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“To all the voices: heard and unheard”

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Introduction

In life, all any of us want is to be seen and heard. It is easy to feel small in the vastness of this universe we call home. Voices get lost in the wind. Whole worlds doodled in margins are crumpled up and tossed into waste bins. And with the ever-revolving door of posts flipping through our fingers, it's hard to find permanency between the void and the blast. We cry out, and we hope that an echo, no matter how faint, will follow back to reach those who come after us.

My hope is that The Final Draft has been a small source of permanency for the students, faculty, and staff of Durham Tech. Housed in the bindings of this volume, you will find thoughts as varied and unique as our student body, stretching across continents, genders, ages, races, and pasts. But no matter how strikingly varied the contributors of this journal have been, we all have the same four chambers beating in our collective chest. As Ernest Hemingway so poignantly put it, "There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed." This volume is stained by a common thread of scarlet moments, fingerprints left on pieces of lives. Through art and literature, we get to see another's soul, if only for the briefest of glimpses.

Thank you for pausing to see and hear those around you. I deeply wish that you find solace, laughter, tears, and hope in these pages. I hope you are reminded of the resiliency of the human spirit. I hope that, even for a moment, you feel connected to something larger than yourself.

~Jamison McLean

The Final Draft Managing Editor



Photography by Julie Humphries

Fairest Winter
Karen Chamberlain

As cold gems fall through the sky amid thunder and quiet,
Rain softly patters the earth whilst the air is crisp and taut.
No one notices the very moment,
But gradually the air is more frigid and chill.
Fair winter arrives quietly,
Softly drifting down and around, quite dazzling beyond
measure...
Frosted panes furnish every dwelling.
Streets grow quiet and lanterns are lit one by one as night falls,
Blanketing in the arrival of Fairest Winter.

The Prisms of Skylight **Karen Chamberlain**

The softest Pearl of gray dawn,
Shimmering shades unfurling in time...
Of morning's Ruby fires, sailor take warning...
Of the noon Tanzanite tide calmly receding.
Sunshine dazzles Amberly,
Delighting fully until twilight is nigh.
Sapphire hues stolidly imbue her delicate brilliance,
To follow the prelude of silence.
An Onyx darkness lit by the dust of diamonds,
Wavering through the abyss of night in Melanite.



“Red Nebula” by Britney Balmer

Darkness in the Sun

Sir Francis Dashwood

The train chugged along steadily through the early morning light, as the countryside unwound in an endless ribbon of small towns, villages and farms, revealing activity in all its earnestness and ordinariness. I, Johnathan Chapman, was heading home for the summer holidays from my place at school in the Big City. As in the past, it promised to be a strenuous break, working, as I would be, on my father's farm, but hard physical labor was an underlying element of our family's routine and I'd convinced myself that it would be welcome enough because it was predictable, healthy and productive. Indeed, given the validity of that argument, it should have been more welcome to me than ever, because, over the last two summers I had contrived a break in the routine, as I had spent those vacations with school friends, hiking around Europe and exploring the many possibilities beyond the farm's limitations.

Dad met me at the station and he dutifully loaded my luggage into the back of the pickup as I chatted with the sprinkling of inquisitive locals who lingered on the platform. Hometown boy's come back after years away, they seemed to say, from behind appraising glances and arch smiles. Dad looked older and grayer and even more bent down than three years ago when I'd last come home and, despite the determined set to his shoulders, his eyes had dulled and they no longer held the perceptive spark that I remembered from my childhood. The rusty and battered old Ford spluttered into life and protested as we set off for the farm. We said little. There was little to say. Since the accidental shooting death of my older brother, Harry, those years ago, and Mother's consequent decline and passing, Dad's sorrow had deepened to the point where it was hard to say much about any topic.

As we lurched along the home road, the farm looked almost as neat and well-cared for as in years past but, underlying the superficial conversation with Dad, I could sense a unspoken tension in him that never before had seemed to be present. No words said, yet—those might come later—but some nagging concern below the almost formal reintroductions between the father and the son who had become like strangers over the years.

Was it, I speculated, to do with the marriage, five years ago, of my older sister, Claire, to Harrison Price? Quite soon, they had moved into the farm to “look after” my failing mother and then, following her death, my grief-stricken father, a convenient arrangement that had simply seemed to have been taken for granted by all involved.

I remembered Harrison from my time before the Big City—red of hair and red of neck, with hands like hams and a stomach like a bottomless bucket, he lacked the initiative or ambition to grasp for anything beyond his local horizons, but he was steady and reliable and, therefore, was reckoned by all parties to be a good partner for Claire, who was capricious, impulsive, and as changeable in her goals as a butterfly making its way across a spring meadow.

We drew up in the yard of the homeplace. The house, too, looked older and sadder, with peeling paint and warping wood, and it conveyed a general air of faded neglect but, nevertheless, the tempting and long-missed smell of bacon and biscuits greeted me from the kitchen door. Being made by Claire, the biscuits would be store-bought but, after a long trip across country, having breakfast ready and waiting for one is an undeniable treat.

Harrison, who had sprouted a stubbly beard on his jowls and a considerable paunch since the last time I’d seen him, helped lug my cases up to my old room, a room that felt so much smaller now, and where pleasant and somber memories competed to peep from the shadows.

Over breakfast, the reintroductions continued, dusting off old shared experiences, recalling previous events, summarizing local “news”, and, finally, introducing me to my niece, Lyla, who was now three years old and who had been a newborn the only other time I’d seen her. With the wide-open gaze of the child, she welcomed Uncle Jackie to “her” home and I duly produced a doll for her to play with.

I’d had a long journey so, after breakfast, I was allowed to go my room to catch up on sleep. As I lay on my old bed and watched the motes of dust playing in the shafts of sunlight, I turned over in my mind what I had learned. Harrison seemed to be well in with Dad—hard-working, honest and reliable, as he was, he was

a near-perfect substitute for Harry—but Claire was the boss in their relationship, while Lyla clearly was the apple of Dad’s eye. I looked at their domestic arrangements through the eyes of an outsider.

I felt a twinge of jealousy about the situation—more than a twinge, in fact. My education, my sending me away after Harry’s death, had been Mother’s idea, and my father, an amiable enough man but, like Harrison, one with parochial, narrowly-focused goals, had never warmed to having me leave the farm, become “different,” and be the first in the family to attend college. Even today, as in the past, I’d sensed some blame in his eyes, some sense of betrayal and resentment, as he’d regarded me across the breakfast table.

But that wasn’t all. There was more. In the past several days, eventually it was confided, Lyla had begun to speak in her sleep. Not the childish babblings that one might reasonably expect from a toddler but streams of “grown-up” language—the vicious curses and foul obscenities of an angry adult. She was saying things, shocking things, that she could not possibly know, even referring to perversions and methods of torture and to long-dead people that she never could have heard of.

This, then, was the family’s dark secret—was Lyla possessed by some malevolence? So far, the family had hidden Lyla’s affliction from others. It was easy to do as her possession occurred only at night but, still, it surely was only a matter of time before one of the itinerant farmhands, though they slept in their own accommodation away from the farmhouse, heard something to raise suspicions. So far, neither Dr. Fletcher nor Rev. Campbell had been informed of Lyla’s condition but the raging violence of the episodes had been increasing and my father felt that one or the other (medical or spiritual) would soon have to be summoned. Claire had flatly refused to consider this course of action and, naturally, Harrison had sided with her. As Lyla’s parents, it was their call. In fact, I had doubts that either Fletcher or Campbell was equipped to cope with a malady such as this—Fletcher spent most of his time lancing boils, setting bones, and birthing babies while Campbell bicycled benignly around his parish, baptizing Fletcher’s newborns and bestowing words of comfort on the relatives of those whom Fletcher had

failed to keep alive. Neither gentleman seemed up to the current task.

That night, Lyla started again. She began with screams that slashed through the house, and then the words began. Ugly words that no child should hear and that no child should speak. Bitter words. Words that no child should know; thoughts that no child should think.

Lyla slept with Claire and Harrison in her parents' room that had, in earlier days, been my parents' room. Had she, perhaps, overheard the words she uttered from either Claire or from Harrison? To be sure, Claire was plain-spoken and had never balked at using the simple common words for the sorts of things that you encounter around a farm, but Lyla's anguished cries were going far beyond this vocabulary. Harrison had been a bit of a hellraiser in his younger days, hanging out with the tough farm lads, drinking, wenching, and sowing his wild oats, but Lyla's vitriolic invective was not in his placid nature. No—these gutter dregs were the vile manifestation of a profanity alien to the simplicity of the soil and divorced from the sensibilities of normal folk. Thoughts too twisted to spring from the mind of a child but wicked enough to emanate from a malignant entity.

The same pattern repeated over the next few days. Farm work from morning till dusk, much of it leaving my ill-prepared muscles clenched into painful knots, and then the apprehensive wait until lights out. Then the piercing screams and guttural oaths once more.

How those sounds cut into the brain, disrupting sleep and destroying rest! Each morning, we assembled in the kitchen for breakfast, more tired than the day before, while Lyla, oblivious to the turmoil, drank her milk, ate her pancakes, and surveyed us with the calm blue eyes of innocence.

One morning, Pete the vanman brought a note from Harrison's father, telling us that Mrs. Price was quite sick and asking Claire to come over to nurse her through her illness. Clearly, Lyla could not be taken so, in Claire's absence, her care was entrusted to Harrison. That night, Harrison was reluctant to face the

anticipated ordeal alone and so he and I sat together in his bedroom, watching over Lyla as she slept, and discussing the peculiar matter in low tones.

Slowly, as we watched, Lyla started to twist and turn fitfully in her cot, moaning and grumbling gently and, so it seemed to me, a soft glow radiated from her to illuminate the room. As this went on, in the shadows, the room's furniture appeared to begin to melt away as the incandescence gradually increased in intensity. A glance told me that Harrison was transfixed with fear but, for myself, I was strangely calm.

At first almost silently, if such a thing is possible, Lyla began a keening ululation, with her eyes staring and unblinking, with her tiny fists bunched, and with her arms and legs becoming rigid. Then, piercingly, the high screams came and, with them, the dreadful words. Writhing now and flailing, she blasphemed in a thick low tone quite unlike the voice of a child, and spoke shocking imprecations against her parents and her home, her religion and her upbringing, her forefathers and her neighbors. Her preternatural frenzy of hatred was as stunning as it was incongruous. And all the while she continued to glow.

Almost imperceptibly, the room was transforming. A wardrobe now stood in one corner and a large dresser in another, where they had not stood before, while a broad bed with a mahogany headboard occupied the far end of the room. Beside the bed stood two shapes—a woman and a man. Somehow, as Harrison knelt immovably in an attitude of supplication on the floor, I found the courage to approach them.

Each figure was translucent and their appearance revealed that they had come from a far distant time. The man wore breeches and a waistcoat while the woman had a long flowing gown and dark hair that was styled in old-fashioned ringlets. Both apparitions turned to regard me but it was the eyes of the woman that ensnared me. She could not have been more than twenty, but her eyes flashed with an age-old righteous passion, the accusing and reproachful passion of one who has suffered a great wrong and who must avenge it.

Those eyes, curiously oriental in their shape, turned to look down at the figure of a child who was sleeping in the bed. I followed her gaze. With a nauseating lurch of clammy fear, I realized that

the figure on the bed, in its innocence, was I, but from years ago. And then, sickeningly, I understood the cause of the dark corruption within our family.

It was I.

It was I who, in my desire to escape my roots, had deserted my family for the Big City. It was I who had broken my mother's heart. It was I who had widowed my father and shattered his spirit by my abandonment. It was I.

More than this, deeper too, it was I, in a moment of malicious jealousy and rage who, that long-gone spring-time morning, had squeezed the trigger of the shotgun that had killed my brother Harry. Killed Harry. Killed. Harry. And sent me away, amid my parents' silence and grief.

It was I.

But, no, corrected those reproving eyes, whispered that shadowy woman's voice, it was not a momentary action, was it? Not really. Confess. Release your sin. Truly—admit it now—wasn't it a deliberate act? Premeditation? That spring morning in the barn, when you raised the shotgun and pointed it directly at Harry's laughing, taunting face, and softly—ever so softly, ever so gently—squeezed that fatal trigger, wasn't it intentional? Driven by spite? Fueled by envy of the better son? After all these years—sent away by parents who had reeled from you in disgust—can you still, still, be so small, so hollow, that you can't admit what you, and everyone else, knows—that you murdered him, you murdered your brother?

Across the miles and the mountains, her eyes told me that my misplaced and conceited ambition and, more, that festering guilt, that so long had been sequestered in the covert places of my soul, had filtered back to my homeplace to pollute it with corruption, and that it was this evil that the innocent Lyla had detected and which was torturing her. It was this foulness of spirit, that emanated not from her but from me, that screamed its loathing from her guiltless throat and tender lips to rebuke my very existence in this decent, honest place among these decent, honest folk.

Had I been stronger, I would have redeemed myself by standing

firm and healing those injuries to my family that my selfishness and jealousy had wrought. By being strong, Lyla's horror could have been assuaged and my family could have been saved. But I was not strong—I was weak. Weighed in the balance, I was lacking. In that instant of realization and self-revulsion, when I could have faced my sins and atoned for the contamination I had spawned, I failed. Instead of feeling contrition, embracing expiation, and receiving absolution, I turned away from that fateful room and I began to run.

I ran.

I ran, as one possessed of great shame and guilt, from my home and from my family, out into the welcoming and seductive darkness of the night. Ever since then, I have been running and running from the light of repentance that could have delivered me, and running deeper, deeper into that engulfing, welcoming and unending darkness that has become my destiny.

Untitled
Michael Pace

A walk in a sea of faces. The walk leads me to a table of time.

The time was of the past. Other people's memories. Other
people's experiences frozen on pages.

I coughed on the words. They were too numerous for me. The stories were not mine. Why should they not be? Do I have something to say?



“Open My Heart” by Sharon Stack

Alluring Sweet Nothings

Daniel Valentine Rivera

Hey, I'm not very good at talking to girls out of the blue.
But let me start by saying it's such a pleasure to meet you.

Relax because the only thing I want to do is talk for a bit.
Get to know me first and I swear you won't ever regret it.

Please forgive me if I'm bothering you or coming off too strong.
Just give me a few minutes of your time, I promise I won't take long.

Perhaps the conversation would flow better if you told me your name.

Tell me a little bit about yourself and in return I'll do the same.

I can tell you're interested even though you may think the feeling is clandestine.

The thing about me is I know to treat a woman like a princess so pristine.

It's the impact of your beauty that captivates me the most.
Making me wonder how much would I give to have you close.

Is there someone in the picture who values and appreciates your elegance?

Someone who cherishes and respects you every time you're in his presence?

If not, then let me say what a shame it is that you're going unnoticed,
Because I'd be there to lift your spirits even when you're at your lowest.

If you were with me, your tears would fade as if you couldn't feel pain.

You'd have nothing to lose because you would have so much to gain.

I'm not like other guys because I'm sure I would treat you right.
And if anybody else wants to conquer you then I hope they're ready to put up a fight.

In just a matter of seconds, I could completely change your mind
And right before you finish a sentence, true happiness is what you could find.

You wouldn't be considered my possession, but more like a figure of admiration.

Whenever people ask, I'd say I hold you in esteem at any moment or situation.

I want to bestow you with everything your heart is missing, and ignite any and all desires you have so we end up kissing.

It's evident that you're skeptical about my sudden shower of compliments.

But if you fell in love with me, I'd consider that one of my biggest accomplishments.

I wouldn't stop pursuing you even if I had no chance of winning your heart

I may not know much but I know for a fact romance is a good place to start.

There are several words I could say to take your breath away.

There are a million poems I could write to make you smile every day.

If you let me I'd make you the magic of my inspiration.

When it comes to poetry you'd be the only source of motivation.

I'm not trying to allure you by whispering sweet nothings in your ear.

I'm trying to offer you a love so secure it would last for more than a year.

Take my love and I promise, you will never have the need to shed a tear.

Just tell me you love me and I will tell you that's absolutely everything I need to hear.



“Tea Time” by Patrick Bowman

“Barack Obama – How the Master’s Tools can Dismantle the Master’s House”

By VGW

Living in a country where race will always determine one’s self-worth simply by the color of their skin instead of being based on one’s merit is truly problematic to all sides of the color spectrum. Barack Obama negotiates the race rules defined by our white supremacist patriarchy to break the race barriers in our nation. Even as a child, Obama did not think much of the fact that his mother was a pale white woman, whereas his dad was a dark black man. Today, these ideals of race have stayed about the same for Obama, but this is not to say he doesn’t believe race is not a huge social issue. Obama used the most powerful tool of all, knowledge, to find himself through self-love, self-respect, and self-identity which allowed him to disembark from the “black tax” that was created from the history of blackness. Obama’s memoir, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, touches upon the dimensions of his life that helped liberate him from his oppressors and create the man he is today. Not only did the places where he lived influence his discovery of self-identity; his racial awareness and his male role models impacted his journey to becoming the 44th President of the United States as well. Guided by his determination to become a great man, Obama also found out what being an African, an African American, and an African American male means in our nation. With this understanding of how race dominates the average American’s social life, Obama liberated himself from his oppressors and tore down the master’s house by not falling victim to the angry black male stereotypes. Additionally, he does not assert white privilege.

Blackness is a part of black culture that can mean several different things affecting people’s black experience. The “black

tax” simply put means that an African American has to work twice as hard to prove that they are worthy or equal to their Caucasian counterparts. The black tax can be correlated with blackness in the manner that it helps create the conditions that some African Americans’ experience in their social, physical, economic, political, cultural, and stereotypical lives daily. This black tax also ties in directly with the identity process that some African Americans will endure throughout their lifetime in our nation. Cornell West declares that “racial reasoning” is one that must be replaced with “moral reasoning,” which is all intertwined with an African American’s identity (25). West believes that:

This new framework should be a prophetic one of moral reasoning with its fundamental ideas of mature black identity, coalition strategy, and black cultural democracy. Instead of cathartic appeals to black authenticity, a prophetic viewpoint bases mature black self-love and self-respect on the moral quality of black responses to undeniable racist degradation in the American past and present. (28)

Obama avoided paying the black tax by fighting against those character traits our white supremacist patriarchal society defined for him. The knowledge he obtained during his journey of self-love and respect is what West was referring to, which allowed him to break past stereotypical boundaries placed into existence during slavery. Obama states, “To be black was to be the beneficiary of a great inheritance, a special destiny, glorious burdens that only we were strong enough to bear,” and these were ideas that he came up with, not by the education he received at school, but by the education he received from his Caucasian mother (51). Here Obama equates blackness as not only a special kind of burden, but a gift that makes African Americans “authenticity” irreplaceable because they have a unique history.

Blackness, the black tax, and race rules intersect to construct the traditional views of the dominant group. Race rules are folkways in American culture, those social norms that determine how most people will live their daily lives, regardless of their efforts to defy the odds, like the segregated neighborhoods they live in and their means of educational attainment. Michael Eric Dyson reiterates this point, “Race is not a card. It is a condition. It is a set of beliefs and behaviors shaped by culture, rooted in history, and fueled by passions that transcend reason” (42). Even with these race rules in place, Obama uses his tool of knowledge to destroy the master’s house. He admits navigating between both “black and white worlds,” although he always found it peculiar when white people asked him racially biased questions during his teenage years. Ultimately, these situations aided him in achieving triumph over the race rules when he grasped the idea of W.E.B. Du Bois’ double consciousness theory about trying to understand oneself as a Negro and an American, and in Obama’s case having an extra facet by being an African as well.

After reading Obama’s memoir, one can quickly recognize that he did not live the average African American’s life as a child and teenager. He was raised in Indonesia as a young child by his mother and his Indonesian step father, Lolo. Lolo became a central male role model to Obama by teaching him gender roles that were associated with what it meant “to be a man.” This notion of manhood reinforced ideals of hiding true emotions and bottling up feelings that mimicked the hegemonic masculinity as defined by the dominant white supremacist patriarchy. Due to this problematic approach toward handling a boy’s feelings and emotions, when he saw a Life magazine which talked about African American’s bleaching their skin to become “whiter” he restrained showing his emotions of confusion, anger, and disgust, which were triggered by racial issues (Obama 29-30).

As Obama grew into a teenager, he was sent to Hawaii to live with his mother's parents, Stanley (also known as Gramps) and Toot. While in Hawaii, he realized that his grandfather was a unique Caucasian man in his accepting ways of rejecting white privilege to a degree, but he still understood the benefits of not having to be black in America. When his grandmother refused to take the bus to work anymore due to a black male panhandler bugging her from the previous day, Obama started to sense his racial awareness more than ever (Obama 87-91). This made him feel trapped in his emotions because he had no one to confide in about this dilemma. Gramps' friend, Frank, an older African American gentleman, sat down with Obama shortly after that incident and told him that, "What I'm trying to tell you is your grandma's right to be scared. She's at least as right as Stanley is. She understands that black people have a reason to hate. That is just how it is. For your sake, I wish it were otherwise. But it's not. So you might as well get used to it" (Obama 90-91). These three men alone, Lolo, Gramps, and Frank, came from all different races, but each one helped Obama learn how to become a man in our society. And in the case of Frank's purpose toward Obama, what it was to be an African American man. Statistics show that African American children are being raised more in single parent homes, usually ran by their mothers. This fact alone separates Obama greatly because although his real father did not raise him, he had three culturally diverse males to help him understand race and masculinity.

Obama's childhood male role models implanted enough ideals about what manhood is that he became detached from his own emotions. In *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity*, bell hooks describes this "trauma" that he endured from bottling up his emotions as "soul murdering;" which is "the psychological term that best describes this crushing of the male spirit in boyhood"

(87). This soul murdering becomes a conduit for African American boys to become angry, and eventually become the stereotypical “angry black man.” Since Obama was exposed to this soul murdering that hooks refers to time and time again from Lolo, Gramps, and Frank why does he not show the traits of a stereotypical angry black man? One potential answer is that Obama used his tool of knowledge of the white supremacist patriarchal society he lives in and flipped the script. This indicates a transformation of freedom that he must have taken throughout his life when finding himself in a racist society that constantly makes him feel unworthy of love and pride. Kevin Powell’s book, *Who’s Gonna Take the Weight?: Manhood, Race, and Power in America*, discusses how he was also taught as a boy to hate himself simply because he was an African American male in our nation, but he goes on to say that, “A major part of the process of shedding self-hatred comes from freeing my own voice to speak the truth of what I see around me, inside of me” (101). Hooks indicates that, “The failure of black males to look to those black males who have liberated themselves via new life maps is rooted in misguided allegiance to the status quo—an allegiance that is cultivated during childhood” (86). Obama accomplished the same strategy that Powell used to help take down the master’s house; which makes him and Powell African American males who created “new life maps.”

Considering Obama’s childhood and teenage years, one might expect him to gravitate toward his whiteness more than his blackness, but instead he placed both dimensions of his inheritance on equal playing fields. Given his comprehension of racial awareness and race rules, these elements did not come overnight to him; several other occasions in his college and young adult years indicated his negotiations with both blackness and whiteness. For example, Regina, a classmate at Occidental

College in L.A. questions why he called himself Barry instead of Barack. Regina and Obama spent the whole day together telling stories from their past, while both were wishing they lived in the place of the other. Ironically, Obama associates blackness with physical location that he longed for, but Regina associates a better life by physical location not based on race.

As Obama ventures to unfamiliar territory in Chicago, Illinois this is where he comes into contact with the last two men in the U.S. that helped influence his understanding of being an African American male, while still trying to negotiate his blackness and whiteness at the same time. Marty, the Jewish boss of Obama for a few years, and Reverend Jeremiah Wright, a leader in Obama's organization both molded Obama in different ways to assist him in his journey of self-discovery. Up until this point, Obama had always associated whiteness with being an element of advantage for Caucasian people in particular, but he soon becomes enlightened by a contrasting concept when he saw the difficulties that Marty had as the white man in charge of an organization solely helping minorities. Obama becomes aware of this disadvantage when he overhears African American ladies of the organization talking about Marty's automatic white privilege and no matter how much he tries to help them, he will never fully understand their community due to his race and also his middle class status (Obama 151). This incident alone helped Obama grasp the fact that the white privilege he could possibly assert was not all it was cracked up to be. Even though one may say that Obama is his own oppressor due to him being half Caucasian, without acting upon his white privilege he resists power and prestige that could have shaped him differently. This situation makes him recognize that not only was race a dimension that could have separated him from the people he was trying to help in his organization, but his class status had never been the same as them

either, just like Marty's status. In *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*, Audre Lorde believed, "Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged," and this difference that separated Obama from the people in his organization he helped made him more valuable once he understood how to approach the situation from a non-bias demeanor (112). This incident with Marty and the ladies in the organization not only helped him gain more racial awareness, but also awareness of class standards that are meant to define people by their income and wealth, while revealing those who are worthy and unworthy as considered by a white supremacist patriarchy.

When Obama was introduced to Reverend Wright, his eyes started to open wide to the possibility that just because one comes from a perceived group doesn't mean that they can't work together with others to achieve the same goal. Reverend Wright focuses on the "us" factor instead of the "we" or "they" factors, forcing Obama to recognize that his blackness and whiteness combined were a blessing in disguise instead of an extra burden to create more confusion when trying to figure out one's self-identity (Obama 284). Because of Reverend Wright's teachings, Obama was able to build his own legacy as a man who doesn't see race as a crutch, but as a powerful entity. This powerful entity could be manipulated into bad things, but to the same extent it has the potential to better all mankind as well.

Once Obama arrived in Kenya after his father died, his last name was recognized by an airline representative in association to his father, Dr. Obama (Obama 305). New emotions of pride, self-love, and respect gave him a peace of mind he had never felt before. Obama's identity was graced with a new chapter of his life when he felt his father's spiritual presence in Kenya. He started to feel whole for the first time ever because being only American left

him with reservations about his self-love and respect, but now accepting he was African as well made a big difference in his life. Hearing his father's and grandfather's story from his father's mother permitted him to emerge as a new man; a man with a new understanding who wasn't afraid to show emotions as he cried beside his father's grave (Obama 429-430). This is the final event that Obama needed in his life to complete a broken past, a past in which he can now learn from and act upon to better himself in the future in more ways than one. This allowed Obama to possibly help future generations of African American males and potentially any male in the U.S. to liberate themselves from the status quo of masculinity and race. By using role models, like Barack Obama, who have succeeded past the racial and gender role boundaries in our society, these new generations of males could become great men for not only themselves and their families, but also for our society built on race. If all males could explore a journey of knowledge built by self-discovery based on racial awareness and race rules like Obama, then maybe the infrastructure of our racist society could then be dismantled by the master's tools as a form of liberation.

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“Girl in Lemon” and “Girl in Peach” by Sharon Stack



“In the Misty Moonlight” by Sharon Stack

Sunlight

Kyla Ponciano

It warms my body
As I sit under the old oak tree
As my mind wanders into the distance
Thinking of nothing
After a hard day of work
It calms my body
I start laughing as my body soaks the sun
Feeling content

Rain

Kyla Ponciano

The gentle pitter patter of rain softly taps my window
As I stare blankly out
Refreshing my spirit
Thinking of nothing except the tiny, little drops coming out of
the sky
Watching everything grow and develop into a beautiful forest
Each drop is like a powerful river
The soft, gentle breeze blows the wonderful scent hanging in the
air - into my room
The sound of rain lifts my soul
Until night falls
What a beautiful world

Life

Kyla Ponciano

The cool, gentle breeze, softly brushes against me
Birds from all corners singing a beautiful harmony
While a little black spider crawls out of its den
Exploring the greater world beyond
Soaring up high in the sky
A majestic bird flies
Not stopping until he finds his loved ones
A bright, red bird
Lying motionless
In the dark corners I lay
Without a trace
Not knowing which way to go
Life is a mystery
We should embrace
In the dark paths I go
Until the end
Of the dark tunnel
I turn towards you
Knowing that you are gone
Until my story is heard
I bid thee adieu



“Chesapeake Bay Pier” by Melissa Scarth

Trait

Hannah Mallah

Eyes like the summer of green grass
As peddled to stream of mint
Like a cup of tea
As the pinky light toned

Clashes the plate
As beauty is in her trait
Like she's eating from plate
As she's not fickle

Like a dotted in a direction
As a straight line to perfection
Pink is class to a glass
And left hand is waiting

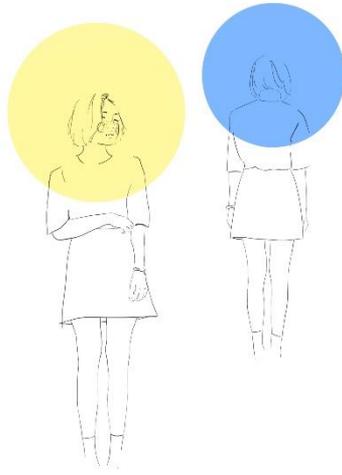
Barbie

Hannah Mallah

Picture a doll in an blue white striped dress
As an hourglass in a gleam to a term
Like the ceramic in her smile
Stalled to be cream

Like the straight lines in a moon
As a model to perfection
Like a beauty before brains
As perfection is beauty

Like heels make hell burn as a stunner
As one step across over the other
Like she is a Barbie girl living in the real world, but she is not
plastic



“Focus and Let Go” by Britney Balmer

Catharsis

Jamison Cole McLean

You are the secret I keep to myself,
The face in my locket, the heart on my shelf;
You are the name I say in my head,
The one I whisper over and over again;
You are the wish that blows the lights out;
When I think of candles, I think of our house;
My greatest achievement, my greatest regret,
You left me strong, you left me bent;
My name on your lips, your tears on my tongue;
You think you're forgotten, but I am undone.

Requiem for Babylon

Kevin George

I saw the souls of my generation crushed by the machine,
grind grind grinding.

Prostitute themselves through the commission looking for
slavery to the master.

Hungry souls burning for any connection to the light in the
dark,

Who hammered the nails and washed the linens and
trembling, sat up late in the bed

Darkness of night floating across the lids of the sleeping
children.

Silently unaware of the desperation, innocent dreaming a
future of nevernever.

Amber bubbles and demon spirit siren song of an ethereal
light,

House a beacon for the weary, downtrodden, tired and seeking
false hope.

Rage, rage against the machine filled with false courage and
bravery and powder and fire and Smoky leaf and hope and sober

To do it all again.

Punch the card and count the clock. Count the chips and fill
the purse. Give the token

To your master. And despair.

And fill the streets and bars and stores with the fodder for the
machine, those weary souls

Who feed the few that drive the great beast.

Who run in the wheels that turn and turn and grind the bones
as they worship and chant

The praises and the psalms of the message drilled in
subliminal by flickering light,

With pixels crafted cunning and aimed with deadly force at
the young, dumb, impressionable Future bodies of commerce and
the pride of human husbandry.

Who pledge their allegiance to the iSomething and swear their
loyalty to the Nothing in their Threads of name and number so
unique in their sameness.

Who brag and who post and who mock while they strut and
shutter with duck face,

With thumb up, who try to be so different while they claim
friendship to similarity.

Who recite the mantra of the flickering diode of broadcast
electron re-posting and re-sharing

And re-hashing, originality through mimicry.

Who purchase their status and wear their loyalty proud on
sleeve and breast and ankle

Showing their allegiance, doing what they're told by cable and
billboard.

I saw the world filled with hunger, needing and wanting and
eating and feeding

On each other, while the stores dwindle and the shelves fill
with need and want and have.

While my brother starves my pockets are filled with the
glimmering, sleek, shiny, new Expensive. It must be worth it. The
box is my master and it tells me so in pretty pictures

And words.

I watch and I listen and I learn, what I am supposed to do to
buy, to want to be, to eat to feed,

To consume.



“Pop Art for Zoe” by DeCarlos Hickson

Beauty Bar

Daniel Valentine Rivera

It's a shame how high the beauty bar was raised for women in society.

So high, in fact, it gives people like you princess the feeling of anxiety.

Beauty isn't specific; I believe it has a wider variety.

But I think you're absolutely gorgeous and I mean that in complete sobriety.

I think it's fascinating how your facial features are always on fleek.

Your captivating beauty is so immense it makes me feel weak.
You have a heart-stopping smile that is as sweet as a kiss on the
cheek.
In fact, every single detail about you catches my attention every
time we speak.

Out of every female in our school you have the loveliest pink
lips by far,
Eyes filled with sparks that illuminate me like how I'm
illuminated by a night star
I tell you these things to boost your confidence so you feel like
you can reach this bar.
Trying to avoid saying things that would make you feel less than
what you actually are.

With a face like that you never have to dress to impress.
Looking at it warms my heart and even takes away my stress.
It's like you have the power to have total control of me like a
sorceress.
A simple 'you're beautiful' isn't enough which is why this poem
is how I express.

I know your insecurities of your appearance kill you in the
inside.
But you completely hypnotized me every single time our eyes
collide
Why not embrace your beauty because you have nothing to hide.
Because when you feel beauty within you, it shows from the
outside.

Stop hating your face, your body, your personality, and your
quirks.
Learn to love them as much as I love you and ignore those
worthless jerks.
When you satisfy yourself, you satisfy me, and believe me it has
many perks.
Never depend on others for your happiness but try to depend on
me only if it works.



“Acoustics”



“Bloom”

Abigail Richardson

“Handiwork”



“Memories”



Casualty of War

Sir Francis Dashwood

Pearceville, a small Southern town nestling among the folds and wrinkles of North Carolina's Smokey Mountains, is remarkable in only one way: even today, an extremely high concentration of residents are descendents of Scottish migrants evicted during the Highland Clearances that were perpetrated in the decades following the ill-starred rebellion led by Prince Charles Edward Stuart—the “Bonnie Prince Charlie” of legend—in 1745. Following the Bonnie Prince's abortive attempt to overthrow the established monarchy, a concerted effort destroyed the clan system that had given him his support—tartans were banned, the playing of bagpipes outlawed, clansmen disarmed, chieftains disempowered and humbled. Redcoats bayoneted resisters. The ultimate step in this “final solution” was the mass exportation from the hills and glens of their birth of thousands of tenant-farmers and their families. Barefoot, penniless, and persecuted, they were herded onto ships bound for the plantations of the West Indies and the Carolinas.

The coastal swamps and humid Piedmont did not well suit these new Americans named Stewart, MacDonald, and MacGregor, and so they moved off to the west, carrying their names and their culture with them, until they found a river ford in the mountains where they rested and put down roots. The community's name, Pearceville, came during Reconstruction—a tribute to a carpetbagger.

In 1776, the townsfolk sided with the Patriots, with sword and black-powder musket facing down the forces of King George. The War Between the States saw their fierce passion pledged to the Confederacy, although some men left to fight for the North. After the war, those men did not return and their names were never more spoken.

And so it continued down through the years. With each call to arms, the men of Pearceville rose to support the cause to the best of their ability. Many walked from their hollers and mountainsides to serve with distinction and bravery in theaters of war ranging from the blood-soaked battlefields of the Marne and Chateau Thierry, to Guadalcanal, the D-Day landings and the

Ardennes, to Pusan and Inchon in Korea. Two men from Pearceville (both MacDonalDs) died during Vietnam's Tet Offensive, and others fell in fields of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 1910, the Daughters of the Confederacy erected a square plinth to remember the casualties of the War Between the States: on its front side are engraved the names of the lost Confederates on a Roll of the Honored Dead. Fallen warriors from subsequent conflicts have been memorialized by having their names added to the Roll. All four sides now bear names.

On top of the plinth, the town placed a bronze statue of a Rebel soldier standing, facing north, in constant vigil against the enemies of his community. "Donal Doo" (Domhnall Dubh), as he is known locally, stands in readiness, in the shadow of the church's bell tower, his bayonet attached to the muzzle of his Enfield rifle, which he holds diagonally in the "port arms" position, with the implied warning that Donal Doo remains alert and dangerous even if his muzzleloader is empty. In a custom steeped in age-old pagan imagery, the bride on the morning of her wedding day tosses a garland of flowers or twisted grass, hoopla-style, over the sharpened point of Donal's bayonet before entering the church.

Throughout this turmoil of history, the folks of Pearceville changed only slowly and, when change came, changed grudgingly. After the Great Depression, roads were paved and children stayed longer in school before returning to farmwork, but the community remained closeknit and insular. Many of the older folks still sprinkled their conversations with Gaelic terms and, even today, a visitor to Pearceville can hear clearly in their speech the soft inflections and trills of their distant ancestors. Gaelic influence was evident also in the naming of people. With so many Stewarts, MacDonalDs, and MacGregors, there could be several "Robert Stewarts" in town, so inhabitants might be distinguished as "Raibeart Og" (Young Robert) or "Raibeart Mor" (Big Robert), whereas a black-haired child might be known as "Raibeart Dubh" by his companions.

So this is Pearceville.

This last spring, a committee of womenfolk successfully pitched the idea that Pearceville should have a harvestfest. This would

involve a celebration of the bounty received from the land, of course, but the committee felt that the deep culture of the town also should be acknowledged. Accordingly, a three-day-long slate of events, displays, concerts and competitions was devised—events showing how to weave and dye cloth and to prepare traditional foods, displays of Highland dancing, concerts of Highland music, including unaccompanied singing (*puirt-a-beul*) and *pibrochs* (*piobaireachds*), and competitions in Highland sports, such as tossing the caber. Committee chair, Mrs. Morna Stewart, a stout woman with resolute bearing and steel-gray hair, contended that this vision of Harvestfest was insufficient and that, as the culmination of the event, there must be a commemoration of those lost in wars: a lone piper, picked out by a single spotlight, would play “Amazing Grace” at midnight on the Sunday of Harvestfest.

Two questions remained: who should play, and from where? The first question was the easier to answer—Iain Og MacGregor was the finest piper in the district, despite his youth. The old saying that it takes twenty-one years to make a piper—seven years learning, seven years practicing, seven years playing—seemed not to have applied to sixteen year-old Iain Og. Even as a child, he revealed an otherworldly gift with the chanter and, when he moved on to the pipes themselves, the old men of the town, eyes brightened by the flame of *usquebae*, would shed tears at the passion that swelled up within them. Iain Og’s *strathspeys* and *reels* would ring across the river bottoms and soar to the hilltops; in time, his *pibrochs* matured to majestic statements of universal sorrow and beauty.

But no gift comes unbidden: Iain Og’s was born of tragedy. His older brother, Calum, whom Iain had idolized as a small child, died in a friendly fire incident in Iraq: Calum’s name is on the plinth. Grief swamped young Iain. He wept in school; he cried in church; he screamed out his demons nightly in his bed, as his mother wrung her hands in silent anguish. The pipes were his sanctuary and his comfort, and he practiced with an intensity that was reflected in his troubling blue eyes.

Regarding the second question, Morna Stewart crushed a breakaway group that wanted the piper to play on the steps of the town hall—the lone piper, she stated with finality, would play in

the bell tower of the church. It was the tallest building, it had a balcony, it was religious, it was an older structure than the town hall, and it was what she wanted.

Harvestfest was a splendid success. Under Morna Stewart's eagle eye, events proceeded as scheduled; displays and concerts were sold out; parking concerns proved unfounded; hotels and bed-and-breakfasts did handsome business; bars, shops, and restaurants were well-patronized. Even the competitive games were largely reputable, except for a dispute about the tug-of-war (a suggestion that one team's turf had been watered by its opponents), combative claims of mismeasurement in the hammer throw and some serious elbow-throwing in one or two of the races but, by that point in the day, the liquor that had been flowing freely was beginning to take effect. Going into the final ceremony, it's illuminating to report that the most controversial aspect of Harvestfest had been the unexpected selection of Mayor MacDonald's daughter, Morag, as "Miss Pearceville." The music concerts had engaged their audiences, but some remarked that Iain Og MacGregor had chosen not to participate. In competitive piping events, his presence hardly would have been fair, as his talent dwarfed that of other entrants, but most hoped that he might have taken the stage to treat audiences in "party-piece" entertainments. It was not to be. Shrewd observers averred that he simply was saving himself for his "lone piper" appearance, but even shrewder observers were less sure.

As the weekend of Harvestfest had approached, a few percipient students of behavior had noticed changes in Iain Og. He was pale, paler than usual, and withdrawn. His eyes slid past yours. He seldom spoke. And, as the great event drew ever closer, these traits seemed to intensify. It was as if a giant dam was being pressured by a mighty flood of water. Shrewd observers averred that he simply was suffering from nerves, but even shrewder observers shook their heads in uneasiness.

The shrewder observers were correct—a powerful struggle was in progress for the soul of Iain Og MacGregor. He had been asked and, to be sure, he had freely agreed to play the part of the "lone piper." He had practiced until his educated fingers ached and his ears rang with the sounds of his beloved pipes. At his

request, many mornings Widow MacGregor—his mother, Calum’s mother—had driven him up into the remote mountains so that he could sit on a ledge overlooking the valleys and, in that natural cathedral, play to the blue of the skies and to the green of the earth. Playing a hymn to redemption from sin. Acknowledging the sacrifice of generations of young men. Playing for Calum and for his own abiding sorrow.

One day, as Iain Og sat on his ledge and played his pipes, an eagle circled lazily in a thermal before him, confident of its place in the order of things. Watching the eagle gave Iain Og the strength of resolve to do what he must do.

On the Sunday night, Iain Og donned his best kilt and jacket, picked up his pipes, and made his way to the church. On his way he was greeted by, and responded to, many well-wishers. Few noticed a small bundle he was carrying; none asked about it. As midnight neared, Iain Og climbed the stairs of the bell tower towards the small balcony. There he slipped off his jacket and put on Calum’s torn camouflage jacket from the package he’d carried, then he stepped out on the balcony. Below, in the square, around the memorial plinth, a buzz of excitement and anticipation rose from the crowd but he stood completely alone. Iain Og was prepared.

The spotlight revealed a pale apparition of Calum, and then Iain Og began to play on the great Highland war pipes of the Jacobites, and to play as he had never played before. He played “Amazing Grace” with a purity, a keening clarity, that made the listeners below gasp and shiver at the emotional poignancy of it. Notes of sacrifice, grace notes of salvation.

Some who were there maintain that Iain Og played for an hour, so enthralled by his performance were they but, in truth, he played but three minutes, as had been arranged. The spotlight faded and Iain placed his pipes lovingly on the floor of the balcony. Then he climbed onto the parapet and looked down at the upturned faces of the people in the square. He took a breath. And then he jumped.

But Iain Og did not strike the ground seventy feet below—that was not his destiny. Nor did he soar away to freedom like an eagle in the mountain air. Witnesses saw Iain Og plummet, arms

outspread, but he stopped before he hit the ground. There was a vile “shluching” sound as Iain Og was impaled on Donal Doo’s upward-pointing bayonet. The bayonet ripped into his plunging body through Iain’s stomach, slashed through the lungs that gave his bagpipes their breath, and exited through his throat, wrenching his head back at an ugly angle and snapping his neck. Iain’s body, limbs flailing, corkscrewed round the fulcrum of Donal’s bayonet and rifle barrel and, finally, Iain Og MacGregor was at peace.

The name of Iain Og MacGregor does not appear on Pearceville’s war memorial but many in town say that it should for, truly, Iain Og MacGregor was a casualty of war.



Photography by Julie Humphrey

“Let Go, Let Flow:” How and Why Society’s Views toward Interracial Heterosexual Relationships have changed from the 1960’s Until Today

By VGW

In our nation, race has always been a controversial topic. Not only does this race determine our educational attainment and living conditions, but it also dictates who one can fall in love with. The long standing history between blacks and whites, starting with slavery and advancing into Jim Crow and miscegenation laws, has impacted and shaped views toward interracial heterosexual relationships (dating and married couples). I have seen society’s views, as a whole, change toward people who are involved in interracial relationships. The view points toward interracial heterosexual relationships between black and white couples have shifted in a more acceptable manner compared to previous generations. Several factors have contributed toward these changes, including but not limited to, miscegenation laws being ruled unconstitutional, bi-racial children growing in numbers, and people obtaining higher levels of education.

Looking back in U.S. history, movies have helped newer generations understand where certain view points toward interracial heterosexual relationships emerged. One of the first mainstream movies that addressed these types of relationships was *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*. Made in 1967, it starred Sidney Poitier (a black male) and Katherine Houghton (a white female) as an interracial couple. Poitier and Houghton had only known each other for a few days before deciding to get married. Throughout the movie, there is a transition in Houghton’s mother, who admits to Poitier’s mother that she doesn’t mind the marriage, and neither does Poitier’s mother. Both Poitier’s and Houghton’s

fathers however, seem to have a dilemma with this situation. After long consideration to what his daughter and her fiancé may endure if they marry, Houghton's dad comes around to see that his daughter's happiness is all that matters. The movie ends on a good note with Houghton's father telling everyone that even though society will continuously judge their relationship, they must stay strong for each other for their love to last.

In *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, it becomes obvious throughout the movie that society's views toward interracial dating played a big role to why the couple should not date. A study done in 1961 at Oregon State University wanted to see what influenced people to date interracially. The study questioned 212 students by asking them eight arguments concerning why one would date outside of their race and to place each argument into a ranked order. The students options under the ranked categories were, "Very Great," "Some," "Very Little," "None," and "Don't Know." The study showed that from the eight arguments a "significantly larger portion of respondents attached 'Very Great' influence to the argument" that said, "To make distinctions on the basis of race membership is undemocratic; rather, you should evaluate people on the basis of ability and personality" (Barnett 91). Barnett also stated, "That approximately three out of ten respondents anticipated that the 'undemocratic' argument would be of 'Very Great' influence, but only about one in ten had actually engaged in an interracial date" (92). This makes me wonder if marches, sit-ins, and protests that were occurring primarily in the south during the Civil Rights Movement era influenced the student's responses. For example, the Selma to Montgomery marches, the Greensboro sit-ins, Freedom Rides, and etc. Since most students were not willing to date outside of their race, why did they select the "ability and personality" over race argument more than any other argument as 'Very Great'? A

potential answer could be that they didn't want to be perceived as a racist by marking the arguments that seemed more traditional in a white supremacist society.

Movies are still a contributing factor toward setting society's views toward interracial relationships. In 2006, a movie called *Something New* depicted yet another interracial couple. This movie starred Sanaa Lathan (a black female) and Simon Baker (a white male) as the interracial couple. In this movie, Lathan, an educated and professional woman, struggles to find an acceptable "I.B.M." (Ideal Black Man). In the movie, an I.B.M. is defined by Lathan as, "A good brother. He doesn't have to make a lot of money, so long as he has a job. He just has to be taller than me, college educated, and not crazy. No kids, good teeth, and no kinky sex." After realizing she is too picky in dating, her friend mentions that being that picky is a way to self-sabotage one's love life and that they all needed to "Let go, let flow." Lathan then decides to go on a blind date where she is introduced to Baker. Although, he is perfectly fine with the two of them being different races, she is extremely disturbed by this situation. After running into Baker again at an engagement party, Lathan hires him as her landscaper. Once on the job, Baker starts to open Lathan's mind to new possibilities, which leads her to question her self-identity as a black woman.

After entering into couple status with Baker, Lathan is introduced to Blair Underwood, an educated black male professional. Lathan and Baker have an argument about "being black" at a local grocery store and break up after pressure from Lathan, herself, and outside forces finally get into her head. She then starts dating Underwood regularly, but isn't happy and leaves him. Lathan becomes so distraught with her decision to leave her I.B.M. that she seeks guidance from her female friend who explains to her that she decided for herself, no one else, to love a

man regardless of his skin complexion. Putting all her prejudices aside and ignoring society's views toward her love life, Lathan finally goes back to Baker. In the last scene of the movie they get married.

Incidentally, Earl Smith and Angela J. Hattery claimed in their book that, the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (an annual survey of trends) reported 395,000 interracial marriages between blacks and whites (12). Smith and Hattery show in a chart this depiction of interracial heterosexual marriages, where it is clear to see there is a steady increase in the number of these marriages starting with about 25,000 marriages in 1960 and advancing to 395,000 in 2002 (13). Even with this being the case, all interracial marriages only consisted of about 2% of all marriages in 2005, which decreases the percentage of black and white marriages to about 0.06% (Childs 544). According to new studies from September of 2011, 7.4% of all marriages are interracial, but blacks and whites still marry less than any other interracial groups (Kellogg). This is still a smaller portion than same race marriages, but over the long haul, from 1960 until today there has been a steady increase in interracial marriages between blacks and whites.

Miscegenation laws that were set in place during the Civil War era were finally ruled unconstitutional as early as 1967 when the *Loving vs. Virginia* case came about. Miscegenation became a new term around 1864 when "Democrats made the issue of sex between white women and black men a national political scandal" (Romano 6). Benokraitis declares that miscegenation is "marriage or sexual relations between a man and a woman of different races" (113). The *Loving vs. Virginia* case in 1967, tested these miscegenation laws when an interracial couple (a black female and a white male) left Virginia to get married, but came back to their home state to live. The couple was "convicted of violating

the Racial Integrity Act” in the state of Virginia, and were given the option to move out of state or go to jail for a year (Craig-Henderson 8). The couple went to court and finally won their case in Supreme Court due to the ruling that found people to have the “freedom to marry” foundation (Craig-Henderson 8). Miscegenation laws, also known as anti-miscegenation, finally became unconstitutional in our nation. Albeit, miscegenation laws were now illegal, white supremacist beliefs were still headstrong among many racists in our country; which gave buttress to these interracial couples to still be weary of society’s views about them.

In 2009, there was a recent example of this discrimination when Beth McKay and her now husband, Terrance McKay, went to the justice of peace in Louisiana to get married. The justice of the peace refused to marry the couple simply because they were different races (Kellogg). With the most recent Gallup Poll showing that 96 percent of blacks and 84 percent of whites are accepting the idea of marriages between the two, this still leaves a percentage of people who disagree with these types of relationships (Kellogg). On the other hand, the outlawing of miscegenation has now allowed newer generations more opportunities to date outside of their own race easier than previous generations simply because they were not a part of the history when these laws were made or discontinued.

Undoubtedly, bi-racial children are starting to grow in numbers due to the increase of interracial heterosexual relationships. On the U.S. Census taken in 2010, almost 2 million people identified themselves as black and white bi-racial, which is “more than double the number in 2000” (Kellogg). According to Lewis Jr. and Yancey:

The birth of children not only marks a new phase of the family cycle, it introduces some significant concerns that are not present in same-race families. Some concerns include: the advent of

having a child permanently records the interracial marriage; a birth expands the family lineage to mixed-race blood kin; a child potentially changes some family members' perceptions of race; a child changes the proportion and cultural mores within a family; and a birth provokes reflection of racial socialization. (71)

If a bi-racial child can turn even the biggest bigot into a believer of colorblindness, then producing forms of entertainment in the media that depicts a happily married or dating interracial couple with bi-racial children may possibly break down the whole white supremacist patriarchy infrastructure that continues to thrive in our post-racial society.

Additionally, more education has proven to produce more racial tolerate people. As indicated by Sharon M. Lee and Barry Edmonston, in 1960 high school educations among blacks was only 20 percent, while whites graduated at 43 percent, but by 2000 this gap had almost disappeared (17). Obtaining racial tolerance is usually brought about in college and, "one indicator of this tolerance is the reality that individuals with a higher level of education are more likely to enter an interracial marriage" because they are exposed to more "racial understanding by increasing our ability to critically think through some of the racial stereotypes we have encountered" (Lewis Jr. and Yancey 49-50). Due to the recent recession, if more people are obtaining a college degree than ever before, the acceptance of interracial relationships should grow even more than before.

Finally, I believe that interracial heterosexual relationships have not only become more acceptable, but they have also increased from previous generations. To acknowledge something is to admit it exists. If movies are any indication of how interracial couples are being perceived in our society, then the outcome for these couples should continue to become more accepting as time goes by. Not only has the banning of miscegenation laws across

the country since the 1960's impacted the acceptance of these types of couples, but the increase of bi-racial children and the higher levels of education people are obtaining is creating a new outlook for interracial relationships. Racism and a white supremacist infrastructure may then be knocked down if current trends continue. This would not only help our society to stop claiming to be colorblind, but to actually become it and only acknowledge one as a human being. We must all remember that when it comes to matters of the heart, one must "Let go, to let love flow."

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Photography by Julie Humphry

Citizens of the Friend-zone

Daniel Valentine Rivera

This poem is dedicated to the poor ladies and gentlemen balls deep in the friend-zone.

The ones who pretend to wallow in self-pity because they can't find a love to call their own.

The ones who struggle to conquer their most desired partner and are left with no skills to hone.

This is my way of saying, there is way out this over populated country and that you are not alone.

The friend-zone is a depressing wasteland of sorrow and low self-esteem.

The perfect place to end up if you have nothing left but a broken dream.

The ones that put you in here have no idea what they've done and they need to redeem.

They need to understand the irreparable damage they cause you is an unacceptable common theme.

Nothing more than a cliché, how these individuals can't look past appearances and traits.

Fastidiously picky when it comes to choosing a partner resulting in constant alternates.

This trend of overlooking potential soulmates harms both parties and misleads their fates.

I believe it's more beneficial to look for a meaningful relationship instead of one that dominates.

I say this to the citizens of the friend-zone, and to the ones being thrown in as I speak.

No more hiding the ardent emotions, no more avoiding the one that makes you weak.

Confess those feelings, tell your special reason for existence exactly what makes he/she unique.

And if your attempts end in rejection, remember you don't owe them shit, take that L and turn the other cheek.

However; if you're one of the irritating few who won't take no for an answer, that's splendid.
Admire, flatter, and captivate them in any possible way to show them compassion is intended.
Be completely devoted to making that one person happy in hopes that one day the citizenship can be suspended.
Be prepared to throw away your pride and shame into your efforts to find love in a lifestyle not recommended.

Do absolutely nothing to impress them unless your heart, soul and mind is incorporated.
Your efforts may go unnoticed but that's never stopped you before so no need to get frustrated.
Friendzonians keep your chin up, love doesn't disappoint forever but it remains forever complicated.
Forever alone is an overstatement, but forever mutual genuine love is immensely underrated.

Soon you will find a difference between what is said and what is actually meant.
There is something you unattainable individuals need to remember in any moment or event.
That friendzonians have love for you all, and it's completely unconditional to certain extent.
When love flies out your window, they'll be outside your door that opens at the close if without your consent.

So when your crush, lets called them desires, chooses someone over you unbearably.
Wait patiently for them to come to their senses, keep in mind that their love can never be.
Even after the devastation of their collapsing relationships, stick around the debris.
Rebuild upon it when they're at their most vulnerable, and from this country you'll be free.

If the opportunity ever presents itself, where you are able to come through.

Make sure that the one that you desire is supposed to be in love with is you.

When you reach that time in life, it will feel as if there was nothing you can't do.

You still have chance at romance, and chance for your dreams to finally come true.

True love is learning to admire imperfections and viewing them as a perfection.

Your desires don't understand this, and it is your obligation to be their correction.

Be the embodiment of flawed but sincere, and when it comes to love, be the only projection.

Be the one who deserves the most, and the one who wouldn't mind finding love in their own reflection.

If they still don't love you, love yourself, and that's something that is more priceless than art.

I understand, life can seem even emptier when you're shut down right before you start.

Along this empty road, I promise that all your desires will one day open and lend you their heart.

Until then, us friendzonians need to stick together at a time where we couldn't be any further apart.

Industrial Disorder

Isaac Hicks

Is obesity, eating disorder really causing disorders?

The thin girls and big boys, really placing new orders?

Are the social elites standing in line or building new borders?

Of where lower class get "fat" and now labeled as hoarders.

How bout we put down the camcorder and see what's at stake?

See the media calling bodies perfect, but big is a mistake.

All the thin girls will find their prince, if they keep down their weight

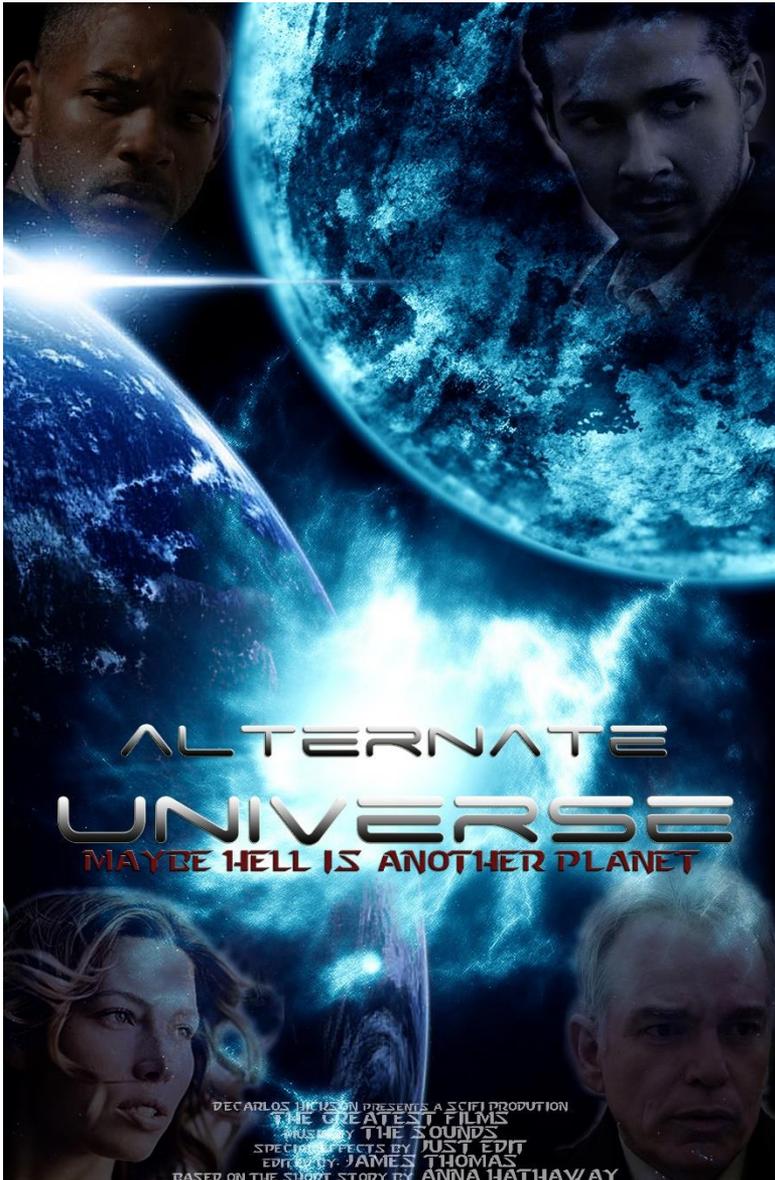
but all the larger bodied kids have already sealed their own fate.

But what makes thin so great? Industrial revolution, my friend.
Those sitting at the top, decided that weight was no longer a
trend.
Where before it was only those with money, on food they could
spend
but now, the size of your waist, is the best way to ascend.

I try not to offend because these labels have hurt me before
With laughter from the whole class as you try to fit through the
door.
Think if it was you or what your children may go through
And not build these media stereotypes, instead make everyone's
confidence brand-new.



Photography by Julie Humphries



“Alternate Universe” by DeCarlos Hickson



“Drifter” by Britney Balmer



**“Momo Loves Me”
Amanda Blanchard
“Duke Gardens Statue”**



Golden Lights

Amanda Blanchard

One note lingers on the brow eye
-Ever-knowing-
Seeing all
Taking in this cacophony
Of others' voices
Who have worked
As hard or less
Than one who desires
To lift their place in the world
And feel the flight of success
That feels too far away.
Await patiently
For the star to land in your ear
To whisper its secrets to you.
You will take your seat
and name the next golden lights
That know exactly who you are.



Portrait by Amanda Blanchard



“Death of Seasons” by Carl Swann

“Fight the Power,” But are we Really?: How the System Controls Black Men

By VGW

Throughout American society, race has played an overwhelming role in all Americans’ lives. Not only have we allowed the color of our skin to determine how we will be perceived in a racist society, we have also allowed it to determine the value of our education and the neighborhoods in which the average American will live. Describing one’s masculinity and the power that men in America obtain in a white supremacist patriarchal society is also no exception to these determining factors. There is a system at play in our society that overrides everyone’s ideologies daily; and due to this system, the dominant group in American society is always protected. Before telling you exactly who the dominant group is, we must address the system and how it functions. It functions to trap Americans in a never-ending cycle that clandestinely controls their ideals by continuously regenerating sources of power that

help shape their social institutions and hierarchies, such as elitism, capitalism, and politics. The dominant group in America is white men, and their dominance replicates over time, making it extremely difficult to redefine the system. Given this fact, how can a black man in this society, where he is constantly being oppressed, really express his identity, his masculinity, and his powers within, without reproducing the system itself? Black male leaders like Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver, or Huey P. Newton help reiterate the underpinning dimensions of hegemonic masculinity and power in U.S. society by advocating Black Nationalism. Even though their messages seem to say they are against the white supremacist patriarchal values, in all reality they are just mirroring those traits with a slightly different ideology, such as black power and black masculinity. Once you understand those ideological structures, it becomes obvious that black men in U.S. society are spitting images of the system they so desperately want to overthrow.

Black power is a political and social concept that promotes racial pride by creating institutions that nurture and cater to the black collective as a whole. Separation from the white race, self-sufficient economies, and cultural institutions are needed to help the black community advance in a rather oppressive nation. Along with these ideals and values from black power, emerged black social thought. This way of thinking was tied directly to black people attempting to obtain control over their lives in the sense of addressing the white supremacist patriarchal society they live in head first; without second guessing the consequences from their actions by the dominant group's power, the system. Kwame Ture, better known as Stokely Carmichael, coined the slogan "Black Power." Carmichael was a Black Nationalist who wrote a major book on black power, politics, and liberation. According to Carmichael and Hamilton:

Our basic need is to reclaim our history and our identity from what must be called cultural terrorism, from the depredation of self-justifying white guilt. We shall have to struggle for the right to create our own terms through which to define ourselves and our relationship to the society, and to have these terms

recognized. This is the first necessity of a free people, and the first right that an oppressor must suspend. (34-35)

Carmichael and Hamilton not only show why black power emerged, but why Black Nationalism was a prerequisite in a nation where blacks were constantly demoralized and oppressed by the system. Huey P. Newton, the leader of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense said, "Power is the ability to define phenomena and make it act in a desired manner," which is what the Black Panther Party was trying to do throughout its whole existence, by making the system and everyone else realize why blacks were not content with the status quo in the U.S. (Clever "On the Ideology" 173).

Black Nationalism is the concept of keeping black social, economical, and political spheres separate from those of whites. Black power is directly tied to Black Nationalism because without a black man completely detaching himself from the white community in every aspect, he will still have the white supremacist patriarchal values entrenched in his unconscious mind. The white supremacist patriarchy is referred to as the "imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy" by bell hooks throughout her book, *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity*. Hooks reiterates, "Again it must be emphasized that the black men who are most worried about castration and emasculation are those who have completely absorbed white-supremacist patriarchal definitions of masculinity," which is a great representation of how black men have taken on those values of the dominant group without even realizing they have done so (10). A black man is projecting the same ideologies placed upon him by a racist society he lives in, if he misuses his own individual power to oppress his female counterpart. Ironically, this scenario applies to a black man who considers himself a Black Nationalist and a devoted member to the concept of black power.

Eldridge Cleaver serves as another example of a black male leader who has been co-opted by the white supremacist patriarchy. Throughout his whole book, *Soul on Ice*, Cleaver referred to black women in particular, as "bitches," but after an epiphany, Cleaver changes his mind and calls these same black women "Queens" (236). Obviously, Cleaver has some power and

masculinity issues that are derived from his inability to separate himself completely from the white supremacist patriarchal society. This aspect is tied directly into a black man obtaining power by his predefined masculinity. If a black man is lacking masculinity, then he cannot truly hold black power. Both black power and black masculinity have characteristics that determine if the black man in America has assimilated to the system, even though he may not be aware of this conformity.

Masculinity is the notion or trait that is most often tied directly to men in U.S. society. Linden Lewis illustrates this point:

Masculinity is a set of social practices of men in society that revolves around ideas of appropriate gender roles, ways of behaving, ways of experiencing and navigating one's way through a world that demands conformity of individuals through rewards, and punishes expression of difference. Masculinity is the practice of an awakening consciousness of one's self as a man. (47)

Clearly, any deviation away from these prescribed notions of manhood will then be deemed as inappropriate. Unfortunately for black males, they must add extra components, such as stereotypes to what black masculinity is because their masculinity is determined by the hegemonic group, which in this case is white masculinity. Of course the racist hegemonic group did not want to make a black male's masculinity better than his own, so to subjugate the black man's mental capacities, they simply brought in stereotypes that are still present.

Hypersexuality is the stereotype usually associated with a black male's masculinity. Some black men in our society do not realize that this is a negative and oppressive stereotype that traces all the way back to slavery. Unaware of this stereotypes history, black males usually take pride and confidence toward being hypersexual, which is exactly what the system wanted to occur. Anthony J. Lemelle Jr. talks about a sociological study that was conducted from 2000 to 2006 called the General Social Survey (162). Lemelle Jr. focused on how many sexual partners white males, black males, white females, and black females have had since their 18th birthday (162). The study found, that of the four groups surveyed, black males had the highest number of sexual

partners in three different age groups (162-163). Lemelle Jr. goes on to question if “hypersexuality is an overstatement” or not and why scholars automatically blame black males for their promiscuity and hypersexual activities instead of looking at other outside influences such as the culture surrounding the black males which is defined by the system (162-163).

Another way to look at this aspect of black masculinity is by looking at a black man’s power that comes from his sexual member. Scott Poulson-Bryant believes that, “It is the metaphorical power of a penis’s size that gives it the psychological weight men lug into relationships with women and with each other. Essentially, it is a signifier—of power, of prominence, of strength” (22). Or as James Baldwin argues, “the color is the size, the size is its color.” In this sense, the power a black male may hold is simply the power of the penis regardless of size. How can one simply obtain power from one’s race in a sexual way? This all ties back to the white supremacist patriarchy in which we live in. Black power is not defined to Poulson-Bryant as something created to improve the black collective, but instead it is a black man’s capability to obtain agency for his black social thought solely through his hypersexuality.

The only downfall is that this type of power that is determined by black masculinity has no prevalence in the real world. According to Poulson-Bryant, this type of power is temporary and black males are eventually still characterized as “disposable and dehumanized” (98). Black men fall victim to the white supremacist patriarchy because they have assimilated into the system that created their hypersexual image, which has further depicted the system’s ability to emasculate and castrate them (Poulson-Bryant 124). Hooks suggests that “Equating manhood with fucking, many black men saw status and economic success as synonymous with endless sexual conquest” (71). But why should this be the case? These situations are engulfed with the hypersexual stereotype; which is now used as a positive dimension of the system instead of a negative one.

With working together with black women, black men will hopefully defy the system that has made blackness an issue. This issue has created several controversies in the black community;

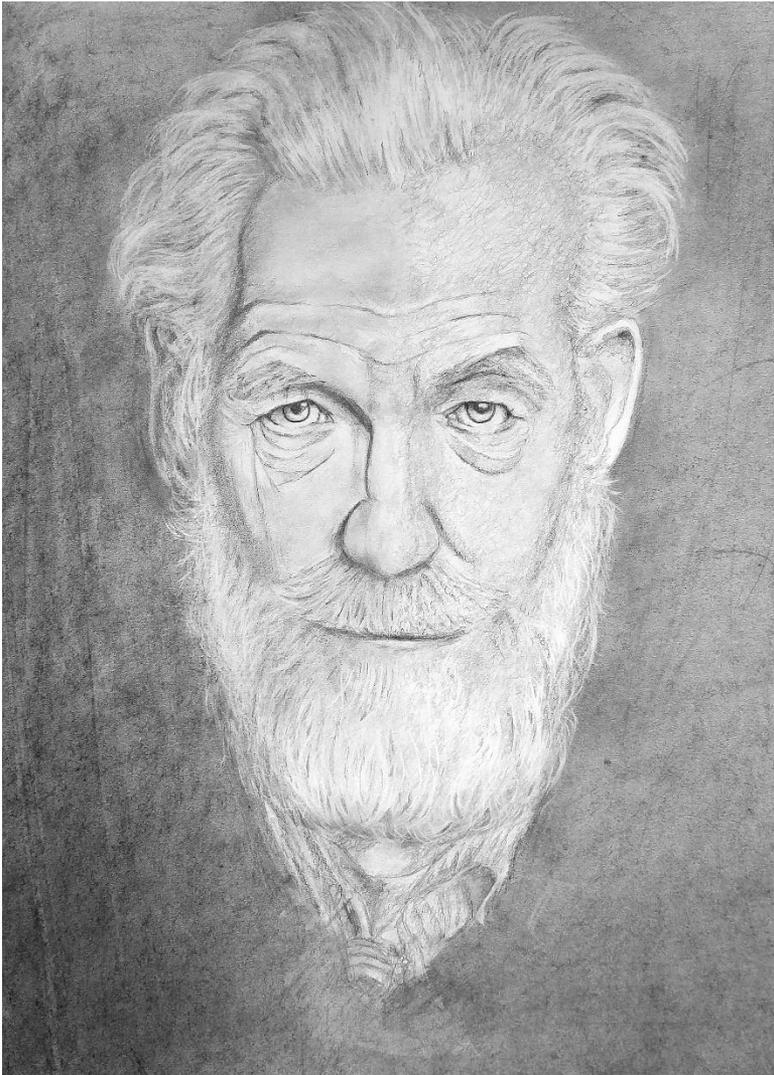
and unfortunately for black men, they have suffered the most from confusion and frustration. Within a white supremacist patriarchal society, to define black masculinity and black power via the status quo would be to neglect what it means to be an individual, a human, and a free spirit in this world, simply because of that four letter word, r-a-c-e. Even with the first “black” President of the United States in the 21st century, his masculinity and power are constantly being questioned by the general public and other leaders simply because of his extra [quote] “vulnerability” [end quote] of being a black man. This is another example of no matter how much black men try to fight for or against the system; they are simply reduced to pawns that represent the system’s full strength of replicating. So can we really “Fight the Power” like Public Enemy suggested in their 1989 single, while still living in a society where race will always tyrannize those who are deemed as inferior to the dominant group as defined by the system?

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“Portrait Study” by Mary Pham

Nostalgic Stimulants

Daniel Valentine Rivera

Have you ever had a moment where certain stimuli take you back to a simpler time in the past?

When life was lived carelessly, never thinking further and pretending the day could never be our last.

For me, being around my family during the holidays brings back the memories that went by so fast.

Memories of when innocence and ignorance birth the bliss that seemed invisible in a world so vast.

The sight of toys as far as the eye can see, or towering over us like a skyscraper

The sounds of children's laughter and the scornful voice of our respected caretaker.

The smell of zero stress expected when Play-Doh fills up the nose instead of hookah vapor.

The taste of no responsibilities served from our personal chefs, baby sitters, maids, and bakers.

How lucky was it that I grew up with things only the family fortune could provide.

Growing up having not a care in the world and now struggling to set my problems aside.

Hardest thing for a teenager is concealing emotions that we are still expecting to hide.

The happiness of my future depends on how well my emotions can appreciate a euphoria tide.

As a kid, I might have made mistakes along the way of structuring a life that's not brutal.

But screwing up back then seems a lot less stressful than screwing up right when its crucial.

It's about time I start coming clean and accepting my mistakes, and if I'm going to be completely truthful

I might as well right all my wrongs by analyzing the flaws of my past and present to make myself useful.

Now, how grand would it be if I was given the chance to start over with all experience at hand?

Not all sense is common, especially in the mind of youth who are not prone to understand

That life doesn't always get better as time progresses and problems never cease to expand.

These problems lead to poorly made decisions, and it takes away the childhood happiness by command.

Problems no matter the situation, big or small, served as a distraction

That took away from the bliss I so desperately sought after and repelled the attraction.

Sorrow and pain demands to be felt but happiness is something that needs no way of contraction.

Curse my obliviousness that inclined me to feel the joyous emotion but enjoy it only at a fraction.

Nostalgic? Perhaps, but at the very least I want to start from the beginning with all the experiences,

So simplistic, yet still so impossible. It's about time the present and I set aside our differences.

Not completely content with the so called "gift" I have, but I will continue to keep up appearances.

My biggest fear is my future, because my past and current self never understood the seriousness.

I had a billion different kinds of amusement that had the ability to calm the sorrow and rage.

But as a kid, I had no sense of appreciation for my surroundings, the moments of that page.

Such details and aspects of life are too complicated to value at such an immature and vulnerable age.

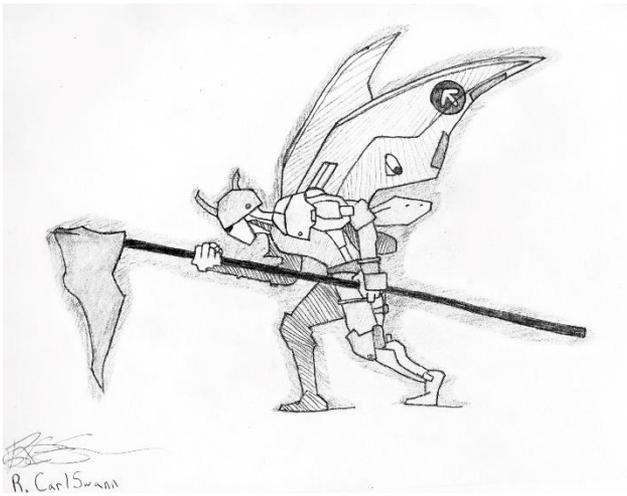
Obviously I was too late to fully comprehend this, now imagine if only knew this at my earliest stage.

I lived a life of luxury and was blind to see that this way of living couldn't get any finer.

No senses of continuing when my past is where I truly belong and death couldn't be any kinder.

Nostalgic is an understatement when these stimulants attempt to serve as a permanent reminder

That I could be much happier now if I learned to embrace the youthful stress that was always minor.



Untitled Works by Carl Swann

Dance

Claire Wagner

The sun awakens as we meet
With flashing eyes and flying feet,
With singing and with piping sweet.
At daybreak we are dancing on
Where stars and spheres and shadows run,
Our faces flaming like the sun,
Our laughter lawless as the moon,
All leaping to a lovely tune;
Though revels shall be ceasing soon.

For ice will take the turning world
'Neath slumbering darkness slow-unfurled,
The sun from smoking heaven hurled
And frozen all our flying feet
As twilight stifles singing sweet
And silence stills our revels fleet;
When sea and sand are smooth as glass
And even shadows cease to pass
Across the rime-encircled grass.

Still feet are flying free and fast
'Twixt lunar frost and solar blast;
We whirl till dawn and day are past
And dusk draws near to give us rest,
Till night enfolds us on her breast,
Till darkness brings us sleep at last.



“Animalia” by Mary Pham



“Cosmos” by Mary Pham

A Memory of a Dear Friend

Chris Wilson

As she awoke with throbbing pain covering every inch of her body, she looked around the room. The room was filled with familiar faces: friends from school, family, neighbors, and hospital staff. Everybody in the room was sobbing, and she tried to fight back her own tears of pain and fear. As she managed to sit up in the bed, everyone bombarded her with their sympathies. She looked to her mother with a confused expression and asked, “What’s going on?” Her mother explained that she had been in a car wreck and was dying... There was nothing that could be done to save her. Upon hearing those words flood from her mother’s mouth, she giggled. Shocked, everyone in the room asked why she was laughing. She stopped giggling, exclaiming, “Because all of you are sad I am dying but I’m not.” Everybody gasped upon hearing those words come from a fifteen year old. She shrieked as she felt her time near its close. The light faded. The sounds grew more and more distant. With her last breath she made everyone promise not to be sad for her. To be happy and not cry at her funeral. “Death is not worth crying over.”



“Troubled” by Abigail Richardson



“Solice” by Abigail Richardson

Untitled

Tyshon Albritton

This life was passed down from generation to generation
Living the life full of self doubt and assimilation
Broken up colored and whites terrible sections
Yet we're supposed to be equal but can't carry protection
To carry your weapon is a suicide note
Knowing it's a threat when you're pulled on the side of the road
Sirens go off and you say, "Here we go."
Telling your friend to put on his seat belt slow
Pulled over and you turned off the car
Now its you vs the man with the star
Knocking on your window "license and registration"
Then he feels threatened because of your hesitation
Reaching slowly in your pocket to pull it out
Meanwhile the officer is still scoping you out
Trying to fathom the works of an African American
Not quite sure how to get out of this predicament

Oh no, you're taking too long to get out your wallet
The officer draws his? gun out of its locked pocket
Safety is always off so don't expect to hear a click
Because once it's out it's out and you need to think quick
Keep those hands up keep them right in the air
Now you're scared
Because he's scared
Passenger is scared
The kids are scared
Not really sure where to go from here
So you just close your eyes and spit a prayer
Calling out to your personal savior
This rodeo is almost to an end
Question is will you begin driving again?
Now that the officer is all about how to regain control
And their best effort is to relieve your soul
Yelling "Get out of the car!" "On the ground!"
And your body is stuck in awe as if it didn't hear a sound
So he opens your door and grabs your arm
Purposely with force he intended to inflict harm
Now he has out his firearm looking you dead in the eyes
And the next thing that happened should be of no surprise
"He's. Got. A. Gun!"
Claiming to see it yet the officer saw none
Pop pop pop the gun goes off
Now you're laying on the ground body all soft
You didn't die so you're looked at as a tragedy
When honestly you were one victim of an worldwide travesty
#BlackLivesMatter



“Mr. Double Vision” by Willow Hammermueller

“I’d Walk a Million Miles for one of Your Smiles, for my Mammy:” Are Black Actresses Progressing or Mimicking an era That Some White People Romanticize?

VGW

Since 1929, the Academy Award has been the highest honor an actor or actress could receive in their professional career. The Academy Award ceremony is an annual event that has been in existence for eighty-three years as of 2012. Over the decades, only thirteen winners have been Black. Of those Black winners, only one female has won the ‘Best Actress in a Leading Role’ award, and five females have won the ‘Best Actress in a Supporting Role’ award. Why is the number of Black actresses who have actually won these awards so small compared to their White counterparts? From the Academy Award trends, Black actresses are more likely to win awards for playing either a Jezebel, Mammy, Welfare Queen, or portraying a historical figure. If these trends continue for years to come, then the Academy Awards ceremony is only substantiating the idea that for Blacks to succeed, they must assimilate to white societal norms. Albeit, some of these Black actresses say they are helping future generations progress in a racist society, to a degree they are only mimicking roles and character traits that some White people believe they should be portraying due to a romanticizing notion of “ how things used to be.”

Two prime examples of these controversial Academy Award winning actresses are Hattie McDaniel and Octavia Spencer. They both played Mammy roles and won the same Academy Award. McDaniel won this award for a portrayal of a Mammy during the

Civil War in *Gone With the Wind* made in 1939, whose actual name in the film was Mammy. Spencer won this award for a portrayal of a Mammy during the 1960s in *Mississippi in The Help*, which was made in 2011. Spencer's character was given the name Minny Jackson. There is a seventy-two year gap between McDaniel and Spencer winning the 'Best Actress in a Supporting Role' award. One has to question why Black actresses who are portraying Mammy stereotyped characters are still being deemed Academy Award winning in a proclaimed "post-racial" society. It should now become obvious that our white supremacist society is trying to hinder progression among Black people, especially Black women.

In *Gone With The Wind*, Hattie McDaniel becomes the matriarch of the family she once worked for. The plot of this movie is rather difficult to summarize, but a White wealthy southern family is forced to change their lives once the Civil War begins to survive. Once the Civil War ended and McDaniel gained her freedom, she decided to stay with the family she devoted her life toward. Coming across as a strong, independent, and persuasive character in the movie, McDaniel is able to take advantage of her position within the family. When we see McDaniel's unique facial expressions and hear her rather sneaky comments about the White people she takes care of, we are witnessing McDaniel's acts of resistance toward the original Mammy portrayals. A good example of McDaniel's outstanding performance of resistance is when Vivien Leigh refuses to eat before going to a cookout. McDaniel makes several sly remarks and facial expressions toward Leigh's looks and her love life to manipulate her into eating her breakfast.

Hattie McDaniel commented on her role as Mammy in *Gone With the Wind* by saying, "I tried to make her a living, breathing character...to glorify Negro womanhood; not the modern,

streamline type of Negro woman who attends teas and concerts in ermine and mink, but the type of Negro of the period which gave us Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth” (Mapp 9). Some have said that McDaniel placed her own twist to the Mammy role in this film. Other Black people during that time period, including the NAACP, gave her grief for playing a role which impersonated slavery in modern times; hence, setting Black people back several years from progression. Regardless of what either side said about McDaniel’s performances, she is the reason why many Black actresses have entered the film industry.

Melissa V. Harris-Perry calls the dilemma that Black female actresses face in movie and TV roles the “crooked room” (29). The crooked room is a confined area that Black actresses are placed in when it comes to their acting careers. Here these women, “accommodate the degrading stereotypes about them,” by playing those Mammy, Jezebel, and Welfare Queen roles because of the constraints placed upon them by our white supremacist society (Harris-Perry 29). Hattie McDaniel reiterates this, “Why should I complain about making seven thousand dollars a week playing a maid? If I didn’t I’d be making seven dollars a week actually being one!” (Bogle 82). McDaniel argues an excellent point. During her lifetime Black women were not really able to work in any industry besides being domestic laborers. Instead of McDaniel settling for what her mother and grandmother probably did before her, she broke the mold and became the first Black person to win an Academy Award. One could then dispute that McDaniel was improving the status quo for Black people during that time period. With such limited options in the workplace during McDaniel’s life, becoming a famous actress regardless of the roles and characters she had to portray does place her in a rather stand-alone position.

In *The Help*, Octavia Spencer serves as a maid for a White lady that she helped take care of when the White lady was a child. Spencer gets fired for using the bathroom inside of her boss's home. This action forces Spencer to take her oldest daughter out of school and make her work to earn money for their family. Unable to find work, Spencer is basically forced to take a maid position for a White lady that seems to be an outcast. Just like Spencer, her new boss has trouble pleasing the White women in her community, especially Spencer's former boss. In the movie, Spencer is known for making homemade chocolate pies with whip cream topping. As an act of resistance toward her former employer, Spencer makes her last chocolate pie for her. After her former boss consumes a piece and a half of the pie, Spencer admits that she put her own fecal matter into the pie. This incident becomes the leverage she and her best friend, Aibileen Clark, played by Viola Davis, needed to help write and publish a book about the situations Black maids face in Mississippi. With the help of another White lady who was trying to get her journalism career started, the book was written and published. The stories that were told by several Black maids, including the situation between Spencer and her former employer, become the talk of the town. The controversy between the White women in the town and their Black maids has everyone guessing who was who and where did the stories really originate from. Eventually, the book helped Spencer have a job for life with a White family who truly appreciated everything she did for them, while it also left, Davis unemployed.

Additionally, once the demographics of the voters for the Academy Awards are broken down, it becomes clearer to why certain Black actresses are overlooked for the actual award. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "there are 5,765 voting members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences,"

and “of that number, nearly 94 percent are Caucasian and 77 percent are men. Blacks represent about 2 percent of the Academy” (Keith Andre Collins). As Collins stated, men, particularly White men, are the one’s deciding on what roles are worthy of Academy Awards. With this being the case, the idea that a Black woman will win one of these awards for playing a non-stereotypical role will probably never happen. In an interview with Oprah Winfrey, she asked Octavia Spencer if she was skeptical about her role in *The Help*. Spencer’s response was, “I wasn’t skeptical because I felt that we never seen these stories told from this perspective. And I felt that it was something that needed to be done, and I wanted to be a part of it.” An actor’s career is not sustained by their personal beliefs toward a certain role, but by the quality of their work, or it should be this way. Spencer and McDaniel both personified their Mammy roles to the best of their abilities in their works. But when does the quality of the movie’s plot override the quality of the actor’s work? One answer to this could simply be that the more the movie resembles a white supremacy or a racist society, than the quality of the actors no longer matter. This indication of superiority over other races almost automatically qualifies a motion picture to be a box office hit, not only by the Academy Award voters, but from audiences as well.

The question now becomes why are audiences so fascinated with Black stereotypical roles that they have seen for decades? Simply put, some White and Black audiences want to reminisce a simpler time. A time where some Whites knew their white privilege would still benefit them completely, while making all non-whites inferior to their automatic privilege, prestige, and power. Alicia I. Rodriquez-Estrada wrote, “the ‘Mammy’ image was intended to represent what was good about slavery,” and this can all relate to the opinions of the audiences who still watch and

applaud Black stereotypical characters in film (233). This is because our nation is still highly racist. Living in a white supremacist patriarchy which creates and dominates our film industry as well, leaves little room for those who deviant away from original Black stereotypes. If this wasn't the case, then Tyler Perry films would not be in existence or have become so popular. Perry's films, which usually consist of a majority Black cast, typically portray Black women as those who need to be saved, Jezebels, or Mammies; whereas, the Black men are usually casted in their roles by colorism's effects on who is perceived as good and bad. At last we must answer the question of all questions that Black female actresses face in their acting career. Are Black female stereotyped characters, especially the Mammy role, in the movies and television shows a sign of progression or further oppression? Lamentably, this question's answer is in the eye of the beholder. As the reader can see by now, there are ups and downs to each scenario mentioned. Trying to dictate if a Black actress is assimilating or simply surviving in her acting career is hard to determine if she plays certain roles or not. No actress wants to be an unemployed actress, and for Black actresses being picky in the roles they chose to play is really not a luxury they have unlike their White female counterparts.

To sum up, many people in our nation are trying to obtain and keep a steady job, and Black actresses should not fall into another category just because of their chosen career path. A spectacle can be interpreted in several different ways depending on who is watching it. Black actresses' performances should be seen in the same light as all other actors. Maybe these women aren't looking at the Black stereotypical roles as just that, but maybe they are looking at the roles as simply as it being a paying job. On the other hand, you have those well-known actresses that have purposely stepped back from playing in film because they refuse to continue

to be portrayed in the light of a Mammy stereotype. In the film industry, especially when it comes to the Academy Awards, it is difficult to overlook the fact that White people and men are calling the shots. If diversity does not reach the voters toward the awards given by the Academy soon, then our society can continue to see Black women being portrayed as Jezebels, Mammies, Welfare Queens, and historical figures. Lastly, to create change, one must believe in change. With that said, audiences, Black and White alike, must start new trends toward what they like to watch for their media entertainment.

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Photography by Julie Humphries





“Tap Water” by Mary Pham

Parental Cage

Daniel Valentine Rivera

When I put on this cap and gown and I take my final steps as a senior across the stage,

A weight will be lifted off my shoulders but will be replaced by the uncertainty of a new page.

This chapter isn't over, because I'm still entangled in this tedious period I call parental cage.

In their eyes, I'm an immature inadequate disrespectful son who will never be viewed as a sage.

Life is great when you're in your element and nothing kills your vibe.

My element isn't at home, so when I'm there it's often a different side.

The side that's nowhere near respectful, generous, content, or kind.

It's like a persona that is induced by my creators who I believe are blind.

Blind to see that they expect a little too much of me, and that it's unfair.

Blind to see that I do actually try to impress them but they don't seem to care.

Blind to see that saying 'try harder' only discourages me and makes me glare.

Blind to see they will never have a perfect son, so their wishing and hoping should just end there.

But one day I'll prove my worth and demonstrate that I'm capable of handling my own.

Even though it's inevitable disappointing them, at least I'll know they will never leave me alone.

It's reassuring that whenever I need assistance they will always be on the other end of the phone.

The day I escape the parental cage is the day they are no longer with me, and feel a sorrow I've never known.

I graduate today, and we'll see if they can utter the words I've waited my whole life to hear.

The words "estamos orgullosos de ti" could possibly be the key of the cage that lets out the tears.

Although I can never thank them enough for all they've done and putting up with me all these years,

They did a great job raising me, and if they still love me and I still love them, I should have nothing to fear.

A Mythical Reasonable Man

Literature Analysis of Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants"

Michael Pace

Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" uses setting to symbolize a change in the American's support of his family. The station "on this side" where the story opens is described as barren (475). There are no trees and no shade on this side where the American and the girl sit, discussing their future. They talk about his desire to let the air in and how it is so simple. For the girl it is not simple. Her future, if she has the abortion, is symbolized by the barren setting that they look out on. The strain of that future does not sit well with her. She gets up and walks to the end of the station to get a breath of air, free from her companion. As she lets the proverbial air in, the girl looks "[a]cross on the other side," and she sees the fertile side (477). The fertile grain field symbolize birth. This other side is the other option for these two lovers. The option that her lover is arguing to end. As she wishes to have it all, the American says he can give everything to her. However, his everything is different than her everything. The beauty of two perspectives that seek the same end with completely opposite paths. If she follows the American she cannot have both her child and her lover. As the girl makes her choice clear, the American "is accepting her side of the issue" (Renner 82). Hemingway shows this through the American's actions as "[h]e picked up the two heavy bags and carried them around the station to the other tracks" (478). This other side of the station is her side. It is the fertile side that she looked out on and saw her path. The train was always heading to Madrid, and the American is willing to carry the load that all reasonable people carry.



“Logan’s Tribute” by DeCarlos Hickson



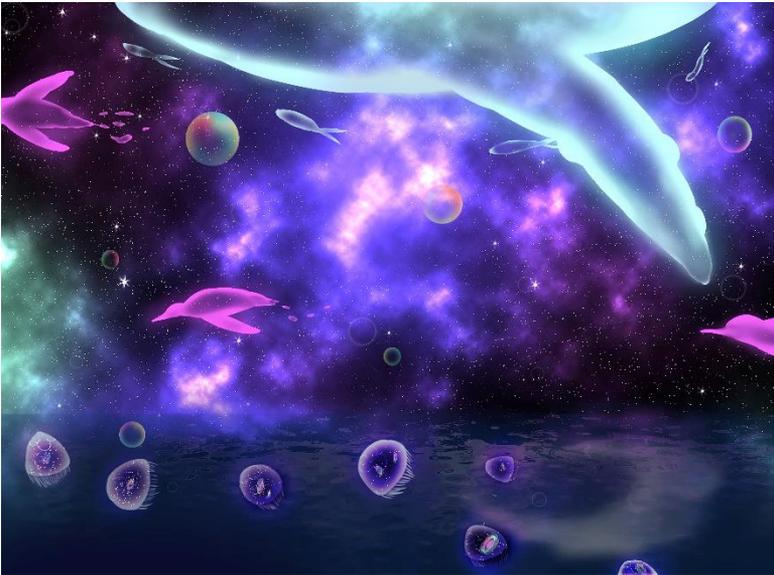
“Thoughts of You” by DeCarlos Hickson



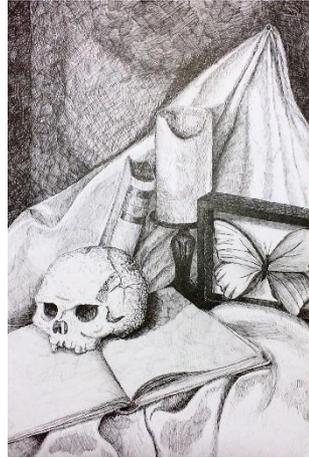
“Candy Coated” by DeCarlos Hickson



Artwork by Philip Cherry



“Ethereal Aquarium” by Zhane Strachan



“Still Life” by Amanda Blanchard

Erasure
Amanda Blanchard

Ink splattered like blood stains
Across words I felt in my hands, viciously murdered
By the toppled well.
They were my children,
Perfectly formed into figures
Who had their own moment in time.
Forever lost,
Oozing into the wood,
Dripping onto the floor.
Where do dreams go
When their words are erased?
Do they escape and land
Upon another mind?
They fail me
Behind a splash of my mistake.
I may remember them,
But never in the same way.

