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5-2022

## White Saviorism zine

Bree Finnegan

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### Recommended Citation

Finnegan, Bree, "White Saviorism zine" (2022). *Student Zines*. 5.  
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**W h i t e  
S a v i o r i m s  
T o w a r d s  
B l a c k W o m e n  
a n d S a v a r n a  
S a v i o r i s m  
T o w a r d s  
D a l i t W o m e n**

**By Bree Finnegan**

## *Introduction*

My name is Bree Finnegan. I am a first year college student at Pace University. I just learned about the Dalits and the way they are treated in society, whether they are in the U.S. or in Asian countries. I am interested in the topic of dominant caste, Savarna, saviorism towards Dalit women and White saviorism towards Black women.

I am going to explain what saviorism looks like for Black women and then what saviorism looks like for Dalit women. I will then compare the two and show the similarities between them. I am also going to provide the reasons why saviorism is bad and how to detect it.

I want you, readers, to understand that these two communities may seem very different, because one is about race and one is about caste, but they are actually very similar when you learn about them.

## *White Saviorism Towards Black Women*

For background knowledge, white saviorism is also known as the white savior complex and it is when white people think they are helpers/helping minority groups, just to look good in society. They think that they are making a difference in the lives or lives of people of color, because they see that they need "help". These white people will "help", but they still have the power structure in tack because they believe being white is dominant.

Social worker Algeria Willson wrote to Michigan Radio, "Listen. Learn. Mute. Examine. Study. Think. Analyze. You will never understand, and that is OK. But you must act. Thousands of experts around this country are telling you how. It's overwhelming. It's daunting. It seems too big to tackle."

This article is explaining how white saviors are not needed or wanted. Black people/women need white people to listen and actually act upon the request of Black people for Black liberation.





## *Savarna Saviorism Towards Dalit Women*

Dalits, especially focusing in on Dalit women, experience dominate caste saviorism. Savarnas try to understand Dalit experiences but when they do, they tend to dehumanize them completely. From Feminism in India they explained, “This explorer’s [Savarnas] outlook to study the ‘exotic’ for satisfying their intellectual curiosity is a way of combining romance with oppression.” This is suggesting that Savarnas romanticize the caste system, and it is just a reality that they have to follow. Savarnas fetishize caste in a way because they do not acknowledge caste capital, for which they feel entitled to have dialogue and conversations only to help maintain their intellectual supremacy. They have no willingness to unlearn the system, for which they do not understand their privilege of their social position. Some Savarnas are an ally with Dalits if it is in their own convenience to engage with them. Dalit women are treated differently purely because they are Dalits and are seen as less than.

Savarna's savior complex is trying to show that Dalits want "help", but some of them do it for show and do not actually want to see change within the caste system. They ‘help’ for the social image.



## SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE SAVIORIMS TOWARDS BLACK WOMEN AND DALIT WOMEN

There are very clear similarities between Black women and Dalit women. They are both marginalized groups of people, for which there tends to be a savior present. For Black women it is a white person, for Dalit women it is someone who is Savarna. There is a complex for both of these savior images that these oppressed women "need saving" from the saviors. These saviors will not actually listen to what these women need, instead they will act in a way that will look good for them. They do it for the social image of being a 'good person' Which means they are not actually helping these women, creating more problems.



# WHY SAVORISM IS BAD

Saviorism from White people and from Savarna is bad because it:

- establishes the idea in the savior's heads that they are superior compared to oppressed groups, who they look at and think that they need help from a superior.

- They think that because these people are "less than me" that they need to be the helping factor, making saviorism demeaning for marginalized people.

- Savors do not educate themselves with what the problem is at hand, instead they act a certain way just to look good in society.

These saviors need to unlearn in order to learn and actually help. They need to listen and amplify marginalized people's voices, and not act out of mere façade.

**Examples of saviorism:**

- Volunteering could be seen as saviorism because they will attempt to help communities without the real knowledge or consideration of what these communities really need.

- White families adopting children explicitly from countries in Africa, are seen as 'rescuing' that child from Black culture

- Some films also have saviorism as their main plot such as Hidden Figures. The department head, who is a white male, has to be the 'helping hand' to desegregate NASA. In the movie the organization desegregated quickly, but in reality it was a slow process.





## *Citations Page*

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