Charting the Outsider: Writing in an Age of Displacement

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ABSTRACT

There is a critical importance for a body of creative work around many types of physical and

mental displacement during an “age of displacement,” which is particularly apparent in the

growing divide between people of different backgrounds in the current volatile American

atmosphere. The perspective of the outsider, especially members of communities marginalized due to race, gender, class, religion, immigration status, or a number of other factors both major and minor, has been long undermined, devalued, or ignored altogether in popular media, and this limits representation and empathy. This causes a sense of displacement and further isolation from a society that, without exposure to the complexity of these perspectives, denies them just thought and compassion. Texts focusing on outsiders such as *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, “Ozymandias” by Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Fun Home” by Alison Bechdel, and *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles, all of which include elements that emphasize and celebrate the individual, isolated spirit as a multilayered entity, inspired my usage of creative writing as a force for empathy. Particular themes of this collection include physical displacements in female coming-of-age and immigration, as well as the mental displacements of unsettling environments and experiences. This collection of creative writing aims to capture the implications of displacement and is an innovative solution to this issue of invisibility. More importantly, depictions in creative writing of both minor and extreme experiences of isolation and duality is fundamental if diverse perspectives are to be more accessible.

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