

Perspectives

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

DECEMBER 2020



DAIS

PERSPECTIVES ON COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AT DAIS

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“Dance, is a huge part of my identity and self expression, but it wouldn't be half as enjoyable to me, if it wasn't for the sense of community and collaboration that dance brings with it. Working together to figure out a complicated step, or struggling to choreograph a move that fits on the music perfectly together are all a part of that community experience, one that I believe is the core of dance.”

**DHANITI PAREKH,
HEAD OF DANCE**

AS A MEMBERS OF
THE STEMULATE
CLUB, WE ADOPT A
COLLECTIVE IDENTITY
AS SCIENCE, MATH
AND TECH
ENTHUSIASTS TO
ENGINEER SOLUTIONS
TO REAL-LIFE
PROBLEMS

**DEVAJNA GOPAL,
MEMBER OF
STEMULATE CLUB**

“Collective Identity is a sense where everyone feels like a part of something bigger than just themselves.”

**VIKRAM SHIVASHANKAR,
HEAD BOY (2019-2020)**

“Collective Identity is a thread that ties a community together”

**SHANAYA PIRAMAL
HEAD GIRL (2019-2020)**

“There is continuous dialogue between our collective and personal identity as our understanding of the world evolves with the two circles never superimposing on one another completely. At times it feels like they are mutually exclusive and at times there is a good degree of intersection. It is only when the movement of the circles intersecting in size and shape that one achieves some sort of stable identity.”

MR BIPIN SHAH

P

“I strongly believe that cookery is one of those rewarding activities that brings people together, brings them joy and gives them a sense of accomplishment. It gives the feeling of being part of a larger whole, of belonging to a community.”

**ARZOO USGAONKAR,
HEAD OF COOKERY**

“On existe grâce aux autres. Et on communique grâce au langage. Donc, notre existence n'a aucun sens sans communication avec l'autre. Vive les langues!”

**MISS RAJANIGANDHA
DESHMUK**

“For me, learning a language is learning a life skill and opening up a whole new world of culture. It's like seeing the world with new eyes. Language is very closely connected to the culture of any country and plays a vital role in shaping the identity of any individual

MISS NITIKA GUPTA

“

THE STRENGTH AND POWER WITHIN EACH OF US IS CONNECTED BY THE INTANGIBLE BONDS WHICH WE NURTURE AT DAIS. IN OUR RESPONSES TO EXTERNAL CHALLENGES WE SERVE AS A UNIT OF SUPPORT FOR EACH OTHER, THEREBY CREATING A ROBUST COMMUNITY.

MISS SONALI BAJAJ

"Identity and Diversity"

"Notre identite Collective"

**"What society doesn't
want you to know"**

"Mi Ciudad"

**"Judging Alice Broadway's
'Ink' by its cover"**

**"Cookies, Cupcakes and
Collective Identity"**

"Michelle Obama"

"Belonging, Disliking personality and other 3 am ramblings"

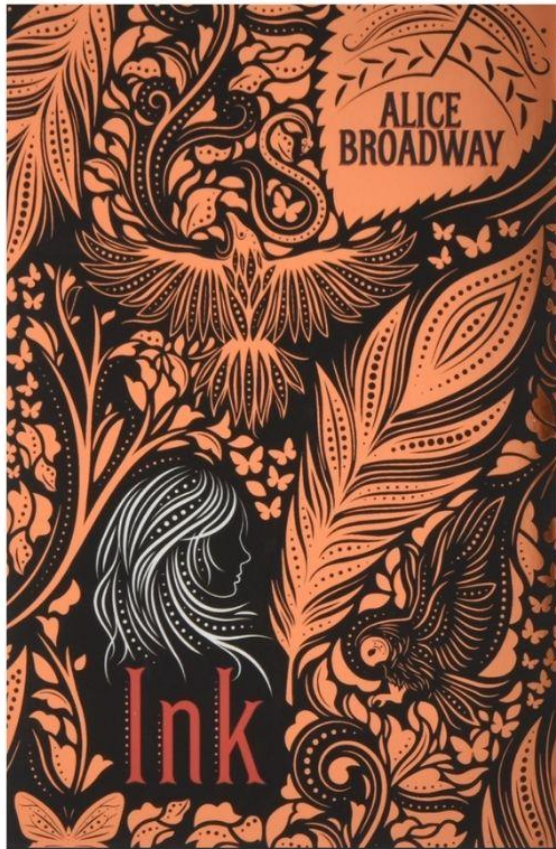
FRIDA KAHLO AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Collective Identity refers to the idea of a collection of individuals sharing a set of attributes which binds them together as a community and plays a defining role in their individual identity. These shared attributes contribute to a sense of belonging. Expressions of collective identity or group heritage often show up in theatre, music or other forms of artistic expression. A choice example of the expression of identity through art is the work of Frida Kahlo.

Kahlo is one of those few individuals whose style and persona are era-defining. Her body and her cultural identities are central to an understanding of her work. Her father, Wilhelm Kahlo, was of Hungarian Jewish descent, and immigrated to Mexico in 1891, marrying a Mexican native. His second wife, Matilde Calderón, a mestiza, was a Mexican of mixed European and American Indian ancestry and was Frida's mother. The question of dual identity, of a duality in the sense of belonging, is a complex one. Frida's awareness of herself as a mestiza is central to understanding her work. Many of her works deal with this dialectic between her European and indigenous Mexican identities. This is best illustrated by her 1939 painting "The Two Fridas", with the Frida on the left wearing a white lace dress of the European tradition while the one on the right wears the traditional local dress of Tehuana.

Her sense of collective identity was cemented by her international tours. Living in the United States for several years, Rivera (her husband) and Kahlo socialized with such prominent American figures as Conger Goodyear, the Rockefellers, Henry Ford, and Clare Boothe Luce, often making the newspaper headlines. Although Kahlo and Rivera spent a number of years working in the United States, their connection with the life and culture of Mexico – their sense of *Mexicanidad* – remained absolute and was the defining element of their identities. A painting like *Self Portrait on the Border Between Mexico and the United States* of 1932 reflects this intersection between her experience in the United States and her sense of "*Mexicanidad*".

Interestingly, despite her strong sense of collective identity, one of the strongest features across Kahlo's works is her sense of personal identity. About one-third of her works are self-portraits. Her sense of identity, as represented in her works is a unique overlay of strong collective themes - such as her ethnicity, her nationality and her identity as a woman - combined with the events in her life that are entirely specific to her - her struggle with polio, her spine fracture and her relationship with her husband. Much of her work is labouring to characterize herself, and it is in this endeavour that she gained acclaim for her brand of art. In her own words, "I paint myself because I am so often alone and because I am the subject I know best."



JUDGING ALICE BROADWAY'S 'INK' BY ITS COVER

Yet another young adult novel capturing the struggle between a citizen of a dystopian community and its government structure, values, and beliefs, but one aided by fascinating world-building, community traditions, and quite frankly an unmissable cover - 'Ink' somewhat stood out of the crowd.

As the book acquaints you with Leora, the artistic, strong-minded protagonist, the jarring yet intriguing nature of her community unfolds. Her's is a world where each notable moment of one's life, good or bad, is inked onto their skin, forming a rich tapestry of their unique identity to be bound

and preserved after their death. Unless of course, they commit a heinous crime. Then this tapestry, this story, is brutally burned.

The plot forces Leora to grapple with the revelation that her father, a man she's respected and looked up to all her life, one who can do no wrong, has been marked in punishing ink, one of the few whose life book, his skin, a cultural symbol within Leora's society, will be burned at his death. As she attempts to discern the circumstances that led to her father's fate, the values instilled within Leora, the identity shaped by her community, are all brought into question as she begins reconsidering all she has ever known to be right and true.

While I did struggle, to some extent, to fully understand Leora's motivation and nuances throughout the story, the themes it dealt with did provoke much thought; to what extent would someone go to fit the norms of the collective identity of their society, regardless of the morality of that identity itself? How do governmental structures and control over the media's rhetoric shape unique identities, no matter how diverse, into one collective identity deemed 'acceptable' by the governing body itself? Reading about the innate prejudices of Leora's society towards the 'blanks,' an outlawed community of people who refuse to mark their skin highlighted this jarring truth, and the magnitude to which beliefs and values don't stem from a place of objective assessment, but societal conventions and impositions.

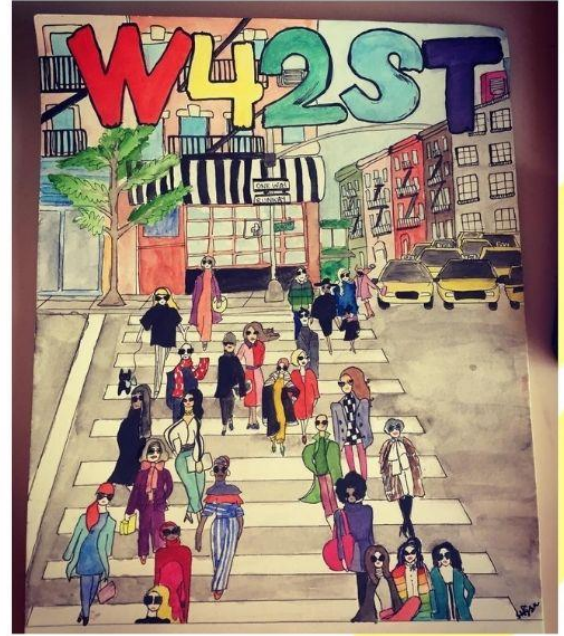
I'd definitely recommend this book to anyone interested in diving into an individual vs society conflict. If not boasting the best-developed characters, it'll certainly provoke thought about societal structures. And at the very least, it's got one of the best covers you'll see.

~ Devika Kothari (Y10)

DIVERSITY AND IDENTITY

Think of each one of us as humans first
Traditions and looks put aside
From the basics of our anatomy
Each blood cell, red, round, indented
Identical

So why is it that,
Even though we are the same,
We aren't thought of the same way,
Ponder, scream, wonder, cry for a change
But you'll see,
The conclusion lies in our own society



City streets are the **real** Runway

- Nysa Agrawal (Y9)

Maybe my skin has more melanin than yours,
Maybe my head is cradled by a hijab,
Maybe the syllables rolling off my tongue are different from yours,
Am I different? Yes
But are you more important? No

It's not religion that needs to be changed,
Not skin colour or the way we choose to look
It's the brain that needs to be rewired
We need to rewrite this book

Diversity is a quilt
Woven together,
each patch just as important as the last
Identity is a tapestry
Each thread, just as important as the last
Diversity and Identity are a painting
Each brush stroke, just as important as the last

But Diversity and Identity are NOT society
Society is the death of originality

~ Avantika Kampani (Y8)



Queer, Black Lives Matter

- Nysa Agrawal (Y9)

MI CIUDAD

Hola, yo soy Yash y hoy voy a hablar sobre mi ciudad.

Mi ciudad se llama Mumbai, y vivo aquí desde que tenía tres años. La ciudad está situada cerca de la costa, y esta en el oeste de mi país. Cuando era pequeño, me mude a esta ciudad porque mi padre consiguió un trabajo nuevo en un hospital. Por eso, ahora voy a un colegio indio en el centro de la ciudad, La Escuela Internacional de Dhirubhai Ambani.

Lo que me fascina de la ciudad son las facilidades que ofrecen a los ciudadanos. Por ejemplo, desde mi punto de vista, los parques son hermosos y tienen muchos espacios verdes. Mi hermano dijo que le había gustado los parques. Sin embargo, hay algunas desventajas. Por ejemplo, siempre hay mucha gente. Cabe mencionar que Mumbai es una de las ciudades más poblada del mundo. Anteriormente, existían más parques, pero debido al metro, el gobierno ha talado muchos árboles.

Creo que hay un problema grave en mi ciudad – la contaminación del agua. Los ríos se están contaminando poco a poco porque la gente tira su basura en el agua. Quiero añadir que, si fuera presidente de india, mejoraría la situación de mi ciudad. Por otro lado, a los ciudadanos les gustaría crear conciencia sobre este problema a los niños. Me parece que los adultos serán los primeros en echar una mano.

Voy a estudiar en mi ciudad y buscaré un trabajo aquí.

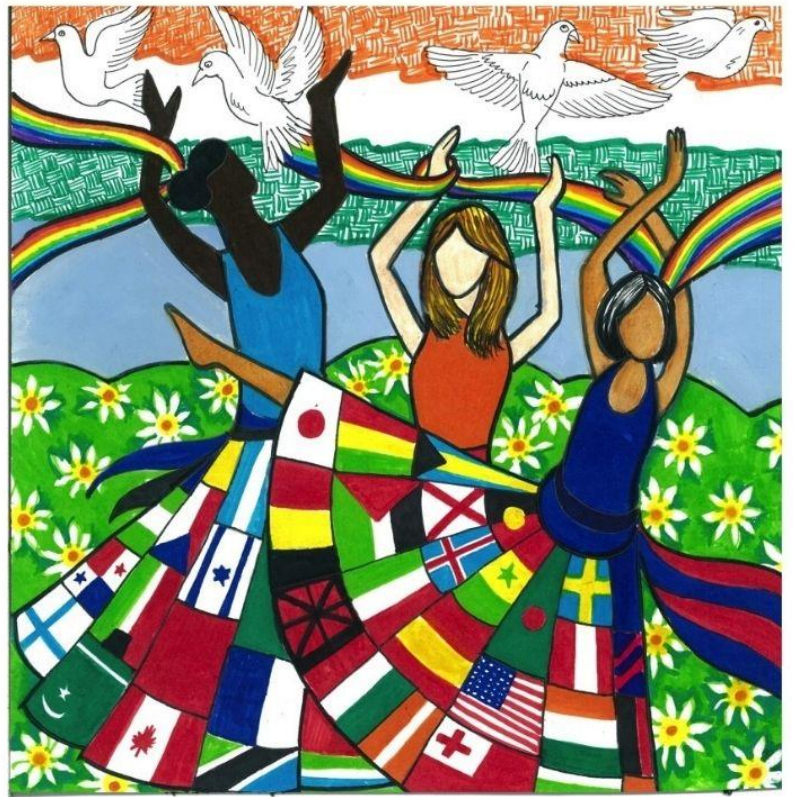
¡Ojalá que en el futuro mi ciudad sea la mejor del mundo!

~ Yash Fadia (Y11)

NOTRE IDENTITÉ COLLECTIVE.

Qu'est que ça veut dire? Est-ce que c'est la main d'aide qui on offre au vieux qui travers une rue encombré? Est-ce que c'est la collaboration entre deux amis en classe?

Ou est-ce que c'est le sentiment d'appartenance qui existe entre des membres d'une société? Selon moi, c'est l'accord non-dit entre des personnes habitant partout dans le monde. Notre identité collective est la corde qui nous connecte. Ainsi, je vous invite à réfléchir : quels sont les attributs qui vous partagent avec la personne à coté de vous? Êtes-vous assez compatissant que votre voisin? Si vous avez de choix, rejetteriez-vous la hâte et choisirez de tranquillité? Voulez-vous



विविध भूमि

- Ananya Mukerji (Y11)

devenir assez courageux que votre meilleur ami? La liste est inépuisable grâce à des innombrables qualités merveilleuses qui on peut partager avec les autres.

Cependant, est-ce que les humains sont bon? Nous sommes l'espèce qui a détruit des forêts, causé deux guerres entre nous-même, crée des bombes nucléaires et blessé presque chaque autre espèce, du ciel à l'océan. C'était horrible. Si vous me demandez maintenant, « Est-ce que tu penses que les humains sont bons? », je ne pense pas que je veux vous répondre. Car un autre aspect de notre identité collective qui est souvent ignoré - qui est peut-être le plus important - c'est la capacité d'améliorer. Si vous voudrait vraiment améliorer, il n'y a pas de force en monde qui peut vous arrêter. Il n'y a pas d'individuel parfait, qui est 100% 'bon'. Mais en périodes de difficulté moral, c'est notre identité collective qui nous encourage à être meilleur que nous-même. C'est l'identité collective qui nous donne la force intérieure pour combatte de mal. Et c'est l'identité collective qui vous contraindre à pardonner les autres, parce' que vous sais qu'être humain et se tromper.

Rappelez-vous, il pourrait une action d'une seul qui change le monde, mais c'est la persévérance qui est enraciné dans notre identité collective comme citoyens mondiale qui combatte le mal, hébergeant un esprit d'unité entre nous-même et réaliser le rêve d'un.

~ Shravani Mhatre (Y11)

COOKIES, CUPCAKES, AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Have you've ever woken up on a lazy weekend, googled 'Simple cake recipe' and proceeded to fill your house with the cinnamon swirled aroma of banana bread? If so, chances are, you've snapped a picture, captioned it "#SundaySpentWell" (Or something along those lines), posted it on your Instagram story, and awaited the sea of compliments flooding your messages. Well, that's practically me on a daily basis (except, unfortunately, not every day is a lazy weekend). It's no secret that I document my desserts on my Instagram page as a way to channel my creativity and passion for pastry, just like several other bakers out there. I made my account and learnt how to write engaging captions and take pictures that sometimes look better than the dessert itself, making my page stand out from the others. You might be wondering, 'how did you just learn to step it up?' Well,



<https://www.instagram.com/elihebaker/?hl=en>

the answer is, more than just practicing techniques and recipes, which was worthwhile to some extent, over the past few years, I've been heavily inspired by the baking community on Instagram itself. From the at-home-bakers showing off their warm and cosy treats, to the elaborate professionals marketing the most breathtaking cakes, ingenuity and artistry is everywhere you look (or scroll). In this community, it doesn't matter whether you have 20 followers or 20,000. What matters is that you're just as passionate about this art form as the other millions of dream-chasing bakers on the platform. I've always wondered how complete strangers are so supportive of me, when everyone has the goal of trying to grow their own page. I wake up every morning, and more often than not, there's a comment from an unfamiliar page saying 'Wow! I love this cake, it's so creative!' I mean, shouldn't they be picking up the smallest of flaws and criticising me instead, to make them sound 'better' than me? The answer to that is, in this community, the word 'selfish' doesn't exist. It's only about trying to pick others up and spreading the joys of baking. What I love best about being a part of this boundless network is that I can transport myself to far off places and experience things that otherwise, I would never have been exposed to. With just a glance at my screen, I'm immediately taken to Florida, whose Key Lime Pie with hints of citrus that dance on my tongue, or even Istanbul, where the shocking pink Turkish Delight seems to just melt in my mouth. Even though I'm probably 50,000 miles away, gazing at these confections from my phone screen, I feel as if my skill entwines harmoniously with this circle, giving me a surreal sense of belonging.

However, it is easy to be overwhelmed with the myriad of cake pictures that look too beautiful to eat, or the complex french pastries with countless elements to each. A lot of the time, I wonder where I stand in the group. On the flip side though, this helps me to stay on my toes and always do my best, putting out content that makes me truly happy while doing what I love the most. This doesn't require being glued to the phone all day, neither does it require posting 15 pictures a week. All you need is a sprinkle of enthusiasm and a drizzle of kindness, and what you'll be rewarded with is a kitchen-full of fulfilment and ecstasy.

~ Elisha Parikh (Y9)



ENOUGH

what are we?
our minds search for a word.
a word to define us.

we look around
flashes of red ambulance light
strains of screaming sirens
humming ventilators,
frantic phone calls
praying, crying, screaming,
that's all we know now

what are we?
we are helpless.

we try to connect, reach out
locked doors, locked down
sun up, sun down
the clock keeps ticking
we won't stop searching

what are we?
“vulnerable” our minds mumble
a comforting hand on our shoulder
shining child-like eyes
“who are you?” we whisper
our voices hoarse and scratchy
“hope” she says. hope. hope.
a memory sparked in us,
from a simpler age, “hope”,
almost foreign on our tongues with time

what are we?
“hopeful?”.

the dam is lifted.
contrasting pictures flow out
flooding our heart, mind and soul
we see no more than glimpses
a cheerful fireplace surrounded by smiles
a grief-filled terrible scream of utter despair
a family playing board games,
the slamming of a door in a shocked face
a couple staring at each other with secret smiles

what are we?
“unsure”

a moment of realization
the wrong question was being asked.
who cares what we are
what we are is transient, ever-changing
It is a part of us, but never defines us.

who are we?
we are us, and that is enough.

~ Hrishita Shah (Y9)



A shoulder to cry on
- Sia Harisingani (Y11)

PERSPECTIVES

The word perspective is interesting and the topic for this essay made me approach it from a myriad different angles. Because that's how perspective is formed, something that is formed through different influences and angles and sides? And that made me think about who I am and how much of what I think is influenced by my surroundings. It all came down to two important questions: Firstly, how much of my perspective is influenced by external factors? Secondly, what even are these factors?

In pursuit of an answer, I took a topic I'm very passionate about and decided to analyse my perspective on the matter. With that in mind, let's begin!

Being a millennial, I've grown up with the Internet and everyone's opinions being made available all the time. I've watched a million YouTube clips, liked a thousand Instagram posts and read a ton of blogs. Women empowerment, feminism and female character are words spread across the internet that I come across all the time. I think this privilege and access to information has made me proud to be a girl and believe I can do anything I want in life. But it also made me wonder what feminism is- Is it the labelling of all men as pigs or is it the idea that women are all-powerful?

The idea that women are powerful and can achieve anything they want is a theme I see in many of my favourite movies and Tv shows as well. Lorelai Gilmore from Gilmore girls made me see how even with a baby on their hip, a woman can be invincible. Rory taught me esteemed positions in the best colleges aren't just for boys. Brooke from One Tree Hill showed me all the different faces of strength a woman experiences through life while going after her dreams. I see women like Kris Jenner whose whole identity is hers and hers alone. She hardly ever is described in relation to men in her life but rather the other way around. Even my favourite book, Divergent, is based on a female going from weakness to strength.

Of course, my friends have a lot to say about feminism. We are the millennial lot, remember? Our conversations revolve on being able to dress as we like, follow dreams we're passionate about and basically be the modern-day feminist who can be and do anything. How much of this comes from our privilege? My teachers read out the textbook version of feminism, they don't use the term as much but rather stress the importance of women getting equal opportunities as men. This made a little more sense to me and my idea of feminism started to form.

My analysis of my perspective on feminism or any topic for that matter has brought me to my last two influences and probably the most important ones- my parents. Through my life, both of them have made their opinions on this matter quite clear. To them equal opportunities are the key, and rather than differentiating based on one's gender, it's the person's merit, talent and hard

work that matters more. They stress how a single incident relating to one man doesn't give us an excuse to generalise that behaviour for all men and vice versa.

A quote from One Tree Hill by E.E. Cummings comes to mind "To be nobody-but-yourself - in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else - means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting." And I guess that's true, we're fighting to be ourselves amongst all the influences around us but if we see a reflection of who we are in our surroundings and add it to our perspective it will make a fuller view. I wonder how my other visions of life have been affected by others, maybe it's time I look at these influences more seriously and see if I truly believe in them too. Maybe you should too, might make up for a better world with a whole lot more unique people.

~ Sara Wadhawan (Y8)

SPORT

What makes sport so special? To some, it's the simplicity. The rules are straightforward and winning is the primary objective. To others, it's the passion. The passion that makes you want more and which ultimately evolves into fierce competition. To some, it's the equality. On that pitch or in the stands - colour, religion, nationality and other facets of your individuality are deemed insignificant. You don't need to fit into a certain economic or social class to excel, all you need is the hunger to succeed. You have the right to represent what you believe in and the club or sports person that epitomizes your values. But to me, it is and always has been the fraternity.

Sport embodies community. Whether you're a player or a supporter, on the field you see something larger than yourself. Your heart beats as one, falling and rising with every twist and turn in the game. Regardless of your roots, success is celebrated with happiness. And in that moment of joy, you know you're not alone. That same feeling is shared by thousands of people



<https://blog.pitchero.com/the-benefits-of-teamwork-in-sport>

out there and for that fleeting moment, you feel a sense of unity. A sense of unity that stems from the purest emotion of them all - love. Love for the game and every aspect of it. A love that you can't get enough of. Nelson Mandela once said that 'Sport has the power to change the world.' The power of sport comes from its rawness. It is pure, unfiltered and imperfect - but that's what makes it human. It's more than just a game. It's a way of life. And it perfectly encapsulates what collective identity is all about.

~ Hrishikesh Chaudhuri (Y11)

BELONGING, DISLIKING PERSONALITY TESTS AND OTHER 3 AM RAMBLINGS

"I'm hungry and hollow and just want someone to call my own," – Richard Siken

When people ask me to describe myself in a few words, I usually plaster a smile on my face, and rattle off a few hobbies and basic personality traits of who I am (But does anyone *really* know who they are?) As someone who spends most of her time thinking rather than talking, I have, of course, pondered the idea of that wretched (horrific, terrifying, often senseless ~~I need a thesaurus help me~~) phrase of 'who I am.' And I finally think that I have arrived at a reasonable answer.

(Reminder for future me: This is written at 3am. It may make zero sense to you if you are reading this while coherent and awake.)

You can't put the entirety of who you are into words. How can you? That's like describing a magical forest. It doesn't matter how hard you try, you won't be able to capture the stillness of the leaves, the faint tinkling laughs of the fairies, or how the trees seem to move when you're not looking. You can't put *all* of yourself on paper. (Doesn't it also depend on how well you know yourself? ~~I feel like I'm stepping into a cobweb~~)

Because you're not *just* a person. (I mean, you are human. ~~I think~~) Think of it in terms of Venn diagrams. You are the intersection of hundreds of Venn diagrams, these diagrams being your experiences, people in your life, school, work, and hundreds of other things that have affected you, and changed you. You're more than just 'shy' or 'rebellious' or whatever other labels are slapped on you.

And I suppose, that's where humans get their idea of *belonging* from.

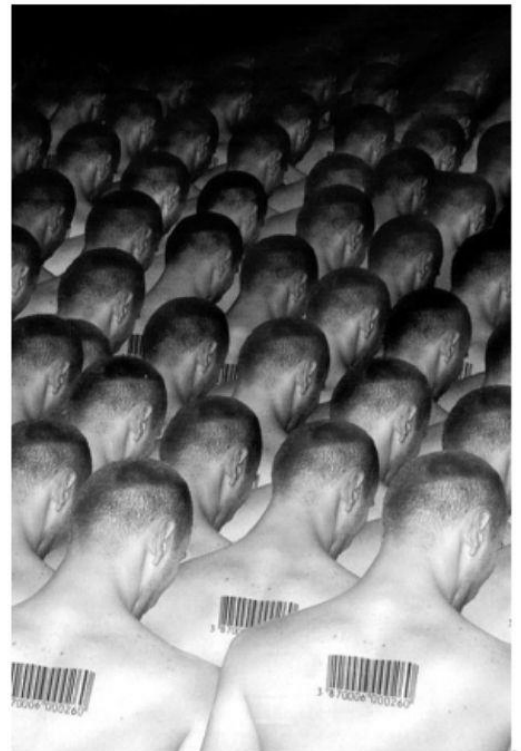
There are a lot of reasons you want to belong. Maybe it's for friendship, or security, but it's just a human need we all have. (I think it makes us fragile. That in the end, it doesn't matter how much money or fame you have, but more of how much you belong). But the most important thing is that when you want to belong, you change yourself. You become a little bit more like the people you want to belong with, and it may even be little things at first. Instead of texting in full sentences, like you used to, maybe you use more emotes and abbreviations. You're now part of a bigger group, and they're a part of you. It becomes a big chunk of your Venn diagrams. That's what collective identity is. (I think it's beautiful, because you're not just yourself, anymore. You're a part of something bigger)

A lot of people ask me what my MBTI (Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator) Type is. I say that I don't know. Call me conceited, but I don't think you can spell me out and categorize me — or anyone, for the matter — in four letters. (I think that people like to put themselves into boxes because they don't want to confront the parts of them that are chaotic and don't make sense.) ~~To be honest, I think it's okay to be unpredictable.~~

Because how can I personality test ~~on buzzfeed~~ consider your collective identity and sense of belonging? It can't. It never will be able to. (I don't think we can ever come up with a standardized test for our personality)

We're just a little too complicated, aren't we?

Other sentences in indecipherable handwriting were present, but not included in order to keep the sanity of this entry.



One of a crowd

~ Amanyas Sejpal (Y9)

- Sia Harisingani (Y11)

MICHELLE OBAMA

Best known for her role as the FLOTUS, Michelle Obama has grown from reluctant and somewhat disapproving political spouse to a pop-culture phenomenon and arguably the world's most influential black woman.

What is it that makes her so popular? So widely beloved? One of the few pentagenerians with 44 million followers on Instagram and a Snapchat account that isn't an embarrassment?

Michelle Obama's political allure is a matter of interest. She herself has no political ambitions (as she has made regrettably clear) and was stepping into the role of FLOTUS that has been played by 43 women before her. None of them had achieved anything near the iconic status that she currently holds. Her memoir 'Becoming' was the most-sold book on Amazon across all formats for 47 consecutive days, the longest streak of any book since Fifty Shades of Grey.

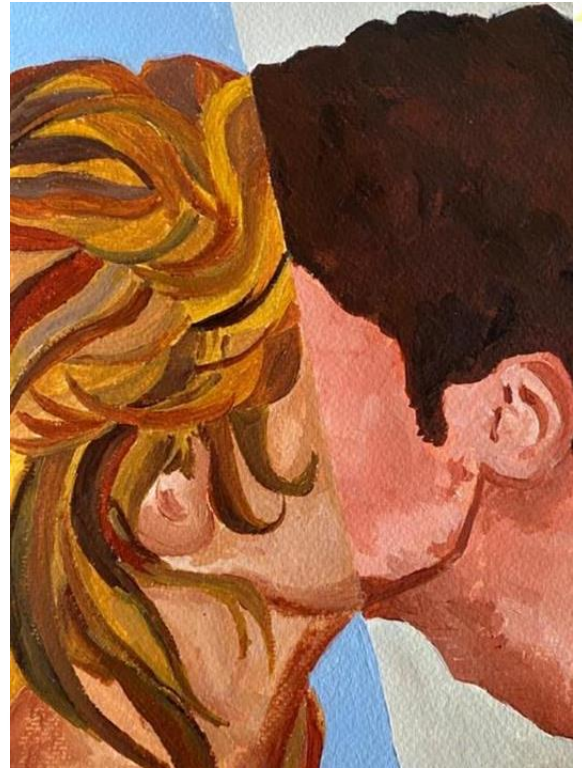
What makes Obama so striking and simultaneously endearing is her self-defining nature. Her media presence, while carefully crafted, is carefully crafted by her. She controls much of the narrative about her and constructs her own personal identity brand by her use of raw authenticity. Her anecdotes, rather than re-emphasizing qualities of women or spouses, showcase her individualism and personality. Whether it be her memoir, her TV appearances, podcasts, newspaper interviews or off-the-cuff quotes, Michelle Obama maintains a firm control on how the world perceives her. Thus, she prevents the reduction of her role and ensures that she is viewed as her own person.

Far from lingering in her husband's shadow, Michelle has repeatedly proven that she is her own person. Not long after the Obamas hit the 2008 presidential campaign trail Americans came to the realization that the former Michelle LaVaughn Robinson wasn't just another politician's wife. It was as if she was concurrently running for office with her husband and then-candidate hopeful, Barack Obama. She broke the conventions set by a long line of First Ladies that were 'graceful' and 'supporting'. Historically speaking, First Ladies' platforms have been developed to embrace humanitarian efforts. Obama made landmark contributions based on her own agenda of issues; from education for girls to obesity to military families she took upon multiple projects during her tenure. Even within her memoir; she deviates from the norm. Most First Lady's memoir books are 70% White House, 30% other – while hers is the opposite. She emphasizes on the idea that she "didn't wake up as FLOTUS"; she is an Ivy League educated lawyer that worked at corporate firms, was a hospital executive and organized for the Chicago City Council. Her emphasis on her upbringing on the South Side of Chicago and her family, education and childhood further sets her up as a separate person.

This self-defined personality brand combined with her unapologetic acceptance of her identity is what, I believe, has made Michelle Obama one of the most popular First Lady's (and women) in History.

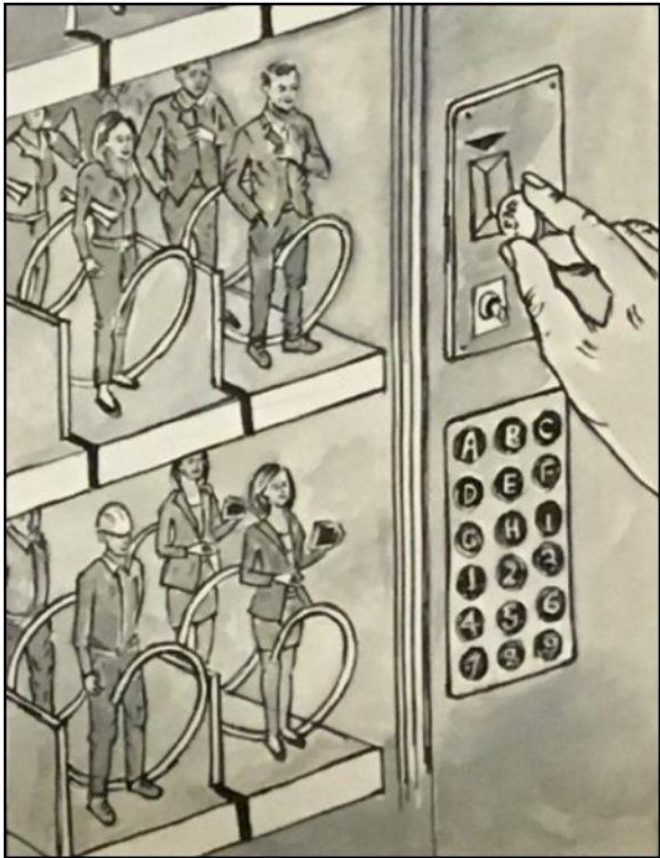
WHAT SOCIETY DOESN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW

Society today
feels so judgemental and scary
and all everyone cares about
is what everyone else thinks.
we spend all our time trying to influence
how others perceive us
but we sometimes forget
that everyone
has a different version of us
in their minds
clouded by their own thoughts and opinions
and preconceived notions
so that really popular girl at school
whose attention you just can't seem to get
may never see how interesting and funny you are
but your best friend will
and to your parents
you may always be
a child that needs to be reprimanded but
your little sister will look up to you
and aspire to achieve
your level of maturity.
There's really no way
you can control completely
what they're going to see
when they see your eyes crinkle
and see that hint of a smile
tugging at your lips
will they be happy
in your happiness?
or will they judge your crooked teeth?
What they think of you
is the most profound reflection
of themselves

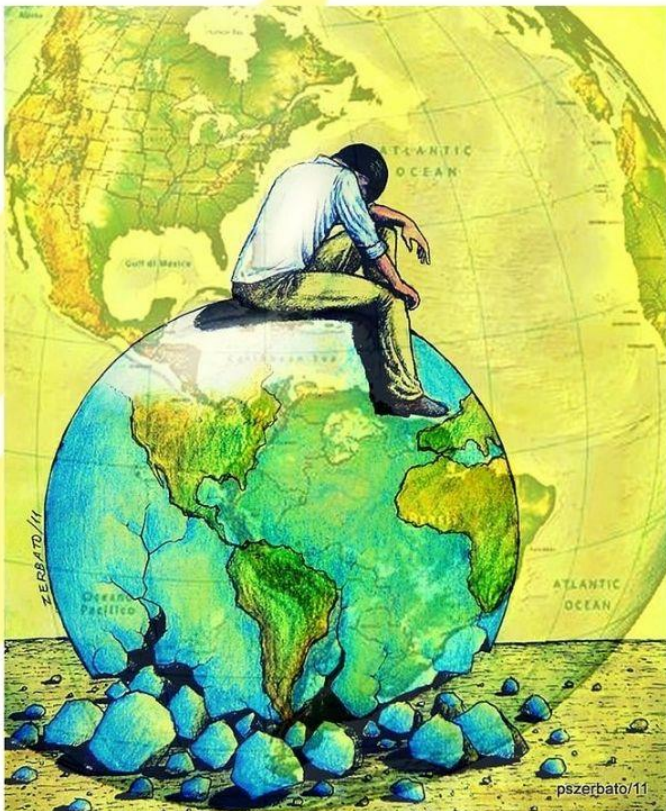


- Keren Wadhvani (Y9)





Pick your personality - Sia Harisingani (Y11)



<https://pixels.com/featured/will-healthy-the-one-that-adapts-the-sick-society-paulo-zerbato.html>

and in no way a truthful discernment of your character.

So maybe you should just stop caring so much about what the others are going to think because it's all going to be so different and inaccurate because you are so much more than what the world thinks of you because in the end the only version of you that matters is the one inside your head.

But if that is true you'll wonder which version of myself truly matters? There's so many of them which one is the truth?

Because you are a different person around your parents smart and caring, responsible and endearing and you are a different person around your friends quirky and hilarious, reckless and stupid and a different side of you is reserved for every person you've ever met and it's the influence of the people around you that makes you who you are in the end it's the combination of every individual side of you no matter how distinct and contradictory that makes you the person you are today And maybe who you are doesn't really matter as long as you're trying to be a better version, of yourself everyday.

~ Kamya Parekh (Y11)

"Do you think that the digital world is helping us cope?"

**"How has your experience
been in DAIS so far?"**

**"Have there been any culture shocks
that you've seen?"**

**"How does global
engagement with
different schools
change your
identity?"**

**"Is there one specific relationship
that has defined you or changed the
way you see yourself in the world?"**

An Interview with Mr. Shields



***How has your experience been in DAIS so far?
How was the shift?***

I've really enjoyed it. I've been welcomed by the students, staff body and the parents as well. I think one of the biggest issues is that I haven't been to the school building since December last year when I came for a series of interviews. In order to have an identity as part of the DAIS community, I've made great efforts. But to a certain degree that's not a fully functioning identity as a member of the community because I still haven't met a single member of the faculty, apart from Mr. Basu, whom I met in December. So, in that regard, I've been made welcome and I feel committed to the school but I've not fully got my identity as a DAIS person. Joining an organisation is about assuming an identity, and I've certainly assumed 85% of that identity, the 15% is the part you're able to assume when you actually get there, meet people, speak to students in corridors, and speak to staff in classrooms. Those are the key things.

Don't you think the digital world is helping us cope?

It's interesting to think how far the digital world allows you to project your identity. Can you project your identity as effectively in a digital space as you can in a physical space? I'm not sure that you can. I think it's easier for people who have had physical interaction in the past to have the same identity online than people who have to build their identity online. Conversations and discussions help you identify people with a similar outlook to you.

Since you've taught internationally, have there been any culture shocks or any significant differences that you've seen?

There was a bit of a culture shock when I taught in the Middle-East because I had no experience in the Middle-East before. However, I was teaching at an effectively British school so the culture shock wasn't as great. In terms of culture shock coming to India, Mrs. Shields is half-Indian, we've spent time in India, and so, in that regard, I'm fairly familiar with the Indian

culture. I wouldn't call it culture shock, but something that I think is notable is that each institution has a culture as clearly as each country has a culture. So, one of the things which always takes a while for any individual to adjust to—teacher, student, parent—is assimilating the culture of the organisation they join because there are all sorts of unwritten rules and patterns of behaviour of organisations, which take a while to pick up. I wouldn't describe it as a culture shock but it is a process of acculturation.

Relating to your International experience, how does global engagement with different schools change your identity?

I'll talk about it on a few levels. I'm a Scot and have always had an accent. I have to make sure that my communication is clear, that I am understood. That is one of the key things because if you are used to working in a British Context, then you can say things and students will understand that exactly. That has been something international teaching has taught me: "Say exactly what you mean, and mean exactly what you say" because you can't expect people to decode cultural references.

It also made me appreciate that people are fundamentally the same in every place: they love the children and have a real desire to see them flourish. And that was really important for me, I went to Saudi Arabia, a country that is very different from the UK. However, the international experience taught me that people are the same all across the world as they have the same strengths, the same weaknesses, ambitions and desires.

The third thing it taught me is that I have to be a global citizen, absorb cultures, and understand what happens in some circumstances is culturally bound, and that it is my job to fit in into those culturally bound patterns of behaviour or expectations. I have become a citizen of this school and this country and therefore, through prior experience I know that you have to bend your identity and personality to some degree to fit in a local context. You can't lose your core identity but you have to shape your identity.

You spoke about how you had certain apprehensions about going to the middle east, do you think these preconceived notions

influenced your experience or interactions initially?

I would say no because those preconceptions were about the way the society ran, I may have walked in with some preconceptions regarding the students but after the first day I realised that these were just students. Within the first day the preconceptions had completely vanished. In terms of society, I will confess it took me longer, but then again it wasn't a particularly easy society to access. I think that is one of the key things with the way people continue to hold on to preconceptions as you can only break down preconceptions if you access a society, which will reinforce or remove the thoughts, and that is something that is quite difficult in Saudi Arabian society - its quite a closed society in that regards. But at the end of my time there we became friendly with a Saudi Arabian Family and that gave us access to a culture that was difficult to penetrate and that did help to dismantle preconceptions.

Is there one specific relationship that has defined you or changed the way you see yourself in the world?

Yes, my relationship with my wife is the fundamental relationship that defines my reflectivity or outlook. Your parents have a foundational role in who you are as a child but as you go further in life, the person closest to you is the one that has the biggest impact on the creation of your identity. They act as a mirror and allow you to reflect and think such as "Actually this is not the identity that I wish to have", so yes I definitely think Mrs. Shields is the answer.

How has the relationship with your students defined you and your identity today?

That's a really interesting question. It's defined me because it has made me have a far more reflective and reflexive identity than it would have done otherwise. I mentioned before that teaching is an interaction or communication. It is very easy to have a one-way communication, it's very easy to lecture people, to have the presumption that because you know something it becomes clear to other people as well. However, what working with students has taught me is that you have to be reflective because your perception of a situation may be far adrift from the perceptions of your students. I'm not saying that the perceptions are correct or incorrect but perceptions do drive behaviours and that has made a much more holistically reflective person.

"Let's settle the debate"

"Would you rather"

"Which band would you rather be part of?"

**"Which impractical job
have you always wished
to pursue?"**

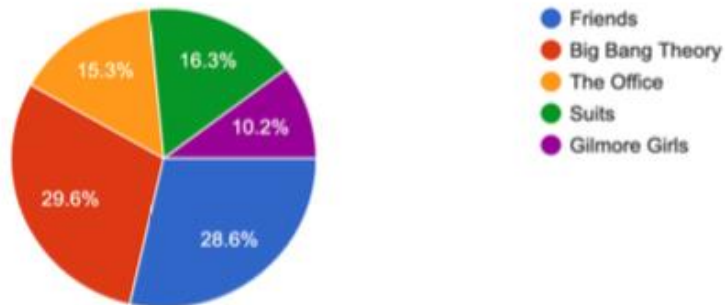
**"Who has annoyed you the
most during lockdown?"**

**"Which new
aesthetic have
you discovered
recently?"**

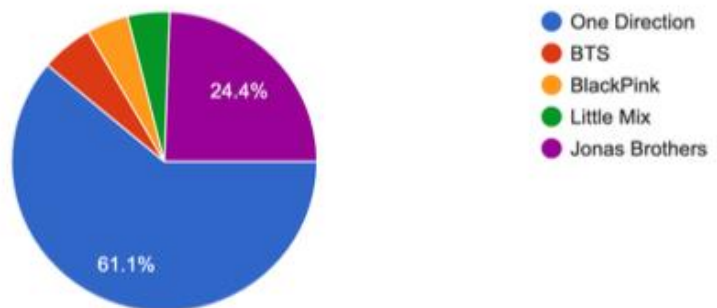
**"Which high school clique
would you never associate
yourself with?"**

POLLS

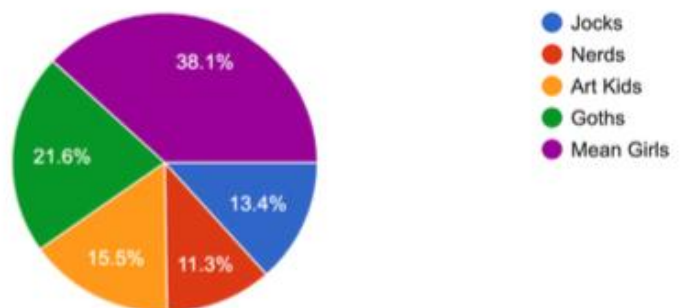
Let's settle the debate:



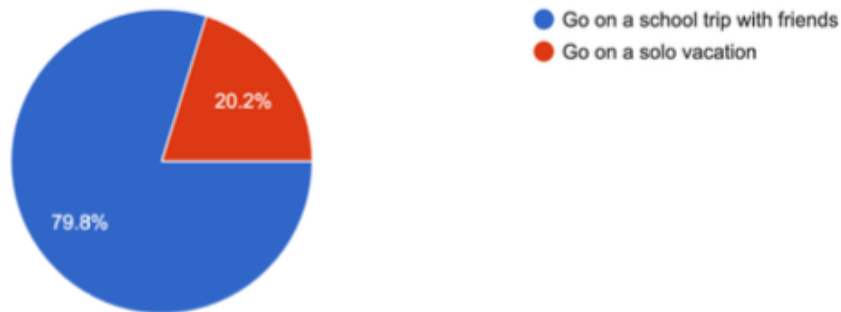
Which band would you rather be part of?



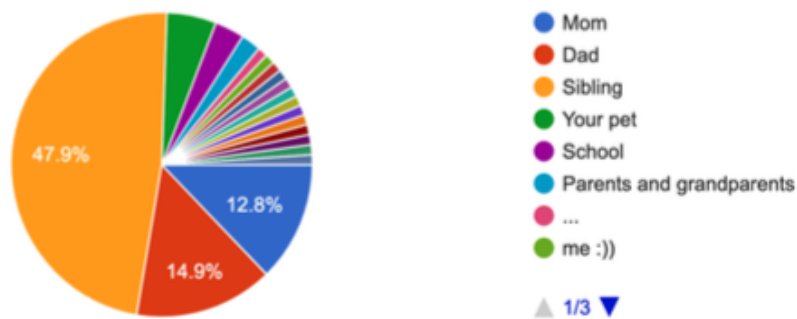
Which high school clique would you never associate yourself with?



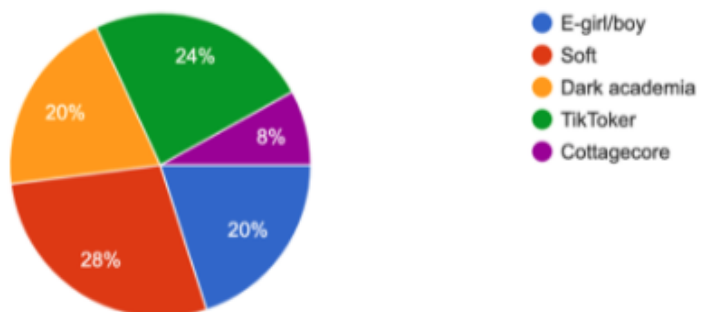
Would you rather:



Who has annoyed you the most during lockdown?



Which new aesthetic have you discovered recently?



"The Good Place"

"Miss Americana"

"Little Women"

"To Kill a Mockingbird"

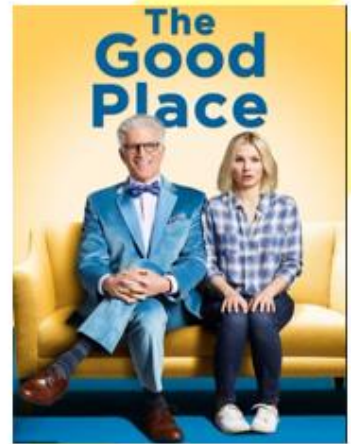
"Puddin' "

"Aunts Aren't Gentlemen"

Films and Television Recommendations

The Good Place:

The Good Place is a sitcom set in the afterlife of a rather mediocre human being, Eleanor Shellstrop, that explores the often dichotomous representations of our fates post our life - the 'Good Place' and the 'Bad Place'. Eleanor ends up in the Good Place – a selective afterlife for the cream of the crop – but is she there by accident?. It doesn't matter because she'll do anything to stay and what seems to be a simple case of mistaken identity, however, soon meanders towards philosophical lessons and unexpected betrayals by literally 'worldly figures'. This feel-good comedy is perfect for your Christmas Netflix binge.



<https://risewiththia.com/2017/10/21/what-the-fork-finding-and-conquering-your-good-place/>

Miss Americana

Miss Americana is a documentary film, revolving around Taylor Swift (you may not have heard of her), that documents her writing her 2019 album, 'Lover', while also disclosing aspects of her personal life like her relationships with friends and family. The key track in the film, however, is of Taylor finding her political voice and openly expressing her opinions. Her journey of finding this previously unexpressed political identity grew - from reactions to political events to releasing two political anthems ('You Need To Calm Down' and 'Only the Young') and creating a petition supporting LGBTQ+ rights—is thoroughly chronicled in the film.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miss_Americana

Little Women

Available on Amazon Prime, Little Women revolves around the relationships between 4 sisters, all with entirely different personalities and identities. The most exciting feature of this film is how, even with contrasting identities, the four sisters maintain their relationships as they continue to battle the vicissitudes of life. This is a film everyone can relate to, despite it being set in the 19th century, the characters are entirely relatable because the four girls' personalities represent people and their traits, even today.



<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3281548/>

Book Recommendations

Puddin'

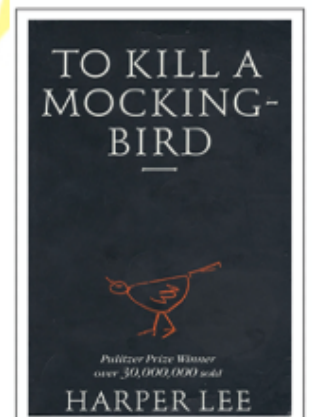
Puddin' is a novel about two girls Callie and Millie, who are on the two opposite ends of the social ladder. From the outside, they seem like direct anti-theses of each other but if you take a closer look, they are more similar than you would perceive—starting with the same pet name, Puddin'. The novel's key message is that your looks, societal standing, preferences do not determine your personality or your identity, and people, whom you thought you would never get along with, might be your secret soulmate.



<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/28269171-puddin>

To Kill A Mockingbird

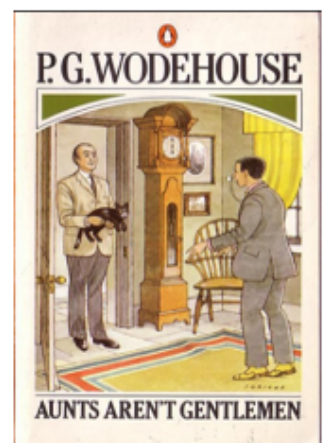
Everyone has read or at least heard of this classic novel, revolving around Atticus, a lawyer, and his children, Jem and Scout, told through the eyes of his daughter, Scout. While the most discussed theme of the book is the racial injustice and prejudice, another dominant theme also happens to be the maturation of Scout from 6 to 9 years of age—how these experiences build the foundation of her personality and identity. Other central themes are the familial relationships and societal stigmas. Read this book to be emotionally moved and be prepared to clear your schedule for at least a day, because once you start this book, you will not be able to put it down.



<https://www.straitstimes.com/lifestyle/5-reasons-why-to-kill-a-mockingbird-is-important>

Aunts Aren't Gentlemen:

PG Wodehouse is regarded as one of the greatest comedy writers of the 20th century, with his affable stories set in charming British towns and villages. Aunts Aren't Gentlemen revolves around Bertrand "Bertie" Wooster and his unparalleled brilliant personal butler, Jeeves. As the title suggests, the novel is filled with very reckless aunts and is a hilarious narration of Bertie's unfortunately eventful life even while on holiday. And of course, it is always Jeeves who comes to his employer's rescue when his family (read: one aunt) thrusts him into one catastrophic situation after another.



<https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Literature/AuntsArentGentlemen>

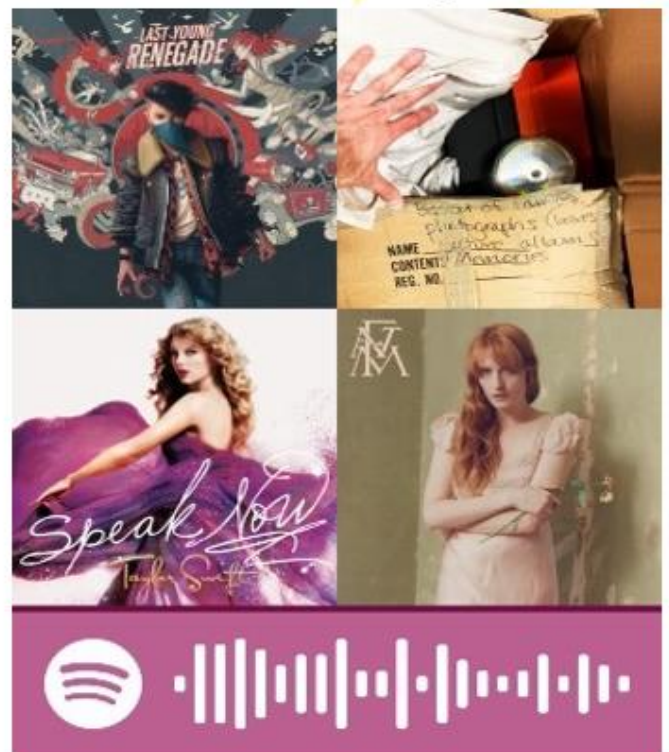
Playlists

Internet Culture

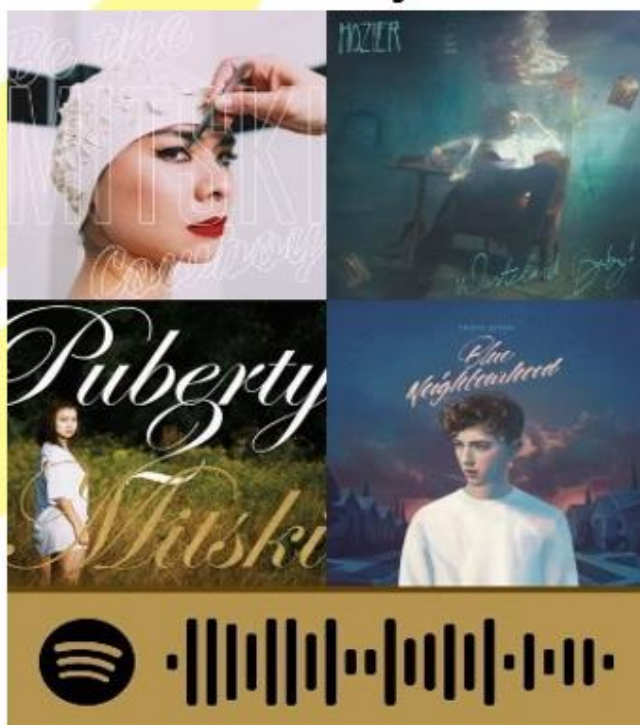


For access, scan the Spotify codes at the bottom of each image.

Relationships



Identity



EliTheBaker

Happy.Feet_454

StepUpWithFitness

SanikaDaga_Arts

Aishambrosia

DIVIJA SHAH



@StepUpWithFitness
Looking for tips to get fit?
Check out this fitness blogger
and influencers' Instagram
account for workouts,
motivation and inspiration

RIVCKA MADHANI



@Happy.Feet_454
Passionate about dancing?
Rivcka's account highlights
dances of all styles ranging
from classical to hip hop

AISHA PATEL



@Aishambrosia
Not perfect, but can make
delicious desserts! Check out
her account for some mouth-
watering recipes!

ELISHA PARIKH



@EliTheBaker
This extremely popular and talented 14 year
old baker and entrepreneur features her lip-
smacking desserts on this page, feel free to
check it out and place an order!

SANIKA DAGA



@SanikaDaga_Arts

Enthusiastic about arts, Sanika showcases her talents on this page ranging from music to art and photography.

ADITYA BHARGAVA



@atonal_aditya

Wanting to dive into the world of piano? Aditya's channel is the place to start! Check him out for music ranging from classical to pop.

ATHARVA NIHALANI



@c.art.istry

Atharva likes to do cool stuff with cards. check out his account for cardistry & a bit of magic!

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