

Bittersweet

A Student Run Project



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Issue 2

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ISSUE 2

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Editorial

Editor-in-chief – Hollie McAndrew

‘Never Trust the artist. Trust the tale. The proper function of a critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it’ ■ D.H. Lawrence, ‘The Spirit of Place’ in *Studies of Classic American Literature* (New York: RosettaBooks, 2022) pp. 66- 71, p.67

Do you know the feeling of reading your favourite book over and over again until your understanding of it moves so far away from the initial response you had to the plot and into a special place in your heart? Where the meaning and lives of the characters become so important that you understand the purpose of every word on the page. All we ever wish is to relive the sensation and emotion of finishing your favourite book for the very first time. Well, what if that feeling was only the beginning of how much a text can really make you feel?

In our magazine we began with the connections created in association with our favourite books and began looking back to where it all started; in our childhoods.

Sociologists like Margaret Mead highlight the importance our surroundings have on nurturing us at a primary age and how this has shaped our humanity. Well, as English Literary students we have learnt to understand the importance of language and the formation of what our favourite texts are. These texts influence our environmental and cultural understandings and ultimately cause us to engage with the fields we are in today. But literary studies sit so deeply rooted in all of our society, so why must our rich engagements not become an available insight to anyone who might share within the entertainment factors of the work we have become so invested in?

Far too often, books are understood and appreciated from a surface level of an engaging plot, and even when encouraged (like at GCSE level Shakespeare) we can become put off with the discussion that an author may have intentionally foreshadowed the ending or strategically used alliterative assonance within a sentence, for example.

Hollie McAndrew, Nottingham Trent University

The function of this magazine is to relay some of our appreciation of understanding a text, one that reads deeper than anything achievable after just one read and further than what the author set out to do. Every book is read differently in every reader's mind due to their own psyche breaking down the words in their individual understanding. As Bennett and Royle put it in their chapter on readership in *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 'the meaning of the text is created through the process of reading...interpretation is a function of identity and that all of us, as we read, use the literary work to symbolize and finally replicate ourselves.'

In today's society, we struggle to embrace this concept of definitions derived from our personalities. So much censorship guarding encourages individuals to hold back on disagreements and our personal interpretations. To be encouraged to be different and go against the grain within society becomes difficult with the culture of etiquettes, not wanting to offend by seeing a ulterior perspective. However, this issue is not just an exemplar for free speech but instead, it also importantly tackles those messages and meanings that may be hard to face and may not agree with the consensus view. Creative literacy is losing its importance as nepotism for artificial intelligence (A.I.) takes over and capitalism takes ownership over individuality. Within 'Bittersweet' we aim to tackle opinion-based re-readings through the light of reminiscing.

We encourage you while reading our work to reduce this gap between the freedom of creativity that existed in the naivety of childhood and the contemporary change amongst our societal or political viewpoints, and to reconnect with your younger self, where the possibilities could be endless. Re-visiting texts is a way of tracking our own change and development as each time we read something over and over again the words appear to make sense in a slightly different way. That is why we have chosen to discuss the importance of interpretation through the function of the biggest development we know; from childhood understanding, against our adult selves. Here, we can factor in how the world has changed and therefore what new lenses we can incorporate in the way we read work. For example, how many of us can no longer re-watch World War Z without connecting it to the Covid-19 pandemic?

We will take you on a nostalgic exploration, re-visiting texts that you may originally have thought would have no further relevance to you than the old teddy you still have, collecting dust somewhere. In fact, our works display interpretations of meaning and hidden messages that may inspire your own thought process or open your eyes to a depth of literary study not yet explored. Our hope is to reignite your love for reading by taking our readers back to where it all began. To opening your eyes to the importance that literary factors have on our everyday lives. Developing tools to interpret and extract your own definitions in acknowledging our creative possibilities and how they weave the tapestry of our issue.

The publication of *Bittersweet* is positioned geographically crucial in the literary developments taking place in Nottingham today with the city being home to so many

great authors, such as Jonathan Emmett, Alan Sillitoe, Helen Cresswell and of course D.H. Lawrence. Yet the city's library was on a decline in 2010 and eventually shut down for good in 2020. This summer, the summer of 2023, a new city library is to be open near the Broadmarsh bus station, which will kickstart 'the year of stories' here in Nottingham. This long-awaited announcement is the start of a new chapter for the city, and will be celebrated through the medium of storytelling. Our issue exists to re-visit and celebrate the stories, and even to discuss and explore some new ones, opening the floor to both new and pre-existing creative juices that will hopefully ignite a love for reading in-line with the contemporary changes for Nottingham's locals.

The Grimm Brothers

The Oral Tradition

Once upon a time in a land far away, the people of a small town sat down around a fire to hear stories about fantasy and magic, not knowing that this very action would continue to be passed on for years and years to come.

There is no real way of estimating when the art of storytelling began. Due to its origin as an oral tradition, there is no written record – no history. There is a high likelihood that the act of storytelling began as soon as we developed the ability to speak.

Fairy tales in particular emerged as European folktales that were passed on from generation to generation. They were often made to portray parables with a moral twist, and featured issues such as sadistic parents, brutal punishments and children being devoured by beasts.



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Through time, there have been multiple people that tried to transform this oral tradition into a literary one, but the ones that succeeded the most were the two German brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. In 1812 they published the first edition of their collection of tales with the name *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. In English that translates to *Children's and Household Tales*, implying that these stories were for everyone, children, and adults alike.

However, the two brothers never intended the fairy tales in their book to be for children, but rather a way to preserve the folklore of the regions that were being overrun by France during the Napoleonic war. The stories were tragic and filled with murder and chaos, not at all suited for children.

The collection contained 200 fairy tales and became widely appreciated all over the world, subsequently becoming the model for turning the fairy tale writing. One of the stories included in this first edition is 'Hansel and Gretel,' a brutal story of abandonment, survival, and cannibalism.

The original version is about two medieval German siblings, whose family was struggling during the famine. The siblings, abandoned in the forest by their mother, starving, stumbled upon a house made of sweets, not knowing it was a trap set up by a child-eating witch. The witch captures the children and imprisons them. After a while, Gretel tricks the witch and shoves her into her oven, closing the hatch, and burning her alive. Freeing Hansel, they steal the witch's treasures and return

The Censorship of Stories

home, where their cruel mother, has mysteriously died.

Through time, the dark and gory fairy tales portrayed in the Grimm brothers' collection grew lighter, adapting to time, becoming more suitable for children.

The Grimm Brothers' story of Hansel and Gretel was one of the many fairy tales that evolved over time and became more and more sanitized through each publication of it.

They published the last edition of their collection in 1857 where the cruel mother had been swapped out by a wicked stepmother to make it less personal, as well as showing the father as more empathetic, showing more regret for his actions so that the father is not antagonized.

Today there are versions that are solely meant for children where Hansel and Gretel run away into the woods and get



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The Century of Film

lost instead of being abandoned by their parents.



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About a hundred years after the brothers Grimm finished their collection, during the mid 1900s, film became hugely popular, and it did not take long until fairy tales were adapted into film. The first adaptation of Hansel and Gretel was made in 1954 and followed the same plot as the original fairy tale.

Presently, there are around 22 films based on the story of Hansel and Gretel. These films are either made to be meant for children or into horror films aimed towards adults. One of the more well-known adaptations is the 2013 film *Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters* with Jeremy Renner and Gemma Arterton as Hansel and Gretel.

The film is set fifteen years after the original fairy tale and the siblings are now fully grown skilled and successful witch-hunters. The two dedicated their lives to save others from evil witches, but they soon stumble upon a new challenge that is connected to a dark secret of their past.

Even though fairy tales are still heard and read by many, film is at present taking over, and as for the future, there is no possible way of predicting how fairy tales will evolve.

Felicia Bergfast, Nottingham Trent University

The World of Winnie The Pooh

I first read *Winnie the Pooh* when I was a young girl and if you told me that Tigger had ADHD, or that Eeyore had depression, I would have looked at you with a blank face. Yet, now as an adult, it is a lot more convincing.



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A. A. Milne was inspired to write the tale from his son's, Christopher Robin, teddy bear.

The idea that the characters' exaggerated personalities were representations of mental health issues came from the Canadian Medical Association Journal, 'Pathology in the Hundred Acre Wood: A Neurodevelopmental Perspective on A. A. Milne' in 2000. Not only

did it analyse characters' behaviours, but it also stated the treatment each needed.

To start, Piglet appears to be very shy but when further examining his character he represents Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD). This can be seen through his constant worry about unthreatening situations, causing him to have a stutter: 'it's awfully hard to be b-b-b-brave...'

Piglet even goes as far as to fake headaches and illnesses in order to escape situations. These are all signs of GAD, which children only need one symptom of to be diagnosed.



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As a child I always thought Eeyore just wanted to be alone, and I could never understand why he was not happy. Now I understand that he represents Major Depressive Disorder, which is characterised by his slow movements, lack of energy, and his pessimism.

He is described as a 'sad' and 'melancholy' donkey and even his name has influenced the world, so now the word 'eeyoreish' can be found in the Oxford Dictionary, meaning pessimistic and gloomy.³

Eeyore seems to be experiencing depression when he says, 'I don't seem to have felt at all now for a long time.' His sadness has overcome

³ Milne, p.35.

him, and he feels as though he has lost all emotions, similar to those who suffer from depression. Despite this feeling, Eeyore always wants his friends to be happy even if it means him being alone.



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We all know the bouncing, happy, joyful Tigger, however, what we might not have known is that his personality shows clear signs of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Stephanie Watson claims that ADHD often leads people to get into trouble and chaotic situations, which is something Tigger certainly does. He climbs trees and then becomes unable to get down. He tries large amounts of food just to discover he doesn't actually like it after earlier declaring that it is his favourite.

Along with his fidgeting, bouncing, interrupting and impulsive behaviour, Tigger clearly has ADHD.

His impetuous behaviour is also seen as he swallows Roo's medicine, which could have been dangerous for him but, as we established, he does not learn from his actions even when he could cause harm to him or his friends.



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I also remember thinking to myself as a child 'wow, Rabbit is really clean' but his fear of dirt, constant cleaning and perfectly organised items are all symptoms of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

I believed Rabbit could be rude to his friends but now, I understand that this rudeness was more than likely because of the stress caused by his OCD.

Some examples of Rabbit's OCD include his books being organised alphabetically. However, he later reorganises this by length instead as alphabetically is not aesthetically pleasing. He then changes the order back to alphabetical again, all of this causing him a great deal of stress.

Similarly, Rabbit's plants in his garden are all placed symmetrically but he later panics when they grow so that they are not presented in the way that he wants them to be.



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Eating fast, eating when not hungry, eating until far past being full, feeling guilty about eating and eating vast amounts in very little time all accumulate into a Binge eating disorder, which is represented in Pooh. At one point, Pooh eats so much that he cannot fit through Rabbit's door.

So, is this psychoanalysis reaching for something innocent or is it insightful to view the world of Winnie the Pooh through this lens?

Even though Milne did not intend to write the characters to represent mental illnesses, it is clear that each character is a representation of a disorder.

In an interview with Brian VanHooker, psychology professor Caleb Lack commented that ‘with any representation, it helps people to realise that they’re not alone,’ meaning that children experiencing symptoms similar to the characters in *Winnie The Pooh* have someone to relate to.

We must remember that this book was intended to be enjoyed as a form of entertainment. This gives us the pleasure to enjoy the book as kids, but as adults, we instead realise something that something might have been overlooked.



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Matilda The Musical

From Book to Movie to Theatre: Why is this Roald Dahl classic still being remade?

Is there anything more incredibly magical and exciting than going to the theatre? What's better than seeing your classic, well-loved children's book come alive with song and dance on stage before your very own eyes? The Royal Shakespeare company's production of *Matilda* has unsurprisingly been running for over a decade, with every show a roaring success.

the live performance of *Matilda* leaves you only wanting more.



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Experienced director Matthew Warchus had a vision for his Live show. Alongside writer Dennis Kelly and gifted lyricist Tim Minchin, the trio aimed to create a show for all ages. Whether it be a first-time watch for the younger audience, or for the veteran *Matilda* viewer that can recite every line, the musical brings joy to all.

‘Unique and unforgettable’

- Rolling Stone

Thus, securing its lengthy stay and comfortable position as one of the most popular West End shows in recent years,



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Watching the beloved story that we all know, and ultimately love, unfold in a different form gives it a breath of fresh air. Drastically different from the book and the film adaptation, the musical numbers and live performance brings *Matilda* back to life.

What I believe is important about this production, and the reason for its success, is its ability to teleport anyone back into their nostalgic period of childhood - where

you can become a kid again, just for the night, and fully immerse yourself into the characters, songs, and story, much like we did when we read the book for the first time.

Matilda not only withholds this nostalgic, personal connection with us, but the production has also allowed for wider social representation on stage. Whilst Matthew Warchus intended to keep the production as close to the classic original characterisation as possible, he still desired to allow more opportunities for diversity. He sought representation, to branch out to wider audiences and represent individuals who had been neglected within the previous adaptations of the story.

Heidi Williams is one of four girls rotating the lead of Matilda that is being shown in The Cambridge Theatre in London. As a

young black girl, playing the lead role in this adaptation is crucial in the celebration of diversity and difference. Especially as she holds the role of strong-willed Matilda, sustaining amazing inner strength and power. This confidence and sense of self-worth can be seen through her want for a better life for herself, despite her unfortunate upbringing.

‘Gleefully Nasty and Ingenious’

- The Guardian

The range of cultural representation is amazing for younger audiences to see, with a young girl like Matilda as our



unlikely hero. She carries the message that despite your appearance or age, you must be resilient in having your voice heard and to be accepted in society. Arguably, the casting choices for *Matilda* is yet another reason for its ongoing success amongst critics and the general public.

The show allows for the audience, young or old, to transport themselves to a world of fun, mischief, and imagination, keeping the inner child alive within all of us. The message strikes us every time - to find your inner strength, to stand up for yourself, and always do what's right. This important message is displayed throughout, just like Roald Dahl's original book, which continues to resonate with people. It is what brings audiences back year after year, this idea of the audience immersing into a world of childlike nostalgia. This, along with the adaptation of cultural change, is the reason for its consistent success in theatre, and is also why I believe it is well worth a watch!

Matilda The Musical is currently showing from 16th of September 2021 to the 26th of May 2024 at The Cambridge Theatre in London. Tickets start from £24, and the production is 2 hours 40 minutes long with one intermission in the middle. It is recommended from 6 years and above, making it a perfect day out for the whole family.



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Do We Really Want To Be a Disney Princess?

INVESTIGATIVE ARTICLE

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Do you remember being a child and consistently reading Disney princess novels, wishing that you were a princess and living this flawless, exquisite lifestyle? I remember dressing up in my Belle or Ariel dress, buying plastic high heels and wigs to ‘live’ the way my idols did. Now, being in my (almost) 20s and reading these novels back through the ‘amazing’ lens of social media, I realise that there are so many things the nostalgia of our childhood overlooks, such as the damaging ways that these stories diminishes women’s rights. Or do they?

Firstly, we must remember that as kids we don’t recognise the true meaning behind these magical stories. This could be argued to potentially ruin the whole ideology we hold of our childhood.



p.s yes this is a picture of the younger me in a princess dress...

Kids don’t understand the concept of feminism, but should they? I remember receiving a Princess and the Frog hardback novel when I was a little girl, showcasing it like a trophy and reading it over and over for years until it was falling apart at the spine, not even thinking about the controversy that Princesses encompass regarding feminism.

Princesses, such as Sleeping Beauty and Snow White, created within Disney’s so called Golden/Silver Ages, mirror the ideological woman shaped by the 19th century’s culture of domesticity. They suggest the notion that women should stay within the home and rely solely on the protection of their ‘breadwinner’ husband, and where the ultimate happy ending revolves around marriage. Like, come on! That’s not very feminist of us!

Aimee Eaton, Nottingham Trent University



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I recently read an amazing article about a mother from Lehigh University who started to write powerful feminist statements in her child's Disney Princess novels, such as *The Little Mermaid*, to show the endless possibilities women can achieve. Do we think this is too far? As a child, I just remember seeing beautiful women with entertaining lifestyles that I could look up to, not how women are unfavourable!

With just a quick Google Search, I found the Cinderella fairy tale in a Bedtime Story for Kids subsection. And as we know already, Cinderella spends most of her life in servitude, being confined to the house, her only solution being her fairy godmother showing up and giving Cinderella a complete makeover, gifting her an expensive dress to wear to go to meet the man of her dreams.

WOW, how realistic! That's the whole point of kid's books though, they aren't meant to be realistic. However, showing to a kid that they need to be socially beautiful to feel valued could lead to ruined self-esteem at such an early age.

Understandably, Disney has come a long way then. We now have *Mulan*, *Princess Jasmine*, *Elsa*, *Moana*, and many more who are more inclusive of female empowerment; like *Queen Elsa*, she doesn't need no man!

Not to mention, my favourite has to be the iconic 1998's *Mulan*. Instead of becoming a bride to uphold her family's honour, *Mulan* impersonates a man and successfully fights in the military service to uphold their duty and to save her father instead of acting like the typical 'damsel in distress.'

What a good way to educate the new and upcoming generation, am I right? But seriously though, breaking these stereotypical ideologies unleashes so much inspiration and aids kids to understand the morality of life; it is okay to be independent!

Lastly, growing up on these less feministic novels, I see now that there is clearly a powerful timeline there that represents society's issues.

For example, Disney's *Moana: Book of the Film* published in October 2016 is a story that I wish I could have experienced when I was a kid. Yes, it is nice to have the nostalgia of the fairy-tale high life. But seeing Moana, a female, in a leader position as a chief of her tribe, having a supportive grandmother that is telling her to follow her heart and embark on a dangerous journey, really touches my inner child's heart. There is something we can teach in future generations to come, by being inclusive of all kinds of unrealistic stories that can teach children to escape from the damaging societal norms of the real world.



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Reworking classics for one generation or ruining it for another?

INVESTIGATE ARTICLE

Nehizena Erhabor

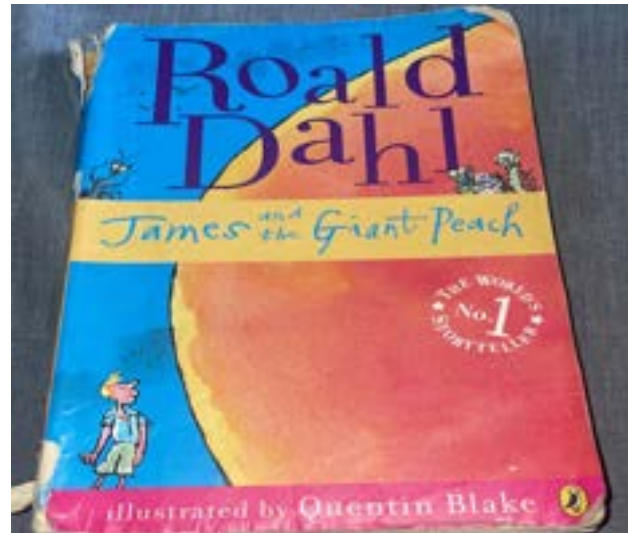
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Rewritten editions of many classics by British author Roald Dahl are set to be released with reworked titles that are meant to be more inclusive for all readers.

Contents in regard to characters' physicality, gender and race are to be changed to more 'child friendly' terms. For example, Bruce Bogtrotter within the infamous story *Matilda* is no longer described as 'fat' but is now 'enormous,' or as within *James and the Giant Peach*, the 'cloud men' is said to be changed to 'cloud people.'

This announcement was undoubtedly going to cause shockwaves in society for two reasons. One being that Roald Dahl is a beloved and highly regarded author with his children's books, being extremely well known, selling over 300 million copies worldwide.

Secondly, there is a growing debate in the world, inclusivity vs sensitivity. With many people, namely the older generation, believing that the newer, so called,



©Nehizena Erhabor, 19th March 2023

'snowflake' generation are overly sensitive to a fault.

However, the young adults of today have adopted a different mindset, one that ensures that different groups of people are always included and are made to feel visible in all facets of life.

This is done by removing any language or media that could cast them in a negative light, as well as ensuring that people are always authentically represented to avoid any marginalisation.

This has caused many readers to have mixed feelings, due to many people having Roald Dahl's books intertwined in their fondest childhood memories.

Personally, I can relate to this as growing up, the first set of books that I remember truly resonating with me, were written by Roald Dahl. Namely, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* and *The Twits*.

A particular favourite of mine is *James and the Giant Peach*, as the thought of animals

coming to life and conversing blew my mind and had my eyes glued to the book.

I believe that the books shouldn't be reworked since the author who created them is not alive to edit them himself, taking away from the magic and uniqueness of his stories.

In response to the suggested changes of Dahl's books, I think that there needs to be a set criterion on what is deemed as 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable,' otherwise we will be editing and reworking books forever until there is nothing left.

It has been said that Puffin, the publishers of the books, have hired 'sensitivity readers' to rewrite the books. What do these sensitivity readers deem as 'inappropriate' and do they have any guidelines which they follow for them to be replacing words? These are amongst many questions people have in concern of what the new reworked texts will be changed to.



© Nehizena Erhabor, 19th March 2023

On the other hand, there is a different angle to approach this situation. The reworked versions might attract more people and Roald Dahl's fanbase could be broadened. The inclusivity of the new books allows different groups of society that might usually be ostracised from children's books and society in general, to feel seen and included.

This would be good as young children from these groups will resonate with the books much deeper. This is a mutually beneficial situation, providing more readers for Road Dahl and his family, and people from different backgrounds will feel seen for once.

The reworked versions of these books were a shock to many, but it might surprise us all for the better.

Overall, the perception of whether Roald Dahl's original work is deemed to be innappropriate for contemporary readers is entirely subjective. However, if Dahl's work is changed, will the screen adaptations based upon the originals be appropriate for current children to watch?

Individualism in the 2010's hit Adventure Time

INFORMATIVE ARTICLE

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In this article, I will explore themes of individualism and freedom in the 2010 TV series *Adventure Time*.

Individualism is defined by freedom and the principle of being independent in who you want to be. For me and the audience this theme is shown throughout the series; with examples of a same sex relationship, a character whose identity shifts between male and female, as well as a male character using feminine products like makeup to express himself.

The show's central ethos revolves around ideas of self-acceptance and personal freedom, whatever that may be defined as. There are many examples in each season where characters find themselves, and don't allow societal stereotypes to affect them. This is a new, and key view that is seen within younger generations of today who have a more liberal perspective on society.

In recent years, the generation of teenagers and young adults are redefining concepts



of gender and pronouns. This movement has led to more and more teens exploring their identity.

Since 2010, *Adventure Time* has portrayed a character who fluctuates between female and male pronouns and never speaks on their gender. This character's gender seems to be fluid, which played a key part in raising present-day teenagers with such understandings of gender freedom.

Even though it has never really been addressed, meaning we don't know if the writers are trying to intentionally give the younger generation someone or something to look up to, I do believe this character was made for this purpose.

This show was first released alongside the rise of new and improved social media platforms. However, this unique and unusual children's TV series, as discussed in an article by Juliet Kelber, that contains



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these important topics, weren't yet spoken about online.

The show has aired a handful of 'Fionna and Cake' episodes, in which all the characters are gender-swapped. It shows them changing appearances and mannerisms to better fit stereotypes of the other gender.



© Adventure Time Fionna & Cake [title card] by Fred Seibert, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/84568447@N00/52458655732/in/album-72177720303231579/>>

In a New Republic article, they speak on the lesbian relationship portrayed in this show stating: 'It has also developed a deeply nuanced, dynamic group of female characters—Princess Bubblegum, the ever-

sophisticated creator of the Candy Kingdom and scientific mastermind; Marceline the Vampire Queen, a punk rock half-demon and resident badass; and Susan Strong, a super-buff but gentle cyborg.'

By showing a strong female cast and characters as the show's leaders, young girls are taught that you can still be a strong and independent woman within a male heavy society.

Although it has never been confirmed by the show-writers themselves, both fans and the actors understand that there is a lesbian relationship between the two characters. This was unusual during the time that the series was released in, but it was, more importantly, released in a childhood show that was incredibly popular. It normalised same sex relationships to the generation by showing new and unique relationships.

The show itself has always been perceived as somewhat out of the ordinary for a children's show set in the 2010s. But these new concepts were just beginning to be coined around that time. Therefore, *Adventure Time* was the right fit for such developments in the representation of society for children. This, by presenting new age ideas so that children can learn about freedom of expression from a series that had the reputation of also being individual.

The series also creates space for men that use makeup to 'feel pretty'. Therefore, portraying healthy masculinity within a world where toxic men are in charge.

This can be linked all the way from contemporary appreciation for drag in 2023, feminine men wearing makeup, to the 1970s rockstar era, or to the new romantics where makeup was considered powerfully masculine.

An example being the rock band 'Kiss' who were idealised for, not only their music, but their unusual looks due to their heavy eyeliner. They broke down stereotypes but ultimately it can be seen as more of nuance than positive masculinity.

This theme was seen throughout a couple of different episodes, first within season 4 episode 17 and then again in season 5, episode 18, where Jake the Dog is shown putting on makeup instead of helping his friend Finn, as it is his way of making himself feel pretty.

This adopts more of a positive and healthy way for young boys to express themselves through makeup and to make them feel less anxious of adopting more feminine

stereotypes. Not only can we see the character actually applying the makeup, but also, how happy he is with it on. Overall breaking down the distinction of what is acceptable behaviour within gender identities.

This show uses its popularity to speak on ideas that were not normalised in children's shows during the time it came out. It links the view on individualism to each of the main characters as they go through struggles to find themselves whilst supporting the rest of the protagonists.



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The Jungle Book Retold

Ellen Grix



© Image from page 146 of "The Jungle Book" (1894) <
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The jungle was once a beautiful and bountiful land, teeming with plants and animals of all shapes and sizes. But something had changed in the jungle, something that Mowgli could feel in the air. Everywhere he looked, the foliage was thinner, the trees shorter, the animals fewer and farther between. Sometimes he could hardly recognise his home, and he feared for what would become of the jungle and those he lived amongst if nothing was to be done about it.

The cause of this change was no mystery to Mowgli. Everywhere he went, he saw signs of humans' trespassing - from tree stumps that told of logging operations, open air garbage dumps, and habitations that had slowly encroached on the jungle. He wished they would leave himself and his friends in peace! The air was getting hotter, and the rains were less frequent and less plentiful. The creatures of the jungle were struggling to adapt to the changing climate, which meant that food sources were far scarcer and more unpredictable. He grew concerned,

and his stomach growled in hunger. Mowgli understood that if these matters were not addressed, the jungle he loved so dearly would eventually be cut down- the trees that Bagheera rested amongst, and King Louie swung in would be gone with no hope of growing back.

“The reason the beasts give among themselves is that Man is the weakest and most defenceless of all living things” – Rudyard Kipling

The thought made Mowgli feel sick. The villages were replaced with big cities that were strange and scary to him. He wanted to be in the jungle and refused to let his life be robbed from him like it had from so many of the other animals. With the help of his friends, he set out to teach the people of the jungle the importance of preserving their environment. He worked tirelessly to encourage sustainable practices, maintaining biodiversity by replanting trees and balancing out their diets. Educating the people that surrounded the jungle on the importance of conservation so that the beautiful place he called home would remain for generations to come. He begged the sky for hope, for change, for everyone to love and respect the jungle as he did. The sky gave no indication it heard his cries, but he knew he had to keep his faith in the future of the jungle and for society to wake up and see that they are destroying peoples' homes. Everybody and everything must all exist in harmony in order to survive.

Jennette McCurdy's *I'm Glad My Mom Died*

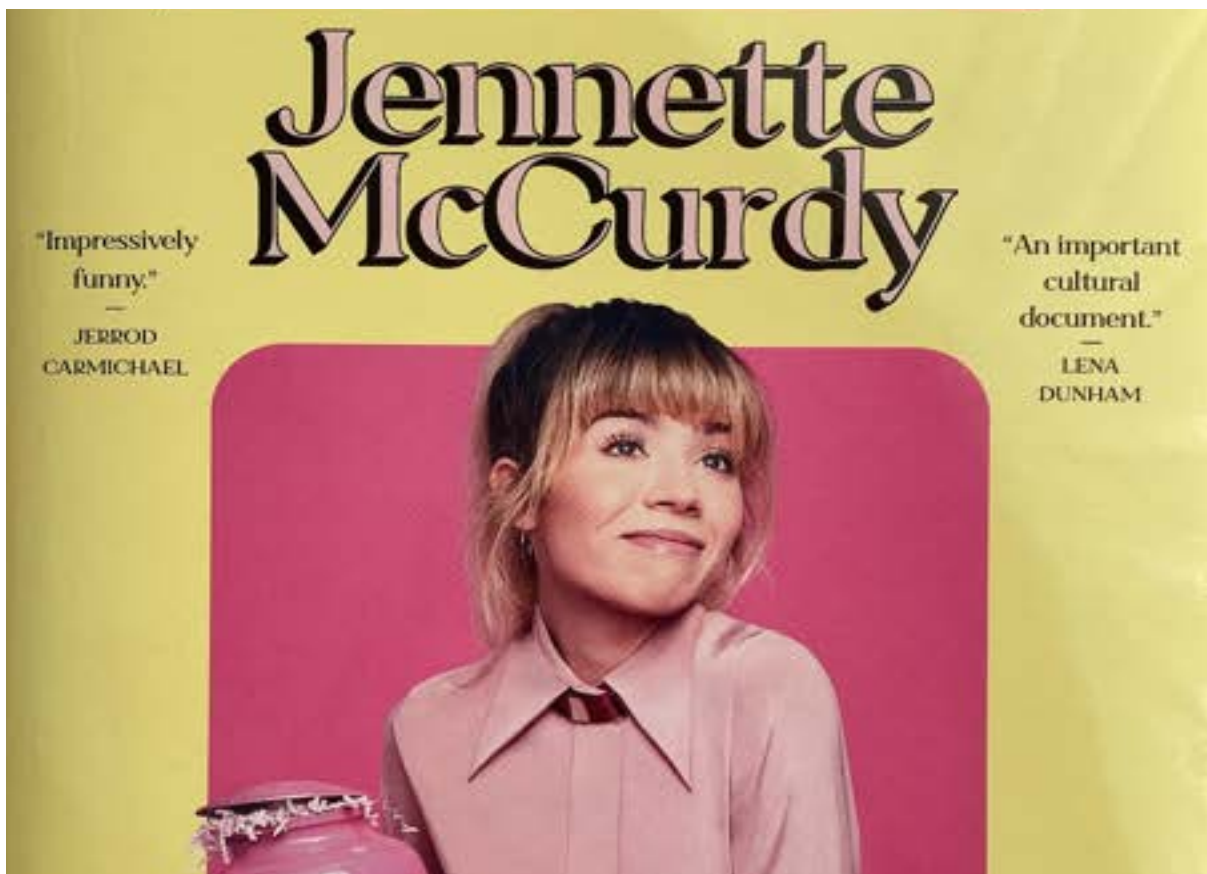
From childhood Nickelodeon star, Jennette McCurdy, we get an emotional rollercoaster of a memoir as she takes us on a shocking ride covering everything from her acting auditions, to the issues she had to deal with at home.

This memoir is crafted beautifully: it is entertaining, it is easy to read and most importantly it is influential. Although reading about your favourite childhood TV star in such a daunting and negative light

may seem a difficult task, the fact that it is such a fascinating book made it a delight to read. McCurdy does a wonderful job at shedding light onto the real issues within the acting and producing industry, while also engaging the reader by using comic relief amongst all the serious and negative topics she takes us through.

The controversial title of her memoir, *I'm Glad My Mom Died*, has definitely sparked interest in many of her fans and the now young adults who grew up watching her in the famous Nickelodeon show *iCarly*, as well as her other productions. Personally, I think the title is a genius way to get a lot of readers to pick up this book in the first place.

As McCurdy retraces her childhood, she explores her unhealthy relationship with her mother in a way that is genuinely heart-breaking to read; especially, when



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she talks about her mother's behaviour towards her. Honestly, I don't think many people who grew up watching her portray such a fun and alive character as Sam Puckett would have expected the actress to have struggled so much in real life, mainly because of her unstable relationship with her mother.

I was shocked to find out while reading this that McCurdy actually hated being recognised as Sam Puckett (her character in *iCarly*), and that as time moved on, she moved on from the *iCarly* series and started to prioritise her mental health over her career instead.

Reading this memoir truly felt like I was reading a typical hero novel where we as readers root for the protagonist and we feel her relief when we read of her overcoming her struggles at the end of the novel. McCurdy writes like a true author and it was a pleasure to learn more about her life as well as to get exposed to all the secrets about the production at Nickelodeon, including mental health issues and eating disorders.

This book was not only an amazing read, but it was also an educational and an extremely influential one. I hope that for the younger audience picking this book up for the first time, this may serve as an excellent eye-opener to what a toxic parent/child relationship *truly* looks like.

“Underneath the tears I
beamed.”

Overall, it was an absolute pleasure to experience Jennette McCurdy's life

alongside her. It is clear that she is not only an amazing and strong person but also an incredible writer. This memoir is a double-edged sword, following hard and triggering topics yet, at the same time, it is written so unbelievably well that I know most people will appreciate it as much as I do.

You can purchase your copy of *I'm Glad My Mom Died* here:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Im-Glad-My-Mom-Died/dp/1982185821>

Harry Potter's Depressing Background: The Truth Behind J. K. Rowling

INFORMATIVE ARTICLE

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What exactly has J. K. Rowling done?

The infamous Harry Potter series author received criticism for her generally divisive opinions on the transgender community in her series of tweets back in 2020. Rowling publicly liked a large amount of transphobic material, some of it going as far as to hint that trans women are sexual predators, along with some that blatantly stated that trans women should not be allowed access to female only bathrooms as they could pose a threat to cis women.

One of her tweets reads, “People who menstruate.’ I’m sure there used to be a word for those people. Someone help me out. Wumben? Wimpund? Woomud?”



© J.K. Rowling 1999 by John Mathew Smith, CC-BY-SA 2.0
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Several people perceived this as being insulting to the transgender community because it was manifestly transphobic. Countless amount of people reacted harshly to it, generating quite the uproar worldwide.

Rowling continued to speak out about her opinions on gender and sex whilst showing her massive support of TERF, which is ‘an acronym for trans-exclusionary radical feminist. First recorded in 2008, the term was originally used to distinguish transgender-inclusive feminists from a group of radical feminists who reject the assertion that trans women are women, the inclusion of trans women in women's spaces, and transgender rights legislation.’

As one can expect, this led to a very unfavourable reaction from the audience, who were deeply disappointed in these radical viewpoints exclaimed by one of the biggest authors of their childhood.

The trans community was adversely impacted by this since it would give others the impression that it is OK to support damaging movements, such as TERF, if

someone with J. K. Rowling's level of influence supported such harsh beliefs.

Many started to speak out against it, some even advising people to avoid buying anything created or authored by Rowling, as supporting someone who promotes this kind of message could be harmful, especially to the younger audience to whom most of her work is catered.

Furthermore, many celebrities went against Rowling's opinions, some of them being the cast members of her incredibly famous book and movie series *Harry Potter*.

Emma Watson, who played Hermione, one of the protagonists, states in a tweet that '[t]rans people are who they say they are and deserve to live their lives without being constantly questioned or told they aren't who they say they are.' She also posts a statement saying: 'I want my trans followers to know that I and so many other

people around the world see you, respect you and love you for who you are.'

This is immensely significant, and it takes a lot for a person like Watson, who basically grew up with Rowling in her life, to speak out against the famous author's beliefs and reaffirm that Rowling's opinions are inaccurate and detrimental.

The actress grew up paying tribute to J. K. Rowling's books as one of the main characters of the *Harry Potter* movie series. Since Watson has known the author from a very young age, it must have been extremely difficult going against someone that you used to look up to.

Daniel Radcliffe was the next Harry Potter star to speak out about the issue, stating in an interview that 'transgender women are women.' The actor argued that his, or anyone else's opinion on the matter of gender or identity is going to be as



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accurate as someone's who has done an immense amount of research and has experience in speaking on the matter. He continued by stating that this is in fact not a fight between him and Rowling and that it is more significant to focus on the wellbeing of the transgender community.

J. K. Rowling did absolutely nothing to help herself in this predicament; in fact, she continues to speak out about her divisive viewpoints and defend them, claiming that '[i]t isn't hate to speak the truth.'

She also wrote a statement to defend her 'freedom of speech' where she states, 'I'm concerned about the huge explosion in young women wishing to transition and also about the increasing numbers who seem to be detransitioning.'

Research, according to Rowling, supports her argument that women who want to be men are frequently only attracted to others of the same gender, and being terrified of homophobia, they want to exchange gender in the seeking of approval.



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Rowling continues to argue that the world had become more misogynistic and difficult for women, and that she wants to keep women safe. She writes, 'I want

trans women to be safe. At the same time, I do not want to make natal girls and women less safe. When you throw open the doors of bathroom and changing rooms to any man who believes or feels he's a woman, then you open the door to any and all men who wish to come inside.'

Her claim that trans women only 'believes' to be women is incredibly patronising and disrespectful toward the transgender community. Simply put, it indicates that she believes transgender women are not actually considered to be female.

For someone who frequently asserts their support for the transgender community, Rowling seems to be disagreeing with them quite a bit. One could conclude that it appears that she is stating that a male simply cannot become a woman.

Promoting the notion that transgender women might pose a threat to cis-gender women dehumanises them and creates the impression that they pose a threat to society, which opens the door to transphobia and bullying, something the community already faces daily.

Many will read this and get the impression that every transgender person may be a threat to them. However, this could be true of any person, trans or not; they could still present harm to anyone. In other words, it has less to do with a person's gender or sexual orientation and more to do with their mental health, wellbeing, and capabilities.

Despite the fact that she has lost millions of admirers who have expressed their dissatisfaction with her opinions, Rowling says that many have reached out and given her a great deal of support throughout the

entire crisis, which further reinforces her belief that her views are accurate.

She didn't seem to care about anything other than the support she got from others with similarly cynical opinions. The threats, backlash and words of disappointment she received from the people who had earlier shown her support through her career did not seem to concern her whatsoever; so long as there are others that agree with her, it didn't matter that she had offended millions of people and put out a message reinforcing that it is okay to be discriminatory toward a community of people who have continuously been fighting for equality.

Rowling later claimed in another tweet that she is 'deeply amused by those telling me I've lost their admiration,' and she followed this by saying that she could not care less about how her fans feel about her opinions, and that it does not bother her if she loses their support. This is highly insensitive and disrespectful to state as she would be nowhere without her fans and their support.

The statement was obviously intended to mitigate some of the damage, but it generally fell short. Many people continue to strongly disagree with Rowling, continue to criticise her, and refuse to continue supporting her work.

Her novels only advocate for love and inclusion, yet she fails to live up to these ideals and instead sends out damaging messages. This is a huge let down to anyone who grew up reading and supporting her work; the person they thought highly of has turned out not to be much of a great or accepting person at all.

Given that Rowling still adamantly defends her opinions, it's unclear whether her career can ever fully recover from this stain. It is sad to realise that the author, who served as an inspiration to many children, teaching them to never give up through the Harry Potter series, has somehow turned into one of the generation's most despised writers.

Although I strongly disagree with Rowling's egregiously insulting views, my opinion of the *Harry Potter* books hasn't changed since I was a child. Instead, I prefer to keep the artist's work and her personal beliefs apart. Having said that, I won't be purchasing any of her future work or giving her any other kind of support because I believe it is harmful to give such a toxic individual a platform.

Others are attempting to take Rowling's ownership of *Harry Potter* away in an effort to entirely distance her from the franchise. Although it is generally believed that someone who holds her beliefs should not be connected to it in any way, this has not yet happened. Still, it will be interesting to see what the future holds for J.K Rowling and her upcoming projects.



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I don't read much these days. In fact, most of the reading I do is on instruction packets, the part that says 'microwave in a suitable container for 15 minutes' and I'll also look at the back of a cereal box every so often at breakfast. Beyond that, my eyes grow tired, and I decide it's not worth it to stress myself out so much. I've had the same book sitting on my bedside table for half a year and I still haven't finished it. I pick it up, read the first couple of pages, put it down and carry on with my life; it just doesn't 'pull me in,' and I know I'm not the only one who experiences this.

But it didn't use to be this way, when I was twelve years old my bookshelves were filled with *Goosebumps*, *Michael Morpurgo* and *Percy Jackson*. I used to spend the cool summers outside in a camping chair with my head in a book. I couldn't put it down until my dad's coarse voice would shout '*a tavola*' (come eat); I would always try and read for an extra five minutes but he'd eventually stand at my feet and ask me to come inside, and with a sigh, I'd get up to go eat. Sitting at the table, I used to go through the book in my mind, barely tasting the food I was putting in my mouth until my mum told me to slow down.

It makes me sad to think that nowadays these books are sitting in some forgotten corner of my parents' house, collecting dust, untouched and unwanted. However, there is one book I own that has survived multiple addresses, and although I don't read it often (sometimes years), I still think about it occasionally because it was my favourite book as a kid. It is a *Michael Morpurgo* book called *Born to Run*, which I received as a present for my tenth

birthday and it has stayed with me since. It kept me sheltered from the world when things got tough as a kid, kept me busy when I was bored out of my mind, and got me to sleep when nothing else would work.

The last time I read it was a week ago. I remember sitting in my garden on a mouldy patio chair, watching it get dark when out of nowhere the vague curiosity to read the book entered my mind, so I went inside and into my room where I pulled out a faded cardboard box from underneath my bed, mostly filled with junk I had collected throughout each address. I riffled through the box and fished out the book, it was small and worn but not absolutely destroyed; the deep creases on the spine showed that it had been well loved. A dog sat forlornly on the front cover, and inside the overleaf read 'Happy Birthday xx 2010.' I sat on the floor, my eyes adjusting to the size of font, it seemed I had grown familiar with 'adult' books, with their intimidating monolith of words and letters. The words on the pages in the *Morpurgo* book felt cosy with its big block letters that were so familiar to 11-year-old me. I spent the whole night turning its pages, lost in quiet concentration as the book slowly drew me in. I'd find grease marks and occasionally even small, scribbled illustrations on the dog-eared pages. At three o'clock in the morning I reached the end. Lazily, I lifted my eyes from the pages and watched inwardly, reminiscing, and sitting there unconsciously smiling.

The fact that I finished a book in one sitting is a sign that my love of reading never really went away in the first place, so why then is it so hard for me to pick up

a book nowadays? I think the blame lies with the fact that I no longer read for pleasure. I set the bar too high for myself, I try to read what challenges me, and what I think a 22-year-old should read. Sure, having this attitude has helped me become a wider reader and it's made me more knowledgeable, but it has made reading unenjoyable to the point where picking up a book just doesn't feel worth it. I think we would all benefit if we had a healthier attitude towards reading. Instead of dismissing children's and YA books because they're not challenging enough and therefore not worth our time, we should revisit these books and enjoy them as a child would: for fun.



Underlying warning in childhood classic WALL-E

INFORMATIVE ARTICLE

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© A Robot on Wet Concrete Floor by Erik McLean
<<https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-robot-on-wet-concrete-floor-5895399/>>

At first glance, WALL-E is about a solitary robot who is left with the responsibility of cleaning a waste-covered earth. Without anywhere to dispose of it, Planet Earth has accumulated skyscrapers of garbage and it is therefore no longer sustainable for humans to live there.

A central authority within WALL-E (called Shelby Forthright) persuades the humans to leave earth and board a spaceship called the Axiom. This powerful figure is CEO of corporate conglomerate ‘Buy n’ Large’ as well as holding the title of President.

A futuristic robot called EVE is sent from the Axiom spaceship to Earth to scan for life and encounters WALL-E. Together they embark on an adventure to return the spaceship inhabitants to aid sustainability and rebuild the ecosystem.

The younger viewership the movie is targeted at engage with its plot, funny characters and satirical perspective of lazy individuals, which is causing them to overlook the environmentally conscious morals of the film.

The perspective I offer is instead one gained by either the parents, who may find themselves stuck watching this, or an audience that have revisited the film recently.

Consumerism is a major issue foreshadowed within the dystopian context of WALL-E, where humans ultimately live to consume. The ideology of the corporate conglomerate ‘Buy n’ Large’ in WALL-E aims to make life more comfortable for its inhabitants.

Despite this intention, psychological manipulation conceals the ship's members from the mass of waste dumped on earth and within the atmosphere. Occupants in the spaceship who have this ‘easy life’ become morbidly obese, reliant on robots and begin to neglect face to face communication.

Their over-consumption of food and materialistic belongings leads to unhealthy sedentary lifestyles; their screen addiction causes them to become blind to how they have been victimised.

Ryan Palmer, Nottingham Trent University



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of collecting user information through ‘cookies’ and analysing consumer psychology to a scary extent.

Social media platforms are now adapted specifically to increase screen time, capture attention, and sell product. WALL-E, released in 2008, therefore acknowledged the technical advances present today before many electronic and social media platforms had taken off.

Overall, this message can be directly applied to today’s society and can act as a warning to the capabilities of naivety in regard to consumerism.

Corporate companies today are advancing in how they capture consumer information and adapt their marketing to make customers buy. The initial function of social media was to allow its users to connect and build relationships. However, in more recent times, conglomerates such as Instagram and Facebook, have made use

Looking back to the early message behind this children’s movie is crucial. It becomes apparent that this is what WALL-E warns us about, as our generation is becoming more and more addicted to screens because of social media propaganda.

WALL-E conveys the extremity of falling into traps of consumerism, including the destruction of earth, as well as the result of a wasteland. Whilst it may appear dark and extreme, very real cases of our planet becoming a wasteland began to emerge with the appearance of this film; from then on landfill sites like in China and



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Indonesia are growing and becoming a common sight around the world.

Families buying in excess, and improper understandings of recycling cause the dystopian context of WALL-E to become a very real threat within the near future.

Correlations of Shelby Forthright being President and CEO of a major company makes individuals feel that he is trustworthy therefore they conform to all his ideologies and values. Values that coincide with many corporate CEOs present today.

As consumers, we feed corporate companies who misuse our trust in pursuit of profit. While I cannot fully blame capitalism as the cause of the deterioration of our planet it is a contributing factor.

Ecological awareness is definitely on the uprise and with this, we are beginning to see companies using it to their advantage. Clothing brands claiming to be creating garments with 100% recycled material as a marketing strategy, allowing them to bump up the price due to its environmental impact, when the reality is that no more than the paper tag was recycled.

The underlying message in this childhood classic is to not live to consume as it will eventually destroy the planet. Instead of having a digital addiction, individuals today need to pay more attention to what's important and not become engulfed in the unhealthy lifestyle that WALL-E exhibits.



© Wall-E Toy on Beige Pad by Lenin Estrada < <https://www.pexels.com/photo/wall-e-toy-on-beige-pad-2103864/> >

The Hunger Games: First experiences of Dystopia

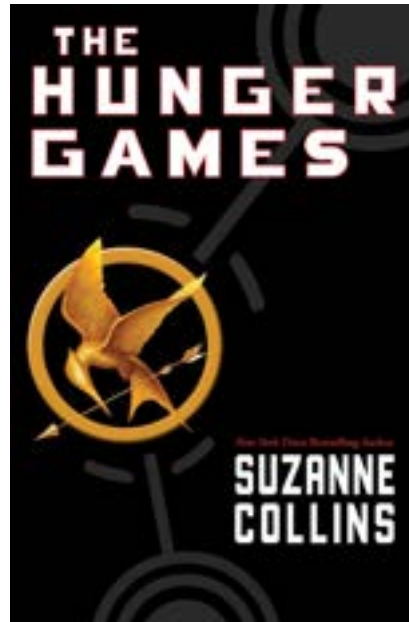
Exploring the similarities found in
Suzanne Collins' dystopian novel to the
typical teenage life.

Lydia Sewell

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Whilst at first glance it is a ridiculous concept to attempt to compare the average British childhood experience to the one illustrated in the city of *Panem* in *The Hunger Games*, it is not an entirely dissimilar circumstance – especially the one experienced by our protagonist, Katniss Everdeen.

Familial issues, isolation, romantic problems, and an incessant urge to leave her 'district.' While the dystopian difficulties they face in the novel are far darker and more hopeless than the average British childhood should (hopefully) have been, the core moral and emotional dilemmas remain the same. In this way, we subconsciously, and perhaps unknowingly, form an understanding with this character, and are drawn in by the urge to know how this amiable character deals with the issues we also face.



For example, Katniss has a problematic and unstable relationship with her mother, a plight that the majority of teenage girls can resonate with at some point during their adolescence. However, the independence this gave Katniss sparked jealousy in children with an insatiable curiosity such as my own. Living vicariously through Everdeen's dangerous adventures greatly contrasted with the small-town problems of the suburban midlands that my friends and I lived through.

Furthermore, one of the main subplots of the book series was the love triangle between Peeta, Gale and our heroine. In the era we were all entering our obsession with young love, her turmoil and romantic complications piqued our interest and set up an entirely new issue that Katniss had to face, adding further depth to the novels. The problems of a teenage girl rarely vary, regardless of if you're living in a dystopian world or not.

The film adaptations helped surge the franchise into stardom and popularity – not that it was exactly lacking before. The first

two books in the series were both New York Times Bestsellers, but after the release of the first film in 2012, the publisher had reported over 26 million Hunger Games trilogy books in print.

The Hunger Games book trilogy contains much more thrilling and unnerving details than the film series was able to cover, and therefore remains a worthwhile read even after watching the films. Yet, due to its consequent mainstream audience and popular following after the film release, it was a widely discussed phenomena – and this brought the discourse of why there is something familiar about the concept.

The author, Suzanne Collins, revealed that inspiration for the text originates from both classical and contemporary sources. From distant textbook history that we were taught as children, to televised world events that were occurring while we were young.

The classical origins are from the Roman Gladiator games, a totalitarian government, a fight to the death, and was viewed as popular entertainment. The familiarities with the Capitol are striking. Collins explained to the New York Times that, ‘I was such a huge Greek Mythology geek as a kid, it’s impossible for it not to come into play in my storytelling.’ Also, inspiration from the modern world stemmed from the Iraq war. A war that, as children, many were aware of, but never really fully knew the severity and reality due to our young age.

The book trilogy also never failed to present fresh, unexpected challenges in each book, never straying too far from the cautionary message against dictatorship.

The story of the revolution against the Capitol is also a surprisingly prevalent event seen in real life, as modern revolutions have occurred as recently as this century.

In conclusion, the resemblances this text bears to our real life are surprisingly uncanny. Perhaps this was the reason for its success – however, I do not want to appear reductive.

The text was a fresh new perspective for a young adult series, and thus incredibly gripping. The ability to combine the classical world with the contemporary, while simultaneously drawing in the young minds of the twenty first century is certainly a grandiose achievement.



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Iconography in the Playroom

Classism and toys

INFORMATIVE/INVESTIGATE ARTICLE

Leanna St Rose-Haynes

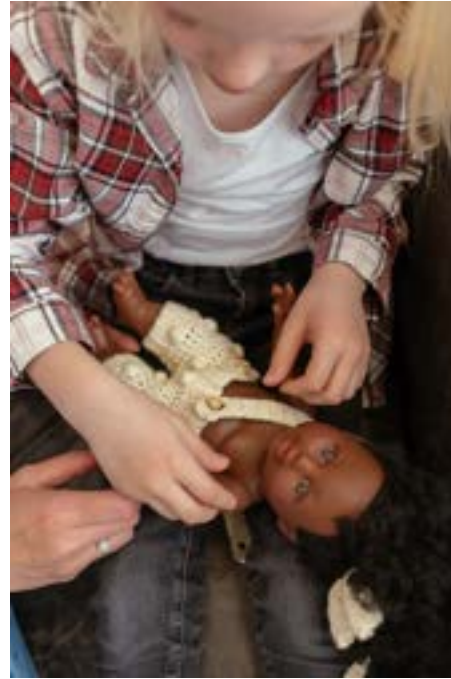
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As young boys and girls, we are taught to never envy others or to want what another person has. However, despite our parents' best efforts, we have all been possessed by jealousy at one point or another, especially during moments like show and tell.

Most of us may remember the school day showcase. Some may have brought a picture of a favourite pet, others a souvenir from a recent trip, but most commonly, people brought a toy for the occasion. For some, show and tell would've been a day that was looked upon with fondness, but for others it evoked feelings of dread. The latter feeling being caused by a fear of ridicule and exclusion.

Superficial questions on the playground plaguing our little minds like; 'what Bratz doll do you have?' 'Did you get that new Lego set?' 'Did you see the doll that she brought in, it's not even a real Barbie?' Though we never knew it, the toys we had denoted our social standing. Our ability to judge our classmates' tastes in toys reveals a deeper sociological issue of classism that relates to play and childhood development.



© A Girl Holding a Doll by Mikhail Nilov < <https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-girl-holding-a-doll-8307539/> >

To best understand the divide within the toy aisle, we need to pick out two toys that are in competition with each other. For the sake of this article, I will pit American Girl dolls against mainstream girls' dolls (i.e., Barbie and Bratz).

First introduced in 1986 by Pleasant Company, American Girl Dolls are known for their high-quality products, fulfilling enrichment and educational value. Each doll comes with an accompanying book that explores the doll's historical background and teaches children about different eras and cultures.

American Girl dolls are seen as aspirational toys, designed to encourage girls to think about history, culture, and the world around them. With a wide range of product lines, American Girl have something for everyone. That is, everyone that can afford to buy into the lifestyle as a basic historical doll is expected to set you back \$115 (roughly £100). For the average family who makes roughly

£32,300 a year, spending money on their merchandise or travelling to their limited specialist stores, is out of the question.

However, there exists more mainstream options like Barbie dolls. The Mattel icon 'Barbie' can be found in most warehouse-style stores with an onslaught of options with prices ranging from \$14 to \$25 (roughly £10-£20).

However, toys like these are often style over substance with little emphasis on educational enrichment, thus creating an imbalance in the type of play achieved by these two toy types. Is it fair that certain instruments in early childhood development are available to a select few whilst others are left with misguided and misrepresented icons?



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By making well-rounded early development toys inaccessible, young children can be subjected to long-term developmental issues such as decreased

social function and increased susceptibility to external influence. Such concepts have been researched and discussed at length by sociologists. For those who would like to explore the concept through a sociological lens, I suggest Joel Best's journal article 'Too Much Fun: Toys as Social Problems and the Interpretation of Culture.'

Intellectual toys are marketed to parents with significant disposable incomes (and mainstream toys are often marketed towards families who prioritize entertainment value over education). These toys are designed to be cheap and accessible, making them more appealing to families with limited resources.

However, they also perpetuate the idea that play is purely for entertainment, rather than an opportunity for learning and development. Ultimately, what we worship is what we become. By prioritizing expensive, aspirational toys like those sold by the American Girl Franchise we reinforce the idea that education and intellectual pursuits are important, and that play can be a valuable opportunity for learning and growth.

Conversely, by prioritizing cheaper, mass-produced toys, we reinforce the idea that play is purely for entertainment, and that education and intellect are less important. Through monetary restriction, ideas of meritocracy and reduced class mobility are implicitly taught to impressionable children. Thus, giving those who are disadvantaged a jaded worldview and those who have a head start.

The covert classism hides in the fact that those who have more disposable income can buy better role models for their children, whilst the average family is left

with purely aesthetic icons who impose little to no goals or imagination on the child that plays with them. Though it may seem far-fetched, this arguably contributes directly to reduced class mobility.

This then begs the question, what should we do or what can be done? In all honesty, it depends on personal preference on how you would like a child to be raised. Perhaps instead of limiting play to physical items we should foster spaces for children to use their imagination or we should create better accessible characters for kids to look up to.



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