

Andrew Booth- Brain storming

<p>Action- Paul Theroux Author Context-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• White Male• Travel writer and novelist• Born in Medford MA• “The Red Carpet is not the way to see a country”• “Fiction gives us a second chance that life denies us” <p>Book themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young teen rebellion• Self-Identity in turmoil• Parents vs Friends• How young men view women• Coming of age story	<p>Dance For me- Amina Gautier Author context-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Woman of color• Brooklyn born- Chicago and Miami living currently• Ph.D , Highly awarded author <p>Book themes-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Racial stereotypes• Sexualizing woman• Fetish or Culture• Development from who she was to who she is to who she will be• Barriers between what is and what isn't acceptable<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ignorance or intolerance
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2. *Social influences appear more influential than our personal influences*
3. *A lack of discipline between peers, (as youth) alters the way we transition from one self-identity to another*

Quotes

During this day he encounters three truly bad men, they fill him with fear and anxiety. When he finally returns to his father's shoe store at the end, he feels secure. -Mackenzie Kuhne (Discussion action) “The suggestion that my father might be tricky reassured me and made me admire him.” Quote pulled to support her idea

“out of my father's sight, someone else”—I was not sure who, but certainly not the person he was used to. - action (enters the story the idea changing identities) Action **young adult perspective**

“Maybe that was his other side—a ladies' man” (eddie's social affirmation on the view of women confirms the beliefs that sexualizing women is okay because he trusts his dad. No discipline for chivalry **Society views boy “just like your father”**

“he hated any kind of foolery.... Any kind of indiscipline”

“That was friendly. It encouraged me, because I felt that she was becoming familiar with me, and something more might happen, and it excited me, because I didn't know what.” (misconception of affirmation from Paige, leading to the sexualization of Paige) **young adulthood experience**

“I'd never told anyone this, but I always felt naked in my pleated skirt, vulnerable... jealously watching girls enter the bathroom with skirts that covered their knees and walk back out with skirts that skimmed their thighs, but I still couldn't get it.” **Young adult perspective** (she felt vulnerable but yet wanted to be more exposed because of the other girls, this isn't an example of body positivity but social affirmation of nudity)

“Yeah,” I said, relieved that her groundbreaking news had nothing to do with me” Social affirmation of acceptance so she will go to the party she is uncomfortable with **Young adult hood experience**

“I don't like anybody,” I said (possibility she is asexual or just not sexually driven through puberty yet) **young adult hood experience**

“He's never made it with a black girl before” shes just a checklist now to the boys **how society views girl, like she owes them a libido**

Bring it together

Culture is created through the conjoining elements of social affirmation and a lack of social discipline; both alter the process of which our beliefs become our behaviors, and thus become our identities

Understanding literature is all about the conception of a text's themes as well as the misconceptions. Misconceptions often play a more powerful role in the after math of a works publications. One essential misconception that alters the minds of readers is the idea that 'fake' and 'fiction' are interchangeable; they're not. Centuries ago, Jesus uses parables to illustrate moral concepts to his disciples. Fast forwarding to a modern context, modern authors, Paul Theroux and Amina Gautier alike, seek to use the same rhetoric styles in fiction to tell more in their stories through underlining themes. Misconceptions inside the text prove to be just as powerful as those outside the text through the reader. *Dance for me* by Amina Gautier and *Action* by Paul Theroux show us how culture is created through the conjoining elements of social affirmation and lack of social discipline; both alter the process of which our beliefs become our behaviors, and thus become our identities.

One of the most common complaints from *baby boomers* about *millennials* is this perceived entitlement we (millennials) share homogenously. Frankly, they're not wrong; but they're not right either. Entitlement is a trait that is taught to people by people who feel entitled. You feel entitled therefore I should too. So how does this relate? Our protagonist in *Action* is taught his perceived entitlement to a sexual relationship with Paige throughout his interaction with her. There were clear signals of hospitality and wholeness provided to him only to be dismissed or misinterpreted. Theroux writes: "That was friendly. It encouraged me, because I felt that she was becoming familiar with me, and something more might happen, and it excited me, because I didn't know what." A glass of lemonade and encouraging further education in casual conversation isn't an innuendo for sex as it was perceived by Albert.

Digress into *Dance for Me* for a moment. Our protagonist is taught entitlement on the other end. She is pressured into unconsciously believing she owes her peer a “normal” libido. And we must use the word *normal* very loosely in this context because who defines normal in this situation. In the story, the girls went to an all-girls school that is paired with an all-boys school for school plays. Although it’s never stated it, would be a reasonable assumption that such a school, being an exclusive private school, would have very limited LGBTQ teachings as many similar schools don’t in America. Additionally, the likelihood of our protagonist identifying as asexual or anything on the spectrum wasn’t written in.

We are given the following from Gautier: “I don’t like anybody”. It’s not a lot, but it’s one of seldom inclinations we are truly given into understanding the sexuality of this girl. This girl is still young so it’s possible she hasn’t hit the stage in puberty just yet when she starts to like boys, perhaps she is asexual in a society of heteronormativity. Additionally, the author never gives our protagonist a name because she doesn’t have an identity, not yet at least. These explanations allow readers to understand the problems she faces within a society who expects something from her she doesn’t yet know how to have.

So, we have a boy who is entitled to sex and a girl who feels someone else is entitled to her sexually. Remember the misconception between fake and fiction. How different from these stories are our everyday lives? We must ask how we got here in the story to understand how we got here in the real world.

Switching it up, look at *Dance for Me* first this time. This story is about a nameless girl, uncomfortable in her own skin, desperately trying to fit into a white washed culture that puts her on display. Before we address her being the “token black girl” to Heather and company, we need to talk about her body; it always starts with the body. Our nameless protagonist includes: “I’d

never told anyone this, but I always felt naked in my pleated skirt, vulnerable... jealously watching girls enter the bathroom with skirts that covered their knees and walk back out with skirts that skimmed their thighs, but I still couldn't get it." It's both Ironic and contradictory that a young girl who feels vulnerable in a skirt but envies other girls who can appear more naked in their skirts. A lack of social discipline has dismissed modesty from being trendy and has affirmed the positivity associated showing off more skin. To be clear, this isn't about slut-shaming or body positivity among women, however it's the pressure young girls feel to be perceived as something, anything other than prude.

Now let's address the fact that Heather was using or narrator as her "token black friend". Our nameless young girl so desperately wants to be accepted, she'll do anything to do it. She gets invited to party she doesn't want to go to, but she goes anyway because she was "relieved that her groundbreaking news had nothing to do with me (the narrator)" (Gautier). So, she goes, and is then pressured to kiss a boy by her friend, reasoning with the following: "He's never made out with a black girl before" (Gautier). She's not this boy's friend; she's his fetish. She is affirmed that she is wanted by being pressured into this party and there is no social discipline, so nobody, including the narrator, understands the moral implications with fetishizing this young girl's race, her identity.

This ultimately takes her from who she was into who she is. She enters our world as a nameless young girl; she leaves as a heterosexual black girl who smokes pot and loves to dance. Her identity is merely a mirage of labels she allowed people to place on her. Jasmine Misner, from class discussions reflected similarly: "I feel as though she is not happy with the girl she has become. She lost something and now doesn't know how to appreciate herself." Albert has a similar story to tell in *Action*. We see this through Theroux's underlining theme.

Like the girl, Albert's original self-identity is unclear as he is first introduced. What's different though, is by the time we meet him, Albert already has a perceived identity of himself from his father. But this identity isn't him, not in its entirety. Albert describes his identity as "out of my father's sight, someone else"—I was not sure who, but certainly not the person he was used to" (Theroux). From the start we are presented with a loss of identity, almost a blank slate for self-discovery if you will.

Without a doubt, His father plays an important role in Alberts path of self-self-discovery. His father is authoritarian, "He hated any kind of foolery... any kind of indiscipline" (Theroux). It's important to not dismiss Albert's rebellious side that seeks to go adventure and explore the world of indiscipline apart from his father. It's imperative, to understand albert, you must understand he always went back to his father for approval. During Class discussions, Mackenzie noted: "During this day he encounters three truly bad men, they fill him with fear and anxiety. When he finally returns to his father's shoe store at the end, he feels secure." His father is always his rock, just as Mackenzie reported.

When adventuring and disobeying his father he hangs around Eddie. Eddie describes Paige a sexual commodity; "she's *action*" (Theroux). This consequently leads Albert to view Paige as a sexual commodity. The key element in this whole situation is his father. Upon his adventure, he meets a woman who knows his father. Following, Albert thinks; "Maybe that was his other side—a ladies' man" (Theroux). He always sought approval of his father in the end. This brought to light that maybe women weren't such a negative thing to be involved in.

Notice the pattern here; there is no social discipline to teach young albert how to view women at such an impressionable age. There is also a social affirmation indirectly between his father and himself that the ideas Eddie put in his head were reasonable. His father never wanted

Albert to be like this, but Albert's identity wasn't his choice; it became everyone else's because Albert let them. Just as the girl in *Dance for me* let the heather choose her identity, so did Albert.

This fiction isn't fake. This is how we go from who we were into who we are. We formed a culture of heteronormativity, fetishizing cultures, racial stereotypes, sexualizing women, and entitlement. It is near impossible to control social affirmation and discipline and in some cases, we shouldn't have to. We do live in a heteronormative society, but LGBTQ is largely more accepted today than it was fifty years ago. Woman have more rights and more representation than they did fifty years ago. The changes we see in our protagonist, reflected in the theme, warn us of where we are and where we are going. We cannot allow other people to label us into identities that make them more comfortable. Understanding these themes provides us, as members of society, the awareness we need to be better.