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Editorial

Why are Fraternities the Breeding Ground of Misogyny?

I come from a long line of brothers. My dad is my brother. My uncle is my brother. My second cousin twice removed is my brother, but before you start coming up with weird ideas of a plethora of sick incestuous relationships within my family, I'd like to take a second to clarify. All of these relatives of mine were part of the same fraternity: [Sigma Alpha Epsilon](#), my worst nightmare. See, as a son of my father, I had the opportunity to watch his interactions over the years, particularly his interactions with other women, and let me tell you, I am ashamed. My father is what you might call a sexist misogynist idiot. He looks down on women, steps on women, shames women, judge's women, berates women; the list could go on. But I've noticed a trend in the behavior. My sick old father is not the only member of my family who engages in this deplorable tenue. Do you think you could guess who the other perpetrators are? If you have any sort of logical compass I'm sure you would have named my uncle and my second cousin twice removed, and you, my friend, are correct. I've heard stories of all of these people growing up, and from what I gathered, they used to be lovely, respectable gentlemen. But then [boomshakalaka!](#) College hit this family like a brick on steroids. In went the honorable and virtuous Rana men, and out came the chauvinistic Rana boys, hell bent on fornicating with the most innocent girl in the area and winning the next game of beer pong. What a shocker it was to my family, a collection of priestly Jesus worshippers and advocates of abstinence, to see their kin be molded into these heathens. It didn't take long for the household to locate the source of these

terrible behavioral changes, and given your prodigious guessing skills, I'm sure you can presume that our culprit was the infamous Sigma Alpha Epsilon, the mecca of [meninists](#), monomaniacs, and misogynist pinheads. Please don't see my specificity as a reason to downplay the severity of the issue. Sigma Alpha Epsilon is just one example of the repugnant behavior that goes on within the walls of a college social fraternity. The issue is more widespread than one is willing to believe, and it has ingrained itself into the minds of millions of post graduate men, circulating through their thoughts as they walk amongst you and i.

The setup of modern day [Greek life](#) can seem daunting, but I've found it to be most useful to view it in terms of a jungle habitat. On one end we can see the innocent and graceful gazelles, which assume the role of the sororities. These beings are the source of fuel for many other workings in this environment, but they are also regarded for their beauty and naivety. It may not seem like it, given the fact that they are the embodiment of a true sisterhood, but they serve as pieces to the machine upon which fraternities find their power and superiority. They feed on these innocent gazelles and in turn, grow stronger and more gluttonous by the day. Occasionally meandering to and fro outside of the village are the hopeful and young baboons, considered fresh meat by the villagers. They represent the [rushees](#) by possessing an unwavering desire to impress their superiors and find a home in one of the many dignified fraternities. This is what I have found to be where the seed is planted, and thoughts of sexism and superiority are established in the minds of these feeble, young primates. On the very top of this abhorrent primitive hierarchy rests the staunch and robust lion, the king of the jungle. These are the alpha males, the pride of the pack, and they will destroy any brave character who possesses even an ounce of courage to challenge them. They are the maker of rules, and they have the power to condemn anyone who dares break the rules. They will hunt you, they will hurt you, and if you

upset them, they will find a way to make your life a living hell. This is why a member does everything they are told, regardless of the fact that it goes against the very morals of human kind. Mankind ceases to exist in the world of Greek life, where only primitive affairs exist. The existing dogma shows no equal relationship between the sexes, despite what many choose to think. It shows just the opposite: the belief that women should be subordinate to men, because men and women are not created equal.

From an outside perspective, the alliance between fraternities and sororities seems, at best, amiable. And this is true if the only criteria of this friendship is a shallow emotional connection, but in reality, there is an unwritten rulebook associated with being in a fraternity or sorority. This is partly due to the fact that Greek life is built on “traditional values” and partly due to the fact that the word “progress” is taboo in every corner of a Greek village. After spending time listening to the most appalling college stories pour out of my father’s mouth, I learned of a few rules that nearly every Greek house lives by: 1) Sororities are not allowed to host a [party](#), this must be done by a fraternity and a fraternity only, 2) No type of regulation is required for the creation of beverages for the party. Members of the fraternity reserve the right to add whatever ingredients they feel is appropriate in the house beverage, 3) Methods of [hazing](#) not meant to be repeated outside of the fraternity house. Failure to follow this rule will result in severe consequences. It doesn’t take a genius to see the outright sexism in rule one and two, as they boldly declare that the fraternity has the right to dominate over females, and do with them as they please. And the third rule? Hazing is a punishment. It is painful and humiliating, and it instills fear into even the frattiest of frat bros. They are bound to their position by fear, and it serves as the fraternity’s strongest glue. Whether or not the individuals in a fraternity are sexist by nature, any sort of dissent results in iron-handed punishment, and these boys will do

everything to avoid it.

To many, a fraternity is a brotherhood, a coalition of men. And although this may seem like a positive thing, where men can work together and establish familial relationship with one another, it follows the exclusionary principles of a patriarchal society. These are the principles that we must learn to fight against, because they are the same principles that have never allowed us a female president, or the same principles that allow women to be paid [twenty-three percent](#) less than men. These principles breed inequality between the genders, and this is truly heartbreaking.

Is it too radical to view fraternities as a breeding ground for the vile and inexcusable behavior towards women that has been plaguing American society from the very start of our country? Perhaps, but is it also too radical to say that the [sun](#) is nothing more than a fiery ball of gas held together in the sky by the magnetic fields of all the planets surrounding it, or that the [sky](#) only seems blue because tiny particles in the air absorb all other wavelengths besides blue, projecting this color to us. This is not radical. This is cold hard fact. This is an explanation for a worldly phenomenon, a reasoning behind why our society is what it is. And this is unacceptable.

Mentor Texts

The style of my editorial is strongly influenced by an opinion piece written by Gloria Steinem, titled "[Women Have 'Chick Flicks.' What About Men?](#)". After reading her work, I was awestruck by her casual but assertive tone. Her choice of words when describing an incident on a plane where a man was seemingly offended created a very powerful tone, by portraying the author as being more than just a naïve, subordinate being, but as an aggressive, powerful woman. I wanted to mimic this persona in my own writing by using a variety of words to simulate power, and build up my own credibility through the use of words. Steinem also set up multiple comparisons throughout her editorial, establishing a relationship between the cinematic likings of men and women. By doing this, Steinem created a foil with the types of movies that are typically considered "masculine" in order to emphasize the significance of the issue she hopes to raise, which are the discrepancies between male and female cinematography. I wanted to mirror this in my editorial by comparing fraternities to sororities so that the blatant sexism could be easily seen.

Another editorial I chose to use as an influencer for my opinion piece was one also written by Gloria Steinem, titled "[After the election of Donald Trump, we will not mourn. We will organize](#)". The most important aspect of this piece that I wished to mimic was her call to action. This created a lasting impression on me that I wanted to reproduce for my own readers. My article is meant to convince, to inform people of a problem, but I felt that it was necessary to give readers a task to complete once the editorial is read.