Moonlight Companion Peice

**Companion Piece Write-Up (10 points)**

**Instructions:** Access the assigned companion piece of the week (or find your own companion piece) and listen to, read, or watch the entire piece. Then, respond to all of the items. Your responses to each should be at least 0.5 double-spaced pages in size 12 font. To help, I grade 0.5 pages as 11 lines of content. If you have less than 11 lines, you will lose points for not writing enough.

**If this is a student-chosen companion piece (skip if this is an assigned piece):**

1. What is the piece you have chosen for this week's write-up?
   * Moonlight
2. What type of media is this (podcast, book, movie, etc.)?
   * movie
3. Provide a link to the piece (if a book or movie, give a link to IMDB or Goodreads or something like that):
   * <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4975722/>

**Section 1 (Summary):** Summarize the piece. Be sure to explain what the piece was about in enough detail that it is clear that you watched/read/listened to the entire piece. Also be sure to highlight aspects of the piece that show its relevance to race and/or gender.

*Moonlight* is a film that looks at the life of black person named Chiron. Gender and masculinity are heavy themes throughout the movie, and we see how they effect Chiron's identity and his relationship with those around him. The first part of the movie cover's Chiron's childhood where we see a young black boy who is living in poverty, has a drug addicted mother, and who is not socialized as well as his peers. We see two scenes where Chiron does not properly take on masculinity, one where he dances too flamboyantly and one where he walks too flamboyantly. In his middle school years, Chiron has an intimate relationship with his friend Kevin, who since childhood has sat higher on the social hierarchy than Chiron. In high school the features of masculinity change, from sports, to getting girls and doing drugs. Chiron is still a social outcast, and so he does not take part in these things, but he does observe and desire them, especially through Kevin. Finally, after an altercation with another student fueled by pent-up rage and adrenaline, Chiron is sent to juvie and is there hardened into the stereotype of an aggressive and powerful black man. However, it is revealed that this was all an act that Chiron has put on to find a place in society. Chiron has used the shield of aggression and power to hide the weak boy that remains inside.

**Section 2 (Reading Connection):** Discuss at least one **reading from this week** that relates to the piece. Be sure to explain which reading you are discussing, what the reading said about the topic, and how the reading is connected to the piece.

Much of Chiron's experience is related directly to gender. Chiron struggles when he is young to take on the affectations that so many around him are pushing him towards, including a scene where his mother drunkenly yells at him that the reason he gets beat up so much is the way he walks, and a scene where Chiron dances more flamboyantly than anyone else in his music class. These events might point to underdevelopment in Chiron's social learning. Chiron struggles to imitate the people around him despite authority figures in his life pushing him towards it through reinforcement and punishment, two of the key mechanisms of social learning theory. This seems to be due both to an inability to externalize the behaviors and disinterest in or inability to observe them. When we see Chiron in adolescence, we see that some of the behaviors that ostracized Chiron as a child are no longer present, but he still does not fit in well with his peers. This points towards an identity difference that has pushed Chiron away from these behaviors.

**Section 3 (Personal Reflection):** Discuss how the piece relates to your own life experiences. Consider how the stories or information presented is similar to, or different from, what you've experienced. If the piece focuses on an identity very different from your own, you can think about how not having that identity has led to a different life. You can also discuss memories that the piece made you think of. You should not give your opinion or evaluation of the piece, and you should not just talk about how it made you feel (e.g. "this topic makes me sad").

Masculinity has played a very toxic role in my life. I remember a day in my early teens where I could not find any shorts to wear because none of my shorts covered my knees, which was required to be a boy. I guess it was the era of baggy shorts, or maybe it was just that most of my brother's shorts were from goodwill and way too long on him. I have never taken easily to the masculine traits, and in response to that I have generally skirted the line of traditional masculine features. I don't relate to the way that Chiron was bullied for his feminine traits, or the way that he was not able to adapt his behaviors to avoid notice. My approach to gender is much like my approach to subjects I don't like: do the bare minimum to get an "A". Despite this, I have been unable to escape the extremely binary view of gender in society today. My understanding of gender and gender schema have always been strong, and for most of my life I viewed gender as a very binary thing. I think this is in response to my own concerns about gender, in order to fit it into my life I need to have a good understanding of it. As I have escaped my puritan roots and explored my gender identity, I've realized how much of my binary gender schema was a defense mechanism and how much that limited my self-image and identity.