“Behind the Blue Shutters”

Human beings have been conditioned to place individuals into categories that oppose each other and ignore differences among and within those categories throughout history. Even though social movements represent a significant part of the United States of America’s narrative, the tendency to think in binaries and the shunning of differences persists into modern western culture. However, the recognition of intersectionality as a methodology increases the emphasis on the importance of accepting differences as differences and forming genuine empathetic relationships with people of different identities. According to mainstream feminism, third wave feminism birthed intersectionality, but the foundational concepts of this methodology are traced all the way back to the first wave’s interactions with the abolitionist movement and became strengthened in second wave’s black feminism. With the evolution of intersectionality comes the increased understanding of individuals’ experiences and a progression in relation to women’s roles in western society. In my thesis “Behind the Blue Shutters,” I explore the perceptions of two neighboring women representative of two different women’s experiences. Ava exhibits the moral face and driving force behind her family who refuses to give up on her theories about the neighbors living in the Cape Cod with blue shutters across the street. Trapped in her home by an abusive husband, Annabelle becomes the object of Ava’s obsession. In a story designed to emphasize the importance of an empathetic relationship and women empowering other women, I explore the consequences of oppression among the gender binary, but also the oppression women place on each other.