

THE INTERSECTION OF RACE AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

by

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This paper views the intersection between race and cultural production as related to Native American identity, the shifting racial composition of the sport of lacrosse, and the social and moral paradigms of the Holocaust. According to the Oxford Dictionary, cultural production is the “social processes involved in the generation and circulation of cultural forms, practices, values, and shared understandings.”¹ The following three papers explore how varied social processes intersected with race to produce and reproduce cultural norms. Each paper relates to social processes being formed through cultural ideas, practices, values, and social behavior of a society. Furthermore, each examines how race impacts these processes. For example, the third paper discusses the lives of the German population and their differences with the Jewish race through social and moral standards. A dominant group of German people had a particular image they wished to keep consistent throughout their culture, which created the shared practices, understandings, and values. Each of the topics examines a group of people of common ancestry who share a particular culture, history, language, and set of values. Examining the customs or culture helps argue the idea that race and cultural production intersect. Social development is intimately related to the make-up of a person. The topics of the papers examined in this work discuss a group of people who at some point were deemed inferior to the race in power. The struggle between racial classification factors into the notion of cultural production by examining the physical and social aspects of each race and culture. This is because diversity exists within one culture and within one race.

The elements of cultural production are shaped by the systems within which they are created. The norms of everyday activities are a way for us to produce the culture we accept. Each

¹ "cultural production." *Oxford Reference*. 17 Dec. 2018.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095652897>.

topic is broken down in different examples to examine how race impacts the cultural that is being created. Each topic discusses the ideas, customs, and social behaviors of a society. Sherman Alexie's novel, *Reservation Blues*, tells the story of a Native American band living on a reservation whose goal is to achieve recognition from a record company. This Native American band has developed cultural norms relating to their race and their thoughts and actions throughout the story. The second topic discussed is the sport of lacrosse and how the game has developed throughout the years. Specific participants of the game have created change involving the demographic of the sport. In recent years, lacrosse has evolved from a sport in which the vast majority of participants were white to one that includes an increasing number of African Americans. Finally, we examine the dark aspects of the Holocaust. The social and moral standards of the ordinary man are drawn out through different resources. Specific shared understandings between the ordinary man and society connect to the theme of race and cultural production.

Peter Wade author of "Race, Nature, and Culture" examines "the way definitions of race are currently constructed with reference to an opposition between nature and culture, and how these definitions often take for granted the category of phenotypical variation, tending to reproduce race as problematic category."² Through Wade's article we can examine the definition of race and relate it cultural production. Wade states, "race is, in reality, an entirely social and cultural construction; there is nothing 'natural' about it, save the mere facts of phenotypical variation."³ Wade uses this idea of phenotypical throughout this article. He relates race to the biology of a person. "This is one idea which I wish to use in examining the study of race. Briefly

² Wade, Peter. "'Race', Nature and Culture." *Man*, New Series, 28, no. 1 (1993): 17-34. doi:10.2307/2804434.

³ *Ibid.*, 17.

I argue that in conceptual approaches to race, analysts frequently refer to a level of biology that is presented as neutral and undifferentiated.”⁴ He relates race to the common appearance and believes that race, seen as a phenotypical variation, is a highly socially constructed one.⁵ This idea that race is seen as a common appearance relates to the topic discussed throughout this portfolio.

A popular Native American author, Sherman Alexie, plays a powerful social role in shaping ethnic identity and making ethnic groups - such as his own Spokane tribe - visible. Through his novel, *Reservation Blues*, it is possible to concentrate on different authors arguments about his ethnic authenticity, the historical aspect of his writings, and the way each character stays within the lines of their culture. The main sources consulted in this paper are Gloria Bird, “The Exaggeration of Despair in Sherman Alexie’s *Reservation Blues*”; Stephen Evans, “Open Containers: Sherman Alexie’s *Drunken Indians*”; Joel Janicki, “The Art of Losing Historical Allusions in Sherman Alexie’s *Reservation Blues*”; and Janine Richardson, “Magic and Memory in Sherman Alexie’s *Reservation Blues*.”

Alexie’s novel tells the story of a band, the Coyote Springs, and their journey to Manhattan. The band comes together in an unusual way. It begins when Thomas Builds-the-Fire, a lonely, dark-skinned Indian man with the physique of an old man, comes across a guitar. As he is on his way to the reservation’s Trading Post, he runs into two bullies on the reservation, Victor Joseph, a tattered and angry Indian man, and Junior Polatkin, a tall, good-looking Indian with long dark hair. They inquire about Thomas’s new guitar and to their surprise find out that Thomas is reluctant to share the details of his guitar. This results in a brawl between the three

⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁵ Ibid., 21.

men, which the reader learns is common throughout the reservation. Alexie explains that these fights are, “full of frustrated, macho warriors who are treated like animals by the rest of the world.”⁶ Alexie’s point relates to the idea that Indians were forced off of their land by the white population and eventually downgraded to residing on reservations. Eventually, the three men join together to form a band representing an idea that although they were fighting in the beginning they are united by a common heritage, history of suffering, and a desire.

Through this band alone, Alexie pulls in different controversial topics that are discussed throughout the paper. By examining two important characters, George Wright and Phillip Sheridan, we can support the idea that race is impacting the culture that is being created. Wright and Sheridan were members of the United States Army and both have recorded defeats of native tribes. These two characters in Alexie’s novel represent these men but are not the same as the 19th century generals. Wright commanded troops during 1803-1865.⁷ He was in charge during the Battle of the Spokane Plains and was involved in the hanging of a chief and his son.⁸ Yet even as Alexie provides facts on Wright, he also attempts to reveal a side of remorse in him. He has an emotional side that is revealed when the Coyote Springs do not get signed by the record company. While it is hard for the reader to feel remorse for Wright, it is still evident of the attempt by Alexie. Sheridan is the complete opposite from Wright. As a character, he is a dirty record executive who will go through any measure to find success for himself. He is willing to compromise certain morals in order to sign a band. Sheridan, a general during 1831-1888, oversaw the Indian Wars on the Great Plains.⁹ Alexie portrays him as an evil white man who has

⁶ Alexie, Sherman. *Reservation Blues*. New York: Atlantic Monthly, 1995: Print, 236.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 50-60.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 55-60.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

a vendetta against the Native American culture. This can relate back to the American Indian Wars, when hostility stemmed from technological and cultural differences as well as feelings of superiority.

The modern-day Wright and Sheridan are on a mission to portray Coyote Springs to the public's desire. When the reader is first introduced to these characters you are under the impression they mean no harm. They fly the band out to the East Coast, accommodate them in a hotel room, and provide the opportunity for their band to be heard by an audience other than their reservation. However, the initial opinion on these men begin to fade when Alexie reveals what their real motive is. Wright and Sheridan persuade the band to be stripped of their identity and dress in clothing that originates from their tribe members. The goal of their appearance is to represent a "savage." According to the record company, the oppressive culture will only accept Native Americans as dressing in primitive clothes and wearing war paint on their bodies. In order to project this image to the public, the record company expresses this interest to the Coyote Springs. Alexie depicts this scenario to represent situations that may have occurred years ago when stereotypes were prominent against Native Americans. This example shows how certain labels against Native Americans have declined in recent years. The ancient customs of the Native Americans are being exposed to the greater public in Alexie's novel. This idea supports the theme of race and cultural production by discussing the racial and social behaviors of a society.

The idea of race and social behaviors reflecting on race and cultural production transition to the topic of race and racism in sports. For years now, the game of lacrosse has been a huge part of my life. My mother who was a part of the first United States Lacrosse Team, named team captain, and later inducted into the Hall of Fame has been a driving force in my passion for the game. I began the game when I was in elementary school and participated on a youth team in the

area. Throughout each course, I have tried to find ways to tie in the game. It was not until my Race and Racism course that the history of the sport could be brought in as a topic. During this course, we discussed how sports have been inaccessible to African Americans for certain reasons. This issue led me to think back to my first time playing with an African American. Upon entering college, I saw that the sport was more diverse. By the time of my freshman year of college, the diversity within the team had changed. Being a part of the Monmouth University women's lacrosse team, I can only remember having a handful of African American teammates. Unfortunately, this has been the case with many colleges. Until recent years, the game of lacrosse has been viewed as a predominately white sport. For example, in the 1970s, when my mother was a part of the U.S. women's lacrosse team she had one African American teammate, which was pretty common during that time. The realization of the change in the sport came from last year's issue of the United States Lacrosse Magazine. The popular magazine released an issue dedicated to including a twelve-page section featuring the faces and voices of the black lacrosse community.

The articles used are Elijah Black and Matt DeSilva, "Elijah Black: Being a Part of Something Bigger"; Taylor Thornton and Matt DeSilva, "Taylor Thornton's Support System and the Power of 'Unwavering Belief'"; Joey Coffy and Matt DeSilva, "What It Means to Be Black in This Sport"; Kyle Harrison and Matt Hamilton, "Where are the Rest of the Black People"; Shaun Church and Matt Hamilton, "Shaun Church: From Southside Queens to College Lacrosse Coach." The common theme among the interviewees relates to creating a change to the younger generations. They recognize the problem of limited numbers from the black community participating in the sport of lacrosse and create avenues for young athletes to gain interest in the sport. The spotlight on these players result in the hard work and dedication they have had to their

academics and athletics. Each athlete rose above difficult hardships and created programs or opportunities for those in need.

My argument throughout this paper is how the participants in lacrosse have helped diversify the sport by creating a new culture. Influencers such as Jessy Morgan, Kyle Harrison, Jim Brown, Myles Jones, and more have all paved the way for change in the diversity of the game. Collectively, each athlete recognized the issues that were denying opportunities to the younger generations. Specifically, Kyle Harrison has been a key contributor who continues to find ways to use his fame to create change for the younger generations. He has started and teamed up with others to produce openings for inner-city kids who did not have the resources to become involved in the game. Club teams are a huge expense that parents have to take on, and many of these teams practice outside at a sport complex. Inner-cities do not have the space or resources to accommodate parks. Harrison created a non-profit organization which allowed athletes to join without having to worry about an added expense. He designated practice locations to parks within a short distance from cities. While his story is explained in detail throughout *Lacrosse: A Predominately White Sport on the Rise to Diversity*, it is necessary to share an introduction to the achievements made by Harrison.

Not only is my passion for the sport of lacrosse high, there has always been a lingering curiosity in the events that took place during World War II. My undergraduate degree is in history, and I enrolled in as many World War II and Holocaust classes as possible. Dr. Christopher DeRosa, a beloved professor, assisted in helping my interest grow. He facilitated in my work for my final paper for the History program which discussed concentration camps in the Holocaust. Therefore, when taking my History Proseminar, my decision to write about the Holocaust came without hesitation. My confidence in the subject and past experience has helped

to direct the final paper to the life of ordinary men living in Germany at the time of the Holocaust. The question of why these men decided to join the movement has often come up in discussion. Unfortunately, there is not distinct answer as to why, but there are accounts from scholars who believe they found a why. Through the examples of the ordinary man it can be argued that culture is not so much defined as society wide versus being able to change rapidly by a group of people. The average man's decision to join the movement created significant change within their race.

At first, there was hesitation about this topic, but with the help of Christopher Browning and his book *Ordinary Men*, the option of exploring it further became possible. Browning discusses the incentive to join the Nazi Party. He believes that the enticement to join rises when there is an increasing threat of war which gives prospective recruits the urge to join. Arguably, the economy of Germany in the 1930s was poor. Economic motivation became a key factor for citizens who were struggling each day. The hope each man had when enlisting was the idea of earning a steady income. This idea was popular within the peers of the German citizens. With the recruitment successfully achieving high numbers and job opportunities opening up the economy was beginning to change in a positive way.

William Brustein, author of *The Logic of Evil: The Social Origins of the Nazi Party*, discusses the idea that these individuals joined the Nazi Party because they believed there was no other alternative. He applies different concepts to attempt to classify their reasoning's, one example being the economic motivation. Germany was in a recession, families were struggling to survive, and when Adolf Hitler greeted the population with promise of a better life, it was hard for them to resist. Their daily lives were miserable and full of stress, they needed someone to bring them hope for a brighter future. This is exactly what Hitler took advantage of. He provided

a scapegoat for the German people by preaching the Jewish population was the root their problems.

The breakdown of each topic, ranging from characters in Sherman Alexie's writings, current members of the lacrosse world, and past German citizens involved in the Nazi Party, all relate to ordinary people surviving each day. Arguably, it is through the culture of these ordinary citizens that their history is created. Each character or citizen has their own story to write about. Another important aspect to each topic discussed, is the issue of race; American Indians versus the white population, African Americans versus the white population, and the Germans who believed they were racially superior deemed the Jewish population as inferior. Not only do these topics relate to race, they also relate to a broader idea of the white population being seen as superior to every other race. This white supremacist perspective stemmed from very early on in American history and has somewhat gotten better throughout the years.

Richard Peterson author of "The Production of Culture Perspective" supports the idea of the production of culture stemming from the systems of each culture. He states, "the production of culture perspective focuses on how the symbolic elements of culture are shaped by the systems within which they are created, distributed, evaluated, taught, and preserved."¹⁰ He goes on to discuss six different facets of production and he uses them to theorize within the production perspective. He supports his argument by stating, "practitioners of this perspective focused on the fabrication of expressive-symbol elements of culture, such as art works, scientific research reports, popular culture, religious practices, legal judgments, journalism, and other parts of what are now called the culture or creative industries."¹¹ He examines how culture production can be

¹⁰ Peterson, Richard A., and N. Anand. "The Production of Culture Perspective." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30 (2004): 311-34. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737696>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 311.

successfully applied when looking at it from an individual standpoint versus a collective standpoint. This supports the idea that race and cultural production can be examined through each individual of each topic discussed.

Three out of the six facets of production that Peterson discusses are ideas based out of technology, industry and organizational structure, and occupational careers. The first idea is wealth. While he is presenting different viewpoints from other authors, he shares his own, “those who controlled the means of producing wealth shaped culture to fit their own class interests.” Wealth can draw out a lot of different emotions and perspectives in people. For instance, the average man living in Germany before the start of World War II was broken down and poor. They were in need of any sign of hope. The first person to bring them that light of hope would create an open door to many possibilities. The average working-class and middle-class man would seize the opportunity to provide revenue for his family. The idea that someone producing wealth to provide them power supports the argument of the ordinary man seeing a way out of distress.

The second facet discussed relates to the production of mass media. Peterson refers to another author, Howard Becker who wrote “The Cultural Apparatus,” who “showed that artistic creativity is not so much an act of individual genius as it is the product of the cooperative effort of a number of people.”¹² Peterson then goes on to say, “the ‘news-making’ studies of the 1970s exemplified the production perspective because they went beyond tracing the social dynamics of newsrooms to reveal how organizational routines determine what should be defined as ‘news.’”¹³ This example of cultural production uses media to show the creativity of a group is more

¹² Ibid., 312.

¹³ Ibid., 312.

effective than a single artist. This faucet relates to the sport of lacrosse and those involved in the game. Influential people working hard to create change in the game is an example of the cooperate effort of a number of people. They tackle the production perspective by shifting the culture. Each organization of lacrosse thrives off of culture, this is especially true with coaches. A coaches' goal is to build a culture that reflects their team's goals. In order to create avenues for African Americans or other cultures to be a part of the sport, it is important to create cooperative change. To relate back to the media faucet, the influential members of the lacrosse world effectively use social media to create change. Peterson states, "technology provides the tools with which people and institutions augment their abilities to communicate, and changes in communication technology destabilize and create new opportunities in culture."¹⁴ The platform of technology helps reach a wide audience, especially if you are hoping to create change.

The third facet relates to mass media as it depicts the use of music. Peterson uses technology to represent the cultural concepts in music. He believes that, "because of destabilizing changes triggered by the alterations in law and technology, large numbers of independent record companies and radio stations successfully entered the field by making music targeted at a specific audience."¹⁵ This faucet relates to Sherman Alexie's novel and the band discussed throughout, the Coyote Springs. The Coyote Springs travel off of their reservation and perform at different venues. Eventually, their story leads them to Manhattan where they have the opportunity to perform in front of a record company. However, because this record company wants to attract a certain audience and be able to make a profit off of the band they ask that the band be stripped down to their original roots. They want to depict the Coyote Springs as savages

¹⁴ Ibid., 314.

¹⁵ Ibid., 313.

and to wear war cloths and war paint. Each of these faucets relate to the production of culture by focusing on the systems within which they are created. Race and cultural production are evident throughout each area of study. Cultural production is constructed off of systems, and these systems are referred to as each topic.

Sherman, Alexie: Reservation Blues, Casebook Study

Throughout his childhood, Sherman Alexie did not know that he could write about powwows, ceremonies, broken down cars, or cheap motels, all of which made up his life growing up on a reservation. He is a very talented Native American author, who does a tremendous job in telling stories. Author Ase Nygren states that, “Ethnic literature writers have a powerful social role in shaping ethnic identity and in making ethnic groups visible. With the rise of ethnic literatures, there has been in criticism a tendency to link literature written by writers of a certain ethnic descent with a specific group of people, and thus with a specific ethnic experience.”¹⁶ Nygren then states, “Inevitably when dealing with ethnic literature, it is impossible not to be self-conscious of one’s own position.”¹⁷ Alexie has the upper hand in his world of writing which makes him so compelling. His unlikely qualities of his ethnic experiences allow him to explore the idea of ethnic literature and ethnic authenticity. His background provides him the credibility to write about his ethnic identity. However, Alexie states in this interview with Nygren, “People thought I was writing about stereotypes, but more than anything I was writing about my own life. As an Indian, you don’t have the luxury of being called an autobiographical writer often. You end up writing for the whole race.”¹⁸ Alexie then goes on to state, “So I became political because people viewed me politically. I got political to fight people’s ideas about me. It is only in the last few years that my politics has found a way into my work that feels natural.”¹⁹ This idea allows Alexie to explore the idea of ethnic literature and authenticity. There is another side to this that Sherman Alexie addresses. Some critics believe

¹⁶ Nygren, Åse. “A World of Story-Smoke: A Conversation with Sherman Alexie.” *MELUS*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2005, pp. 149–169. www.jstor.org/stable/30029639.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 153.

Native American writers have careers strictly because of their ethnicity. The following critical essays helped analyze the critical points of what it means to be an Indian and the notion of ethnic authenticity. They also support the intersection of race and cultural production by examining the Indian race and their impact on the culture of the time.

Reservation Blues is a novel that takes on the journey of a newly formed band, the Coyote Springs, and follows their lives as they perform at Reservation bars, small-town taverns, and eventually the big city of Manhattan. Coyote Springs initially consists of three men from the Spokane Reservation. Eventually, the group includes two women from the Flathead Reservation. Throughout this novel, there are a lot of consistent historical references that Sherman Alexie incorporates into his story of Coyote Springs. As Coyote Springs travels to perform in various different bars, Alexie clashes popular culture with history. The band's fame originates from performing in front of locals during their rehearsals at Irene's, a local bar. The band begins to improve quickly, and Victor, one of the band members, is becoming a tremendously decent guitarist. Indians from all over begin to show up at their rehearsals just to hear them perform. After recent news of their popularity, they receive an invitation to play at the Tipi Pole Tavern in Montana. The Coyote Springs journey to Manhattan begins after their first performance at the tavern.

Joel Janicki who wrote "The Art of Losing: Historical Allusions in Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*," discusses different historical allusions that appear throughout the novel. They consist of military, economic, and social settings that have undermined Native American culture, especially that of the Plateau Indians in the American Northwest, including that of Alexie's own tribe, the Spokane's.²⁰ Janicki focuses on the historical significance of the

²⁰ Janicki, Joel. "The Art of Losing: Historical Allusions In Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*, 23.

reservation as well as two important figures from history, George Wright and Philip Sheridan. Both of these men were members of the United States Army. They are on record as having defeats of the native tribes of the northwest which include Alexie's ancestors, the Spokane's.²¹ This resulted in northwestern tribes being confined to life on reservations.²²

In *Reservation Blues*, George Wright and Philip Sheridan are the names of two producers from Calvary Records in New York City who arrive on the Spokane Reservation to discuss a recording contract with Coyote Springs. It is ironic that Alexie uses the word Calvary to represent their record company because he is also referencing the U.S. Calvary which happens to be the nemesis of the Spokane and all other tribes of the Northwest and the Great Plains.²³ Alexie is using these characters to represent the actual George Wright and Philip Sheridan from the United States Army but has created a different role for them in his novel. In Janicki's article he discusses the historical representation of Sheridan, Wright, and the U.S. Calvary by showing their authoritative power. Alexie uses this by showing how the representation of authority and power are always stacked against Coyote Springs, yet the very act of engagement is a form of resistance and a challenge to the system.²⁴ Janicki is proving that the Native American tribes are constantly being tested or battling with opposition. Sheridan and Wright, in Alexie's novel, are in power through the Record Company and have the final say on Coyote Springs fate regarding their success on the recording contract. This example, shows the comparison between the actual Wright and Sheridan compared to the characters in Alexie's novel.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

²² *Ibid.*, 25.

²³ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

The men from Calvary are not fully identified to the reader which leads them to play two different roles in the novel, the first role being a part of a record company and the other being men of war. Alexie touches on Sheridan and Wright's backgrounds with hints in the dreams and visions of his characters. Checkers Warm Water is a girl Coyote Springs meets along their travel. Her dream begins with Phil Sheridan entering into the hotel room she is staying at in Manhattan. The dream occurs after Coyote Springs had a terrible performance in front of the owner of Calvary records and portrays Sheridan taking out his rage on Checkers. It is important to note that the original Sheridan was a ruthless and aggressive commander who played a leading role in the U.S. Army's destructive campaign against the native peoples of the Northwest before the Civil War.²⁵ He was one of the most highly decorated officers in the nineteenth century, and one of the most successful Union generals in the Civil War. He is associated with the statement, "the only good Indian is a dead Indian."²⁶ This block quote from the fight between Sheridan and Checkers brings out his strong beliefs on racism:

That's what you Indians always say. The white men did this to us, the white men did that to us. When are you ever going to take responsibility for yourselves? You had a choice, we gave you every chance. All you had to do was move to the reservation. We would've protected you. The U.S. Army was the best friend the Indians ever had. This is just like you Indians. You could never stay where we put you. You never listened to orders. Always fighting. You never quit fighting. Do you understand how tired I am of fighting you?²⁷

George Wright played a different and less destructive role than Sheridan. Janicki explains that the original Wright's intention for the Indians was to save them from total extinction by his attempts to keep the races separate and out of harm's way, secure their property rights by giving them land between the Cascade Mountains and the Columbia River.²⁸ However, the most

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

²⁷ Alexie, Sherman. *Reservation Blues*. New York: Atlantic Monthly, 1995: Print, 236.

²⁸ Janicki, Joel. *The Art of Losing: Historical Allusions in Sherman Alexie's Reservation Blues*.

prominent historical reference in *Reservation Blues* is the slaughter of over eight hundred Native American horses at Liberty Lake by George Wright. This example shows the different beliefs between Alexie and Janicki when discussing the original Wright and the character. The horses are brought up by Big Mama, a character throughout Alexie's novel, who had witnessed the shootings. George Wright, described by Janicki, seems to be caught up in-between the war and his beliefs. However, Janicki is not providing an automatic pass for Wright's actions. Janicki's point of Wright is how he is caught between two emotions, while Alexie shows one perspective of Wright and his ruthlessness on the killing of the American horses.

"The Exaggeration of Despair in Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*" by Gloria Bird questions the assumption that an ethnic identity leads to automatic literary authenticity.²⁹ Bird believes, "that *Reservation Blues* contributes to a portrait version of reservation life, one that perpetuates many of the stereotypes of native people and presents problems for native and non-native readers alike."³⁰ She also believes, "native culture is misrepresented throughout this novel."³¹ Her article addresses examples from the novel that misconstrue representations of Indians as well as comparing *Reservation Blues* to movie scripts.

Bird's argument, in my opinion, has little support because she mainly focuses on two minor characters. While I believe Alexie is painting a picture of Reservation life, Bird argues that he is adding to the problem. She discusses two different characters that are mentioned in Sherman Alexie's novel. The nameless character who is described as having "cheekbones so big that he knocked people over when he moved his head from side to side" and the character who is

²⁹ Bird, Gloria. "The Exaggeration of Despair in Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*." *Wicazo Sa Review* (Fall 1995):47-52.

³⁰ Ibid., 47-52.

³¹ Ibid., 47-52.

referred to as “the man who was probably Lakota” are both characters she argues are never humanized because Alexie neglected to provide them with a real name.³² The man with the high cheekbones is a feature from the Siouan descendants who have extravagantly high cheekbones. “The man who was probably Lakota” is a Bible-thumping “crazy old Indian man” who goes around yelling that the world is ending.³³ Bird makes the distinction that these representations are becoming implicit, meaning people who haven’t grown up on a reservation decide that this representation is accurate because they do not know otherwise.³⁴ She does not truly base her argument on these two minor characters but her concern is that the novel reads like a popular movie and highlights only particular aspects of Native culture. Portraying her opinion on these two minor characters helps support the argument that Alexie is highlighting much more than one aspect of Native culture. She believes that *Reservation Blues*, even though critics say it is a native representational novel, does not depict the native community accurately. Her argument seems a bit simplistic, only comparing two characters and pointing out a minor flaw. Whereas, Alexie portrays a fictional story that illustrates life growing up on a reservation.

Janicki and Bird’s articles clash when Bird criticizes Alexie for not providing any Spokane culture or traditions, or anything uniquely Spokane. Bird states, “There are no signs of elders, with the exception of Big Mom whose figure is exalted to mythical disproportions. Pan-Indianism becomes the axiom for Indianness, borrowing from various native cultures and traditions, that in the end, misconstrue what is Indian, or specifically Spokane, to the greater public.”³⁵ Janicki does not agree with Bird’s criticism. Janicki believes that, “Alexie’s novel

³² *Ibid.*, 47.

³³ *Ibid.*, 48

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 48

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 49

serves an important function by its capacity to cross borders – temporal, cultural, and social – in a satirical way that invites the mainstream reader to consider life on the reservation and the broader issue of historical relations between colonialist Americans.”³⁶ He argues that, “Bird is critical of the use of allusions to popular culture as lacking any overarching artistic purpose, serving only as the writer’s means to keep the episodic plot moving forward.”³⁷ Bird believes that what is missing from *Reservation Blues* “is a sense of responsibility to the cultures the characters are attempting to represent.”³⁸ She thinks, “it is more specifically a product of the techno-generation and not the serious literature it is made out to be.”³⁹ She also believes that Sherman Alexie did not accurately as possible show the way of life on the reservation.

Blythe Tellefsen, author of “America is a Diet Pepsi: Sherman Alexie’s *Reservation Blues*” argues against Bird’s argument of Alexie not providing any Spokane culture or traditions in *Reservation Blues*. If Tellefsen was directing her article at Bird, I believe she would counter the main point of Alexie’s credibility of reservation life. I argue that she discusses the idea of race and cultural production as a crucial factor in the construction of Native and American identity. She supports her argument by, “using popular culture as a tool used against Native Americans by the dominant society, that excludes, misrepresents, and exploits them throughout its popular culture to the point where any sense of “Indianness” is stripped from the Indian.”⁴⁰ However, she states it can also be used by the Native American to “dislocate a stable sense of the American as white and middle-class and then to reconstruct a new kind of American Indian

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 51

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 52

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 52

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 52

⁴⁰ Blythe Tellefsen. "America Is a Diet Pepsi: Sherman Alexie’s *Reservation Blues*." *Western American Literature* 40, no. 2 (2005), 125-147.

identity.”⁴¹ Tellefsen uses the analogy of “United States being a John Wayne movie, the Bureau of Indian Affairs is a jar of commodity applesauce, America is a Diet Pepsi, and Americans are consumers of those products.” She then states that “America being referred to as Diet Pepsi means it is a kind of fluid that is intrusive, embodied by various kinds of popular culture.”⁴² She uses food, drink, and American customs, for example Thanksgiving, to represent American culture. This is an example of comparing a race and its norms to cultural production. The social behavior of a society, in this instance the use of food and drink in terms of a holiday, are an example of cultural production.

Tellefsen proves her point of reconstructing a new kind of American Indian identity by pulling in quotes from *Reservation Blues*. Thomas Builds-the-Fire is sitting in his house watching television, he experiences despair that is brought on by what he is watching. “He turned on his little black-and-white television to watch white people live. White people owned everything: food, houses, clothes, children. Television constantly reminded Thomas of all he never owned.”⁴³ The consumer culture of America is to buy and to be valuable, white people owned everything ranging from food to material goods. The television show made Thomas realize what he was missing out on, reflecting back on a world of which he was not a part of. The behavior of consuming is something Thomas believes he is missing out on because his culture is not a part of that.

Tellefsen also makes an interesting point when she notes how George Wright and Phillip Sheridan brought Coyote Springs to Manhattan for an audition. All of the members of the band have grown up on reservations, and have lived within an Indian community. However, they want

⁴¹ *Ibid*

⁴² *Ibid*

⁴³ Alexie, Sherman. *Reservation Blues*. (New York: Atlantic Monthly, 1995), 70.

to sell the band to an audience who would listen to them other than their reservation. So, the record company persuades the band to be stripped of their identity and dress in clothing that goes back to their original tribe members. The goal of their appearance is to represent a “savage.” This is an example of cultural oppression, the oppressive culture, in this instance the record company, is borrowing elements of an oppressed culture, Coyote Springs, and is using them for their own benefit. This is an example of how a group of people at one point were deemed inferior to the race in power. Proving a point that race intersects with cultural production by examining it through a set of people who share the same culture, history, language, and values. The record company can be seen as stealing the bands cultural elements and traditions while they are continuing to deny the value or humanity of the culture of the band. The dominant culture does not see Native Americans dressing in jeans and a t-shirt instead, they see Indians dressing in primitive cloths and wearing war paint.

Historical allusions play a role in both Janicki’s article and Janine Richardson’s “Magic and Memory in Sherman Alexie’s Reservation Blues.” Janicki argues how historical allusions are shown in social settings that undermined Native American culture, while Richardson argues two main points of community and identity relating to a person’s past and present. Alexie tackles the issue of responsibility by including events that happened in the 1800s that affected the Spokane region. Alexie asserts his side of the story and explores the relationship of history and memory to the present.⁴⁴ As Richardson notes, “For Thomas, the silencing or ignoring of painful history – one’s own as well as others – leads only to multiplication of anger and pain for those in denial.”⁴⁵ He also says, “The buried pain needs to be brought to the surface and acknowledged,

⁴⁴ Richardson, Janine. “Magic and Memory in Sherman Alexie's Reservation Blues.” *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, vol. 9, no. 4, 1997, pp. 39–51.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

for only then can the past and the dead cease to contaminate the present.”⁴⁶ Richardson argues that in Alexie’s novel, history is the burden that everyone in America carries as an integral part of the American experience.⁴⁷

Richardson’s article also talks about Checkers Warm Water’s dream that involved Phillip Sheridan. Her dreams involved Indian men who forcefully take advantage of her sexually. Her dreams give life to voices from the past. After examining the portentous dreams that the characters experience, Richardson brings up the idea of Wright and Sheridan being reincarnated. He states, “While Sheridan continues to enact old patterns of genocidal racism, the reincarnated Wright evolves into a penitent seeking to make amends.”⁴⁸ Richardson believes that Alexie is drawing on a narrative more closely related to his ethnic and political roots. I agree with Richardson’s belief because it closely relates to cultural production and the connection between race and culture.

There are plenty of themes to focus on in *Reservation Blues* and the works of numerous authors touch a lot on history, life on a reservation, and how Alexie’s story relates back to society. Joel Janicki author of “The Art of Losing: Historical Allusions in Sherman Alexie’s *Reservation Blues*,” examines different historical allusions that appear throughout the novel. One specific significance Janicki touches on is the use of two important characters who were also very important figures throughout history. Gloria Bird, “The Exaggeration of Despair in Sherman Alexie’s *Reservation Blues*,” believes that *Reservation Blues* contributes to a false depiction of reservation life, one that exploits many stereotypes. Blythe Tellefsen, “America is a

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

Diet Pepsi: Sherman Alexie's 'Reservation Blues'" discusses the consumer culture of America is to buy, and the characters in Alexie's novel are reminded with how little they own.⁴⁹

One theme that these authors do not touch on is the use of alcohol throughout the Native American population. Stephen Evans, "Open Containers: Sherman Alexie's Drunken Indians" discusses the dysfunctional nature of contemporary reservation life and the fragmented, often alienated lives of the characters who daily confront white civilization leading them to alcoholism.⁵⁰ The stereotype of the drunken Indian appears in Alexie's work and he often refutes it. Evans states, "Alexie's work shows that he uses the social and moral values in irony and satire, as well as certain conventional character types such as the stereotype of the 'drunken Indian.'"⁵¹ Evans references Gloria Bird in his article by bringing up her point of the important issues concerning the future direction of new Indian fiction. Bird and Evans question the use of this stereotype and believe that Alexie "preys upon his community and culture in a damaging stereotype."⁵² Both authors are simply trying to bring to light the representations of life on the reservation, however, we should keep in mind that pointing out these stereotypes can fuel the reality of the drunken Indian. Stating this example of the drunken Indian can be argued to the main point of how race connects with culture. This stereotypical culture of the drunken Indian that is brought up by many authors and Sherman Alexie portray the social development of a person. Arguably, whether this stereotype has truth behind it or not, it still applies to the social aspect of the Native American culture.

⁴⁹ Blythe Tellefsen. "America Is a Diet Pepsi: Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*." *Western American Literature* 40, no. 2 (2005), 125-147.

⁵⁰ Evans, Stephen F. "Open Containers: Sherman Alexie's Drunken Indians." *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2001, pp. 46-72.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 46

⁵² *Ibid.*, 48.

Evans points out a certain issue that recurs in other texts, many authors, such as Bird, focus on one literary work in their analysis. Works published by Alexie following *Reservation Blues* “reveal the devastating, debilitating, and destructive effects of alcohol on the Indian culture.”⁵³ While Bird focuses just on *Reservation Blues*, there are many other texts by Alexie that represent this same issue. Alexie’s stories pull in Native American lifestyles and applies them to his fictional characters. So, through his focus on alcoholism, Alexie redeems earlier stereotypes of Indians.

Through each of these literary works, it is evident that the use race and cultural production shines through history. Whether it is examining stereotypes, focusing on addictions such as alcoholism, life on a reservation, or the use of cultural appropriation through the example of the record company and the band *Coyote Springs*, the history of the Native Americans through fiction and nonfiction portrays how their race intersects with the idea of cultural production.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 48.

Lacrosse: A Predominately White Sport on the Rise to Diversity

The game of lacrosse was founded by the Native Americans, and ever since has been a very popular sport. Thomas Vennum, author of *American Indian Lacrosse*, states “the oldest surviving sticks date only from the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and the first detailed reports on Indian lacrosse are even later.”⁵⁴ The distribution of lacrosse shows it to have been played throughout the eastern half of North America, mostly by tribes in the southeast, around the western Great Lakes, and in the St. Lawrence Valley area.⁵⁵ Even though it started as one of many indigenous stickball games, it peaked interest with the Europeans in the early 1800s. Through the sport of lacrosse, we can explore how the concept of race and the implications of racism have changed over time. Arguably within each new year, the game of lacrosse is increasingly becoming more diverse due to the voices of the players, coaches, and fans. This point supports the idea that race intersects with cultural production through the members of the lacrosse community. They are creating avenues for circulation of cultural values by generating new rules, expectations, and standards within the lacrosse community. *US Lacrosse Magazine* serves as a resource for members of the lacrosse community. It produced an April edition that included a twelve-page section featuring faces and voices of the black lacrosse community. This special feature reached millions of lacrosse fans, players, coaches, and others in a huge spotlight. With this edition, it proves the point that individuals in the lacrosse world are creating change within the game. Each article produced in the magazine supports the thought that race is an entirely social or cultural construction. The edition interviews players and coaches who discuss

⁵⁴ Vennum, Thomas Jr. *American Indian Lacrosse: Little Brother of War*. Washington, DC and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994. This article written by Vennum was featured in the *US Lacrosse Magazine*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

their experiences and how they dealt with adversity. Each article argues the fact that the sport of lacrosse's culture is continuing to change each year. The black lacrosse community shows passion and desire to create diversity in the sport of lacrosse. Their overall goal is to continue to change the culture and provide opportunity to others.

Each interviewee in the US Lacrosse Magazine believe in order to promote diversity throughout the sport there needs to be more African American players to use as role models to the younger generation. Jim Brown, one of the greatest football players, also played lacrosse in College. Alisha Ricardi, author of "Diversifying Lacrosse Still Work in Progress," states that "Brown helped create possibilities for black athletes by playing football and lacrosse at Syracuse University in the mid-1950s, a time when racial integration in collegiate and professional sports was still very much developing."⁵⁶ Since Brown, the next recognizable black lacrosse player has recently been Kyle Harrison, four-time Major League Lacrosse All-Star and NCAA player of the year as a senior at Johns Hopkins in 2005.⁵⁷ Harrison who is mentioned below from his article in the US Lacrosse Magazine, has been a huge voice in the effort to diversify the game. The issues that are slowly changing due to the help of Harrison, in recent years, include the growth of the game in inner cities. Ricardi provides background on Harrison's accomplishments, stating that he has been on the board of Lacrosse for Life, a San Francisco-based organization focused on bringing lacrosse into the city, and he works with the Starz Foundation.⁵⁸ She mentions that The Starz foundation is a nonprofit that is trying to develop lacrosse in Southern California's underserved communities.⁵⁹ "In order to provide easy access to inner-city children, we must

⁵⁶ Ricardi, Alisha. "Diversifying Lacrosse Still Work in Progress." *ESPN*, ESPN Internet Ventures, 17 June 2011, www.espn.com/espn/news/story?id=6165886.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

target the location where most people of color are, update facilities used to practice, and lower the prices to join the sport.”⁶⁰ This is an example of changing the culture of children who reside in cities. The cultural production of this idea stems from the Starz Foundation overall goal. Their goal is to integrate children of color into the sport of lacrosse. Ricardi states, “this is what the US Lacrosse is hoping for. In 2003, the organization created the BRIDGE Program to enable lacrosse programs in underserved communities and those unexposed to the sport. In 2016, there were 14 lacrosse programs in 10 cities nationwide affiliated with the BRIDGE Program.”⁶¹ In 2008, another program was introduced to enrich the support of teams. A three-year pilot program called First Stick was created to better measure the success of new teams.⁶² The diversity and cultural aspect of the sport has grown with the help of these programs and the role models from the black community involved in the game.

Jessy Morgan, current head coach at George Mason University in Virginia, discusses race and racism in lacrosse. In her article from IWLCA (Intercollegiate Women’s Lacrosse Coaches Association) titled “Race in the Sport of Lacrosse,” Morgan talks about personal experiences that she has dealt with growing up African American. She believes that the perspective of this issue needs to be discussed but she also dislikes it when people make statements as if they represent the entire race of people: “The opinions that I express are my own experiences that have given me a small glimpse inside the complex world of institutional racism and social biases.”⁶³ Her background in working with institutions gives her enough credit to provide this information. She was hired in August of 2014 and is currently entering her fourth-year coaching at George Mason.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁶¹ Ibid., 1.

⁶² Ibid., 1.

⁶³ Morgan, Jessy. “Race in the Sport of Lacrosse.” *BEHIND THE WHISTLE*, IWLCA, 8 Feb. 2017, 1.

She was a former Virginia All-American then became the assistant Women's Lacrosse coach at Virginia, and her first collegiate coaching experience was at Howard University. Morgan admits, "it makes me cringe to think that there are people that don't believe that these stereotypes exist but they do. It's even more surprising that if you had asked me in High School I would have also vehemently denied the claim."⁶⁴ She attended McDonogh, a college prep school, where she was in her own little bubble. She talks about how at this point in her life she was unaware that the world saw race. "I was truly blind to the inequalities faced by others in terms of color, sexuality, and gender."⁶⁵ She was a young athlete who was growing up into the harsh nature of adulthood as she puts it.

It was during Morgan's tenure at the University of Virginia when she first experienced racism. It was "not exactly 'tobacco road' but southern enough for a young Baltimore woman. It was here I first heard the N-word, saw segregation, and felt different."⁶⁶ Morgan began to turn to her teammates and coaches for support to avoid continuing to feel different. A common thread amongst college players is that they all state they cannot thank their teammates and coaches enough for making them feel welcomed and supported whether or not they knew what their struggle was. Morgan states, "UVA is where I would constantly be in huge lecture halls and be the only brown face."⁶⁷ She was the only black woman in the dorm rooms being asked about her hair. "Can I touch it; how long does it take to blow dry?" Her frustration about this rang clear when she said that such questions are not cute or endearing.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 2.

Her argument for diversifying the sport and how to respond as a coach is a prominent one because she believes coaches shape the way these players respond to certain situations, and most coaches are uneducated on this topic: “I’m not saying give anyone special treatment... I’m saying to be cognizant and respectful of what these athletes might be experiencing. It is our duty as coaches to nurture all young women to adulthood.”⁶⁸ She stresses that as coaches we are building these young women into confident, respectful mothers, sisters, and wives. It is important to note here that Morgan believes in shaping her players for life after College, she is in no way disregarding the fact that women are strong in leadership positions.

One institutions president told her that there would be faculty members who would take issue with her appointment as head coach just because of her race. She was surprised at the realization, as were many others, that an Athletic Director would second guess hiring her because of her race and that she is a “black coach in an elitist white sport.”⁶⁹ “I have seen a lot in my career, I have felt the pressure of being the only brown face as far as the eye can see at a tournament, or being asked what sport I coach and watching the person’s jaw drop when I say lacrosse,” she added.⁷⁰ Her mission is to change this and put forward enough effort to have the sport of lacrosse more culturally diverse: “I must prove that a black woman from Baltimore can do this job and do it well. I must encourage other women of color to join the sport because frankly the sport needs the growth. I make sure that when I see a black athlete play that I correct coaches in describing them as just an athlete.”⁷¹ Morgan realizes that she cannot take on this job

⁶⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 2.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁷¹ Ibid., 1.

alone and her hope is to have other coaches extending hands to girls and young women of all colors to help expose them to the game of lacrosse.

Kyle Harrison, a two-time Team USA midfielder and former Tewaaraton winner at Johns Hopkins University, currently plays for the MLL's Ohio Machine. His article that was featured in the US Lacrosse Magazine is titled, "Where are the Rest of the Black People?" His story is unique because unlike other black lacrosse players who were interviewed, he grew up assuming that black people played lacrosse. This was because his father had played the sport and he grew up loving the sport because of his father: "It wasn't until I got older and heard these other guys' experiences and I was like, 'Oh, maybe everyone else wasn't as comfortable at the beginning.'" ⁷² It was not until he was older that he began to ask himself where are the rest of the black people? His viewpoint is a little different than his peers, some are angered by the current status, while he took it as a proud moment. "I remember feeling at that point proud, like, heck yeah, I'm here to compete!" His presence on the lacrosse field at Johns Hopkins prompted other black kids to pick up a lacrosse stick and play. "I would go to a McDonald's near campus and see black kids with sticks tell me that they were playing because I was playing," he recalled. ⁷³ This was when Harrison started understanding the direction of his generation and future generations. The role they were about to take on was to be ambassadors to future children of color to play the sport of lacrosse. ⁷⁴

Johns Hopkins men's lacrosse has many opportunities for students in the surrounding Baltimore area to come to their games or participate in camps or clinics. These opportunities allow children of color to see Kyle Harrison as a role model. They might see him and think,

⁷² Kyle Harrison, "Where are the Rest of the Black People?" US Lacrosse Magazine, 2018.

⁷³ Ibid., 1.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 1.

“There’s a guy that looks like me that’s doing what I’m doing.” Harrison is a very well-known name in lacrosse and a lot of young boys look up to him. They follow him on social media and direct message him on occasions to deal with issues with which they have been struggling. He has a nephew living in Maryland who gets called the N-word at games frequently. He argues that we are more socially unaware than before because of the climate of the country. The saddest part about it for him is that it is what people are being taught as they are growing up.⁷⁵ When Harrison and Chazz Woodson put together an all-black team in 2013, Nation United, and they were dealing with significant pushback from people. “An all-black team, is that really promoting diversity? It’s a lot of people that I trust and respect, but that was eye-opening for me,” Harrison states.⁷⁶ Despite the opinions of others they continued with their approach of an all-black team. Eventually, more and more people began to buy into their team culture and dynamic. Harrison goes on to say that we are in a very good spot right now because this generation wants to see change: “More so than ever, we have a lot of well-known people with voices and platforms and they want to stir the pot.”⁷⁷ “Our group is going to change this thing, someday, somehow, because we’re all passionate about it,” Harrison insisted.⁷⁸ Harrison, his fellow peers, and coaches are creating a huge impact in young children’s lives.

Elijah Black, a junior midfielder for the St. Viator boy’s lacrosse team, a high school in Illinois and a part of Nation United Lacrosse Club located out of San Diego, California, was also featured in the US Lacrosse Magazine where he addresses his past experiences:

When I was growing up playing lacrosse, I would look up Kyle Harrison highlights trying to imitate how he plays. If I could be the next Kyle Harrison, that’s what I strive to

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 1.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1.

be. I definitely think I could carry on what he wanted for the sport and pass that on to the next generation.⁷⁹

Elijah was young and naïve. He did not realize what was going on in the world with race. At a young age of nine years old he was just running around with friends having fun oblivious of the differences between them. Black states, “in the Chicagoland area, all the high schools I’ve played at, I’ve noticed three other black kids.”⁸⁰ “There’s always that feeling in the back of my head where I’m just kind of separated. There’s a boundary between me and everyone else on the team, culture and friendship-wise,” Black says.⁸¹ His participation on the Nation United team really helped build his confidence: “I was on the summer team at the IL Recruiting Invitational, it was my favorite tournament I’ve ever played.”⁸² His team had gone to this tournament to make a name for themselves and to put out to the world that “us black kids can play together at a high level.”⁸³ He grew that confidence from his teammates and from Kyle Harrison as his idol. Elijah Black is growing up in a new generation where people like Harrison are helping create change to better his experience.

Shaun Church grew up in Southside Queens for most of his childhood until his family moved to Uniondale on Long Island, New York when he was in the fifth grade. He played football and basketball like any other city kid. As a city kid, he was not aware of the sport. As mentioned before, Kyle Harrison has created change in inner-cities to create awareness of the sport of lacrosse. When Shaun reached middle school, the lacrosse coach convinced him to try out for the team: “At Uniondale, I played with a lot of African-Americans. We were going

⁷⁹ Elijah Black. “Being A Part of Something Bigger.” US Lacrosse Magazine, 2018.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁸¹ Ibid., 1.

⁸² Ibid., 1.

⁸³ Ibid., 1.

through the same things – with single-parent homes and a lot of guys who lived with their grandparents.”⁸⁴ Shaun is a prime example of overcoming racism after numerous incidents he was associated with during his high school years. His family moved around a lot because they got kicked out of their house at Uniondale and eventually moved to Hicksville.⁸⁵

While playing lacrosse at Hicksville he began to notice things: “I was an attackman when I started playing lacrosse, but I was being moved to midfield. I was told it was because I was faster and more athletic, but I’m generally a good feeder even to this day.”⁸⁶ A coach shifting a player to a different position can sometimes be seen as a demotion in the eyes of young players. They often believe they are being moved because they are weak at their original position. However, this is often untrue, many coaches see players have potential in different spots on the field. In Shaun’s case, he was under the impression he was being moved to a different position because of the stereotype that all African American athletes are fast.

Stereotypes are huge in the game of lacrosse, as they are in almost all sports. There are talented African-American lacrosse players who compete for the USA Lacrosse team, men and women, and some who play in Pro-Lacrosse leagues. In particular is Myles Jones, alumni from Duke University, who plays for the USA Lacrosse team and the MLL which is the Major Lacrosse League. Shaun Church references him in his article: “Myles Jones, we call him the freak and the beast. He’s not just Myles. He scores and does a little celebration, it’s like, ‘Look at that beast.’”⁸⁷ By many fans he is seen for his height and skin color when he is playing. It is an

⁸⁴ Hamilton, Matt, and Shaun Church. *Shaun Church: From Southside Queens to College Lacrosse Coach*. US Lacrosse Magazine, 2 Apr. 2018, 1.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 1.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁸⁷ Ibid: Myles Jones is an African American lacrosse player who is 6’5” and around 240 pounds. He is known for driving through defenders with ease.

automatic stereotype that has been engraved in America since the start of slavery; all African-American's are seen for their skin color first and then for who they are as a person, Church believes he is no exception. He is currently the head coach at Monroe Community College and it gives him a great sense of pride to believe in his coaching philosophy. "We can't allow our kids to show up at practice and go home," Church insisted, "We have to engage them and talk with them. Even if it's a buddy system. The kids don't know each other enough on these teams," he added.⁸⁸ He coaches because he is hoping he can provide more opportunities for these kids. Very much like Harrison and Morgan's points of being an idol for kids, Shaun Church wants kids to see him and believe that they, too, can be an African-American head coaches. He is striving to be positive in this movement.

People such as Jessy Morgan, Kyle Harrison, Elijah Black, Shaun Church, and Myles Jones have all been impactful speakers as well as role models to the younger generations and have provided past and current experiences they are dealing with that are helping move the sport of lacrosse to becoming more diverse in a positive light. Besides these influential advocates, Cornell University women's lacrosse midfielder, Joey Coffy, stands out as a role model as a student-athlete. She talks about her experiences at Cornell and her awareness of how she has stood out in regard to others: "This is a predominately white sport, and I do stand out based on the color of my skin."⁸⁹ The way she has overcome some of her experiences is with her support group but also by remembering to make it about the sport, make it about the team, and make it

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ DaSilva, Matt, and Joey Coffy. *What It Means to Be Black in This Sport*. US Lacrosse Magazine, 29 Mar. 2018, 1.

about nothing else. She had a standout sophomore year during which she was fortunate enough to earn numerous accolades:

I knew people were now looking at me. I was going to be a name on people's scouting reports. But then I also started to think about what I really look like, particularly in juxtaposition with my teammates and competitors. I rarely came in contact with an opponent who looks like me.⁹⁰

With this much spotlight on her, Joey did not want to provide any room for negativity towards her. However, it is very hard to have a third complete season especially with the amount of pressure one puts on themselves. There was one game in particular where her mother and her younger brother attended and they were sitting in the stands. In the game of lacrosse if you foul someone within the eight-meter arc you are rewarded with a free position shot. Joey was fouled and had an opportunity to score, which she did and bumped her team on top. Her younger brother, who was seven years old at the time, overhead a fan from the opposing team yell that she was a cheater and the N-word. Her seven-year-old brother went up to the parent and claimed that his sister is not a cheater. Her mom quickly pulled him away and told him, "That's not your fight."⁹¹ Coffy states, "although she was beside herself with anger, she didn't want a little black boy looking like the aggressor in the situation. That's the stuff your average white family does not have to deal with while watching a lacrosse game."⁹²

Going into her junior year of college, Joey was moved from midfield to defense. She took this as a demotion and was very distraught. Relating back to Church and the idea that these

⁹⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁹¹ Ibid., 1.

⁹² Ibid: This quote and scenario is very similar to an article by Richard Wright, "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow." Wright's mother was very upset with him when she found out he was in a fight with white kids on the block. She had wished he had hid from them and did not fight back. This is a huge generational gap where Richard's mom at an older age had grown up afraid of causing fights with white people. This goes along with Joey Coffy's mother dealing with her younger brother. The younger generation is outraged and is yearning for positive change.

players are being moved positions because of their genetic makeup. However, in her coaches eyes it was seen as a promotion because she could really hone in on her skills of being very athletic and having fast feet. These traits help build strong defenders. “But because of these experiences and the way I perceived black female lacrosse players in the past, I thought this was a demotion,” concluded Joey.⁹³ She claims that people see a lot of black lacrosse players on the defensive end. She believes it sends a message on how they ended up there. Was it solely because of their athleticism? Or was it because of the entire package? Another issue she has overcome is how to cope with her teammates unwitting racism. Her teammates cannot relate to her experiences, because it is something they have never had to live through and it is something they do not particularly understand. “Sometimes it is a look. Sometimes it is the way someone says something to you,” she insists.⁹⁴ They have never had interference with racial friction.

Joey is going to be a very influential person especially after her collegiate playing years. She has become confident and comfortable talking to people about certain issues. She feels that these conversations need to happen and she is more than willing to be a mediator in the room:

Race has bifurcated a lot of communities. You get a lot of people who are not only intimidated or angered by the conversation, but you also get a lot of people who assume they won't find common ground. Having often been in situations where I am the only black person in the room, I can sit in the middle and almost be a mediator for this conversation, because it needs to happen. We've got to resolve our racial issues if we want to progress as a nation. That's something I want to see over my lifetime.⁹⁵

She is embracing being the only black person in the room at points and is taking it on as a challenge to promote change. This is how the game of lacrosse is going to be escalated into becoming more and more diverse as years go on and the game grows even larger.

⁹³ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 2.

Another example of creating racial change in the game of lacrosse comes from a graduate from Northwestern, Taylor Thornton. She was a four-all time All-American midfielder who won many honors such as the Honda Sports Award as the nation's top women's lacrosse player after being named IWLCA Division I Defender of the Year in 2011.⁹⁶ She talks about her experiences playing in sport as a minority and her incredible support system from her family. Thornton attended a predominately white high school, college, and was steered towards a predominately white sport. She loved her experience at Northwestern and was cared for by head coach Kelly Amonte Hiller. The coach saw Thornton more than just an athlete or a black girl that can run, she saw her as something bigger and as a dominant player. Thornton states, "sometimes that is all people see me as, a black girl that can run. They tend to belittle the accomplishments I had throughout my career in lacrosse."⁹⁷ Thornton realized that, "as a minority child, sometimes you have to work twice as hard to get half the recognition. That's the hard reality."⁹⁸

A reoccurring theme from these US Lacrosse interviewees is they are all aware of how important it is for young minority girls and boys to watch someone like them thrive. Taylor Thornton grew up idolizing Cherie Greer, who was a member of the University of Virginia women's lacrosse team and was eventually inducted into the Lacrosse Hall of Fame. Greer played at such a high level that it inspired Thornton to want to work just as hard. She coaches for a local club team where she has the most diverse group of girls. "I like the fact that they are starting younger. My fifth and sixth graders, you see all different races and all different types of

⁹⁶ Taylor Thornton, "Support System and the Power of Unwavering Belief"

⁹⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁸ Ibid: her experience growing up as a minority was difficult but with the help of her mom, dad, and brother she had enough confidence to want to play lacrosse.

girls.”⁹⁹ These club programs are really benefiting these girls because they are getting a stick in their hand at a young age and getting them excited about the sport.

Support at home allows people like Taylor, Kyle, and Joey to make a huge impact in the game of lacrosse. “Having support at home, it’s really important that it starts there,” Thornton says, “because a lot of times, the people around them are like, ‘What’s that? Why do you want to play that?’”¹⁰⁰ In order for change to occur there must be voices of color at the table providing feedback on their own experiences. It is important to know how many people are on the board of US Lacrosse who are of color and are really trying to bring this outreach into diversity. Taylor believes that “You need to diversify the voices who are making these decisions.”¹⁰¹ Starting at an early age, going into different inner cities and getting sticks in the hands of young girls and boys is a great start. Starting at an early age will allow kids to see what this sport can become. Thornton claims, “It has this rep of a very waspy, white sport. Seeing a few more dominant people of color, they will be like, ‘Oh cool. I want to try that.’”¹⁰² The key contributors to changing the game are in their late twenties or early thirties and are beginning to see change in the younger generations. Providing that more people will step up to the plate to create change, in a couple of years the game of lacrosse will continue to diversify.

Beverly Tatum, author of *Breaking the Silence*, talks about how we need to continually break the silence about racism whenever possible. “We need to talk about it at home, at school, in our houses of worship, in our workplaces, in our community groups.”¹⁰³ She believes that

⁹⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid: Taylor is talking about how the support at home is beneficial to anyone. They’re going to play a more traditional sport and really starts with that nucleus.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰² Ibid: example of this reoccurring theme of being a role model for younger generations to create change.

¹⁰³ Beverly Tatum, “Breaking the Silence.” From Paula Rothenberg, *White Privilege*. Page 195.

talking means being powerful with your words and using productive dialogue to raise consciousness and to lead effective change. In Tatum's chapter, she is ultimately providing a guide for white people on how to speak effectively about race and racism. "In order for there to be meaningful dialogue, fear, whether of anger or isolation, must eventually give way to risk and trust. A leap of faith must be made."¹⁰⁴ Many white Americans have grown up learning racist attitudes from parents, friends, grandparents, or the mass media. In order to change their perspectives, they must confront their racial views and seek to become antiracist. This change can be brought about by people using their voice to make a change. All of these US Lacrosse interviewees are African American, however, that does not mean that they do not have white lacrosse players supporting them. Kyle Harrison has the help of Paul Rabil, a white American lacrosse player, supporting him through social media and standing up for what he believes is right. The change in the game of lacrosse is currently in the process and with the help of influential people the game will continue to diversify. These cultural and racial factors from these contributors are making the game of lacrosse available to minorities. The fear of playing due to the lack of African-American players to look up to in the past has restricted the amount of black lacrosse players to gain the courage to play. This has kept the game of lacrosse from becoming diverse in the past; however, with the changes made by these influential people more and more kids are looking up to them and entering the game of lacrosse.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 199.

Ordinary Men: Life as a Nazi

Living in the twenty-first century, there is an abundance of access to primary documents that reference World War II. With endless resources of diaries, journals, news articles, and interviews of what occurred during the reign of Adolf Hitler and his conquest for the Final Solution we are able to study the events that took place. Different scholars have taken on the challenge of researching different aspects of the Holocaust and World War II. Through these means it is possible to learn how Germans were affected by their actions and what made it possible for them to complete the indescribable activities that took place. It is important to understand the men who took part in the Final Solution to prevent this atrocity from happening again. How did Hitler's men get to this point? How could Hitler have the power to turn ordinary men into killers? The term ordinary comes from the work of non-fiction written by Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*. Browning discusses the average man and uses arguments to discuss their nature prior to the war. It is important to understand what defines the average man and how Nazism appealed to so many people. The explanation is not simple but diving into the background of these men can help portray their thoughts. Involving Christopher Browning's points creates the argument that an average man could be persuaded to join the Nazi Party by the simple fact of achieving higher class. The average man can be defined as middle class, who were born and raised in Germany, and fit the mold of Adolf Hitler's views, of Aryan race.

William Brustein, the author of *The Logic of Evil: The Social Origins of the Nazi Party*, took on a challenging task to study the sociology of Nazism and other extreme political movements: "My principal hypothesis is that individuals who joined the Nazi Party calculated that the benefits of joining would exceed the costs."¹⁰⁵ Brustein proposes the idea that men

¹⁰⁵ Brustein, William. *The Logic of Evil: The Social Origins of the Nazi Party, 1925-1933*. 22-29

believed joining the Nazi Party created greater opportunity for them. He applies an interesting concept of an “interest-based account.” This is his primary tool to classify the economic positions and interest of the various social classes and occupations in Weimar Germany and then to analyze which of these groups were more likely to join the Nazi Party.¹⁰⁶ Brustein’s point of studying the relationship between good and evil and rationality and irrationality based on Nazi membership helps support the topic of cultural production.

Brustein studied the key elements of a German society in terms of occupation, market, and class positions.¹⁰⁷ The incentives he researched to join the Nazi Party are chilling. As the economic depression deepened, the party grew in strength and the stigma to join became less threatening to potential members and the enticement to join became stronger. In 1933, when the Nazi Party won electoral victory this created an influx of new members to join the political party. The influx of registration to the Nazi Party circles back to the idea of a social process being involved in the generation of cultural forms. Christopher Browning, the author of *Ordinary Men*, also discusses the incentive to be a member of the Nazi Party. Browning states, “after the Nazi regime was established in 1933, a ‘police army’ of 56,000 men was created. These units were stationed in barracks and given full military training as apart of Germany’s covert rearmament.”¹⁰⁸ When Hitler rose to power he blatantly disobeyed the disarmament provisions of the Versailles Treaty that was established after World War I.¹⁰⁹ Hitler reintroduced military

¹⁰⁶ Helmut K. Anheier, "Studying the Nazi Party: "Clean Models" versus "Dirty Hands", " *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 1 (July 1997): 199-209.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁰⁸ Browning, Christopher R. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and The Final Solution*, 4

¹⁰⁹ Treaty of Versailles, brought World War I to an end, ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied Powers.

conscription and the “police army” was placed into the growing regular army to provide units of military. With the rise for these large military formations, Brustein’s point can be argued here. This idea that once a unique style becomes adopted by others it ceases to remain unique. There have been different opinions on why these men enlisted. “If they enlisted in the Order Police, the new young policemen were exempted from conscription into the army.”¹¹⁰ Brustein also comments that “the 1.4 million Germans who joined the Nazi Party between 1925 and 1932 did so in large measure because the party offered an imaginative and proactive economic package that resonated well with their own material self-interest.”¹¹¹ We learn later that the Order Police plays a huge role in the destruction of the Jewish population. The historiography written from these authors shows the analysis within a society that is driven by material self-interest or the appeal of a better economic society. The additional support they find from the different classes, especially with the “middle-class thesis” and economic reasoning’s, support important research on the incentive to join the Nazi Party. The shared understandings between one race correlates with the idea of cultural production.

Anheier discusses the sociology of Nazism as a “catchall party for the dissatisfied.”¹¹² While there are other catch-all parties, Anheier focuses on one specifically. She compiles, prior to 1933, what kind of classes and occupational groups among the dissatisfied made up the ‘pool’ of likely joiners.¹¹³ She agrees with Brustein’s argument and fully supports his idea on the decision making behind joining a political party. Brustein states, “the decision to join a political party is a two-stage process: first, individuals identify the political party they perceive as most

¹¹⁰ Browning, 5.

¹¹¹ Brustein, William. *The Logic of Evil: The Social Origins of the Nazi Party, 1925-1933*. 201.

¹¹² Anheier, 199.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 199.

beneficial relative to their needs; second, given the compatibility of interests, they will decide to join if incentives and potential rewards outweigh disincentives and costs.”¹¹⁴ This example of the compatibility of interests between the ordinary man, relates to the idea of cultural production. Their shared understanding is what connects them culturally.

Claudia Koonz author of *The Nazi Conscience*, has a different viewpoint on the reasoning behind joining the Nazi Party which she pulls from Hitler’s speeches. She states, “on January 30, 1939, Hitler vented his phobic racism as part of his self-congratulatory account of the new moral and geopolitical order he had created.”¹¹⁵ Koonz then states, “he went out of his way to ridicule ‘German businessmen devoid any conscience’ who took pity on Jews.”¹¹⁶ Koonz pulls statements from Hitler’s speech on January 30, 1939, which was the sixth anniversary of his appointment as chancellor.¹¹⁷ Hitler is quoted as reminiscing about the days when critics had laughed at his racial views. “Hitler’s speech is significant not only because he predicted that Jews would be annihilated in the event of war but also because he elucidated what he saw as the ethical justification of racial war.”¹¹⁸ Koonz points out that the subtext of his speech is clear, “nature’s laws allow a strong *Volk* to attack the weak with impunity.”¹¹⁹ She states quotes from German bystanders who noted the terrible actions taking place against the Jewish population.

“But so powerful was the ethnic consensus that even people who privately agonized over Jews’ plight barely found the courage to express condolences or perform small acts of kindness. Feeling utterly helpless in the fate of a consensus that Jews somehow deserved their fate, Germans who objected could only urge their Jewish acquaintances to flee.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ Brustein., 23-24.

¹¹⁵ Koonz, Claudia. *The Nazi Conscience*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003. 253.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 253.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 253.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 254.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 254.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 254.

The phrase by philosopher, Alexandre Koyre, “open conspiracy” which means to commit a vast crime in full view, shows that the general public was aware of the actions taking place against the Jewish population.¹²¹ Koonz believes that these crimes against Jews occurred within a “public culture that disabled empathy for outcasts. This process was spearheaded by a deceptively mild and supposedly objective form of racism that ultimately proved to be far more lethal.”¹²² This idea from Koonz relates to the overall topic of race and cultural production. The Jewish race is being impacted by the cultural that is being created by the Germans. This cultural idea being that the German race is inferior to the Jewish population.

Koonz brings up a crucial point that, “Hitler’s decision to speak openly of Jews and even predict their extermination in the event of war suggested that he believed public opinion had been sufficiently prepared to accept a harsh solution to the Jewish question.”¹²³ The next point by Koonz supports Brustein’s point that men believed joining would create greater opportunity for them. Koonz states, “people seemed enthralled by the pleasures that Nazi popular culture afforded them and appreciated the state-sponsored excursions that allowed millions to enjoy first real vacations.”¹²⁴ Despite their high morale during the early war years, most Germans sensed that the New Order had a dark side.¹²⁵ Koonz describes both opinions, Germans who did not object and Germans who intervened. Koonz splits one half of the German population who believed in the New Order which took to the cultural production that was forming. She then discusses the other half, Germans who intervened. The intersection of race and cultural production through the Holocaust creates a disturbing and dark example. An idea implemented

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 254

¹²² *Ibid.*, 254

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 256.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 256.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 260.

by Hitler which brought hope for the German people and destruction and fear to the Jewish population. The notions behind why the average man joined relate to the ideas, values, and shared understandings between the German culture. Koonz argues that the “regime developed and disseminated an exclusionary and racist ‘ethnic fundamentalism’ to the public during the crucial peacetime years.”¹²⁶ A change in the public’s attitudes was crucial for the overall goal of the Final Solution. The regime wanted a racially pure German society and in order to create that they needed to change the cultural perspective collectively and individually. They refused to accept those who did not accept the racially pure German society.

Nicholas Stargardt author of *The German War; A Nation Under Arms, 1939-1945* speaks about the willingness behind the German people which relates back to Claudia Koonz. He believes that “Hitler had succeeded in portraying himself as the champion of an injured and besieged German minority.”¹²⁷ Stargardt also states, “There was no doubt that Hitler was pushing at an open door when it came to Poland: an action against Poland would be welcomed by the overwhelming mass of the German people.”¹²⁸ He then goes on to prove the point that, “the German population believed that if Hitler strikes out against Poles, he will have a majority of the population behind him.”¹²⁹ Stargardt goes on to discuss the unwelcome war between Germany, England, and France. He touches on the anxieties and realities of the average man joining the movement.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 272.

¹²⁷ Stargardt, Nicholas. *The German War: A Nation under Arms, 1939–1945; Citizens and Soldiers*. 26.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 26.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 26.

Brustein believes that economic motivation was the reason for joining the Nazi Party.

After further reading, the young policemen who join the Order Police in the beginning of the war are under the impression that they will not be conscripted into the army.

With the outbreak of war in September 1939, the Order Police had reached a strength of 131,000 men. The big threat to its large military formation was, of course, absorption into the German army, a move avoided through a compromise for which the Order Police paid a heavy price.¹³⁰

The police division that was formed for the disposal of the army fought in Ardennes in 1940 and took part in the attack on Leningrad in 1941.¹³¹ The Order Police provided over 8,000 men for the army's military police.¹³² Since the Order Police was losing men to the army, they were allowed to recruit young German men. They recruited 26,000 men which consisted of 9,000 volunteers born between 1918 and 1920, and 17,000 volunteers born between 1909 and 1912.¹³³ They were also allowed to recruit 91,5000 reservists born between 1901 and 1909.¹³⁴ The age of these men recruited ranges from nineteen to twenty-seven. The Order Police was not said to be used for wartime employment, instead, Germany's military had not thought to enlist them. When Germany's military succeeded in rapid expansion on the battlefield it created the need for more occupation forces behind the lines. This meant that the military would need to bring in men from the police battalions. They were formed into training units and then attached to the armies that were invading surrounding countries. Since the Order Police had to give up their resources for the military, the newly recruited 26,000 young men and older reservists were formed into battalion units.¹³⁵ Brustein states, "the Order Police were quickly becoming an essential source

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 5.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 5

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6

of manpower for holding down German-occupied Europe.”¹³⁶ The use of the German Police pulled into the army supports the interest-based account, mentioned by Brustein, by proving these ordinary men with ordinary jobs had no alternative but to say yes to the German army. They were after all under the impression they would not be forced to join the Germany army.

Since these men were recruited into joining either the German military or the Order Police in the 1930s, they were either completely unaware, or chose to ignore, the persistent idea of the Final Solution. Whether these men wanted to or not, they were buying into the cultural production of Hitler’s Final Solution. Christopher Browning and William Brustein provide facts of the growing Order Police and German military which only feeds into Hitler’s Final Solution by providing the manpower. One underlying reason for the need to grow these forces was Germany invading neighboring countries, like Poland. “The invasion of Poland was indeed the third successful annexation of foreign territory by the Third Reich.”¹³⁷ Richard Evans, the author of *The Third Reich*, writes that on August 22, 1939 as the final preparations were being made for the invasion, Hitler told his leading generals how he envisioned the coming war with Poland:

Our strength lies in our speed and our brutality. Genghis Khan hunted millions of women and children to their deaths, consciously and with a joyous heart. History sees in him only the great founder of a state... I have issued a command – and I will have everyone who utters even a single word of criticism shot – that the aim of the war lies not in reaching particular lines but in the physical annihilation of the enemy. Thus, so far only in the east, I have to put my Death’s Head formations at the ready with the command to send man, woman and child of Polish descent and language to their deaths, pitilessly, and remorselessly... Poland will be depopulated and settled with Germans.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 6

¹³⁷ Evans, Richard. *The Third Reich at War 1939-1945*, 16.

¹³⁸ Evans, 16.

The threat that Hitler speaks about - anyone who utters a single word of criticism is shot - is a psychological aspect to consider. The original economic incentive, the hope of creating better economic status for themselves and their families, to join is now seen as a threat. Whether or not these men joined due to fear or because they truly believed in Hitler's ideology, is challenging for one to decipher. Hitler and the men who were under him gave strict emotionless orders for men to enlist. Hitler had vital individuals who ensured a degree of reason and stability. Heinrich Himmler, Reinhard Heydrich, Heinrich Muller, Otto Ohlendorf, Franz Six, and Arthur Nebe were all ideologically faithful Nazis. Heinrich Himmler was reported speaking after the invasion of Poland that "we want to protect the little people, but the aristocrats, the Poles and Jews must be killed."¹³⁹ Different task forces were formed to carry out the Third Reich's ideological policies.

In June of 1942, Reserve Police Battalion 101 was assigned another tour of duty in Occupied Poland.¹⁴⁰ A handful of these men had accompanied the Hamburg Jewish transports to Lodz, Minsk, or Riga. The men who were on these transports saw first-hand the brutality against the Russian Jews. Most of these men had learned about the mass murder of Jews in Russia. However, the other half of the battalion was composed of inexperienced men without any experience of German occupation in eastern Europe.¹⁴¹ The battalion was commanded by fifty-three-year-old Major Wilhelm Trapp, a World War I veteran. Trapp was not considered SS material and he eventually came into conflict with two young captains, both SS men. These two police captains were Wolfgang Hoffmann and Julius Wohlauf.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁴⁰ Browning, 44.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

Hoffmann was born in 1914 and had joined the National Socialist Student Union as a sixteen-year-old.¹⁴² In 1932, at the age of eighteen he joined the Hitler Youth and the SS one year later.¹⁴³ He entered the Nazi Party in 1937, the same year he completed officer training and was commissioned as a lieutenant of the Schutzpolizei.¹⁴⁴ In the Spring of 1942, at the age of twenty-eight he joined the Reserve Police Battalion 101. Julius Wohlauf was born in 1913 and had joined the Nazi Party in April of 1933.¹⁴⁵ In 1936 he joined the SS, and the same year he began his training to become a police officer.¹⁴⁶ He was also assigned to Reserve Police Battalion 101 in early 1942 and eventually promoted to Captain. “In contrast to the elderly Trapp, Hoffman and Wohlauf represented precisely the combination of well-educated professional police officer, early enthusiast for National Socialism, and young SS member that was the Himmler-Heydrich ideal for the SS and police.”¹⁴⁷ The following several reserve lieutenants were men who were not career policeman like Hoffman and Wohlauf but instead were selected to receive officer training after they were drafted into the Order Police. They were drafted into the Order Police because of their “middle-class status, education, and success in civilian life.”¹⁴⁸ As a sixteen-year-old boy, Hoffman was mainstreamed into the cultural production of the Nazi Party. Due to his cultural background, he fit the mold of what the Nazi Party was searching for.

The men who were drafted in the Order Police ranged from the age of thirty-three to forty-eight. Some were Party members and others did not belong to the SS. They were not

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 46

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 46

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 46

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 46

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

reservists, but instead they were prewar recruits to the police. “About 63 percent were of working-class background, but few were skilled laborers. The majority of them held typical Hamburg working-class jobs: dock workers and truck drivers and some were warehouse and construction workers, machine operators, seamen, and waiters.”¹⁴⁹ Browning then points out the age of these men, the average age was thirty-nine. Half of them were between the ages of thirty-seven and forty-two, this group of men was considered too old for the army but seen necessary for reserve police duty. The age of the Reserve Police Battalion 101 was mixed with teenagers who came from the Hitler Youth and middle-aged men who came from the pre-Nazi era. These men had known political standards and moral norms than those of the teenagers. Browning states that, “most of these men came from Hamburg, the least Nazified city in Germany, and a good amount of them had come from a social class that had been anti-Nazi in its political culture.”¹⁵⁰ Do these men sound like a good fit for Hitler in his vision for a racial utopia free of Jews? These men had moral standards which conflicted with the standards of the Nazi vision. Would these men be classified as joining because they were living in fear of the result of not joining the party? These middle-aged men were molded to fit the culture that the Nazi Party was portraying.

The amount of manpower that went into every step to create such success for the Final Solution is appalling. However, at the same time, the more people who participated the ‘easier’ it became. The participation aspect is an example of the production for the Final Solution. The extermination of the Jewish population in Europe did not only consist of the Concentration Camps, the mass roundups and shootings, and the gas chambers. It consisted of men who were in reserve or in the smaller portions of the army or police that were apart of smaller jobs that

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 47

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 48

influenced the Final Solution created by Hitler. The police had to be in charge of sorting the Jews from the ghettos, where they were being sent, forcing them onto the trains to be transported to Concentration Camps, escorting them off the trains, directing them in the right direction whether that be to work or to be gassed upon arrival, and making sure no one was successfully escaping from the trains. As part of the manpower, these men participated in shooting, clearing dead bodies out of trains, fixing the trains with attempted break-cuts, and more. Assisting in these smaller jobs, translates to the theme of racial and cultural production. The shared understanding that Europe cannot find peace until the Jewish question has been solved, supports the German social processes involved in the circulation of cultural values.

In June of 1942, Reserve Police Battalion 101 arrived in the Lublin district. They received a “special action” that was to be taken place in Poland. They received no knowledge of this action and it was not specified in written orders. They were led to believe that they would be performing guard duty. The special action that they had been assigned was mass execution by a firing squad. The men were in charge of moving and resettling Jews from smaller settlements to larger ghettos and camps. Major Trapp was assigned with rounding up 1,800 Jews in Józefów.¹⁵¹ They were told to send only the male Jews of working age to a camp in Lublin and the women, children, and elderly were to be shot on the spot. It is recorded that Trapp had a hard time giving these orders and that he was not present when it took place. Trapp had made an offer to the older men that if they wanted to step out they could, and ten to twelve men stepped forward and turned-in their rifles, where they were told to await further assignment. When Trapp had made his offer early in the morning, the men did not have much time to react or think about their options. Only a dozen men had instinctively “seized the moment to step out, turn-in their rifles,

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

and excuse themselves from the killing.”¹⁵² The idea that they might be chosen for the firing squad was a thought they were not thinking of until they were summoned to the marketplace and instructed to give a “neck shot.” This was when some of the men tried to make up for the opportunity they had missed to step out. Some men were released from the firing squad and assigned to guard duty on the outside of the forest. After shooting for some time, others approached their sergeant and asked to be released, saying they could no longer continue.

Many scholars have researched on the topic of ‘the banality of evil,’ arguing humans are willing to participate in deeds authorized by the state as acceptable. Ardent states, “Studying perpetrators with the aim of understanding and empathizing is less desirable for many historians.”¹⁵³ Browning believes, “We have to look closely at the perpetrators who carried out the murder day after day, face to face, with their victims, and to treat them as human beings. Then you are faced with that uncomfortable awareness that: are they fundamentally different than I am?”¹⁵⁴ A number of explanations have been invoked in the past to explain why men become killers: wartime brutalization, racism, segmentation and routinization of the task, special selection of the perpetrators, careerism, obedience to orders, deference to authority, ideological indoctrination and conformity.¹⁵⁵ These factors are valid to certain degrees. Browning believes, “war, and especially race war, leads to brutalization, which leads to atrocity.”¹⁵⁶ The behavior of any human being is a complex phenomenon. After researching these killers, it is hard not to feel uneasy. Those who killed cannot be absolved by the notion that anyone in the same situation

¹⁵² Ibid., 61.

¹⁵³ Ardent, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*

¹⁵⁴ Browning, 101.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

would have done as they did. Among them, some refused to kill and others stopped killing.¹⁵⁷

The responsibility of their actions come down to each individual. These men, willingly or unwillingly, were under the belief that their actions were acceptable and of the norm of the accepted culture.

Society tends to condition people to respect and comply with authority. Every day people are seeking career advancement and what they can do to improve. Within each society, peers feel pressure to be a part of the norm. When scholars are writing the historiography of such a topic, they are shedding light on a perspective that is not explored often. Some men strongly believed in the Nazi ideology while others, specifically apart of the middle-class, had different political views. Germany was at their worst point during the start of World War II. In the 1930s, they were focused on rebuilding. The German people were in need of someone or something to blame for their hardships. A powerful, convincing voice rang through their streets and provided them with an outlet. Adolf Hitler played on the existing prejudices that had existed within German, and European, society for centuries. He aided in creating new social and moral paradigms throughout the German people. He took advantage of the average man and persuaded him to believe in the cultural forms, values, and shared understandings of the Nazi ideology. He was able to create a cultural production that his German people started to believe in by preying on a race.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

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