I don't remember what I felt lying in front of the camera, so can I trust this face to remind me? What is this preservation, what are these fingers and eyes? How is this really me, and how can I be faced with myself like this?

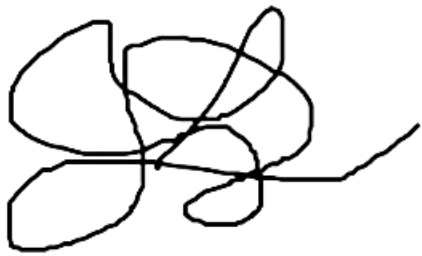
The distressing process of producing the final prints remains a psychological landmark in my memories of Ana. She has put me in this position on this paper. She's divided me like in no other photograph she's taken. I feel as though I am both here and there, truly there on the wall, and I can see myself absolved from development or advancement—as if forgiven, even if only in a way, by time.

The coatings given to that paper before exposing it are marks made by both, now indistinguishable from one another. I could not ask for anything more than to have shared with Ana the experience that resulted in these works. For now, I can only offer this brief text that both points to and exemplifies my perplexities.

Touched and indebted, I thank her.

There's something so special about a woman who dominates in a man's world. It takes a certain grace, strength, intelligence, fearlessness, and the nerve to never take no for an answer.

RIHANNA



Electric Ladies Will You Sleep?

Allie Caton, Boston University

The science fiction genre has been used for decades to explore ideas about the future, often with reimagined cultural constructions. A branch of the expansive science fiction realm called Afrofuturism emerged as a way to explore specifically black experiences and stories about the past, present, and future through a futuristic sci-fi lens. Taking advantage of the genre, singer Janelle Monáe created a music-based story about a society that flourishes on the oppression and enslavement of androids. Through constructing this musical novel, Monáe builds a thoughtful and multifaceted critique of the unjust social realities of marginalized identities. In her narrative, Monáe uses the figure of a cyborg that embodies and controls multiple marginalized identities to represent the imprisonment contingent to these identities. She goes on to explore how the android body can be used as a tool for rebellion, and highlights the connections and implications that this form of android rebellion has for real life.

It's impossible to fully grasp the depth of any individual Janelle Monáe song without considering her larger body of work. Monáe's entire musical career has been solely focused on her android story that spans across seven suites, broken up across three albums. The story centers around an android cloned after Monáe named Cindi Mayweather. She is an indentured android who falls in love with a human, and becomes aware of the oppression that she and other cyborgs receive at the hands of humans. She grows to become a savior, travelling through time to free androids from an evil human organization called The Great Divide. All the while, the Droid Control chases after her for her illegal behavior. The plot is convoluted and has many moving parts, but the overall utility of the story as a representation of black, marginalized identities and struggles is clear even

from a surface-level listen.

Historically, artists and creators have used cyborgs to represent a number of social issues—specifically those about race, gender, and sexuality. Donna Haraway presents the figure of the cyborg as it relates to intersections of gender, race, and sexuality in her 1984 article "Cyborg Manifesto." She argues that cyborgs "seem to have a natural feel for united front politics, but without the vanguard party. The main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism. But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins"(Haraway and Wolfe). It is their status as products of an oppressive society that makes cyborgs powerful tools for rebellion. Cindi Mayweather fully fits this description. She was made by a patriarchal, oppressive society, but rebelled against it in the name of justice for androids. In her article, "Posthuman Blackness and the Black Female Imagination," Kristen Lillvis describes Cindi as "a free android associated with the Droid Rebel Alliance that seeks to disrupt the futuristic human-android hierarchy that echoes contemporary race, gender, sexuality, and class conflicts" (Lillvis). This is the foundation of Monáe's story. In its simplest form, it is a futuristic retelling of black history and present as well as a predictive narrative of black future.

Monáe's Afrofuturistic story is a departure away from its male-centric Afrofuturism predecessors, in that her story centers on a female android who is—literally and metaphorically—a black woman. By doing this, Monáe positions the black woman as the key to true and complete freedom. In the song, "57821," a chorus of voices sings about Cindi, saying "You're the one, you're the one" and "May your light lead us all back to one/ Indivisible sum." They continue to sing "the sun has come," utilizing the double entendre "sun" and "son" so as to equate her to the biblical messiah. Lyrics which posit Cindi, a black android woman, as "the one" to save all androids and bridge the gaps of injustice support Kimberlé Crenshaw's arguments about intersectionality. Crenshaw writes that "neither Black liberationist

politics nor feminist theory can ignore the intersectional experiences of those whom the movements claim as their respective constituents" (Crenshaw). In centering a black woman in her story, Monáe exemplifies Crenshaw's argument that without specific consideration of black women, racial and sexual freedom cannot be fully achieved.

While the story is clearly about being "other," it goes a step further by portraying the realities of identities that are both black and other, namely being black and a woman. This hearkens back to Crenshaw's idea of intersectionality and the importance that it holds in activism and liberation movements. The focus on the black experience is apparent both lyrically and musically. Monáe's music doesn't fit into one genre; but rather it encompasses a number of different genres—sometimes multiple in a single song. While some songs incorporate rock and techno elements, the backbone of her music is a mixture of funk, R&B, jazz, soul, and rap. No song better exemplifies this than "Tightrope," where Monáe artfully mixes together hip-hop, funk, and a bit of jazz. As a musical story, the music is the most vital and important part of the narrative, and Monáe indisputably focuses on black culture. By relying heavily on these historically black genres of music, Monáe establishes a musical base that relies on black culture to create the foundation for the narrative.

The substantial use of all of these historically black genres (R&B, rap, hip-hop, funk, soul) goes hand in hand with lyrics that tell of the experiences of black people. However, the lyrics further expand the story to include all other marginalized identities as well. One of the earliest songs on the Metropolis album, "Many Moons," has an entire section where Monáe reads off a laundry list of labels, stereotypes, and events. A handful of the words recited include "civil rights," "civil war," "hoodrat," "broad nose," "HIV," "misfit," "tomboy," and "Jim Crow" (Monáe "Many Moons"). Right off the bat, the song lets listeners know that this story isn't going to be about just being black, but it's about being black and gay, or a woman, or any other form of "other." The song "Q.U.E.E.N." is drenched in rhetoric that reflects the experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community with lyrics

like "Am I a freak because I love watching Mary?" and "Is it weird to like the way she wear her tights?" Monáe uses the character "Mary" to signify sexuality and sexual experience throughout the narrative. By naming her here, Monáe makes a direct reference to same-gender attraction and exploration. So, while the base and focus of the story is about black identities, the lyrics offer Monáe a way to expand the narrative to include many other experiences and their intersections.

Though the saga seeks to represent every kind of "other," there is a clear emphasis on the experiences of black women. Some of the most powerful lyrics come from a song titled "Locked Inside" where Monáe sings, "[S]he's quick to fight for her man but not her rights/ even though it's 3005" and "The color black means it's time to die/and nobody questions why"(Monáe "Locked Inside"). These provoking lyrics about being black and being a woman are littered throughout the entire saga—so much so that it's impossible to view the saga as anything other than a story heavily focused on black women. While lyrics about gender and sexuality, like "Some say she can do all the things a man can do….We say a woman came to change the face of each and every room,"(Monáe "Ghetto Woman") and "You got to wake up Mary/You've got the right to choose," (Monáe "Sally Ride") can be taken in isolation, their existence in the full context of a story analogous to the black experience makes it impossible to consider them without the intersection of race in mind.

Because the saga focuses on black women, Monáe's use of a cyborg narrative is poignant. As Haraway explains, "'Women of colour' might be understood as a cyborg identity, a potent subjectivity synthesized from fusions of outsider identities" (Haraway and Wolfe). Whether Monáe is singing about sexuality or gender, all of these identities are "synthesized" with the black identity to create a story reflective of black people with doubly marginalized identities. As a cyborg, Cindi and all other androids are excluded from the group of biological beings that humans belong to, and therefore are "othered" from the notion of the human organic. They are created from mechanics and technology, not from biological parts. They are essen-

tially a product for human consumption. In the song "Violet Stars Happy Hunting," Monáe/Cindi, sings, "I'm a product of metal/ I'm a product of metal/ I'm a product of the man." In a physical sense, the androids are created by their human maker in order to inhabit certain identities like being a black woman. The android's identities do not arise as a chance result of being born black or a woman, but rather as a deliberate decision on the part of their maker; they are created for the purpose of consumerism and marginalization.

Through this "otherness," the artificiality of their creation liberates androids from natural, biological boundaries, but also serves as a prison made up of identities equally as artificial as their bodies. To contrast the artificiality of the android body, Monáe makes many references to God and other creationist themes. The contrast is most clear in the song "Q.U.E.E.N." when she sings "Hey sister am I good enough for your heaven," and "Will He approve the way I'm made? Or should I reprogram, deprogram, and get down?" This lyric brings up the idea that identity is constructed; that it was once programmed and can be reprogrammed or even deprogrammed. There is a clear link between this lyric and Haraway's conception of the figure of the cyborg as "a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self" (Haraway and Wolfe). Haraway's argument also reinforces the use of the cyborg as a means of collecting multiple identities within one figure. A metaphor for reclaiming and redefining one's own marginalization in attempt to break free of cultural stereotypes is exemplified by the android's ability to reprogram themselves. However, this lyric also brings up an interesting notion of android power over selfhood that lends to a metaphor about the artificiality of identity itself. If the android's identity can be willfully manipulated—or even eliminated—then the idea that identity is something that is inextricably tied to oneself is shattered.

The idea of using the cyborg body to host and maintain multiple identities first becomes a clear theme in "The ArchAndroid" album. The first suite in "The ArchAndroid" denotes a shift in lyrical rhetoric from songs about outright war, to a narrative arc that

is less concerned with outward war and more focused on an inner one. Monáe moves from songs like "Dance or Die," where she sings "War is in the streets and it's an eye for an eye," to the song "Cold War," which is more concerned with the struggle of identity maintenance. In "Now We Want Our Funk Cut: Janelle Monáe's Neo-Afrofuturism," English and Kim describe the threat that exists to android identity. They write, "Cindi Mayweather... similarly combines the notion of freedom achieved through the technological with the notion of robot as the ultimate, malleable 'other,' perpetually subject to the domination and fetishization within a commodity culture and to reinsertion into familiar social categories and identities" (English and Kim). This perfectly sums up the dichotomy that Monáe is portraying through her androids: that they offer a vessel for multiple marginalized identities to exist, but also act as type of imprisonment that demands complicity and normativity within a commodified and stereotype-heavy culture. By thinking of the threat in these terms, identity maintenance becomes necessary. In "Cold War," Monáe sings, "I'm trying to find my peace/ I was made to believe there's something wrong with me, and it hurts my heart/ Lord have mercy ain't it plain to see/ This is a cold war" (Monáe "Cold War"). Here she is clearly presenting the threats of belittlement, degradation, and a culture that promotes minority self-hate. The premise of the song "Tightrope" (Monáe "Tightrope") is about maintaining balance in all areas of life, including one's view of self. On the one hand, Monáe describes an outright fight for freedom and liberation, but on the other hand she describes the struggle to maintain one's sense of self within a culture that continually sets out to define one's identity for them.

Circling back to the physical war for liberation, Monáe is careful to not incite actual violence as a means of resistance. There are lyrics that, at first listen, do sound violent and aggressive, but it is clear from the actual lyrics that the only means of "fighting" that Monáe demonstrates is dancing. A great example of this exists in "Dance or Die" as referenced earlier. Lyrics like "Run on for your life or you can dance you can die" and "There's a war in all the streets and yes

the freaks must dance or die!" paint a picture of an actual, physical war, but the only means of fighting is dancing. In Monáe's war, it's not fight or flight; it's fight or dance. This theme of resistant dancing is found throughout the entire saga and in the visuals. In a short memo video, the Droid Control gives an update on their search for Cindi and her continued "violations of protocol." The Droid Control creates a simulation of her illegal actions which looks a lot like dancing. Upon their discovery of Cindi's continued dancing, the "arrest of Mayweather is now [their] highest priority" (Monáe "Cindi"). Through these visuals and lyrics, Monáe portrays dancing as the most threatening act against those in power, which has incredible metaphorical implications.

Dancing is one of the most fully embodied forms of expression that exists. Few other acts use the entire body to express emotion, feeling, or meaning in the way that dancing does. By using dance as a means for resistance and liberation, the androids set out to reclaim their black bodies from a culture that creates, uses, and views them as commodities—a notion that holds true in real life examinations of black female bodies as well. Akeia Benard analyzes the popular view of black female bodies in her article "Colonizing Black Female Bodies Within Patriarchal Capitalism," by explaining that the "colonization and propagandizing of Black eroticism of Black female sexuality" plays the dominating role in defining "Black femaleness" (Benard). Thinking about the ways in which black female bodies are commodified in the mass media, the porn industry, the news media, and any other product of society that involves the viewing of black bodies, it makes sense that Monáe used something as bodily as dancing to be her main form of "violence" against oppression. Dancing is bodily and emotive, two things that are serious threats for institutions wishing to control people both physically and mentally.

Not only is dancing used to fight external battles, but to fight internal battles as well. The song "Dance Apocalyptic" is about continuing to dance in the face of hardships while also acting as a call-out song for "upper class problem" cultures. The song lists a number

of difficult, critical situations that are characteristic of lower-class life such as making enough money to pay rent, bland and unhealthy but affordable food, and even the apocalypse. As a response to all these situations, Cindi sings, "But I really really wanna thank you for dancing 'till the end, you found a way to break out," commemorating the oppressed for their continued positivity, drive, and existence in the face of their circumstance. She also tries to ensure continued action by singing, "But I need to know, if the world says it's time to go/ Tell me, will you freak out?" (Monáe "Dance"). In this line she urges the androids to continue dancing—even in the face of something as devastating as the apocalypse—as a means of sustaining their mental freedom until the very end.

By building this intricate, compelling narrative of identity expressed through technology, Monáe creates a real version of the musical weapons program that exists in her story. Throughout the arc of her three records, Monáe builds an entire story that tells of the enslavement, liberation, and leadership of androids through which she explores the realities of—and future possibilities for—real black women. The mere existence of these records and this story that so clearly echoes reality makes Monáe's music subversive by default. One can only hope that in the future, stories about actual black, human women can be told and be as accepted as the more popular form of storytelling that places black women as robots, aliens, or other forms of fantasy others. Stories like Monáe's that tell of black experiences through androids cultivate understanding through entertainment, which will hopefully pave the way for stories about real, human, black people to be equally palpable to the greater public. With this astonishing and uninhibited narrative, Monáe has created a musical weapon for black liberation and white education.

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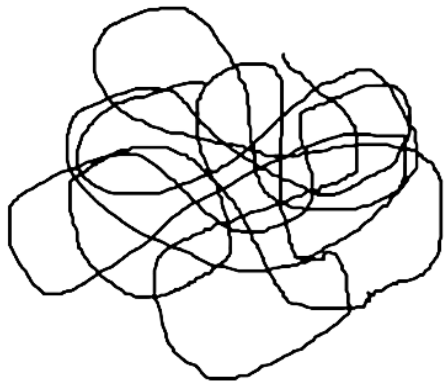
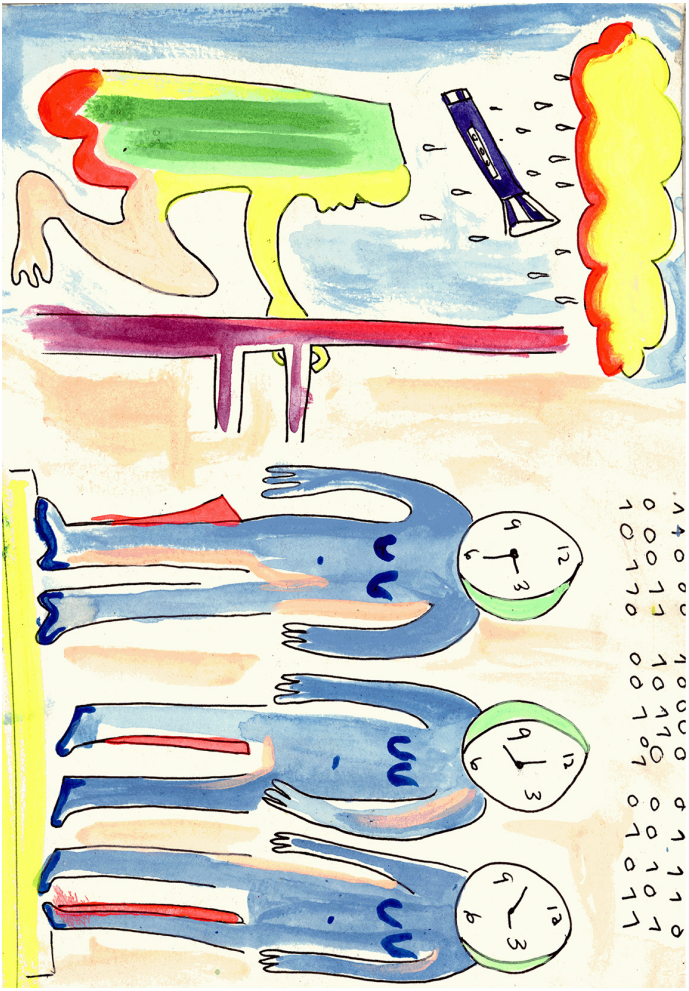
I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own.

AUDRE LORDE





Clock Face Fem at Auction // *sal daña*

Father's Day

Kylie McCuiston, Boston University

I have never known a father.

I have a biological father
Who is called by his first name
Anytime he is referred to in a conversation
And who I have met once at a chuck e cheese
For an hour or so.
I have a step father
Who is called "dad"
And has lived with me and my mother for 14 years
But he lost all implications of such a name
The first time he called my mother a crazy bitch
In front of me
(Which was quite a many years ago).
I have a grandfather
Who is called "pawpaw"
And claimed to want to provide for me
As a father should
But he moved away when I was 10
And did not return until he lost his memory.

These are the only fatherly figures in my life
One who I have never known
One who I have known all too well
And could speak volumes to the havoc
He has wrecked upon my mother
Through his words and actions
And one who made empty promises
Which I do not hold against him

For through my family's stories
He was just as bad to my grandmother
As my stepfather is to my mother
And so, I am grateful that I do not owe
Anything to so horrid a man.

I have never known a father.
But I have known a mother
Who I gladly call my mother
For she has earned that name
In every word and action
She has ever done.

Words have power. TV has power. My pen has power.

SHONDA RHIMES

"For There She Was":

Virginia Woolf's Reclamation and Remembrance of the "Lost Woman" and Gendered Madness through Trans-Epochal Female Elegy

Annie Jonas, Boston University

With each passing epoch, ideas of women in literature have been poisoned by labels of "madness," a term that is used overwhelmingly by male writing and writers. "Madness" is a derogatory and weaponized term men use to literarily imprison women within roles of otherness. This labeling of women as mad or other I will refer to as "gendered madness," for madness becomes linked specifically with femaleness and femininity. The woman who is subjected to this gendered madness is the "lost woman"[1] or the so-called madwoman. She is lost within male-literary authority, hegemonic masculine culture, the traffic of literature, phallocentrism, and labeling. Virginia Woolf, a pioneer of literary modernism, writes *Mrs. Dalloway* as a trans-epochal female elegy for the lost woman. The term "trans-epochal" explains the labeling of women with each passing epoch; it emphasizes Woolf's position as a writer who is in direct conversation—and confrontation—with a literary past (specifically Victorian inheritance) that blatantly and repeatedly disparages femaleness. The term "female elegy" returns to the aforementioned idea of gender-specific targeting, as in the term gendered madness. Just as madness is gender-specific to femaleness and femininity, so is Woolf's elegy. But unlike gendered madness, which demonizes the category of "women," female elegy uplifts women.

Through the writing of elegy, Woolf is protesting against the history she inherits as a woman and as a writer within a political and

1 The term "lost woman" is one of my own creation and is inspired by the recurrent phrase "for there she was" in *Mrs. Dalloway* (cf. pages 35, 76, 118, 142, and 194).

literary history that is male-dominated. She protests through stream of consciousness narrative mode, and the oftentimes ironic agency she gives Clarissa Dalloway. By writing an elegy, Woolf is reclaiming the lost woman and remembering her. Woolf overthrows gendered madness and male authority by rewriting literary tradition to include female presence, not as madwomen, but instead as formidable and commanding women.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, icons of feminist literary scholarship, examine in their book *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* the ways in which the trope of the madwoman stems from a Victorian society based in literary male chauvinism. Their scholarship explains the Victorian inheritance that Woolf bears and the past that Woolf actively protests against. Although *Mrs. Dalloway* does not take place in the Victorian era, Victorian attitudes of male literary authority—specifically phallocentrism—haunt both Clarissa and Woolf's present. This haunting, or "specter of the past" comes in the form of the juxtaposition between the Victorian "monster" and the "angel," two Victorian stock characters that epitomize gendered madness (Gilbert and Gubar 23). These stock characters were created by men and were used to create a literary gender hierarchy, where women became typecasts and subordinate to the men who wrote them into creation. Gilbert and Gubar analogize "the poet's pen" with a figurative penis in order to establish this typecasting as phallocentric (Gilbert and Gubar 4). Literature and writing, then, become phallocentric and male-dominated as the author becomes the "father" of his texts, and therefore, "the owner/possessor of the subjects of his text," who are women, in the case of the monster and the angel (Gilbert and Gubar 7).

Not only does Victorian writing create a gender hierarchy, but it also appreciates male sexuality while disparaging female sexuality. Male sexuality becomes "the assertive presence of literary power, [and] female sexuality, [then,] is associated with the absence of such power..." (Gilbert and Gubar 8). Female sexuality becomes a surro-

gate for male authors to pollute with sexually aggressive and sexually passive stock characters that represent polarized conceptions of femininity. On one side of the feminine spectrum lies the monster who is considered unfeminine, and therefore, unsuited to a gentle life of purity. On the other side, the angel serves as the ideal feminine. The monster serves as the antithesis, or double of the angel, whose "modesty, gracefulness, purity, delicacy, civility, compliancy, reticence, chastity, affability, [and] politeness..." makes her the eternal feminine through the male gaze (Gilbert and Gubar 23). Both stock characters are created by and for men to emphasize the gender hierarchy and their status as authoritarians of literary tradition. Thus, women are symbolically trafficked through literature and exchanged as "other" by this hegemonic masculine culture; they have neither the platform nor the pen to rewrite these structures.

The only viable option left for women to escape this trafficking and literary imprisonment is through the very stereotypes through which they are subjugated. The monster holds an intimidation over men as "other," gaining—ironically, but valuably—an authority and an attempt at the pen, at rewriting her identity. She uses her madness against the very system that defined her as so. It is this technique of using madness against the systems of female oppression which Virginia Woolf uses to revolutionize the novel and redefine it as a trans-epochal female elegy, a haunting of Victorian gendered madness into postwar modernism. The "specter" that haunts Woolf as she writes, and Clarissa as she lives, is a combination of the perpetrator and the perpetrated of Victorian society. Male-literary authority and phallocentrism (the perpetrator) oversee *Mrs. Dalloway* in more ways than one—most notably in Clarissa's representation as "the perfect hostess," a snob, and an obedient housewife, the angel—but beneath the mundanity of the party preparations and the happy June day screams the subjugated Victorian woman (the perpetrated), the monster and the angel interjecting "normalcy" through gendered madness, creating the "uncanny," or "unheimlich" *(MD 7)*. Peter, who labels Clarissa as "the perfect hostess" plays an interesting role,

where he perpetuates these accusations of a Victorian madwoman, but at the same time, he wants Clarissa to break free from said stereotypes. He is ambiguous, not entirely entrapped by the Victorian prejudice that pervades his world, but still an active member within it. He recognizes that "she ha[s] a perfectly clear notion of what she want[s]" and that even "with that extraordinary gift, that woman's gift, of making a world of her own wherever she happened to be," there "was [this] devilish part of her—this... impenetrability" (60-76). To Peter, she is both the angel and the monster. Woolf refers back to the Victorian era not only to create discontinuous and fragmented time, but also because she lived it herself. At the end of the Victorian era in 1901, Woolf was nineteen years old and in the thralls of womanhood. We can only imagine that Woolf would find it personally offensive not only for madness to become a literary phenomenon, but for femininity, female sexuality, and womanhood to be in the hands of phallocentrism and despotic masculinity that pillage their identity, and substitute them with fallacy.

The perpetuator of this phallocentrism and despotic masculinity is none other than Sigmund Freud, who in 1905 published his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. In this essay, Freud constructs a link between sexuality—specifically female sexuality—and madness, explaining that under "normal" conditions, women should be attracted to men through the Oedipal complex. "Normal" conditions[2] refer to heterosexuality and phallocentrism, where the Oedipal complex determines masculinity, specifically the penis, as the center of development for both girls and boys. Deviation from this ascribed "normality," Freud denotes, is an act of "inversion," a "diseased" act whereby the woman is in opposition to phallocentrism. This "inversion" is later referred to as a kind of neurosis or perversion, madness. "Inversion" in women is especially vulnerable to abusive labeling by men as mad because it de-centralizes itself from the idea of heterosexuality and masculinity as the conventional, as the default. Thus, women

2 I am using Jahan Ramazni's quoted "normal" in order to distinguish it from Freud's unquoted normal.

undergo a much more vicious labeling process as "inverts" than men as "inverts," for women become forces that threaten and double the construction of masculine authority.

This idea of "diseased" action is paralleled in Freud's essay *Mourning and Melancholia*, written in 1914, in which he explains the clinical difference between the mourner and the melancholic. Melancholia and mourning interact in doubled ways, much like the monster and the angel; melancholia representing the diseased, unhealthy behavior, while mourning represents the conventional, accepted behavior. Melancholia manifests itself through the mourner's reluctance to move through the consolatory process—to leave the lost-object—twinning "inversion" in its rejection of the conventional (Freud 245). In order to understand *Mrs. Dalloway* as a novel that is a trans-epochal female elegy haunted by gendered madness, we must understand the link between Freud's theories on sexuality and melancholy. In both essays, Freud establishes a power dynamic between the conventional and the unconventional, where the unconventional is considered mad. Specifically, Freud establishes a *gendered* madness, where women, femininity, and female sexuality pose a threat to hegemonic masculinity and the phallocentrism built into literature and emphasized across epochs. Woolf responds to this misogyny written into literary tradition by writing a modern elegy, which is a trans-epochal female elegy. Woolf takes on the position of the Victorian monster (ready and willing to reclaim the pen), the "invert" of female sexuality (threatening Freudian phallocentrism), and the melancholic (refusing elegiac traditional form) in order to remember and reclaim the lost woman.

Woolf uses stream of consciousness to rewrite literary traditions of narrative mode, and in the process, she makes time schizophrenic or mad, placing gendered madness against itself. This style of narration weaves the characters in *Mrs. Dalloway* together, allowing an interconnectedness to form even if the characters themselves are physically disconnected from each other. This interconnectedness can disorient the reader, as the transition from character to char-

acter is very fluid and ambiguous. But it is this disorientation that makes this style of writing effective; through the confusion it instills in the reader, and the uncanny[3] connectedness between characters, the stream of consciousness style is a form of madness. A prime example of the fluidity of transition between characters' minds, and the madness that comes with it, occurs when Peter ruminates about Clarissa after visiting her:

> [Clarissa is] like a hostess who comes into her drawing-room on the very stroke of the hour and finds her guests there already. I am not late. No, it is precisely half-past eleven, she says. Yet, though she is perfectly right, her voice, being the voice of the hostess, is reluctant to inflict its individuality. Some grief for the past holds it back; some concern for the present. (49)

The transition from Peter's mind to Clarissa's comes at "I am not late," creating disjointed and mad time, where the narrator is describing Peter's thoughts, yet his thoughts become Clarissa's actions and voice. Peter's description, or labeling, of Clarissa as a hostess is significant in that it refers back to the idea of the Victorian angel who exists as an ideal created by and for men only. It only makes sense that Clarissa "is reluctant to inflict [her] individuality" because she becomes an apathetic character in masculine narration (Peter's narration), a mere figurine of Victorian femininity. The grief for the past that Clarissa experiences is the grief for the lost woman, for the Victorian monster who attempts at breaching the confines of subjugation. Clarissa feels a concern for the present because she is at odds with herself as an ideal of femininity, living up to expectation, and her suffocation under that ideal. Her voice is "reluctant to inflict its individuality" because she fears deviating from the conventionality, she fears the label of madwoman, of becoming the monster. Her

3 A reference to the Freudian term, "das unheimliche."

voice is also disabled because, as the angel, she cannot claim the pen of male authors, she cannot fight the despotism under which she is subjugated.

The irony of the aforementioned passage comes when we juxtapose Woolf's use of stream of consciousness with Clarissa's labeling. By pioneering this erratic style and narrative mode deviates from conventionality, Woolf herself becomes mad. She emancipates women from labels by becoming the label herself, seemingly accepting subjugation. This seems ironic, for it implies Woolf's acquiescence to hegemonic masculinity, which is counterintuitive to her goal to free women from gendered madness. But we must realize that Woolf is not submitting herself to this authority, but is instead, mourning for the lost woman. By becoming the label, Woolf is being melancholic, herself a diseased griever confronting conventionality, a mad elegist grieving for the mad. By becoming the very thing Clarissa fears, Woolf, like the Victorian monster, is using her madness against the very system that defined her as so. Woolf's melancholic mourning, then, makes her elegy—*Mrs. Dalloway*—melancholic as well. *Mrs. Dalloway* is a melancholic, modern elegy, and therefore is a way out of an impossible situation. The impossible situation being the way that femininity, femaleness, and womanhood is literally written into literary history as mad. By becoming mad, the novel is able to act in a radical way that allows for an ironic freedom, but a freedom nonetheless. The novel, as a melancholic, modern elegy, is expected to act in a radical way, and therefore, gains freedom from the despotic masculine structures through alienation and labeling by that very structure. *Mrs. Dalloway* the novel, Clarissa the character, and Woolf the author become the lost woman by taking on gendered madness, but they do not stay lost; they find themselves through the radically subversive tool that is stream of consciousness narrative and female agency, gaining a way out of the impossible situation that is the literary tradition of male appreciation and female devaluation.

Woolf's use of stream of consciousness narrative allows for female agency, which is also something that she instills in Clarissa,

but in contrasting ways. Gilbert and Gubar explain that "patriarchal mythology defines women as created by, from, and for men, the children of male brains, ribs, and ingenuity" (Gilbert and Gubar 12). By giving Clarissa the agency to "buy the flowers herself," Woolf is rebelling against this literary patriarchal structure, becoming her own creator, her own god, and allowing Clarissa to take the same power (*MD* 3). The imagery of Clarissa buying the flowers oddly reflects that of Eve eating from the tree of knowledge, taking a natural form—in Clarissa's case, flowers, in Eve's, an apple—and uses it as a conduit for female agency, a rebellion against patriarchal authority. Ironically, Clarissa takes her agency as the perfect hostess here, buying the flowers for her party, using her label to gain agency. This agency is reflected at the novel's close, but instead of gaining agency as angelic, she gains it as the monster. Peter stops, looks around in "extraordinary excitement" and asks himself, "What is this terror? What is this ecstasy?" (194). Peter responds to himself, "It is Clarissa... For there she was" (194). Clarissa is the terror and ecstasy, for she becomes a madwoman, monster-like, who takes authority, who is untouchable, who is literally unseen by Sally and Peter. Clarissa induces terror and ecstasy in Peter, just as the Victorian monster did to men. By stating "For there she was," Woolf is mourning Clarissa's otherness, remembering her as the lost woman; it expresses the ways that feminine presence takes up space, but only as a past happening (i.e. "there she *was*"), as a figurative death (194).

It is crucial to establish *Mrs. Dalloway* as a trans-epochal female elegy in order to remember and reclaim the lost woman, to recognize gendered madness, and to redefine labels. Woolf writes to mourn, but also to claim the pen and to change the male-dominated structures present in literary and clinical history. *Mrs. Dalloway* is a melancholic, modern elegy that Woolf uses as a radically subversive tool to undermine male-literary authority through her own radical subversiveness of formal techniques, such as stream of consciousness narrative mode and female agency. Her novel serves as a testament to female success and the ability to overcome. It is our duty as

readers to recognize, reclaim, and remember so that we may become like Woolf and "invent a new name" (Diary 34) for women in literature and female writers.

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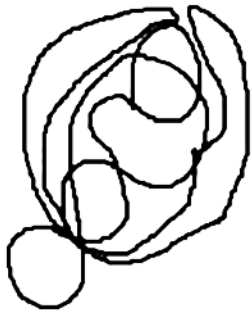
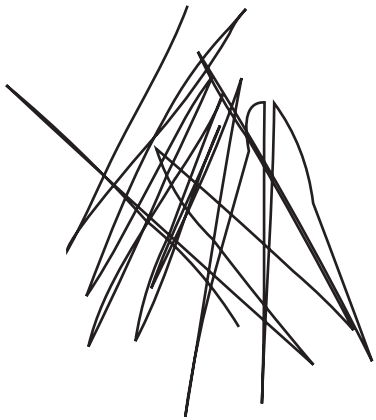
In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders.

SHERYL SANDBERG



Women belong in all places where decisions are being made... It shouldn't be that women are the exception.

RUTH BADER GINSBURG



Tinder: It's Complicated

Sophia Lipp, Boston University

> I've had sex with more than 20 guys just off of Tinder," says Tanya. She wants to sound proud, but you can feel the awkwardness in her voice as her fingers nervously brush long strands of hair. "I was really insecure in high school, so I came to college being like, '*Hey, this is my opportunity to put myself out there*.' And I do that through sex.

Tanya is just one member of the large (and growing) population of Boston University students who use Tinder to hook up. In 2012, two USC alumni launched an online dating app to take advantage of the culture of casual sex on their campus. As of 2016, Tinder boasts an estimated 50 million users—and half of them are undergraduates. Users swipe left or right over 1.8 billion times every day (Flynn). Analysts recently valued the app at $3.6 billion (Cao).

While millennials embrace this digital frontier of swiping and hooking up, traditionalists mock its superficial approach to dating. *The Evening Standard* summarized Tinder as the "dating app now synonymous with casual sex and unwanted pictures of penises" (Edwardes). Hayley Quinn, the nation's top sex columnist and guru, writes that the only thing Tinder provides is, "A DD-sized gap between fantasy and reality" (Quinn). Researchers claim it fuels sex addiction and promotes shallow, fleeting relationships, and emotional trauma (Penn).

"I've never been in a relationship, and I don't know if I really want to be," says Tanya. "Maybe it's because no guy that I've slept with has ever treated me like a real human being, so I don't trust someone enough to be in a relationship with them."

* * *

"[Tinder] is creating a problem for the feminists in the 1960s who centered their agenda on loosening sexual structures and limitations for women," writes Jason Wilick, a columnist for T*he American Interest*.

> We've created an environment where young people have virtually unrestricted access to [sex], yet somehow a sexual utopia has failed to arrive. Instead of creating a gender-blind paradise of sexual bliss, we seem to have constructed an arena of sexual competition that advantages men.

Historian Lonna Douglass disagrees. "The *real* sexual revolution was not about sex at all," she argues. "It was, and [still] is, about power...and challenging traditional economic and political roles in society" (Douglass).

A brief look into the 1960s can pinpoint two revolutionary Supreme Court cases that do just that: *Griswold v. Connecticut* and *Eisenstadt v. Baird*. Both cases dealt with the use and distribution of contraceptives, which was considered not only illegal, but a felony.

Griswold v. Connecticut was an extremely controversial case, as it dealt with what is still a controversial organization: Planned Parenthood. To summarize, the Executive Director of Planned Parenthood (Griswold) was brought to court by the State of Connecticut under the accusations of illegal counseling and distribution of contraceptives to a married couple. Ultimately, the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution guarantees a right of privacy to its citizens, Griswold was ruled not guilty as the sexual choices made by that couple were not suspect to government interference (McBride).

Eisenstadt v. Baird, however, brings it a little closer to home—in fact, it brings it right back to Boston University. The year was 1972, and William Baird, a BU sociology professor, had just given a speech about overpopulation and birth control. A female student walked up to him at the front of the classroom once the lecture had ended, and after some discussion, he gave her contraceptive vaginal foam. Baird was arrested later that day by the state of Massachusetts for

committing a heinous crime—distributing contraception to an unmarried person.

Baird was ruled not guilty, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was charged with a violation of the Equal Protection Clause, with the Supreme Court stating that the law prohibiting contraception distribution to unmarried and not married persons was unconstitutional (Chicago-Kent). But still, conservatives fought (and continue to fight) against the illegalization of these sexual freedoms.

"The sexual revolution began with the transformation of society... and the [freedom of] choice," states Douglass. "But this revolution has still clearly not gone far enough."

* * *

It's February 3rd, 2016. There are still protests going on outside the Planned Parenthood next to the BU campus on Commonwealth Avenue. There are signs with dead fetuses on them, with big, black bloodied letters spelling out, "STOP ABORTION," "CHILDREN ARE THE FUTURE," and "PLANNED PARENTHOOD IS SATAN." These protests have been raging in Boston since the seventies.

* * *

"One thing that sets BU apart from a lot of other college campuses in general is that we have a Center for Gender, Sexuality and Activism that provides condoms and lube for students. That way, when students are like, '*Oh, shit, I just scheduled a date for tomorrow and I have zero things*,' they can stop by here, grab a condom, and make [that date] happen safely," says an event coordinator for the CGSA, Melanie, with a laugh. "We get it. We're a group for the students, by the students."

After a brief discussion about the center's mission (which is to provide a voice and support for any type of marginalized student), Melanie coyly admits that she also uses Tinder.

"As a Tinder user, I have a really fun time with it," She explains. "I really enjoy meeting new people and sometimes getting coffee, and it's just a bonus if we hook up afterwards. I'm just a really shy person and Tinder allows me to feel more open and let it all out."

"Although I've had some bad experiences with it, the good experiences outweigh the bad ones. There *are* people out there who understand boundaries and they're totally cool. I really like having sex when it's consensual, and I'm not hurt by it, I'm empowered by it."

* * *

"Sometimes it hurts," says Tanya. This is two weeks after the first interview. "But I am very realistic about my whole situation. I don't expect anything from every new guy I sleep with. I don't even see the purpose of saving these people's numbers in my phone sometimes. I used to be someone who had a lot of really big crushes, but I was just incredibly insecure. I still am, and I'm scared of, like, literally everything...but mostly of getting hurt. I'm scared of getting hurt."

"My motto is 'just live life.' And things like Tinder can be really uncomfortable sometimes, because it's so hard not to think constantly about what everyone else thinks of you for sleeping around, but now it's just a thing I do." Tanya is staring directly ahead, avoiding eye contact. "I have to do my own thing or I don't know if I'll ever be able to get over all of this."

* * *

The 'Allston Crawl' is what BU students call party hunting. Allston is a Boston neighborhood that is considered to be the school's 'frat row.' These houses belong to frats, sports teams, and upperclassmen who throw parties every weekend. And unless you're invited to one directly, you have to go from house to house and hope that someone eventually lets you in.

"I think it's crazy that girls have to subject themselves to that bull-

shit," says one male BU student about the 'Crawl.' "I mean, it's your [frat] house, your rules, but it's ridiculous what you have to do to get into parties... so stupid."

"It's so much easier to be a girl and get into parties here. If I want to go to a party I have to bring ten girls with me and even then I still might not get in," he explains. "And the girls have to be freezing cold in short skirts and revealing tops to get in anyway. It's pretty amazing that they have to put themselves through that just to get into a mediocre party."

The student shrugs his shoulders. "Honestly, I kind of think the whole thing is very misogynistic. They are literally objectifying these women. But I get why they do it, and I would probably do the same thing. And that's that."

* * *

"I speak from the voice of my generation, an older generation, so certainly I have concerns for the students that I meet and talk to," says Boston University professor of psychology and clinician, Anne Gehrenbeck-Shim. "I think that things like Tinder capitalize so much on one form of connection to the exclusion of all the other forms of connections. You're putting a particular side of yourself out there for the world to see, but it then excludes or downplays other forms of your personality that are just as valuable. For example, you are increasing your degree of sexual intimacy with others, but are simultaneously decreasing your degree of emotional, mental, and intellectual intimacy. There may be aspects of this that are liberating, that allow people to kind of discover new parts of themselves. But when it comes to really developing meaningful relationships, I think that it's false advertising. It doesn't allow for that multilayer, complex level of understanding yourself and someone else. It just doesn't. I'm not gonna say don't do it, but I think people need to go into [hookup culture] understanding what it has the potential to exclude."

> One of the most complex needs that people strive for in life is belongingness. We all want to know that there are people out there that care about us. When we're at home, it's our family that cares about us like that. And when you get to college, you look to recreate that, and perhaps even the degree to which you wish to have that belongingness increases. It makes sense that [undergraduates] would be more likely to fall into this hook up culture, especially as it becomes more mainstream—it's because they're looking for something to turn to.

In a study published in *The Journal of Sex Research* titled "Hooking Up and Psychological Well-Being in College Students," Zhana Vrangalova suggest that both men and women are at risk of negative psychological effects from hooking up (Vrangalova). She notes, "Attachment theorists have argued that humans evolved primarily for long-term mating and that the desire for short-term mating (casual sex) may result from insecure attachments, such as low self-worth or emotional instability. Scholars, health professionals and the media have all warned against its detrimental effects on mental health."

While the negative correlation between casual sex and well-being has not been completely formulated, Vrangalova notes some potential explanations, including, "social stigma from hooking up, less enjoyment and more regret than romantic sex, excessive substance abuse, sexual health problems, and failure to satisfy essential needs for lasting interpersonal connection, or dissolution of the neurochemical and experimental bonds that even brief sexual contact can create."

* * *

"[Tinder] was an opportunity to do my own thing, and it's a thing I love doing and I do it frequently. Plus, a lot of cool things happen through Tinder," says Tanya with a smirk. "For example, this guy that

I had sex with last week is on the Harvard hockey team, and he asked to be on my rotation schedule of guys that I sleep with. I count that as a really big personal win."

"It's very clear that I use this app to have sex with people. People claim that they have this app to just meet new people but, like, no. Everyone goes on this app to hook up. And sometimes when I outrightly say to someone, '*I want to have sex with you*,' I think they are confused by my straightforwardness. But I'm not here to make friends or bonds, I just don't care for that bullshit. This app is all about pairing up two individuals that are mutually attracted to each other, and nothing more. I'm not looking for anything more, and I don't want anything more."

* * *

In September of 2015, *Vanity Fair* released an article titled "Tinder: The Dating Apocalypse" that bashed the app and its users with vividly angry narratives about the superficial and misogynistic tendencies it encourages (Sales). Afterwards, the magazine was met with bitter responses from not only Tinder creators Sean Rad and Jonathan Badeen, but from thousands of furious Tinder users who claimed that there was much more to the app than what this article explored. Several publications released responses to *Vanity Fair* as well, including a *Washington Post* article written by Jon Birger, a social economics analyst (Birger).

"Hookup culture isn't the real problem facing singles today," writes Birger. "It's math." To simplify, Birger argues that hookup culture and Tinder prevail today because of shifting gender demographics. Assuming a popular city location with a multitude of jobs, universities, media, etc., there will be more women than men because of increasing college graduation rates of females, decreasing college graduation rates of males, and as a result, an overall increase of the female population.

> These demographics represent the true dating apocalypse, as stacks of social science show how dating and mating behavior is influenced by prevailing sex ratios. When there are plenty of marriageable men, dating culture emphasizes courtship and romance, and men generally must earn more to attract a wife. But when gender ratios skew toward women, as they do today among college grads, the dating culture becomes more sexualized. These add up to a sexual nirvana for heterosexual men, but... a demographic timebomb for heterosexual women.

The New York Times also released a direct response to VF that included anecdotes from Tinder users who found their lifetime partners and spouses with the help of the app (Foster). One Tinder user even decided to propose to his now-wife using the messenger in Tinder.

"I think Tinder is what you make of it," says one interviewee from the article. "I was embarrassed by how we met at first and didn't tell people, but now I see it as my civic duty to let people know [that my wife and I met on Tinder]" says another. "There's no shame."

* * *

Four weeks later in my last interview with Tanya, she sits down for coffee with a huge smile on her face. "So... I have a boyfriend."

"Last week, one of the guys I have been sleeping with very regularly asked me to be his girlfriend. I spent the night at his place a lot, and we do silly things like shop for groceries and do homework together. We were hanging out a lot, and he makes me feel so comfortable and confident, but I didn't want to get my hopes up by admitting that I liked him first," Tanya says. "He's so nice to me, and I told my family this past weekend which is so weird because I've never even had a boyfriend before. He is such an amazing, genuine human being."

"I didn't tell my family that we met on Tinder because I don't want anyone to think any less of the relationship. Obviously I don't think that, but I know the negative stigma surrounding Tinder, and I think it can be hard to understand how honesty can come from such a superficial site. But it did. I don't expect my parents to understand, we're just a really different generation.

"It's weird to think that I'm only having sex with one person now, but a really, really good weird. I wasn't expecting this transition of lifestyles to be easy, but it has been very smooth because I have become more confident as a person and am ready to feel these crazy emotions with another person.

"I love being able to say that I'm seeing someone.

"I am very happy."

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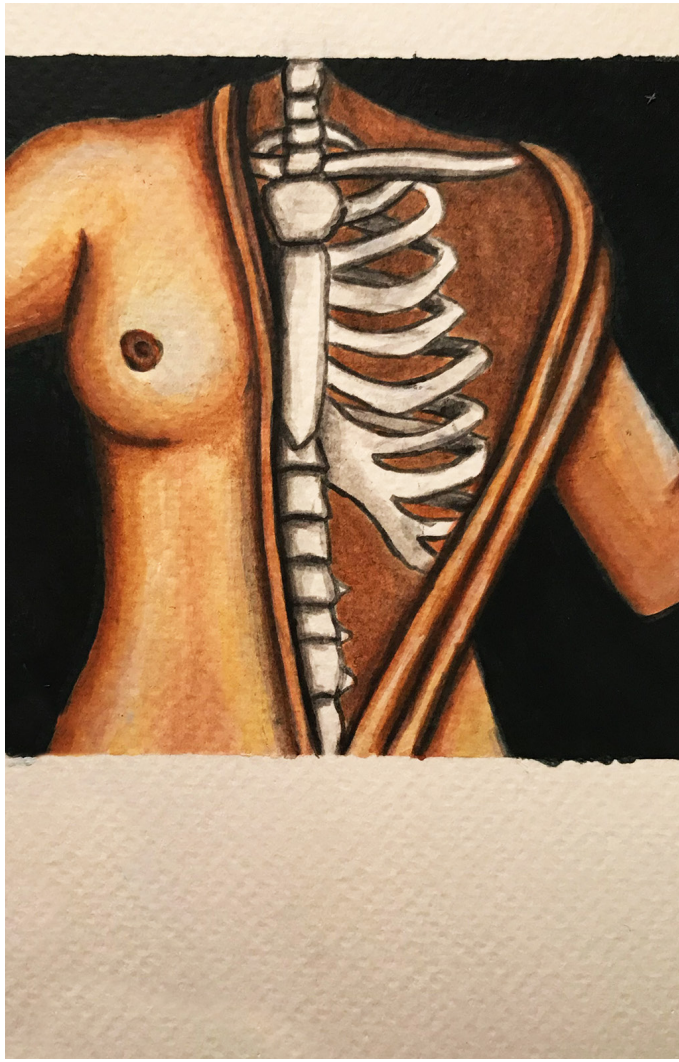


Unzipping, Freeing Rib Cages // *Isabel Torres Anguiano*

How It Feels to Open Up to Someone // *Isabel Torres Anguiano*

Me Too

Avery Addams, Southwestern University

These two works focus on my experiences with intersectionality and the various aspects of my life that affect how I enact with and engage in feminism. The pieces delve into themes of body and sex positivity, black bodied feminism, and intersections of queerness. In these pieces I specifically focused on the #MeToo movement and my experience as a black bodied queer woman in a predominantly white university in Texas.

There is a story that no one likes to tell. It starts with a young girl who grew up in a body large and largely undesired. She shied away from other girls with ballerina breasts and flat starlet tummies. She knew that they had postpubescent secrets of sacred sexual truths, but they belong in a world that's not hers. She grew in her own right, parallel to that life of forays in pheromone fueled trysts and founds love in herself. She told herself her beauty is inside and one day someone will see it shine.

Her story goes untold because it is as uncomfortable as the factors that caused it: that chubby-cheeked, tubby, tummy, geeky glasses girl grows up. She grows bigger, and smarter, but is still so painfully naïve, sheltered from even the subtlest of sexualities. She has been chaste all her life not by design, but merely through circumstance. When she eventually finds love she is hesitant, cautious, startled by burgeoning desires, ashamed of the body she has been taught is unlovable. Eager to have it loved anyway. And she finds it. And this should be the end, a happy coupling, love at long last, but resolution evades and journeys only begin.

The girl gets sick, and it becomes imperative to her health that

her body undergoes a change. She must shrink, slight herself into the world of those ballerina breasts and taut tummies. She has no choice.

And so the girl begins to shrink, a marvel before her own eyes, and finds herself in a new body. However, she never thought back to those days of untaught truths. Woefully unprepared and metamorphosed, she traveled into the world, thinking herself a woman, just as children do.

It began in such miniscule, haunting ways
Eyes lingered on her, demanding
In throngs of thrashing crowds, strangers' flesh pushed into hers,
Unwarranted and unappealing
This phenomenon unprecedented
Took a psychological toll, unpredicted

No one wanted to tell her:
"Your body is not your own
It is theirs now,
In compliance with their desire
, fair game"
It would have been crass
"You were unlovable before, undesirable, and so you were safe, as safe as you could have been"
Now you are proverbial fruit to be
picked and prodded and bitten into for
their delights.
You are among the multitudes of the objectified,
the silent and the stalked, a bearer of our communal freight

This body meant to be a boon
Became a burden so profound
And gave me shame that I had never known
Inquiring into these

advances on my agency
Shed shrewd light on the subject
They said:
“What did you expect?”
“You’ll have to be more careful, now”
“Isn’t this what you wanted?”

I left the group only for a second
Walked across the street
He grabbed me
Wrapped me in himself
Breath fowl with drink
Laughing in my ear
Lapping at my neck
Calling over friends
They crowded, closed-in

I was not me, but sport
Captured prey to be plundered
No longer existing within myself

Someone saw me,
Even as I was veiled
Entrenched in their hunt
Back to safety

Mi culpa
My fault
This new Body,
my Betrayer

I told few,
Bought pepper spray
Walked with my keys in tight clenched fists

And sealed it all away inside me
A piece of me
Taken with peace of mind
Finally offered back
In the last place expected
"Me Too"
You're not alone
It came from pain
Pain that we shared
Hurt I ached to think they felt

I told them my story
And in that ephemeral sphere
I felt invisible arms embrace me
And "me" became "we"

We who love our bodies
And know their powers
Who see beauty in our sex
And marvel at our giving

We who proudly share
And cast off calls for shame

I never knew his name
Or saw him again
But if I did I would say
For every Me there is a you
And all of you should know
That We are not afraid
To stand together
To stand against
To stand

Beat

In troubling days of tumultuous times we so easily lose ourselves
Turn our bodies graveside and forget our aspirations, forgo our dreams
And I get lost in thoughts so loud so unordered
That steps must be taken to hone the reigns
And in these times I tell myself to stop, take a beat, to breathe
And yet, sometimes the vines
Of unwanted affirmations creep in.
Stop
Beat
Breathe
The revolution will not be televised
As insurrection is rarely profitable and never sane
So, we the people endure
And I carried the burden of your ballots
And feared ricocheting bullets
And lifelong friends shipped away
Sitting in shame of my pain
Too scared to agree that
yes;
I was melting
Like hopeless snow on scorched pavement
Stop
Beat
Breathe
Like those Poets so sweet
Who were Beat in the streets
Made to be stanzas in suffering
Spelt out in pentameter; of perseverance
Carved into the backs of buses
Like lessons were carved on ours
Did you read those bleeding lines?

Of this bleeding heart, affirmative action negro
Who let you touch her hair
While you catcalled her coffee countenance
And wrote essays on how you changed her brown life
Stop
Beat
Breathe

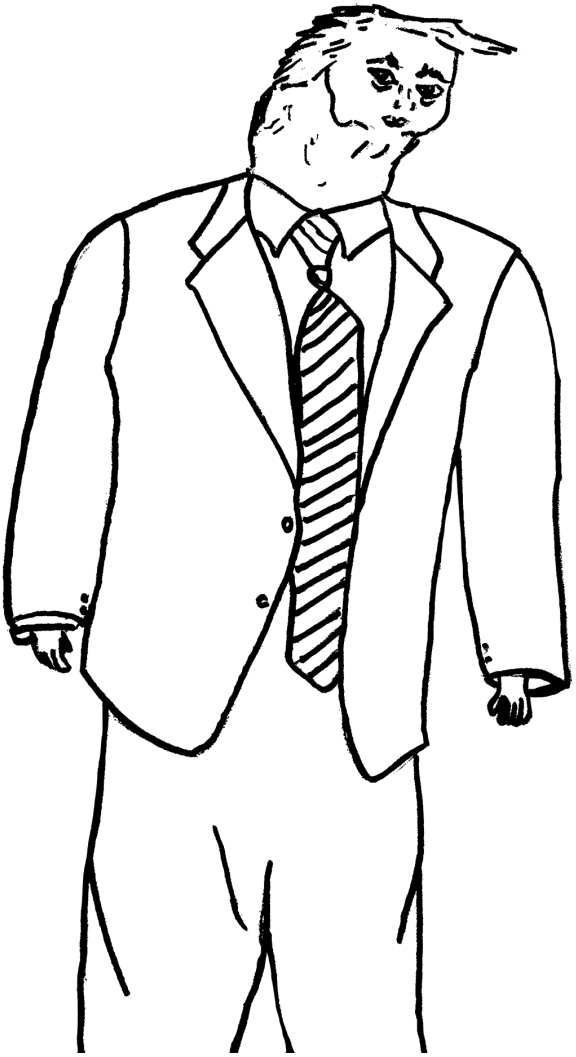
* * *

I am grateful even as I plot my escape
From this *Twilight Zone* of otherness
Where eyes peer like predators in the brush
Fascinated and feasting on strangeness
And yet still some taught me their ways
Crooned and caterwauled; reciprocating for mine
We became one in an unparalleled sense
And held each other as our own
Holding me to no shame
Gave me room to make my claims
And did not conjure, fretful memory
Of my hurried urge to flee
From Eatonville.
My cage, my haven, my home
Who some will say I cast in disgrace
Cast aside from my embrace
Traded for another place
That sweet bosom, always apart of me
Always close, yet imperatively held at a distance
For fear of suffocation, stagnation
Stop.
I wanted to be a beat poet.
To howl on St. Mark's Place
Not a broke back, beatdown drop in a sea of statistics

Perhaps I am both
Perhaps I could not survive it, the disappointment
Beat
So thinly veiled
"secret hero of these poems"
I wanted to see myself in Plath-born platitudes
Brontë willow, pale and pure as alabaster
Meeting death with head high on foggy mountain roads
Breathe
Instead I cried over blackberries
And yearned to kiss cool calm waters like Langston Hughes
Who sang the blues of a time before I was begotten
Stop
What is it to be more than who I am?
In a world where I cannot be myself
When myself is in too many categories to count
And I am compelled to keep them separate, sacred
"Ain't I a woman?"
Beat
I can feel Keats in my soul and Angelou in my sway
And all the while it was locked up;
Dickinson's chains
Echoing Byron's Pains
Will you turn the canon on these brick and mortar walls?
Breathe
Black like you
Just like me
Stop
Unstuck in time, out of sync
Who do I owe myself to?
In a world where there are those who seek to own me
Beat
And I lay awake asking
What it means to be free

In a world where freedom is for purchase
And over drafting isn't an option
For axioms of ideals so obscure
Because homes are taken without second thought
And the price of a family means being willing to watch them starve
Breathe

Yet still in the back of my mind a voice calls,
"I rise, I rise, I rise,"
And so I do
"born in Babylon both nonwhite and woman"
"What a piece of work"
"Fearfully and Wonderfully made"
"Etherized upon a table"
"On cloudless climes and starry skies"
"The truth is we were born"
"And what rough beast, its hour come round at last"



Cheese Doodle Man with the Tiny Hands // *Tiffany Makovic*

sal daña, New School University

Four Poems

the powdered cheese packet said

‘treasure cave’ on it
it was used as a raw material
to modify the flavor of
modernity

it burned a little
made my lip curl
the chubby cushion with
butt print was
a totally loyal archive

i pledged allegiance to it
a gas with no light
lemon lysol stinging a
toy anal atm
flicking balls
being linked away into
a puddle slop
toupee fashion in the 90’s
timber panel nostalgic
professionalism

some things just work out
crunchy in their oldness
snap happy pilly
tipping over old friends
people in ‘good’ dresses
clouds made from squares

love version 2.0

there was a twinkle in his eye
and larceny in my soul
I'd also like to engage in slipping
the Rolex
off of history

all quiet in the western union

she quickly removes
all mirrors from the mansion
places a rubber mask on her face

blasting 'mask off' by Future
she sits deeply in the bean bag of her contradictions
her insides begin to dance

to the bass, no treble
is this what it's all about?

i forget sometimes what tingles feel like
until someone tells me to smile
and i hold back
the urge to sock them in the face

divinity

a well-known rumor
every night
fallen
falls away

running out of breath
is a method
to explain exposing
of being exposed

a designed formality of removal
taking a seat
to domination
a sole standard of measurement
at capacity

the flattened-out function
calls itself alive

figures of nonbeing
blaming the free
blaming the ignorant
wrongly charged

affixed within the collection of
petrified/vivified
wax figurines whose
appeasement in melting anguish
spells out
mother/country

living folds

I have sketched a swift outline of the

two worlds
within/without
the veil

and thus have come to the central problem

not concerned with Truth
for we know
there is no such thing as Truth.

but peeling

peel one layer
remove a veil
and yet another exists,

there is no way to eradicate
the infinite layers that continue
to appear.

living folds

living

folded

a certain framework
belonging to
no one
you can go your own way

where the market economy has been fully developed–a (hu)man's activity becomes estranged from (her)himself

merry-go-round
  it turns

just like
any
post-1-click remorse
heaven
subject to
the
objectivity of
examining oppression
witness how
the commodity must go its own way
independently of (hu)man
heaven

you can go your own way

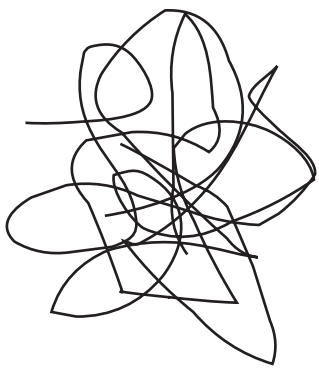
go your own way

you can call it

another lonely day

Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time. Write yourself. Your body must be heard.

HELENE CIXOUS



Vivian Li, University of Toronto

Our Vision of the Feminine

we've lost her
again.
        We see her hair rippling the air
like a splay of dead branches
        her face angled to the moon
in a flower, opening its petals
to the torrential rain,
        bruised arms with winter's breath
on its cheek—
rooted to a stem of ice,
        she freezes every morning
        before putting on
        her Cinderella shoes.

Why Transitioning Is Threatening

Molly Cardenas, Southwestern University

I'm a cis-gendered, Hispanic, queer woman with a major in English Literature and minors in Feminist Studies and Religious Studies. As such, I have limited personal experience with gender violence, gender discrimination, and/or gender dysphoria. However, two individuals who for several years have been, and who to this day continue to be, very close and inexpressibly important to me, came out later in their lives as trans and non-binary. Witnessing their transitions, difficulties, and pains through the lens of both an ally and a friend is largely what inspired and fueled my research. Again, I do not and cannot ever know or ever fully understand their trauma, nor do I seek to claim, disclose, or exploit it. I merely wish to raise awareness by lending another voice to the far too limited, though steadily growing, conversations regarding gender-queer individuals and their rights. It is with this intention, underscored my unabated belief in scholarship as an impactful form of activism, that I present my modest and by no means complete research.

[Content warning: for mentions of gender violence and gender discrimination.]

An individual's way of life becomes most threatened, ironically, when their identity is perceived as a threat to dominant cultural norms, or as "disrupting" the status quo. Because transgender identities "disrupt" hegemonic heteronormativity, mainstream American society often reacts in oppressive, harmful, or exploitative ways. Whether in schools or in prisons, in the media or in the healthcare system (or even in bathrooms) transgender people are punished, abused, and neglected as a result of being non-normative, and for "problematizing" societal definitions of normative identity. In many of the most public, vulnerable, and inescapable spaces—schools, restrooms, and prisons—all kinds of gender identities and people are exposed to harm; but this susceptibility is increasingly true for trans people, who "challenge" and "disrupt" conventional perceptions of gender. Therefore, because transgender identities call notions of gender into question—notions that previously stood as incontrovertible social and biological facts—transgender people frequently and tragically become the targets of frustration, aggression, and misunderstanding.

Discrimination against trans youth and against transgender faculty and staff members manifests itself in the public school system, which is often a socially volatile place where non-traditional gender identities—those that "threaten" binary, traditional identities—are exposed to harm. This harm is experienced at the physical, psychological, and political level, meaning that transgender individuals are punished within the public school systems by way of physical violence (in spaces such as bathrooms and locker rooms) as well as through political aggression, neglect, and psychological trauma.

Banned from using bathrooms or locker rooms that align with their gender identity, trans students are often forced to use bathrooms that, instead, reflect their "biological sex", in order to protect the right to privacy of other heteronormative students. Unfortunately, when subjected to conforming to a gender model that neither accommodates nor accounts for their gender identities, trans people become especially susceptible to violence and harm

in public education establishments. Research indicates that even in higher education, where there is an expected level of understanding and accommodation for transgender people, "transgender and gender nonconforming people often experience multiple forms of marginalization and interpersonal victimization, whether occurring at the micro, mezzo, or macro level on a campus" (Seelman, 620). Transgender people are deemed unacceptable and unfamiliar by their peers and by society at large, resulting in physical harm against them, threatening their peace of mind and sense of safety. Meanwhile, cisgender students' sense of safety is prioritized over that of transgender students', whereby the right to use school bathrooms according to gender identity (rather than to biological sex) is denied to transgender students on the basis of cisgender safety and comfort.

This type of discrimination is legally mandated, as "the courts find that Universities' policy of requiring students to use sex-segregated bathroom and locker room facilities based on students' natal or birth sex, rather than their gender identity, does not violate Title IX", due to the fact that Title IX "contains no explicit language unambiguously prohibiting gender-segregated restrooms in schools" (Hayter 875). What this translates to is that binary organization and separation of gender is so internalized, so fully integrated into the ways in which we view and interact with the world, that the legal documents meant to protect the safety of all students completely leave out any consideration for students who do not conform to a binary gender model. Trans individuals are forgotten—they are literally judicially unwritten—, and therefore, they are thought of as people not deserving of rights and protection. Consequently, they become subjected to emotional, physical, and political harm that is judicially perpetuated. Legal systems, in addition to the "very structure of a [school] campus, uphold a binary conceptualization of gender that makes campus life more difficult for transgender people" (Seelman, 619).

Excessive and unnecessary psychological strains are placed on transgender students within the public school system, often resulting in the development of depression, anxiety, and added stress. As

a result of these imposed emotional inhibitors, "studies and reports, show that transgender students have a harder time being successful in school than non-transgender students, [who] corroborate the notion that transgender students experience discrimination in schools" (Hayter 872). These kinds of systemic inequalities manifest because transgender students are viewed as "unable" to submit to society's definition of "appropriate" gender expression. These psychological strains are a form of punishment that society, law, and cisgender citizens unleash on transgender students without due consideration of the lasting emotional impact they impose.

Unfortunately, public obsession over gender nonconforming identities and what is their place in the public sphere is not limited to the public school system. Because the gender identities of transgender individuals do not fit neatly into the traditional, binary model, their use of public bathrooms has become controversial, and exposes them to violence every time they seek to fulfill a basic human need. In one specific, highly publicized, and extremely controversial political instance, transgender individuals' access to public bathrooms in Houston, Texas—issued under the Human Equal Rights Ordinance, or HERO for short—was viciously protested against by a conservative and traditionalist political group known as Campaign for Houston. This party, representing an ideology widely pervasive in the conservative South, refused to recognize transgender people as valid, as real, or as deserving of the right to use bathrooms aligning with their gender identity. Transgender identity—which does not make sense to members of the Campaign for Houston, and refuses to align with what they believe gender expression should look like—was in this way delegitimized and dehumanized through this group's protestations. For them, individuals identifying as women are not seen in a different light than sexual deviants desiring to infiltrate a female space. Transgender citizens are perceived and constructed as villains wanting to infringe on real, traditionally gendered people's peace of mind and sense of normality. Transgender people are interpreted not as individuals enacting a more complicated formulation of gender

identity, not as people deserving of rights, respect, or recognition, but as perverts, merely "men in women's bathrooms," aliens invading a space that belongs to and reinforces the heteronormative majority. Tragically, this interpretation gained tremendous popularity among conservative audiences, and consequently, misrepresentation of trans individuals prevented their attainment of basic human rights and political protection. In other words, the campaign got in their way of being recognized as fully equal, fully human citizens. Their lack of recognition as citizens and as humans has led transgender individuals to be denied a basic human need of a safe, gender appropriate bathroom, in this political scenario as well as in others.

It has been asserted by some politicians that single-stall, gender neutral restrooms might help eliminate the controversy surrounding transgender individuals' right to public bathrooms; as if taking away the freedom to choose between bathrooms that correlate with gender identity would make all the conflict and injustice magically disappear. However, this shortsighted, "no muss, no fuss" proposal completely ignores the real issue at hand: transgender people are not regarded or treated like people at all. If they were, they would not be forcibly submitted to use isolated stalls while their socially accepted, cisgender peers have the freedom to socialize and feel secure in their gender identities through all the subtle—though no less essential—gender-affirming activities that play out in multi-stall bathrooms. Activities such as using a urinal alongside other men, putting on makeup in the presence of other women, or even engaging in seemingly trivial gossip and banal exchanges of information, all work to make us feel more like ourselves, like unique and valued individuals, regardless of gender identity. Denying this experience to trans people by confining them to only single-stall bathrooms further bars their legitimate and recognized presence in our society as beings worthy of engagement, participation, and inclusion. Unfortunately for transgender individuals, this degree of acceptance would necessitate a break in the familiar, predictable, stagnant safety of the status quo. And the status quo of the gender binary is simply

a part of the social reality most people are not willing to give up, most certainly not peacefully. For this reason, vicious language is frequently used by politicians to rally fear against transgender people and what they represent—that is, the disruption of what we'd like to think is a natural, steady, irrefutable truth (i.e. a binary model of gender that matches seamlessly with one's biological sex). Retaliation in the form of violence is an unfortunate response to the unfamiliar and the incomprehensible, and this "current backlash against trans people using public toilets… reflects a longer history of public toilets… and registers social anxieties triggered by the threat of various marginalized groups entering normative society" (Sanders and Stryker 779). This pathological and collectively shared fear of individuals agitating gender boundaries, of invading and disrupting the status quo, manifests in the physical, public, and universal space of the bathroom. Therefore, trans people are dehumanized, degraded, and abused nearly every time they enter the bathroom, as a result of misplaced fear over the slipperiness of a previously stable ubiquitous understanding of gender, that time and time again gets projected onto transgender people.

Political violence is also committed against transgender people. The prison system, just the same as any other public institution, refuses to take trans safety, health, and well being seriously. For this reason, trans prisoners face more counts of rape, aggression, abuse, and physical isolation or displacement due to their non-normative gender identities. In particular, transgender prisoners continuously experience increased instances of sexual violence and aggression inflicted by fellow prisoners and by prison guards. Transgender people are condemned by law to be imprisoned with cisgender prisoners, and are thus put at an immensely high risk of sexual abuse, regardless of whatever their biological sex may be. The rationale given by the majority of American prison systems for forcing trans prisoners into units according to their biological sex, as opposed to their gender identity, is that it is safer for cisgender as well as transgender prisoners to be exposed exclusively to individuals who possess the

same sexual genitalia as one another. In other words, the risk of rape and sexual abuse might be sizably reduced if prisoners with certain genitalia are only exposed to individuals with the same genitalia. This argument is not only immensely heteronormative, but it is also logically untrue. Men are sexually abused by men and women are sexually abused by women all the time, whether in prison or in free society. Therefore, segregation of prisoners on the basis of biological sex as a means of protection from sexual violence (legally referred to as a form of cruel and unusual punishment) is feeble justification for denying transgender people the right to be recognized and properly cared for in ways that their cisgender counterparts are, so that the "prison's inhumane treatment of… transsexuals [or transgender prisoners] begins with a genitalia-based placement policy and continues with the legal hurdle of denying them protection from cruel and unusual punishment" (Erni, 142). Sorting prisoners into living units based exclusively on biological sex, subjects trans people to more harm and abuse, and is counterproductive in reducing or preventing sexual violence. However, placement in a prison unit that does reflect a trans prisoner's gender identity (usually permitted only after the prisoner has gone through sex reassignment surgery) does not necessarily guarantee safety or acceptance either. In such cases, a trans prisoner might experience exclusion or social ostracization by fellow inmates, in addition to acts of physical aggression, due to misunderstanding.

Some court officials misguidedly believe that the removal and separation of transgender people by way of solitary confinement units is a practical way of circumventing the conflicts and complications which arise from attempting to place non-normative gender identities into normative, binary categories. Placement in solitary confinement, though an appealing alternative for many prisons who seek a quick and easy solution to a widespread societal problem, pose a tremendous threat to trans individuals' mental well being. In addition, solitary confinement dehumanizes trans prisoners who are ostensibly thrown in a cage, in dingy, dark, horrendous conditions of

isolation, removed and separated from the rest of society so as not to "disrupt" the daily routines of the "normal", more easily identifiable prisoners. In one first-hand account, a transgender prisoner in solitary confinement reported that she was "locked down in a solitary cell for 24 hours a day, without access to light, exercise, or running water," deplorable conditions which led to a "debilitating and agonizing desire to end [her] life" (Matricardi, 708). Trans prisoners in this way are treated as "other," as less than human, and as less deserving of recognition and proper care because of their non-normative gender identities.

Based on my findings, I have come to the conclusion that, because transgender identities force the public to question notions of gender, notions that before were positioned as incontrovertible social facts, they have become the targets of frustration, aggression, and misunderstanding. When individuals appear "out of place," or cannot easily be placed in a pre-existing social category, the knee-jerk (and arguably primitive) response is resistance, often manifested in the form of violence. Non-normative gender identities remind society that our seemingly stable systems of identification and categorization are deeply problematic, and that all identities are much more fluid. Trans people are mistreated not only because they "threaten" society's traditional formulation of gender identity, but also because they force us to question how we construct, understand and represent our own gender identity, and furthermore, how we exist, perceive, and "be" in the world.

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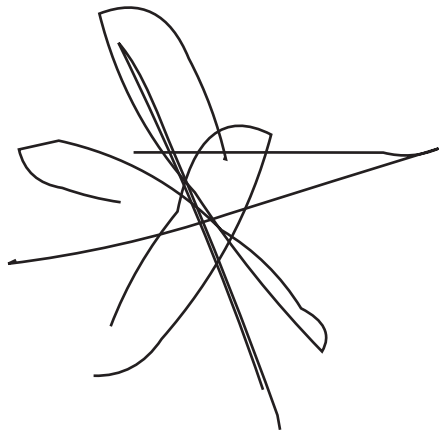
Feminism is for everybody.

BELL HOOKS



Media Representation:

New Hope in Combatting Institutional and Individual Racism

Alice Elbakian, Boston University

This essay investigates a new and promising method of combatting social intolerance: positive and diverse media representation. The scope of this essay is narrowed to matters of race because of how pernicious and ingrained racial intolerance is in American culture. But, the methodology and the specific changes discussed can be adapted to combat intolerance towards any marginalized group, including those located at social intersections.

Some believe that racism either does not exist today, or that it only exists in shadows of its former self. The sad fact of the matter is that racism exists in many of the same ways as it did three hundred years ago. Various methods have been tried to combat the issue (the abolition of slavery, Civil Rights movements, Affirmative Action policies), and while—indisputably—progress has been made, the prominence and persistence of racial injustice indicates that there is something lacking in our current methods. I will begin this essay by briefly outlining racism. I will then analyze the failures and successes of historical methods of combatting racial injustice. With this information in mind, I will propose and defend a new method of combatting racism which rests on positive and diverse media representation. Representation is a uniquely promising method of combatting individual and institutional racism, and I conclude that it will provide long-lasting effects of tolerance—an effect that is largely unseen in previous methods.

I. WHAT RACISM LOOKS LIKE

Racism generally presents itself in two interdependent forms: individual and institutional. As Lawrence Blum states in, "I'm Not a

Racist, But…" racism necessarily involves antipathy and/or inferiorization (Blum, 8). Antipathy is an attitude of hatred or hostility towards a group or individual, while inferiorization is the act of treating another group as inherently lesser through doctrines and social structures. Blum shows that the necessary conditions of racism—inferiorization, antipathy, or both—are possible at both personal and institutional levels. Therefore, racism can exist at the personal and institutional levels. This simply means that the conditions for racism can be met in cases of individuals and social structures, and so it is possible for racism to exist in both places. I say this explicitly because many people contest the existence of one or both of these forms of intolerance.

Blum's conception of individual racism amounts to racial inferiorizing or antipathy on an individual basis. One paradigmatic example of this is the colonial, White American hostility towards Black and Native peoples, which can be traced to pre-slavery times. Institutional racism is characterized by the practice of antipathy and inferiorization in institutions, such as schools, offices, and the criminal justice system (Blum, 9). A paradigm example is the system of segregation brought on by Jim Crow laws, whereby Black Americans' supposed inferiority (fueled by White Supremacy), and White Americans' antipathy towards Black Americans, were used to justify the "Whites Only" access to public spaces and institutions. This included churches, schools, and even water fountains.

It is important that the justifications for racist actions and beliefs—antipathy and inferiority—be understood, because this is what social reform will seek to undermine. White colonials believed that Black people were inferior, and then used this personal, racist belief to justify the institution of slavery. The system of slavery, in turn, only exacerbated and provided further justification of White people's racist beliefs about their superiority and their feelings of antipathy towards Black people. This creates a self-justifying loop where antipathy towards a group is central to the existence and maintenance of a system of inferiorization, and these systems encourage the individu-

al to treat others as inferior. One has a racist belief, and the privilege of shaping their society, they then employ their beliefs to create a society that reflects and upholds these beliefs, imposing racist social structures along the way. Now when they look to their society, it seems that the racist way is the natural way. This "naturalism" only further justifies and reaffirms their racist beliefs. Since their belief now seems more natural and more justified, they continue to use it to shape their society, without questioning it. Over time, the society becomes more radicalized, and racism becomes more ingrained.

The success of this reinforcing cycle can be largely attributed to how Black people were depicted in their society. Their depiction also rests on who exactly is depicting them. It is the people in power, which was, and has largely remained, White Americans. Start with a flawed belief, depict the belief, call it natural, reinforce the belief, then rinse and repeat to create new beliefs and strengthen previous ones. This pattern of affirming an unjustified belief is the underlying mechanism of the institutional-individual interdependence.

This pattern still exists. It is characterized by flawed, irrational thinking, and it is this irrational bias and generalization that fuels stereotypes. Stereotypes themselves are—in a reduced way—associations, often negative ones.

Sally Haslanger is another academic concerned with racism, but she is also concerned with its affective form of racial oppression. She distinguishes two cases of oppression which inherently rely on power, and are analogous to individual and institutional racism. The first of these is agent oppression, where an agent or group abuses their power (often social) to unjustly disadvantage or harm another agent or group (Haslanger, 106). Consider a professor who unjustly assigns lower grades to students of color. Though a professor has equal social power over all of his students, he abuses this power when he unjustly assigns lower grades to members of a certain group (colored students) on the basis of their group membership, rather than the merit of their work. The unjust assigning of grades based on race is not only unfair in nature, it also puts the marginalized students at a

disadvantage in both present and future. Furthermore, it constitutes a disregard towards the merit of these students' work.

Next is structural oppression. This occurs when a structure unjustly misallocates power to the disadvantage or harm of an individual or group. Haslanger explains the interdependent relationship between individual and institutional issues: "individuals are responsive to their social context and social structures are created, maintained, and transformed by individuals" (Haslanger, 105). Take for example the literacy tests imposed on prospective voters of the post-reconstruction era. These tests unjustly enforced disenfranchisement, and consequently a misallocation of voting power in America. Literacy tests sought to determine people's literacy. Success implied that one had the right to vote; failure the converse. While the laws did not inherently specify any group identity, they disproportionately disenfranchised people of a particular group—Black Americans—who had only recently gained their freedom, and right to education, and were thus less likely to be literate. With the removal of political power, the literacy tests served as the oppressive tool by which White Americans (men) could maintain control of the south with essentially no one to bar their way.

In many instances of institutional oppression, the correlate appears to be the fact that the enactors intend for the injustice of those structures, like with the literacy tests. But, institutions can be oppressive without any intent, nor any clearly culpable individual, but rather due to sheer indifference, ignorance, or inconsideration. An architect who designs an inaccessible building, without ramps, is oppressive due to ignorance rather than intent (presumably). Though literacy tests intended to target Black Americans, they did not explicitly do so. But, they still resulted in a misallocation of power (Haslanger, 101). It is precisely the structure itself that unjustly and non-coincidentally disadvantages members of a group, on the basis of their membership. Whether the tests intentionally sought to oppress, or did so as a result of ignorance is irrelevant; it stands that they subjugated Black Americans.

II. THE PROBLEMS WITH OUR SOLUTIONS

Having outlined individual and institutional racism and oppression, I hope to have shed some light on the interdependent relationships between them. So far, attempts have been made to resolve these problems, but these successes have not been without failure. We now move to analyze the results of previous attempts.

Given the interdependent relationship of individual and institutional racism, one might be inclined to think that undermining one component of the individual-institutional relationship would cause the fall of the other. But, as I will show with examples, the two function as more of a see-saw, strengthening and reinforcing one another if and when the other should falter. Consequently, progress achieved on one side is commonly undermined by resistance on the other.

i. The Institutional Approach

While the institution of slavery seems to have disappeared, the ideologies enforced and perpetuated by slavery (inherent racial inferiority, attitudes of antipathy, abuses and misallocations of power) have been modernized to fit the current American climate. Michelle Alexander dubs this phenomenon the "evolution of methods of social control" in her book, *The New Jim Crow*.

Consider the post-Civil War vagrancy laws. Before the Civil War, one way that White slaveholders maintained the institution of slavery was by keeping close physical proximity to their slaves. This allowed them to discipline and supervise slaves, and destroy any rebellions or resistance movements that may have been brewing. Following the Civil War however, many of the newly freed slaves enlisted, moved into towns and away from plantations, or existed as vagrants. Now that slavery was no longer a means of control, White southerners were terrified of an insurrection, and so were eager to develop a new racial social order (Alexander, 28).

In an attempt to regain power, White southerners (and some Northerners) enacted the Black codes, which included vagrancy

laws. Vagrancy laws did two things. First, they sought to rebuild and reestablish an old method of control to replace slavery. Second, because they belong to the broader set of Black codes, they foreshadowed a new method of social control, the Jim Crow laws.

Vagrancy laws outlawed unemployment. Though these laws make no mention of Black Americans, their target was clear given how homeless Black Americans outnumbered their homeless white counterparts—in and of itself a sign of power misallocation. Furthermore, these laws were applied selectively to Black Americans. Anyone convicted was liable to be hired by a private company, or plantation owner, where they were forced to complete manual labor for little or no pay. As Alexander says, "Clearly, the purpose of the Black codes in general and the vagrancy laws in particular was to establish another system of forced labor" (Alexander, 28).

While vagrancy laws may not have been as efficient or successful as the mass kidnapping of over eleven million people from across seas, this new method of social control was more pervasive and resilient. Its implicit (rather than explicit) targeting equips it with social and verbal camouflage: it is more difficult to acknowledge or identify the new method of social control as a method of social control in the first place, which in turn makes it more difficult to see how it oppresses one group on the basis of their belonging to that group. This difficulty only intensifies with each evolution of a method of racialized social control, as more distance comes between the origin of the power structure and the ideas that attempt to maintain it.

The social and verbal camouflage is as follows. Since there is no explicit mention of Black Americans in the vagrancy laws, it is assumed that the law affects the population and all its individuals uniformly. It follows then that any discrepancy in personal or demographic experience with the law is attributable to the individual or the demographic, rather than the law or system. Due to the camouflage, White Americans are tempted to blame the misfortune suffered by Black Americans, on Black Americans themselves, rather than on the law. To reiterate, this is because of the implicit rather

than explicit language of the law. The thought is, there is no explicitly racist or oppressive language, so how could anything but inherent inferiority or laziness be the cause of one's "trouble with the law"? This new method of social control is less explicitly racist, and therefore less obviously problematic. If it is less obviously a problem, it is less likely to face resistance.

Vagrancy laws are only one of the first evolutions of a racialized method of social control. With each evolution, the targeting is less explicitly associated with the unjustified beliefs on which they are based, despite relying on them just as much as did previous methods of control. This means it is harder to trace a law or system back to its unjustified source, rendering racism pervasive and persistent. This is also true for anything that results from these laws, like heightened antipathy and beliefs of inferiority/supremacy. White Americans are tempted to fall back on their attitudes of antipathy and their beliefs of inherent Black inferiority, in part because of how veiled the racism in this law is. Of course, if one takes the time to investigate how it could be that one group is so disproportionately disadvantaged by this law, or any other given system, it becomes clear to a rational individual that the difference in demographic experience is due to the law, not the people.

The Black codes and the implicitness of these laws helped, among other things, to unjustly affirm to Americans that Black unsuccess was a natural result of Black identity. This idea gave way to another evolution of racialized social control in the Jim Crow laws, which made it illegal for Black and White Americans to share public spaces and facilities, because of this perceived difference. Traditional slavery was outlawed, but its foundations of inferiorization and antipathy found a new mode of racial oppression in the Black codes, and then in the Jim Crow laws. These too were outlawed; these too gave way to modern slavery in America, mass incarceration.

Mass incarceration is defined by extreme rates of imprisonment, particularly of young, African American men (Wildeman, 2017). These men are punished with severe, or life sentences for non-vio-

lent crimes (like drug offenses or traffic violations), of which White Americans are seldom accused or suspected, despite their overwhelming culpability (Alexander, 96). The prisoners here, too, are forced in many cases to perform low-wage labor on farms. A traumatizing arrest and seizure is not uncommon either (Alexander, 75). These features alone are eerily reminiscent of the system of slavery and the mass kidnapping of the slave trade.

Institutional racial injustice only appears to disappear, making it harder to fight. Slavery may have lost its role in a traditional sense, but new methods are standing by to take its place. Unless challenged, the cycle is likely to continue, and racism will persist.

Moreover, unless an individual is part of the victimized group, it is difficult to perceive the inherent racist tenants of these laws. An "outside" individual in turn would have to listen to the testimonies and experiences of the victimized group before he could understand this. This "outsider" is unlikely to see, or believe in these injustices and oppressions because they are not easily visible; he cannot feel them and, more importantly, they do not apply to him. For the most privileged individuals, there is no thread that can connect them to the unfortunate and unjust reality in which many others live. The veiled language in laws like the Black codes or Jim Crow only heightens the disconnection between unjustified ideologies and their manifestation in daily life. Consequently, individuals are more likely to blame any misfortunes and injustices that members of the targeted group may suffer on the individuals themselves, rather than blaming the institution.

When an institution does not represent the views of an individual, there is tension between that individual and their society. Thus, any progress recognized at the institutional level will likely result in anger and resentment in individuals who have strong, opposite personal beliefs. This was the case in post-Civil War America between the government and racist Americans. Their government, moderator and authority in determining legal actions and practices, challenged their personal beliefs. Unless the individual is ready to question and

change their beliefs and practices, institutional change will be very negatively received. This would not be a problem if the majority of the population was ready and open to change, but this was certainly not the case after the Civil War, and it does not appear to be the case today, either. Many Americans tout Confederate flags, refuse to remove Confederate statues, deny the modern existence of racism, or are otherwise living in, and acting on, beliefs rooted in the racist past. So, a method which combats institutional racism alone is insufficient for lasting racial justice. It is liable to be undermined by individuals, and is likely to evolve into a new, harder-to-fight form of control.

ii. The Individual Approach

In periods of institutional change, "the backlash intensifies and a new form of racialized social control begins to take hold" (Alexander, 22). Institutional reform is powerful in that it extends the law to all citizens and therefore moves toward judging all citizens as moral and legal equals. However, institutional reform alone hardly results in this ideal in practice. Adopting new laws aimed at racial justice does little to address the individual racism of a population, seeing as racist individuals create and preserve racist institutions. Ultimately, individual reform seems necessary for meaningful and lasting institutional reform.

Consider what an entirely individual approach to combatting racism might look like. One possibility would be to hold personal conversations between racists and non-racists. However, even if discussions about personal beliefs were an effective method of changing these beliefs, it is difficult to imagine a totally individual approach as an efficient method of combatting individual racism across a population. For one, it would take an immense amount of time and energy to teach every racist person (or anyone who is suspected of having racist beliefs) everything there is to know about racism. This includes—but is not limited to—teaching someone how to identify its many forms, how to adopt non-racist beliefs, and then convinc-

ing them to apply this newfound knowledge in their everyday life. One further consideration that needs to be made for this approach is that any conversation about beliefs is personal, so there is always a chance of the conversation becoming volatile; when someone feels their personal beliefs are under attack, they are likely to resist this perceived attack and are less receptive to the information given.

The problem with an individual-based method is similar to the problem with abrupt institutional change: it is destabilizing, and might cause an even stronger ascription to racism in an attempt to preserve and protect beliefs. I am not suggesting that personal conversations and abrupt institutional change should not take place-on the contrary, they should. I am only pointing out that these methods alone have limited power, and face much resistance. Moreover, without an institution to uphold non-racist values, it is difficult to imagine this as a permanent solution to racism, or how this would prevent institutional racism from resurfacing. Recall that institutions do not require racist intent nor a clearly culpable or racist individual. So, addressing individual racism alone—a difficult task in its own right—will still allow for institutional racism to prevail. This entirely individual method seems inefficient and insufficient for combatting racism at individual and institutional levels.

Consider then a large-scale—perhaps institutional—attempt of correcting individual racism. One example is integration of American neighborhoods and school systems, as was done during the Civil Rights movement when legal efforts of neighborhood and school integration were enacted to physically bring Black and White Americans together. As Black Americans began to move towards White city centers, the populations of White Americans who lived there resisted these government-imposed efforts by fleeing to the suburbs. Thus was had the opposite geographic segregation as before: Black Americans now lived in city centers where White Americans once lived, and White Americans lived outside the cities like Black Americans used to. This phenomenon is now referred to as "White Flight" (NPR, The Problem We All Live With).

Here, individual racism enforced segregation—even with an institutional effort against it—and increased antipathy towards "invading" Black families. Furthermore, the generally poor living conditions of Black Americans contributed to beliefs of inferiority about them (Coates, The Case for Reparations). All in all, this method, too, seems to exacerbate racism and racial oppression.

Individual change without government support leaves institutions susceptible to racist ideologies. It also leaves individuals susceptible to reversion in their attitudes, which might happen if they attribute any social failings to individuals rather than to institutions. Meanwhile, institutional reform alone allows people to form new, more pervasive systems of social control, which embrace their racist ideologies. Therefore, addressing individual or institutional racism independently becomes an insufficient strategy for combatting racism. Perhaps the only remaining option is to target individual and institutional racism, simultaneously.

III. A NEW HOPE

People enjoy media and entertainment by empathizing with on-screen characters. Widespread positive representations of Black characters grants many opportunities for an audience member to positively relate to a Black character. Positive portrayals are likely to inspire warmth, connection, and companionship for those of us who take solace in media and fantasy worlds, which many of us do. An individual need not be aware of media efforts to inspire empathy. He does not even need to actively try to change his attitudes and beliefs if he is particularly lazy or resistant to reform. He needs only to watch TV, while the psychology of implicit biases and the general mechanism of empathy will work to undo some of the social damage that his perspective has suffered. Positive and diverse media representation will humanize Black people.

There are four aspects that make the visual media and entertainment industries excellent candidates for instruments of progress in

equality. First, media and entertainment are a special kind of social structure. They are unique institutions in that they aim to personally relate to the individual's feelings and attitudes. This means that progress towards racial equality in media and entertainment should incite both institutional and individual racial reform.

Second, according to a recent statistic from the Nielson Company, 96.5% of American households own at least one television set with access to traditional TV signals (Nielsen Insights, 2017). Media and entertainment are thus widely accessible to nearly all Americans. This is advantageous as people will now have access to the same information, regardless of their social, political, or economic status—meaning new ideas of racial reform and equality have the potential of reaching a varied demographic of the population. Even includes working class White families—who have historically sided with racist ideologies—will have access to this tool of racial reform (Alexander, 25).

Third, visual media does not require heavy thought or deep analysis, as it is generally easily absorbed. This means that some media can be watched and understood passively, including any of its messages, overt or subliminal. This is important because if a particular TV show or film presents an idea that challenges a personal belief, it does so passively. For the audience member watching, this message is far less likely to be interpreted as an attack on the viewer himself.

This distance and passivity is critically important for changing peoples' attitudes and beliefs, like attitudes of antipathy and beliefs of inferiority. It leaves an individual more open to the possibility of a new thought than perhaps does a sharp institutional change, which tends to abruptly impose a new belief on its population with force, leaving little time for individual adjustment. This tends to be true no matter the overwhelming moral justifications for doing so. If a concept that challenges one's personal beliefs is distanced in this way and received passively, it can be analyzed more impersonally since it is not an immediate threat and therefore poses no individual danger. If an individual is less likely to perceive this concept as a threat or at-

tack, then he is more likely to engage with the concept itself, whether in a verbal discussion or an internal dialogue. There is less chance of a "doubling-down" on personal racist beliefs, and more chance for openness to new thoughts and beliefs.

Lastly, media is removed from the real world but necessarily tied to it. Its worlds can be fictional, but they exist in our real world and may even be based on the real world. While we do not live in the fake world of, for example, a cartoon, or romantic comedy, we cannot help but draw connections between its world and our own. We can then use these fictional worlds as models for our own society. By modeling in such a way, we can incite progress rather easily and quickly, since fictitious spaces can be free of the complications and complexities of government, politics, and other people. We may be able to explore the consequences of otherwise impossible thought-experiments, which would be helpful in critical thought and analysis about our society, and how exactly we want our society to look. These analogies will not be perfect—they may be idealizations—but they will be enough to teach us the relevant concepts and give us an ideal or goal world. Think of how law makers from one society look to the policies of other societies as guidance for their own.

Due to the connection between the media and real worlds, it is likely that after exposure to positive images and representations of Black people in a fictional world, an individual will begin to form similar positive associations, judgements, and feelings about real-world Black people through simple associations. All that is needed to sustain these progressive and positive effects is continued exposure to diverse and positive media representations, or continued empathy for Black people. In *Why Integration Remains an Imperative*, Anderson expresses the power of TV and media representation, in this case negative. The author claims that, "Such taken-for-granted stigmatizing public images of Blacks amount to a massive assault on the reputation of Blacks, a harm in itself" (Anderson, 3). If negative images and portrayals have such massive power over the reputation of Black people, then it is likely that their positive portrayals will

have a similarly massive positive effect on Black reputation.

Additionally, the diversification of the media and entertainment industries, and the consequent representation of Black people, cannot happen without the inclusion of Black stories, storytellers, and actors. It is impossible to portray Black characters and people positively without including them in the making and portrayal of a TV show or movie. Engaging Black people in these processes necessarily integrates the institutions of media and entertainment, and fights institutional racism in these industries.

Given these strengths of visual media and entertainment, it is my view that positive and diverse Black representation in media and entertainment industries will be a successful method of combatting both individual and institutional racism. This method may be used to represent any other marginalized group, and I am confident it will have similarly positive and lasting effects. Visibility and inclusion are vital to the sociopolitical progress and de-stigmatization of any and all marginalized groups.

A single positive representation of a Black character could combat multiple racist attitudes and beliefs at once. For example, in the case of a Black lawyer, both racial antipathy and the racist belief that Black people are inferior are combatted by the character itself, and the feelings they inspire. Since lawyers are commonly revered, and thought of as individuals who stand up for others and incite progress, this portrayal could inspire idolization in viewers. There are other positive attitudes that we experience when watching characters on screen as well—warmth, connection, companionship and general empathy—which could also be translated to Black people in general. These attitudes are contrary to feelings of antipathy, a central ingredient for racism, and likely other forms of intolerance, too.

Furthermore, becoming a lawyer is considered a societal accomplishment, and is thought to only be possible for individuals of a certain kind. But this "kind" has nothing to do with skin color, orientation, class, etc. It has to do with being smart, motivated, capable, etc.—traits which anyone can learn or acquire. These are not traits

that anyone needs to be born into, unlike their race or socioeconomic standing. This image of a successful, powerful, Black lawyer challenges the belief that these particular accomplishments, as well as the traits required, belong to White people only, and therefore also challenges White Supremacy.

The nature of a fictional world allows an unlimited number of characters and personalities, which is the perfect opportunity to escape stereotypes, stigmas, and other limits on an individual's personhood, including inherent inferiority. To fight stereotypes and inferiority, media should portray Black characters as strong, full, and complex humans, rather than as the simple token or type-cast characters that they are usually assigned. One example of this bland type-cast is Tracie Thom's character in *The Devil Wears Prada,* which perfectly fits the "Black best friend" typecast. *Law & Order* also portrays Black people mainly as "thugs" or "bad guys", which contributes to negative stigmas about Black people.

In showing a Black character as complex, like the typical (White) character, there is no room to assume inferiority. This can be emphasized with even stronger characters, such as portraying Superman —a classic, strong, American hero—as a Black American. Leaving behind stereotypes and stigmas opens infinite possibilities for positive portrayals of and beliefs about Black people. This in turn invites new positive attitudes and beliefs—including complexity and full humanity—towards Black people, especially from non-Black folk. It also shows youth that they are not confined to the societal expectations or existences that have been created and imposed on them as a result of centuries of pervasive racism. This will hopefully inspire and teach Black youth that they have the right to live as fully human, which is a stark shift from subliminally telling Black children that they are doomed to become their stereotype, as popular media so often does.

Media representations also offer an excellent opportunity to hear and see specifically Black struggles that would otherwise be neglected by inaccurate and simplistic representations. This new voice

could educate White or other uninformed viewers about the phenomenal character of being a Black American. Particularly, it may offer valuable insight to show the not-so-subtle ways in which institutional racism affects the daily life of a Black American. Meanwhile, for Black Americans who are currently struggling, and in particular for Black youth who are only discovering the effects of institutional racism, stories from and about people like them would provide some means of understanding their own struggle. The broadcasting of such a story also provides acknowledgement and validation of their hardship, which is often necessary for emotional processing and progress. This telling of Black stories is of the utmost importance in the fight against racism: this would be a very clear depiction of Black American experiences, and personal storytelling (or narrative) is an especially strong means of empathizing with others.

Continued positive and diverse portrayal of Black characters will necessarily diversify the media and entertainment institutions, and should impart lasting positive attitudes about Black people by inviting a genuine change in personal beliefs and attitudes. This addresses the problem which institutional reform alone could not—it addresses the root of all racist institutions: problematic ideology. Eventually, the hope is that these positive attitudes will assimilate within the viewer—that is, they will have adopted non-racist beliefs through their empathizing with Black people either on-screen or in real life. Once these beliefs are obtained through the institution of media, people will presumably act on these non-racist beliefs in other areas of their life, consciously or not. This includes during, albeit is not limited to, political or social instances, areas where this is a need to continue fighting racism at institutional and individual levels.

An objection that needs to be addressed concerns institutional reform. Presumably, the implementation of this new method can seem questionable. It is unclear why the media and entertainment industries have not already included widespread representation of Black people, especially considering that appealing to a wider audience would benefit box office sales and TV subscriptions. Who is to

say that racist individual biases will not interfere with the progress of institutional reform in media and entertainment?

It is up to the individual, anyone who cares about equality, storytelling, representation, inclusion, or tolerance, to not let this happen. Currently, there is momentum for diversity and inclusion, and individual attitudes align with racial progress. We need to take advantage of this, and use one of our powers in this capitalist society—our buying power—to mold our world. Think of the accolades previously almost exclusively reserved for White people. The Oscar winner for Best Picture in 2016 was Moonlight, a coming of age story of a gay Black man. Viola Davis recently became the first Black woman to win the Emmy for lead actress with her role on *How to Get Away With Murder*. Uzo Aduba of *Orange Is The New Black* became one of only two actors to win an Emmy in both the drama and comedy categories for a single role.

Marvel's *Black Panther* was just released. This film is revolutionary for many reasons: it takes place in an uncolonized African utopia called Wakanda, which is the world's center of prosperity; Wakanda's medicine and technology are far more advanced than anywhere else, and Wakandans are responsible for providing another American hero, Captain America, with his iconic vibranium shield; Wakandans are either bald or wear their hair naturally; the film depicts a Black superhero as just one member of an overwhelmingly Black cast; the Wakandan special forces is entirely comprised of strong, commanding women; the film features a Black female teenager, Shuri, as the smartest person alive in this universe; it depicts various tribes which live rather harmoniously despite differences in culture and lifestyle; the film was written, directed, shot, and scored by Black writers, directors, cameramen, and musicians. And, Black Panther shattered box office records, even becoming the fastest Marvel film to reach the $50M mark. Wakanda and Black Panther are just one example of the inspiration, hope, and empowerment with which fictional worlds can provide us for our own real world.

Efforts of diversity and positive portrayal have already begun, but

they are in their initial stages. Institutional reform is happening, but we need the support of individuals. Our role is now to support this effort the same way we would support other efforts towards justice, like attending marches and protests. It is up to us to consume responsibly and support Black media: buy tickets for Black films to show industries and artists that diversity and inclusion are successful and in demand. Move beyond bland, one-sided roles for people in marginalized groups. Have conversations with others and bring racial justice into daily life. Recommend diverse movies and TV shows with rich stories and characters to friends and family. Without an active individual, there is no one to uphold individual or institutional efforts and progresses.

For lasting social reform, we cannot rely on the independently achieved progress of institutions and individuals. The persistence of racism (likely other intolerances as well) depends on an interdependent relationship between institutions and individuals. Molding our society from an unjustified belief only strengthens the belief in pernicious ways. Likewise, if institutional progress is made, individual backlash ultimately leads to more pervasive problems than before; individual progress cannot persist without an institution to uphold personal changes. But, those who seek social reform can use these existent relationships to their advantage by changing the content of self-enforcing loops to include positive representations and ideals rather than negative ones. Just as we can take advantage of this existent interdependent relationship, we must take advantage of existent reformative attitudes and efforts. The effort to eradicate intolerance both individually and institutionally is there. For now, it is up to the individual to participate in institutional efforts, and assert their individual efforts towards a just society.

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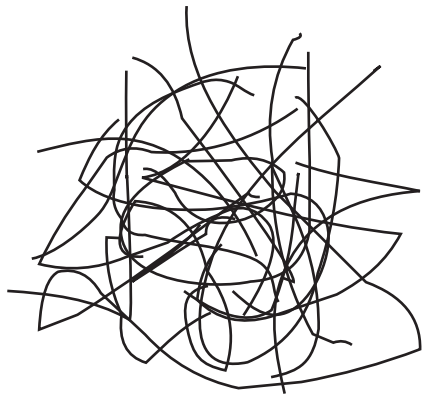
If one man can destroy everything, why can't one girl change it?

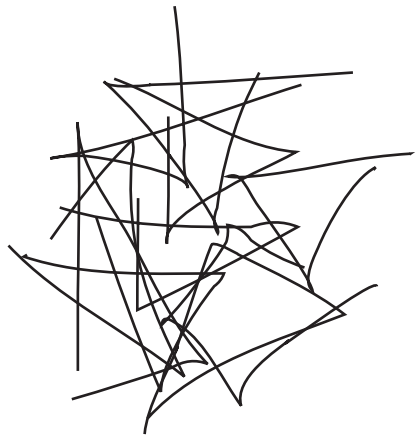
MALALA YOUSAFZAI



Thing Eaten // *sal daña*

No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her own body.

MARGARET SANGER



Namu Sampath, Boston University

reflection

I am a girl. I am a girl, in a world where I am not allowed to be too confident, too sexy, too successful. I am told I can have dreams, but that it will be a longshot to achieve them. If I wear something that exposes me, I am a slut. If I wear something that covers me, I am a prude.

I don't fit into the guidelines of society. Yes, I am a girl. Yes, I understand that this is what we deal with. But no, unfortunately for the men in the world, I will not say that this treatment is okay. I am not going to let myself get weighed down by the pressure of society.

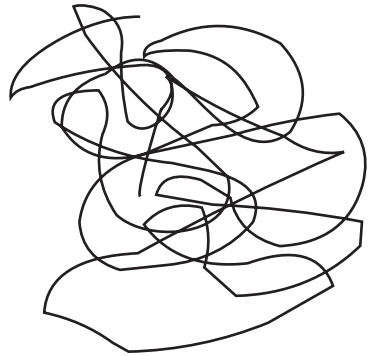
I am a girl. I am strong, passionate, successful. I am capable of extraordinary things. The way that this society portrays women makes us shadows, following men around, always behind them. I am no one's shadow. I'm going to break free of the double standard.

I am:
Fierce. I fight for what is mine. I don't second guess myself.
Resilient. I've been through hell and back, and I am still here, standing strong.
Empowered. I'm ready to take on the world at full force and be the best version of myself.
Passionate. I want people to hear me and to understand that women face issues men have no idea about.

I am me.
I am a girl.
And I am more than honored to be a woman.

I've never been interested in being invisible and erased.

LAVERNE COX



Understandable

Bria Goeller, Emory University

"I mean, I kinda assumed we were just gonna not talk about it."

The rental Kia idled in the driveway that he could no longer call his. His back fought the un-reclined seat, fingers nervous against the steering wheel. We started saying goodbye an hour and fifty-five minutes ago. He was completing the final "dropping-kid-back-home" step of our bi-yearly Red Bowl reunions, only this time it had lasted far beyond what either of us had bargained for. My foot propped itself against the open passenger door. The AC fought to keep the summer air at bay. I prayed he wouldn't ask me to close it, because then I'd be forced to admit to him that no amount of cologne could cover the smell of his freshly smoked Camels—and admit to myself that conversations with my father now made me feel trapped.

Twelve-step program; he wanted to apologize to the people he had hurt, etcetera etcetera. He was worried about my sister. Worried that he hadn't been hard enough on her. Worried by her concerning (read: normal teenage) choices and nervous about the fact that she wasn't following in my footsteps. I assured him that she had her head on straight, and that most 18-year-olds didn't spend Friday nights alone organizing their eraser collections. He asked how I could be so sure. I told him she made smart decisions, using her approach to relationships as an example. I told him that she and I had been talking "just the other night" about how both of us were—and always had been—single. How we'd only somewhat jokingly agreed to blame it on our intimidating don't-need-no-man vibes and equally intimidating heights.

"Wait, so... you are... interested in boys, then?"

We sat in awkward silence until I broke it with a snort. Genuine,

unforced laughter shook my shoulders. It wasn't until later that I realized how sad that question was.

"I mean, you do understand why I would think that, right? Like, it's an understandable assumption?"

Sure, Dad. I understood. I understood every time the word frumpy was used to describe my clothes. I understood every time Mom warned me that people would "make assumptions" if I continued to shop in the men's section of Goodwill. I understood every time Susu told me I'd be "so pretty if only" I'd "put on some lip-n-stick." I understood every time she tried to commandeer my shirts and sew them into something "just a little more form-fitting." Every time she lamented the infrequency with which I wore my hair down. Sure, Dad, it was an understandable assumption. I was the token tomboy of every neighborhood street soccer game growing up. I avoided dresses like the plague. Yes, Dad, I too remembered that phase in middle school during which I pretended that pink physically burned my skin to the touch. It was an understandable assumption. Understandable to assume that my reluctance to talk about romantic feelings meant that I didn't have any. Understandable to attribute my decision of not going to prom to a stifled sexuality rather than an aversion to public dancing and large groups of people. I understood.

"Come on. You did all that stuff with the homeless shelter... I just kind of... I mean I thought that was you sending a pretty obvious message."

Lost-N-Found, sure. Because volunteering to help homeless LGBT youth tell their stories through art must have meant that I was gay too.

"And I thought you picked Emory because of that. You talked about how it had such a large GLT—what is it—population?"

LGBT, Dad. Yup, he'd gotten it. Because fleeing to a gay safe-haven for my undergraduate experience was more plausible than valuing diversity and tolerance.

"But you know that I'm open to like... I mean, I'd want you to feel like you could..."

Could internalize the moment forever? Could later use it to fuel my fear that I'd never move past my 20-year-old-virgin-who's-never-been-on-a-date-and-has-only-ever-kissed-her-gay-best-friend reputation? Could find myself agonizing over what my disproportionately male friend group would look like from the outside? Could wilt with frustration when one of them would tell me that I was "easier to talk to than most girls?" Could fear that my exhaustion while in the company of girls would come off as an attempt to be one of the dudes? Could use this to more easily assimilate my daddy issues into the rest of my identity? Could blame it on the lesbianism—not him telling me, when I was seventeen, that he was "completely detached at this point" and that I was "lucky" he was even still around and then admitting, two months later, that he had been a "horrible dad" and a "bad example" and had decided to "fix" it by walking out our front door forever in the lime green shirt I'd given him for his birthday less than a month before. Of course, Dad. I felt like I could do that. No worries.

"I'm glad we cleared that one up."

Truthfully, I was too. And I was taken aback by his candor. After finally securing the door and waving goodbye as he crawled away, I burst into the house to tell my Mom she wouldn't believe "the crazy thing dad just said." Confusion tickled my fingertips at the sadness she responded with, and my nails bit into my palms when she said that my sister and I deserved better. I defended him, bragging about how much he'd opened up and not-so-subtly implying that I wished she'd do the same. Because this was only the first time he claimed to be "getting his life together," and I had no reason not to believe him. This was before I realized that the words, "I'm not an alcoholic, I'm an abuser," were red flags. At the time, I was happy for his honesty. Amazed by what frank conversation could do.

A new day is on the horizon. And when that new day finally dawns, it will be because of a lot of magnificent women . . . and some pretty phenomenal men, fighting hard to make sure that they become the leaders who take us to the time when nobody ever has to say, 'me too' ever again.

OPRAH WINFREY

The Ugly Side of Beauty

Dinuka Cooray, University of Notre Dame

I. INTRODUCTION

Beauty is commonly understood as the quality of being physically attractive. How does one attain an image of physical attractiveness that appeals to everyone? Women have attempted to answer this question by trying to adapt to various standards of beauty with the progression of time. The media of today heavily influences the direction of the beauty standard, which consequently influences the beauty industry. Beauty industries thrive on women attempting to reach the "ideal" image of beauty. The products that are sold, however, come with a serious health-related price. Since the 1800s, America's beauty standards in the media and profit-driven society have become increasingly harmful towards women's mental and physical health as they strive to attain the "ideal" image of beauty.

The beauty standard of the nineteenth century was unlike the standard of today. Women who had wide hips and large breasts were considered to be most beautiful (Lamkin). This idea may have been due to the assumption that these women possessed a greater ability to bear and raise children. Furthermore, there was a general notion that thinness indicated poverty and heaviness indicated wealth due to having access to more food; therefore, heavier people were regarded as more beautiful. In addition to the praise for this body type, there was a significant emphasis on clear complexion as an aspect of beauty ("The Beauty Standard"). Males looked for a wealthy, affluent wife who could raise and bear children. Race, too, played an integral role in the beauty standard of the 19th century. The "Brown Paper Bag Test" consisted of holding a brown paper bag against a POC's skin for admission to events at black institutions. If lighter,

one could enter ("The Back Story:..."). This progression from slavery led to colorism and the notion that lighter skin was more beautiful. Altogether, these perceptions of health and race were driving factors of beauty during this period, as the potential for childbearing was essential to the beauty standard of the 19th century and racism and colorism were still prevalent.

The health-based idea of beauty, however, did not last for long. In the 1920s, America reached a period of self-expression and rebellion which resulted in completely different beauty standards. Now women strived for a slim waist, small breasts, and a boyish figure (Lamkin). Unlike the eighteenth century, women's bodies were relatively more exposed, and the cultural pressure to maintain a slender figure increased. In addition to these new body-related standards, many women smoked heavily as an unhealthy yet political statement for equality. America had reached a period where one's well-being was not a significant priority. In response to the preceding decade, there once again was a shift in health standards relating to beauty. In the 1930s, people began to realize that excessive dieting and skipping meals lead to serious health problems (Brass). However, these health issues did not stop the standards from becoming more harmful towards women.

Although individuals were aware of the risks of attempting to achieve the beauty standards of the early 1900s, the ideal image of beauty only strayed further from one's natural appearance. Critic Allan Mazur explains in his essay that in the 1940s, the hemline rose higher and women began to wear nylons (Mazur 288). Legs were more exposed, and as a result, women desired thin, toned legs. As time progressed, however, the beauty standards of the 1940s switched from an emphasis on legs to an emphasis on breasts. In the mid 1940s, Esquire hired a new illustrator, Alberto Vargas, who "enlarged the spherical breasts, producing a magnificent caricature unlike any real women" (Mazur 289). As a result, "The preferred size of the U.S. bust grew continually from its flat period in the 1920s to the "bosom mania" in the 1960s" (Mazur 289). Mazur continues

to discuss how the winners of the Miss America had larger bosoms than waists (Mazur 289). The winners of the Miss America pageant especially impacted the "ideal" image of beauty for women throughout the country. The beauty standards of this era were detrimental to the mental health of women since physical features cannot be naturally altered, yet many wanted to achieve the image of a thin waist and an unnaturally large bosom.

With the slender body type ideal of the 1970s and 1980s came a slew of body image related issues, including an increase in cases of anorexia nervosa and bulimia. Mazur emphasizes this correlation, stating, "...there is little doubt that the overall trend in self-starvation has been produced by our culture's increasing idealization as the model for feminine beauty" (298). The 1970s was a period during which women began to experience a significant increase in cultural pressure to maintain a slender figure. "The thinner, the better" seemed to be the standard with the progression of time. Dr. Martin G. Wolfish, a well-published physician, noted how ballerinas in the ballet he attended in 1989 were "...tubular, breastless, bottomless, emaciated creatures in beautiful costumes but with undernourished bodies" (Wolfish). He continued to state how their health had rapidly declined with the passing of age: "Was their breathlessness and lack of grace due to chronic starvation? Do they all purge or vomit to maintain the "look" expected of them? Do any of them still have normal menses?" (Wolfish). The advent of eating disorders with beauty standards of the 1970s and 1980s indicate the extremity of the situation.

II. TODAY'S MEDIA

Today's media-driven age, which started in the 2000's, consists of a continuous upward trend in body-morphism, particularly the drive towards slenderization. In the 2000's, a scientific publication from the journal "Sex Roles" was released stating, "evolutionary and feminist scholars agree that the undue emphasis on thinness witnessed

in modern culture can be unhealthy, leading to eating disorders and body image problems" (Singh 724). Beyond the overwhelming cultural pressure to have very little body fat, the beauty standards of today encompass flawless complexions, large breasts, large buttocks, a tiny waist, full lips, and a tiny nose, to name just a few. Women today will undergo cosmetic surgeries, radical dieting plans, develop eating disorders, and contour their facial structure with makeup in attempt to achieve this new image of beauty. These situations reveal the extent that women will go in order to feel beautiful in today's standards. As one can see, females from every era are culturally pressured to fit the molds of beauty that have been pre-cast by the society around them.

As the critic Devendra Singh and Dorian Singh argue, "...the ill effects of chasing faddish, media driven standards of beauty are evident in many post-industrial societies (primarily North America and Western Europe) where, for example, eating disorders and cosmetic surgeries are on the rise," (Singh and Singh 724). Advertisements, for example, tend to produce inaccurate images of women that depict neither natural blemishes that all women possess nor a variety of body types. Even the models that seem to contain no body fat are excessively slimmed in all areas of their body. Katie Bezdjian states that, "heavily retouched advertisements and the use of underweight women to sell clothing promote the idea that being thin is being beautiful, and that one cannot exist without the other" (Bezdjian). Females view commercials in which women are virtually flawless, which can lead to some women attempting to alter or hide their true self, although makeup can be viewed positively to others. The deceptive portrayal of women in advertisements can be seen in the excessive promotion of thigh gaps among adolescent females in social media. Bezdjian states that, "Thigh gaps are anatomically impossible for most women because of the width of their hips compared with their femoral head. No matter how much toning and crunching and dieting they do, their thighs will never be completely apart" (Bezdjian). The advertisements of today do an insufficient job of supporting

natural appearances of women and instead drive women towards altering their image in order to fit the standards that they are persistently shown in the media.

In addition to advertisements, the media does not project an inclusive image of women of color based on both factual and personal statements. Television, in particular, "...is chiefly responsible for disseminating idealized narratives about culture that viewers may actively seek out," (Russell et al. 120). Many women formulate new beauty standards after viewing the non-inclusive image of women casted on television. Minorities are highly underrepresented in the media, even though "over one-third of the population is black, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latina," (Kite). This can be catastrophic for children of non-white racial backgrounds who seek role-models in the media.

Additionaly, body type is also underrepresented in the media. Thin body types are predominant in all forms of media, including television shows, movies, and novels. Like women of color, plus-sized women encounter both stereotypes and under-representation in the media. They too, rarely play the love interest. Fashion shows such as the annual Victoria's Secret Fashion Show hardly do justice in portraying an inclusive image of women. The models are homogeneous in their collective image, which does not accurately portray a true, inclusive image of women, and thus can be harmful. Adolescent girls are in the most formative period of their life. To be bombarded with this singular body type—at fashion shows, in magazines, on television, and elsewhere in our media-driven age—can lead adolescents to believe that they, too, must fit this image. Objectification of women in the media does not contribute to resolving unhealthy standards: "It is nearly impossible for a woman to feel good about herself after seeing the positive feedback from males that the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show brings, or the emphasis that magazines place on how quickly celebrities are able to lose weight after being pregnant" (Bezdjian). In reality no woman's body type is the same. All women should feel beautiful and confident in their own skin, yet

media devastatingly affects the "standard of beauty" as women strive to achieve the predominantly slender body type of today's standard.

III. A REBUTTAL OF A NATURAL EXPLANATION OF BEAUTY STANDARDS

Despite the substantial amount of research showing that beauty standards are driven by media, some argue that beauty standards of each era are solely based on science. In their paper, Devandra and Dorian Singh argue that the evolutionary mate selection theory, "maintains that there are some underlying, indelible traits of the human body which communicate information about health and fertility, which are then interpreted by humans as attractive," and that "certain ideas of beauty are fundamental and intractable, not arbitrary and artificial" (Singh and Singh 724). The Singh's emphasize how "attractiveness" of females is based on distinct waist-to-hip ratios and psychological tendencies (Singh and Singh 723). While it is true that males may find certain body types of females more attractive as an indicator of health, this is not the origin of the pressure females feel, nor is it the driving force of beauty standards. Our society is constantly exposed to various forms of media—in which there is a clear, singular body type, and females appear virtually flawless. Especially in our media-driven age, "Declaring that humans have a choice over how the media affects us is a completely ignorant statement to make" (Bezdjian). Bezdjian emphasizes that:

> Stressing superficial features so heavily creates a subconscious idea that only physical features are important. That is not true. What is important is that there are women who are deliberately starving themselves to death in a sick attempt to mirror the retouched, remade and revised images that infiltrate every media outlet imaginable. (Bezdjian)

It is primarily the media, not male attraction, that has corrupted to-

day's beauty standard and brought about several detrimental consequences.

The negative portrayal of women in the media of today's heavily digital age unfortunately results in a myriad of body image related problems. Schneider and Levitt, professional writers for magazines including People, Sports Illustrated, The New York Times, and Glamour Magazine, agree:

> In the moral order of today's media-driven universe—in which you could bounce a quarter off the well-toned abs of any cast member on Melrose Place or Friends, fashion magazines are filled with airbrushed photos of emaciated models with breast implants, and the perfectly attractive Janeane Garofalo can pass for an ugly duckling next to Beautiful Girl Uma Thurman in the current hit movie The Truth About Cats & Dogs—the definition of what constitutes beauty or even an acceptable body seems to become more inaccessible every year. The result? Increasingly bombarded by countless "perfect" body images projected by TV, movies and magazines, many Americans are feeling worse and worse about the workaday bodies they actually inhabit. (Schneider and Levitt 1)

These particular body types that have little to no variation do not represent our population. Seeing these images, many women often engage in harmful methods such as violent body practices, eating disorders, and cosmetic surgery in order to conform to what they view in the media and ultimately the current beauty standard.

IV. HOW INDUSTRIES PROFIT OFF OF THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY

These body image related issues that arise from the media are the means by which beauty industries make extraordinary profits.

Women use the products generated from these industries to attain the "ideal" beauty standard. By doing so, women have become profit centers for various industries including beauty companies, fashion houses, the diet industry, the food industry, exercise and fitness industries, and the cosmetic industry. The diet industry, for example, thrives off of adolescent females and women who attain the slender body type of today, as "research suggests that as many as two-thirds of all high school females are either on a diet or planning to start one" (Thomsen et al. 1). This involves the use of dieting pills, laxatives, and boxed dieting foods, all of which provide the dieting industry with multi-billion dollar profits. The food industry, in addition, is rather deceptive with labeling. For example:

> ...labels on Kellogg's To Go Milk Chocolate Breakfast Shake boast of its '5 grams of fiber.' But the fiber comes from maltodextrin and polydextrose, making the shake a poor substitute for breakfast foods it might displace, such as whole grain cereal and fruit. Processed fibers like inulin and modified starches don't confer the same benefits as the intact fiber that occurs in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. (Liebman)

Many of the food items seen in supermarkets have misleading health-related taglines even though a large amount of food is processed and not significantly beneficial. The true way to eat healthily is to directly consume foods such as fruits and vegetables instead of processed products. Women are attracted to these taglines but do not end up losing weight like they expect. All of these industries present a common theme of profiting from women who attempt to reach the "ideal" beauty standard.

The beauty products of these industries, especially the cosmetic industry, often contain toxic ingredients that are highly detrimental to the personal health of women. These products include tanning or skin-lightening products. Many women with a lighter complexion

go tanning during the colder seasons or use suntan lotion. Tanning beds provide a variety of well-established risks to users, including "an increased risk of skin cancer, eye damage, premature wrinkling, and skin rashes" (Loh). In fact, "incidence of the most lethal form of skin cancer, melanoma, has doubled in women from fifteen to twenty-five years old since 1975" (Loh). Despite these life-threatening dangers, lighter-skinned women continue to use tanning beds to alter their natural skin color. On the other hand, many women with a darker complexion use skin-lightening products that can contain "...toxic heavy metals chromium and neodymium, which can cause eczema and allergic dermatitis" (Malkan). Additional chemicals include, "Hydroquinone and mercury, which can produce temporary whitening effects and are also found in many skin products. They are confirmed carcinogens that are banned in the Europe Union but allowed in US in concentrations up to 2%" (Malkan). Skin color is hereditary and no chemicals can permanently lighten skin according to dermatologists, yet many women still strive to conform to beauty standards.

In addition to these harmful skin products, many women use products that change the shape or color of hair that lead to serious health problems, especially for women of color. When used excessively, heat tools such as blow-dryers, straighteners, and curling irons cause hair to dry out. Furthermore, excessive coloring of hair causes brittleness. Women of color are particularly affected by the white-washed beauty standard of today. Non-white celebrities tend to have lighter-colored, often times straighter hair and lighter makeup than their natural looks. In addition, younger children are exposed to the fact that traditional locks and afros are "extreme hair styles" in the popular culture; as a result, young females inaccurately perceive what is acceptable and what is not. Critic Stacy Malkan states,

> Hair relaxers and other styling products expose African American women to poisonous chemicals and cancer-causing agents. Girls as young as 5 get weaves or extensions;

some involve glues and require acetone—or formaldehyde-based removers to get them off" (Malkan). The dangers of these hair products and treatments, although proven to contain serious health risks, are still used by women on a daily basis in attempt to reach the "ideal" beauty standard.

V. CONCLUSION

America has witnessed a horrifying transformation of beauty standards that progressively becomes more and more harmful towards women's health. Today's media-driven age pressures women to attain a perceived standard of beauty through constant exposure of the ideal women in various forms of media. This standard tends to portray a singular slenderized and often white image of females, which has great potential to lead to body-image related problems. Beauty industries, especially the dieting, food, and cosmetic industries, tend to take advantage of the beauty standard by targeting the insecurities of women with their products. These products are proven to have serious repercussions in terms of women's health—such as rashes or cancer—yet are still used in hopes of attaining the beauty standard of today. Fortunately, we are on the right track. The #AerieReal campaign of recent years is a pioneer of using untouched, diverse images of women in their photographs. Victoria's Secret, conversely, has a particularly homogenous type of woman in their photographs. Aerie has received positive feedback and astounding sales and has even caused Victoria's Secret sales to decline dramatically since the launch of this campaign. Like Aerie has done, is time for the rest of the world to prioritize the physical and mental health, rather than the appearance, of women, as there is much improvement to be made.

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About Our Contributors

AVERY ADDAMS (*she/her/hers*) is an English/Film double major in her senior year at Southwestern University. Avery is a spoken word artist, poet, academic, and short fiction writer. Her work primarily focuses on sex and body positivity with an interest in intersectionality and mental health. Avery is currently focused on the reclamation of social media as an outlet for activism even in the face of Net Neutrality repeals. She hopes to go on writing works that will bring attention to the stories and struggles of marginalized voices in America including WOC, Sex Workers, and non-neural typical individuals.

ANA LUISA BERNÁRDEZ-NOTZ (*she/her/hers*) pursues a Bachelor of Fine Arts at OCAD University with a major in Photography and a minor in Printmaking. Her practice stands at the intersection of feelings, honesty and research, and she primarily uses portraiture and self-portraiture, material exploration and, recently, found imagery. Her work deals with the question of female representation in the ubiquitous photographic medium, and with the complexity of the intimate relationships she carries with herself and others. Her very honest wish is to be able to study many degrees and be a practicing artist without having to worry about money.

DEV BLAIR (*they/them/theirs* or *she/her/hers*) is a 3rd year at Boston University. They're a performance artist, theatremaker, storyteller and freelance content creator. They sing, move and dance, act, and write (plays, poetry, etc.) All of their work is in line with their primary artistic goal: to change the culture. As such they use their art to talk a lot about identity, their own experiences as a black queer non-binary femme, and occasionally to educate people who want to support them and others like them. Check out their work at medium.com/@Dev_Blair and follow them on Twitter and Instagram (also @Dev_

Blair; lowercase for Insta.) You can also like their page on Facebook (Dev Blair) to stay up to date on when they publish new work.

ALLIE CATON (*she/her/hers)* is a senior majoring in communication studies at Boston University. Her professional interests lay in the creative entertainment industry, with a focus on the gaming, comic book, and animation industries. She is passionate about creating and facilitating the creation of stories about and/or by marginalized voices in order to reach women, people of color, and all other people who find themselves lacking representation in the media. Currently she is interning at a children's media studio in Boston, working as a freelance artist, and preparing to graduate in May.

MOLLY CARDENAS (*she/her/hers*) is a senior English major with minors in Feminist Studies and Religious Studies at Southwestern University. A writer at heart, she firmly believes that language and narrative are indispensable tools of activism, education, identification, and expression. She hopes to continue publishing well into the future.

DINUKA COORAY (*she/her/hers*) is a sophomore pursuing a double major in Gender Studies and Pre-Health Studies at the University of Notre Dame. She hopes to attend medical school after graduation and eventually specialize in orthopedic surgery or urology. In her free time she is involved with several gender, sexuality, and diversity based initiatives on campus.

SAL DAÑA (*they/them/theirs*) is currently pursuing their Masters in Fine Art at the New School and attained a BA in Music Composition and Theatre from Columbia College. Mining thought from race and gender studies, philosophy and economics their work is a way to apply these interests to their personal experience through image making, poetry and performance. Imagining futures on the outskirts of the norms, viewing bodies as more than sites for production and

smashing the patriarchy are everyday activities which turn into memes you can find on hell_data_@instagram.com.

ALICE ELBAKIAN (*she/her/hers*) is a senior at Boston University majoring in philosophy, with a strong background in chemistry. She has special interests in moral and legal philosophy, philosophy of the arts. and philosophy of language. Alice is passionate about community engagement, learning, education, discussion, and culture. She aims to have personal relationships with others in light of these passions. Above all, she seeks to challenge others to accept non-normativity and change as a part of daily life, rather than as things reserved for the contexts of large-scale social movements. She is pursuing a career in middle school public education, and hopes to work in the Boston Public Schools system.

ANNIE JONAS (*she/her/hers*) is a freshman double-majoring in English and Sociology with a minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Boston University. Annie is passionate about diverse literature—specifically books written by authors of color or books about race, gender, sexuality, etc.—and human rights. Her dream job would be to become a professor, or to work with UN Women/become Emma Watson. She also enjoys making Mean Girls fan art in her free time and listening to the Ratatouille soundtrack on repeat.

BRIA GOELLER (*she/her/hers*) is a junior at Emory University majoring in Creative Writing and Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in art, social justice, and the articulation of identity. An avid writer, artist, photographer, filmmaker, graphic designer, and musician, she is inspired by the power of stories and the humans who tell them. She enjoys, in her roommate's words, 'things that no one else enjoys, including: rain, total darkness during the daytime, vegetables, shitty rap music, and experimental plays that make no sense" in her free time.

VIVIAN (XIAO WEN) LI (*she/her/hers*) is a sophomore majoring in English and Philosophy at the University of Toronto. She is interested in music, visual art, and creative writing—she hopes to continue to create and to explore the world in all its physical and lyrical mysteries for the rest of her life. She is also feels strongly for human rights. Her first chapbook will be coming out in late 2018. She can be reached @eliktherain.

SOPHIA LIPP (*she/her/hers*) is a junior at Boston University's College of Communication majoring in journalism and concentrating in political science and public relations. With works published in Boston Magazine and London's Evening Standard, Sophia hopes to become a Christiane Amanpour-esque reporter and travel the globe, covering international news headlines. In her free time, catch her at Boston's Fenway Park, where she can be caught yelling obscenities at the New York Yankees.

T**IFFANY MAKOVIC** (*she/her/hers*) is a senior pursuing a major in Economics. She's interested in how our market structures and money itself changes motivation and our values in society. She thinks that identifying as a human rights proponent is important, but hates wearing that title because it assumes everyone else who does not is not assumed to be one as well. She would like to write about the future of economics in pursuit of a healthier society.

KYLIE MCCUISTON (*she/her/hers*) is a sophomore pursuing a major in English at Boston University. She is very passionate about the arts and hopes to work for a nonprofit arts organization one day. She is thankful for everyone in her life that has shaped and supported her and is especially thankful for her friends that pushed her to submit.

NAMU SAMPATH (*she/her/hers*) is a freshman majoring in journalism at Boston University. She is very passionate about photography and women's rights. Namu is interested in pursuing a career as a photojournalist where she hopes to be an activist for

underprivileged women around the world.

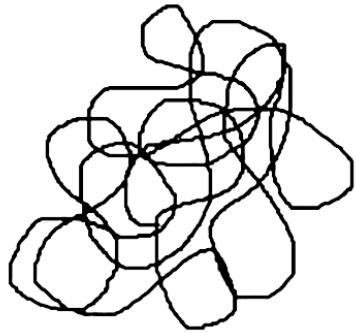
ISABEL TORRES ANGUIANO (*she/her/hers*) is a junior majoring in Political Science, minoring in Women, Gender and Sexuality studies at Boston University, and is on the pre-law track. She has aspirations of having a career in immigration law and some day politics. She spends most of her free time painting. Both her politics and her paintings are influenced by her experience and identity as a Latina, as an immigrant, and as a woman.

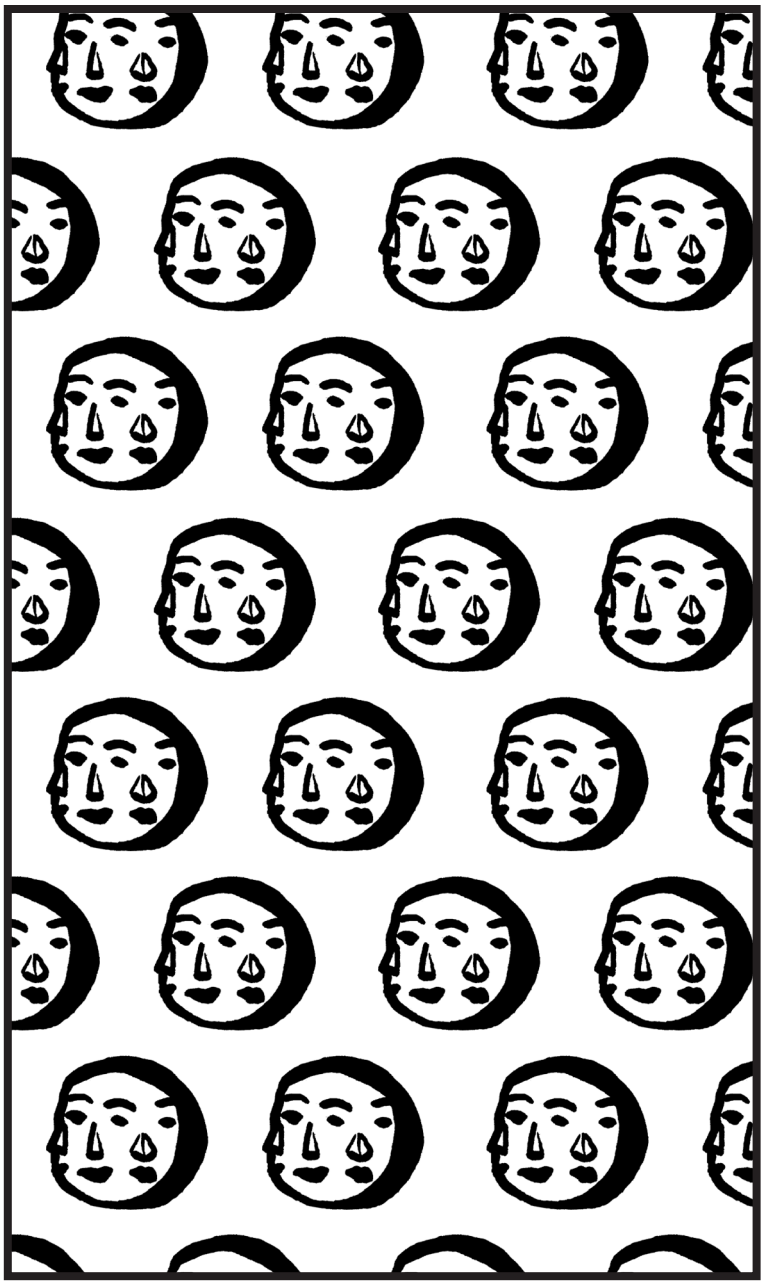
BROOKE TOUBEAU (*she/her/hers*) is an alumni graduate of Massachusetts College of Art and Design. She has been working as a professional Graphic Designer for 10+ years. She has a strong passion for painting, multimedia fine arts, special effects make-up, holistic and spiritual mental & physical wellness, roller derby, and dabbles with writing poetry. Currently she is back in school to become a licensed Esthetician and someday hopes to open her own practice—combining her love for creating facial make-up art and healing mental/physical health.

CORY WILLINGHAM (*he/him/his*) is a sophomore pursuing a double major in Classical Civilizations and Political Science at Boston University. He's interested in labor rights, poetry, and egalitarianism, and hopes to work as a lawyer at some point in his life. If he were granted one wish, he would earnestly try to exploit a loophole and offer a manifesto instead.

It's not your job to be likable.
It's your job to be yourself.
Someone will like you
anyway.

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE





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dinuka COORAY
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