

BTS IDENTIKOVUS

beliefs
family
experiences
personality
likes&dislikes
nationality
religion
culture
friends



EDITORIAL

Cogito ergo sum.

This Latin phrase roughly translates to "I think, therefore I am", and is credited to French mathematician René Descartes. Essentially, what this phrase means to convey is that even in a world shrouded in doubt, where truth is fragile, and falsehood is around the corner, there is absolutely no doubt about the existence of you. Even by doubting your own existence, you are thinking, therefore you must exist in order to doubt that. Even if you are wrong at something, you are thinking, therefore you must exist in order to be wrong.

From that mini thesis above, it seems like there is not an overall or solid definition for identity other than simply being as is. Unlike other concepts where there are almost always external factors, external concepts feeding into it, identity simply is, ipso facto. Identity can be defined as anything, really.

However, it does bring up one of the most controversial and debatable topics which is the idea of 'Nature versus Nurture', something explored extensively within this edition. How your genetics is determined does truly influence you and your identity. Obviously, such things like your hair, eye colour and skin are determined from your parents' genetics and other biological factors, and more complicatedly, personality traits can equally be determined by genetics and some sort of inheritance from the many generations of your family. For example, it is common for reputed geniuses to be born from highly intelligent parents. Although, the environment and

EDITORIAL

surroundings can equally shape your identity too because everyone will have to learn and adapt to something different, thereby those new information will undoubtedly have an effect on your identity. For instance, learning a new language can change one's mentality because it requires understanding of how other people speak, therefore an understanding of a new culture, a new lifestyle, a new identity discovered. Through these thought-provoking articles, such as "How the Environment, Lifestyle and Labels Change Identity" by Taeyeon, you can decide for yourself the answer to this debate.

And as a result, it springs up another debate which is the question of whether identities can change. On one side, it is argued that identity is more discovered while the other side believes identity can be created, perhaps can be reinvented. It is very similar to the previous debate but does include more questions to ponder. For example, many celebrities such as Sam Smith and Ellen Page have noted changes in their gender and sexuality, discovering (or reinventing?) the one that suites them best. This can be explored further in "Does Identity Change?" by Olivia.

So... what can we conclude from this? It seems like there are too many answers yet equally too many questions regarding our identity. Therefore, is there truly any sort of answer to this dilemma? What can we properly garner from this?

EDITORIAL

That is why we have to go back to the beginning. Cogito ergo sum. Perhaps, we have to be comfortable with the idea that there is no proper answer, comfortable with being wrong, comfortable with doubt, and instead find comfortability in learning and discovery, and equally in flexibility and adaptability. Again, there is no denying that you exist; there must be a 'you' to think for you to be wrong or doubtful. And with that reminder, I highly encourage you to use it as an anchor, a way for you to ground yourself in times of high-stress, unavoidable doubt or tribulations because it is a good reminder that you should appreciate your existence as you matter and you are important, and in the same manner, encourages you to be a thinker and still go and discover what your identity means to you: it can be self-discovery; it can be reinvention; it can be for some purpose; it can be simply to have fun and enjoy life. Whatever it is, remember the importance in your existence and please take the time to read these amazing articles and learn something about yourself or others.

Nguyen Thuc Anh To

Cover designed by Choi Hojeong, Y12

CONTENTS

No, You're not a "Stargirl." Capitalism is to Blame for Your Identity Crisis - Ngoc Linh Nguyen, Y12	5
Does Identity Change? - Dakyung (Olivia) Hwang, Y8	9
Why Do We Have Identity Crises and How Do We Avoid Them? - Seobin Yoon, Y9	13
Vietnamese and English: Bilingualism as Part of My Identity - Quang Hung Pham, Y12	17
Possible Relations Between the Emotions of Mozart and his Compositions - Sumin Ryu, Y12	22
How the Environment, Lifestyle and Labels Change Identity - Taeyeon Kwun, Y10	26
Trench (2018): The Intricate Musical Exploration of One's Identity - Nguyen Thuc Anh To, Y12	30
Traveling to Find Our Identity - Geonhee Cho, Y12	34

No, you're not a

Starving

Capitalism

is to blame
for your

**IDENTITY
CRISIS**

Written by Ngoc Linh Nguyen Y12
Designed by The Phuc Mai Y10

- Introduction
- Capitalism and Self
- Capitalism, Aesthetics, and Identity
- Conclusion

Introduction

2020 was a colorful year for social media and aesthetic boards. As Covid-19 cases exponentially rose, the health crisis was determined to be a pandemic, pushing billions of people into lockdown. Therein lay the increase in virtual interactions. Among trends was the golden era of #moodboards, #nicheaesthetics and a myriad of other hashtags under Canva edits filled with object cutouts and pictures of a certain 'aesthetic' published on various platforms. The influence of these posts was significant; a prime example is videos and trends of comparing "VSCO girls", "E-girls", and "Soft girls". The logic seems simple: match oneself to an aesthetic, follow the style, and dress like the matched niche. However, the important discussions were missing. How can a multifaceted human being be reduced to just one aesthetic? What are the repercussions of rapid and disposable identity trends? How does capitalism play a pivotal part in this heightening trend? This paper will discuss trends relating to aesthetics, the influence of capitalism, and the weak formation of identity.



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Capitalism and Self

It is crucial to first define what capitalism is and explain how it manifests in today's society. Cambridge Dictionary defines capitalism as "an economic and political system in which property, business, and industry are controlled by private owners rather than by the state, with the purpose of making a profit". Although this article will not discuss the objective flaws of capitalism, it wants to highlight that in contrary to the system's initial purpose to breed innovation, in practice, it breeds greed and consequently disregards sustainability, equality, economic and political stability, and more. Thus, our number one takeaway: capitalism aims to "mak[e] a profit", at many expenses. In addition to that, capitalism inextricably links to individualism where it claims to give individuals the liberty and opportunity to independently grow and own. Therefore, where the system is adopted, all goods and services are marketed to individuality.

Capitalism, aesthetics, and identity

Whenever one refers to the past, there was always a stable style for each time period. For instance, the Renaissance era with intricate bodices, the 70s flare pants and discos, or not long ago the skimpy outfits from the 2000s. However, the rise of social media has brought rapid paced trends and the ease of becoming influencers. Before the aforementioned mood boards were personality quizzes, and after them are on-going trends, especially on Tik Tok and Instagram, encouraging young, impressionable teenagers to match themselves to a niche aesthetic. At the time of writing this, there are trends ranging from choosing between “downtown girl”, “city girl” to “coquette girl”, or “which Taylor Swift album are you?” with distinctive personality traits for each choice, or stereotypical videos about astrology and university majors; the options to compress a rich personality down to one word are endless. Though, the difference is aesthetics like these are nowadays extremely disposable and recycled compared to staples in the past. On a deeper level, capitalism precipitates the situation as it sells followers items of aesthetics, preying on trendsetters to buy, then dispose, then buy more items and leave them always craving for more material possessions to satisfy their newfound identities. When taking a closer look, the act of reinventing oneself at such a constant rapid pace in addition to the overconsumption from capitalism reveal a weak sense of identity formation.



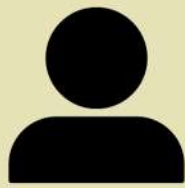
#Softgirl
#Vintage #Indie

On the other hand, are women shaping their identity and defining their self-worth based on socially constructed concepts to maintain their social status and acceptance, let alone respect? In addition to the effects of the patriarchy and white supremacy alongside capitalism, the overlapping systems of oppression have long created aesthetic/beauty standards which subjugate women. For example, in the past, we saw that through the use of deadly arsenic as face powder to achieve an unrealistic complexion. Today, we see it through various Internet beauty trends which center Eurocentric aesthetics. For that reason, narrow definitions of beauty in today's world are racist, sexist, ableist, ageist, transphobic, fatphobic, and in general, unrealistic and oppressive. It oppresses women because it dehumanizes and objectifies them, narrowing a multifaceted, blossoming human being down to their beauty, their assumed desirability to men, and their stereotypical femininity; thus, leaving no room for unique identities to form but one that satisfies an aesthetic that the patriarchy wants. For example, the ideal feminine look is being thin and having 'soft' features. These are not only racist, fatphobic but even transphobic, as it stemmed from discrimination against the flared nose and full figure of black women during slavery in opposed to the Eurocentric petite figure and slim nose and encourage exclusion of “non-passing trans women” when there is no concrete way to be feminine.

When discussing femininity, it is important to explain that society is fundamentally built on a hierarchy of genders where being feminine is placed lower than being masculine. Typically, femmes are expected to look a certain way, dress a certain way, behave a certain way, talk a certain way, and think a certain way. When one's identity is already determined by the "F" or "M" on their birth certificate, they spend their lives being told to wear dresses, makeup, to be nurturing and mature earlier, to be soft-spoken and passive; their sense of self is structured to an unrealistic aesthetic. Although, the concept of being feminine can apply to all genders beside man and woman. Having to constantly cater to their looks through make up and clothing, following trends and purchasing name brands to gain respect all serve capitalism. To worsen the situation, capitalism also invented pink tax – gender-based price disparities (defined by the World Economic Forum) – essentially bumping prices of women's products compared to men's. An example of this is how the razor company Gillette advertised that in order to present feminine and look pretty, a woman must look hairless, which led to the ongoing need of women to shave (especially their armpits). And later created razors specially for women, with a higher price tag. Already, existing as a woman, or feminine presenting person costs them more, while they are being paid less. Moreover are the self-care movements on the Internet. These are again mostly centered towards women and mainly comprise of taking care of oneself. More specifically one is encouraged to take relaxing baths, treating themselves to bougie food, or putting on face masks and retail therapy. A whole aesthetic of self-care is available on the Internet. There are two recurring themes: spending money and becoming more presentable. Even when a movement is focused on the well-being of a person, especially a woman, they are expected to spend money and still, become more refined, fitting right into the narrative that to be a certain identity, you need to be a certain way.

Conclusion

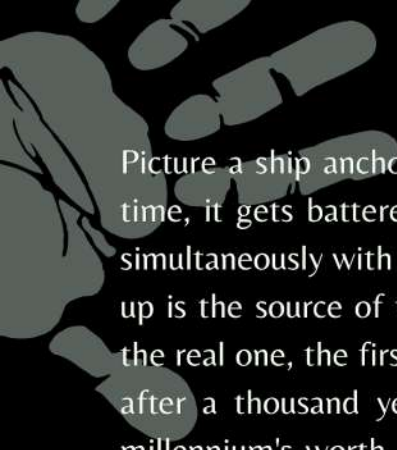
Capitalism has existed for centuries as an economic system aiming to promote innovation and growth. However, it has in reality fostered greed and/or unsustainability and has manifested in various forms of oppression. One of which is laying the foundation for gender oppression through selling disposable goods and services for feminine and identity aesthetics. To further exacerbate the issue, the patriarchy and white supremacy go hand in hand in constructing gender inequality and the mold of "femininity" to target consumer's identity formations, which make them crave the aforementioned goods and services. At its core, capitalism has ingrained a need to consume and change ourselves to "fit in" to an aesthetic regardless of one's multi-faceted identity; and it is about time it gets destroyed.



Does Identity Change?

Written by Dakyung (Olivia) Hwang Y8

Designed by Jaea Lee Y8



Picture a ship anchored to a dock. Say, for example, it stays put for a thousand years, and over time, it gets battered by the wind or the tides. As it wears down piece by piece, it is replaced simultaneously with identical copies. Until, eventually, no original parts remain. This gradual build-up is the source of the question that confused many philosophers and historians – which ship is the real one, the first ship anchored to the dock, or the second ship made up of replaced material after a thousand years? The catch is both ships were called by the same name despite the millennium's worth of changes. This is the tale of Theseus' ship (Amy Adkins, 2015). For years, philosophers and historians have questioned the persistence of identity through this tale – the ship experienced changes, but did that make it an entirely different ship? And if so, at which point of the ship repair did it become a separate identity?

The persistence of identity has been a long-lasting issue, and many international philosophers voiced their theories. Two of the most prominent speculations were the Body theory and the Memory theory, attempting to prove that identity does not change over time.

The Body theory is the simpler of the two: it states that one's identity stays the same as one remains in the same body from birth to death (Hank Green, 2016). At first glance, this theory stands strong because people do not change out of their bodies or switch to fit their likings. However, with ideas come flaws, and scientific reasonings have proven that people undergo many physical changes throughout their lives, like replacing layers of skin and red blood cells. This means that the Body theory cannot be true as it states a slight physical change would make even yesterday's you a different being to today's you. The illogical side of the Body theory is only appropriate for showing the outwardly two-dimensional surface aspect of people rather than depth. In animated cartoons or TV programs, specific characters sometimes have regular looks that do not change, which is utilized to distinguish identity. But people are not only made up of their outer appearance, nor does it stay the same, so it is inadequate to say that the Body theory justifies their identity.

Depth, or consciousness, was what English philosopher John Locke believed to be the core of one's identity, leading to his more developed Memory theory. Like the Body theory, Locke suggests that identity persists over time. Except, he claims that identity is a collection of memories and that a person only exists through those memories linking to each other. Locke explains this memory chain by saying that “as far as [a] consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now as it was then [...]” This may seem like a reasonable theory as only you have memories from your viewpoint, experiencing things from a first-person perspective. People experience the same things, but no one perceives them the same way. But what about the things people cannot remember? If the memory theory was true, people would have to stop being themselves whenever there is a gap in their memory chain (Hank Green, 2016). Imagine having dementia – would that mean people reset as new beings every time there is a moment they forget?

Whilst many attempted to justify their reasonings for the persistence of identity, the question remains unanswered amongst these flawed theories - how can it be proven that identity does not change? And on a tangent, what is the most appropriate way to showcase identity in a way that does not leave more questions?

There is an old joke that goes like this: “ $1 + 1 = 1$ because one cup of water poured into another cup of water still results in a single cup of water.” Now imagine the joke in relation to the persistence of identity – one of the cups represents the ‘being,’ and the water inside it shows the characteristics that make up the identity. Adding more water into the cup, or the being, would mean new changes are happening to its identity, for example, developing a new personality or changing its appearance. Despite the ongoing changes in the identity, the water cup analogy helps to understand that the being stays the same person as the added water becomes one with the initial water cup. In other words, identity does not become the changes, but vice versa. The changes become a part of the identity. I believe that rather than thinking of it as different experiences and changes being connected into a ‘being’ as the memory theory suggested, it should be more of becoming one whole together - like a drop of water merging with another.

Inevitably, there are flaws in the water drop theory because identity is not as simple as a cup of water. Identities not only gain new characteristics but also lose the old, unused ones. A representation of this process with the cups would be pouring some water out. However, this means that the water drop theory faces the same roadblock as the ship of Theseus mentioned previously - if the discarded water drops were collected in a cup, separate from the first, which cup would be the real ‘being’ at hand? More specifically, how would one know which one they really are if they were to have different facets of their identities? Despite standing for the persistence of identity, the possibility of the water drop theory resulting in two or more cups of the same identity works against itself, weakening the argument.

As the cups are a mere metaphor for the theory, there are limits to what they can show - what if the cups never lose water? In other words, what if no one loses any components of their identities? Though there may be characteristics that are no longer present in their identities, they are not entirely discarded as they continue to exist in memories. No matter how many new developments the identity goes through, the different features are remembered by the being themselves and those around them. Memory is like a storage space for recording the evolution of identity. The multiple thoughts of a single ‘being’ total up to one whole identity because, after all, identity is a made-up concept, only existing through the consciousness of others. A person could be a mother, a daughter, and a friend all at once, depending on which memory they are viewed from. Even idle characteristics remain influential because they are the root of the ‘current’ features, whatever that may look like at different points in time. Like human history is not to be overlooked, the unused characteristics still act as the beginning of development. Even if we grew distant from these ‘old’ characteristics, they are still linked to us with the chain of development. Forgetting these would be as unimaginable as neglecting our history and origins. In summary, water drops may be added to the cups but are never removed unless the characteristics become long past the survival of its memories, well after the person passes away.

Identity may only be a made-up concept, but it holds value in people's lives. The cup of water represents one's home on Earth. The house may change, but it remains somebody's home. Throughout one's life, one will walk the Earth solely to repaint the wall of their house, add different water drops of furniture, and decorate to their liking. Identity gifts someone a sense of belonging amongst others - like a house. It is the motivation in life, chasing after the instinctive need to have a place to call home. So, the question remains - what will you put into your cup of water? How do you want to belong in this world?



Why Do We Have Identity Crises and How Do We Avoid Them?

Written by Seobin Yoon, Y9
Designed by Jiwon Kang, Y9

Identity. What do you have in mind?

Identity can be defined in numerous ways, as individuals would say different things about their own identity and what it means to them. The Cambridge Dictionary defines identity in two ways: one as “a person’s name and other facts about who they are” and as “the fact of being, the feeling that you are, a particular type of person, organisation, etc., the qualities that make a person, organisation etc. different from others”. These definitions can be combined; as facts about a person would tell them which organisation or a group of people they belong to. While some people would want and try to liberate themselves from boundaries that apparently outline who they are by doing something different or unexpected, others could feel more secure and protected existing within those labels.



Since there are many chances of encountering identity widely in social life, a huge number of people go through their own stage of identity crisis as well. Have you ever asked yourself who you were and where you belonged; pressured by your identity? Did you ever question yourself, what to write about yourself doing a school project, when ‘identity’ was a given topic? Almost all people would have had the same or adjacent thoughts to these questions. And even struggles similar to these two scenarios.

These types of questions will be a provoking thought to anyone, at least once, in a certain period of their life. Identity crisis can create a tumultuous roller coaster of emotions and it is a very common thing; almost all people go through this stage in their life.

So, what really are identity crises?

Erik Erikson, a German American developmental psychologist, stated that identity crisis is a “developmental event when people question their sense of self or place in the world”. Although this can happen to people at all times, studies have shown that identity crises happen more intensely during adolescence. This is due to the fact that during our teenage years, we are still developing both physically and mentally, which makes our thinking process more impulsive than adults. When a teen is developing his or her identity, they are discovering which aspect of themselves makes them unique, while also filling their need to fit in among the people around them. This means that teenagers can have more abstract and wandering thoughts about their sense of being in the world, increasing the chances of experiencing an identity crisis.

What are the different types of identity and how can they lead to identity crisis?

There are varying types of identity in diverse points of views. We, and others, can come to a sudden halt in our life, spending time absorbed in our own thoughts of identity. Weakness in identity can be anywhere. Whether it is based on your nationality, culture, religion or gender. Now, I will be exploring three different types of identity and how it can cause identity crisis for, mainly adolescents.

Cultural and National Identity

The first perspective in identity I want to focus on is cultural and national identity. National identity, by its means, is a person's sense of belonging, relating to a country and its state. This sums up the nationality, ethnicity and locality within people in society, and it secures people to one big category where they can say, "I belong here." The group of people who have similar national identity may have similar cultural backgrounds, therefore could get along with each other better.

International schools like BIS are namely an example of where cultural and national identity can be encountered most frequently. Not only are there international students, due to different living backgrounds and cultures we could learn from each other about what, for instance, each countries' values are and how each of us perform and celebrate ceremonies inside our countries. Furthermore, speaking English and receiving education in British curriculum allows us to experience different method of teaching and introduces British culture for all students including the ones who are from the UK and the others who are not. It is interesting being taught by teachers who have completely different identity with me, I can distinguish the differences we have, and it gives me the opportunity to embrace diverse cultural backgrounds and nationality other people have.

However sometimes, these environments can cause us to doubt more about our own identities. Learning in a foreign language with foreign curriculum and settling in an international lifestyle makes us used to being in those certain environments. For me as a South Korean, initially, I struggled to use English with teachers, peers, and everyone around me. But now, as I am very familiar with English, I sometimes think as if I am forgetting Korean language and culture; and this makes me question myself what my identity is, and whether I should call myself 'Korean' (which I think I should, because all my family is Korean). This trigger profound thoughts of myself often, and I call it the identity crisis of my own.

Religious Identity

Shifting into a different part of the factors that build up our identity, it is the 'religious' facet. Religious identity refers to attributes that contribute to the development of a meaningful sense of self, providing importance in social roles, and link individuals in a society. You might ask, is religion even important in determining one's identity? The answer is yes. Although some people might not deem religion as important as other factors in their life, religious groups may influence our interactions within our community. Not only might it affect us with our ideologies, but it can also completely change our lifestyles as we become more devoted. Religion might serve as a powerful influence on one's identity assuming that the person is deeply religious or significantly committed to their own.

Gender Identity (Sexuality)

Finally, gender identity. There are many ways of determining gender nowadays, so it is a very common thing to wonder about. LGBTQ+ communities are becoming more aware by the majority of people and are gaining support from time to time. Inferring from the previous definitions, gender identity is a personal sense of one's own gender. While some of the people would want to stick with the biological gender they were born with, some people would want to be identified as a different gender, such as male, female, non-binary, or both. Gender identity crisis can happen when we are unsure of which gender category we belong to, and its process of decision.


How can we avoid identity crisis?

If people ask, "Can we avoid identity crisis?" I would say no. It is a process for us to get to know ourselves, so it is a spontaneous and natural feeling we can experience. Although it is an inevitable process, we should try not to avoid but understand and embrace this process positively. However, to give some tips, we should take some time to explore within ourselves. We should look into ourselves to ask what we like or not, and what makes us happy. Dig deep into your hobbies, or if you don't have one, try to find the things that interest you. This is how we determine what grounds us. With a big, deep root, we will be able to figure out who and what we are. Also, understand that everyone feels like this way in life, and you are not alone with these emotions. Feel free to speak to people around you; they might be able to help you find your way!



VIETNAMESE AND
ENGLISH:
BILINGUALISM
AS PART OF MY
IDENTITY

Written by Quang Hung Pham, Y12
Designed by Yejoon Park, Y8



Language: many will agree that it's a quintessential part of one's identity. Lots of people tend to express themselves in one language only, while many others can communicate their ideas in many. I belong to the second group, a bilingual person – I use two languages on a daily basis: Vietnamese and English. I grew up a Vietnamese speaker, then acquired the English language as I moved through school. I cherish both of them dearly; without either tongue, I would be woefully disadvantaged. In this article, I will be going into the significance of the Vietnamese and English languages on my personal developmental process and how I view them today.

As stated earlier, my mother tongue is Vietnamese. It was the language that I made my first memories in and, more importantly, it was the language that I learnt about our history and traditions in; a steppingstone in cementing my identity. It allowed me to explore the beautiful and intricate tapestry that is Vietnamese culture: a number of works of literature that I would grow up to adore are in Vietnamese, and defining moments of history that showed the world our resilience were also taught to me in Vietnamese. It is very hard to overstate the role of the Vietnamese language in my development as a person: without it, my sole channel of communication with my parents, my relatives, and almost just about anyone I meet on the streets is gone. Without it, my fondest memories of childhood: my first words, my first lesson, my first interaction with a peer, becomes all but foreign to me; something that I would never be able to understand.

English, on the other hand, is my second language. I came into contact with it for the first time when I started primary school, and slowly became friends with it as I moved to Key Stage 3, 4, and 5. If Vietnamese is the language that I learn about my culture in, English is the language I learn about the world in. A lot of knowledge that I have gained throughout the years of schooling has been in English, and in fact, it's the language of many sources that I use to gain knowledge from in my free time.

Another role that the English language played in my life thus far is that it allowed me to find like-minded people in areas that interest me: when I started creating domino art and posting them on YouTube, I noticed that the majority of my comments were in English. Thus, I decided to post content exclusively in English because it would allow my work to reach a wider audience. This decision helped me in getting to know other people who have passions for domino art just like me. I can tell you with certainty that they play a major role in helping me improve my skills, and before I knew it, the quality of my creations began to flourish right in front of my eyes. Because of these reasons, I also value my proficiency in the English language: without it, I would lose a very defining staple of my personality, as well as missing out on many reputable information outlets – what would've been a major roadblock in my path to acquire knowledge.

I would also like to discuss language use in terms of environment as a bilingualist. I wholeheartedly believe that environment is very important in shaping one's use of language, if not the most important factor. Obviously, this is applicable to me; in different scenarios, I tend to choose between English or Vietnamese to communicate: I talk to my parents in Vietnamese, whereas I talk about an academia in English most of the time, or employing a mix of the two when I talk to my Vietnamese friends. The environment's influences are much broader than the choice between Vietnamese and English, however, it also affects how you communicate within that language.





For example, even though I use Vietnamese to communicate with both my family and my Vietnamese teacher, the vocabulary I use when talking to my dad can be very different to the words I would use when writing a piece in class. This also applies to my English as well: obviously the English I use when talking to my brother is in stark contrast to the language I employ when talking about poetry with my English teacher. Even though I use one language in many situations, I choose to use it differently depending on the situation I'm in. This primarily stems from the fact that I feel different levels of comfortability around different people: I feel very comfortable around my friends, and this presents itself as slangs or colloquialism in the language I use to communicate with them, words that would sound odd and out of place if I use them to talk to my teachers.

For the final section of this article, I want to touch on something else pertaining to language: mastering 2 languages and using them effectively is all well and good for me, but something that has made me think very long and hard is what happens when one language starts to dominate the brain and the thinking process – and coincidentally, this is what I feel is happening to me with English and the principal reason for this is simply that I don't have as many opportunities to use the language as I used to.



WHY?

I am a student of the IB diploma program, and this equates to a much heavier workload. This results in me spending more hours by myself to finish my work instead of socializing and communicating with my friends and family, the latter taking up the lion's share of my Vietnamese communication. Understandably, this lack of communication has resulted in my proficiency in using Vietnamese steadily decrease, which has been noticed and commented on by my family and my Vietnamese teacher. I am finding myself thinking in English more and more frequently as I move through the final years of school, and this presents itself as moments when I am unable to find a word in Vietnamese that accurately describes what I want to communicate. I have witnessed some Vietnamese people I know communicate in perfect English but uses either a very clunky Vietnamese or just plain English when talking to their parents, and, as I have stated earlier, losing the ability to comfortably communicate in Vietnamese is definitely something that I don't want; one of the last things that I want to experience is having to use a translator when talking to my parents. Since a major contributor to my proficiency in the English tongue is to immerse myself in it, I'm now trying my best to make an effort in immersing myself in the Vietnamese language through many different methods such as spending more of the day talking to my parents, reading more Vietnamese literature and actively use more varied vocabulary when speaking Vietnamese, in order to gain back what I lost.



Being bilingual to me is more than just being able to speak 2 languages; it means gaining access to 2 different worlds which encompasses different ideas and different views of the world, as well as being able to compare and contrast between them in different everyday scenarios. It is something I am, and have always been, very proud of. Yet, I would find myself communicating a lot more in English than in Vietnamese. Writing this article has helped realize that Vietnamese is just as important to me as English; bilingualism means knowing how to express myself in more than one way, so why am I only making use of just one way of thinking and not two?

If you're bilingual and you're finding yourself using one language more than the other, give yourself more opportunities to use the other language because having 2 languages of equal proficiency at your disposal can and will be very useful. After all, and I repeat, why only make use of just one way of thinking when you can use two?



Possible relations between the emotions of Mozart and his compositions.

Written by: Sumin Ryu, Y12

Designed by: Quynh Chi Ho, Y10



Artists are affected by emotions a lot. For example, painters use light and bright colours for their work when they feel positive and dark colours when they have negative feelings. Specifically, the composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, lived a depressing life. Although his compositions do not always have negative moods, Mozart himself had a difficult life within his mind. This article is an exploration of how composers' emotions might affect their compositions.



Mozart's personality was cheerful when he was younger. However, Mozart leaned toward increasingly nervous and unstable tendencies, especially in the last two years of his life, as increasingly intense mental exhaustion worsened abnormal behaviour, making it almost unbearable for others. Also, Mozart's body was unhealthy because he lived an unhealthy life with various diseases such as

streptococcal infection, acute joint rheumatism, and coma since he was young. He responded morbidly to his isolation, and his response deepened the isolation. That is why even his wife did not want to be with him later.

Mozart first started playing the piano when he was three years old and his first composition when he was five years old. He composed symphonies at eight and opera songs at eleven years old. Mozart not only could compose songs from an early age but also could listen and write down music only with his ears. Mozart showed his outstanding musical talent from childhood and composed more than 600 songs until his death at the young age of 35. It was Mozart's father, Leopold, who made Mozart a genius composer. Leopold was a violinist at the Salzburg Palace Music Company in Austria. He was fully responsible for his children's education, and not only taught music, which was his major, but also taught all subjects such as arithmetic, reading, writing, literature, language, and dance. In these teachings, Leopold discovered Mozart's musical talent.



1786.

Compositions.

One composition that Mozart composed in 1791, before his death, was *Lacrimosa* also known as *Requiem*. This piece of music was the last music that Mozart composed before his death. The key signature of this music is D minor and minor keys generally make music feel gloomy; D minor is one of the keys that sound very depressing. In addition, Mozart was asked to remain anonymous, although his health deteriorated. Mozart wasn't feeling well, but he was asked to compose a song. Mozart was frightened by the commission and poured himself into the piece with obsession.

But it was too much. Only the *Lacrimosa* and *Kyrie* movements were finished by him, although he was able to draw the bass lines and voice parts for *Dies Irae* through the *Hostias*. When Mozart was a child, his compositions were full of positivity and he can feel happiness from the music like in *Minuet in F Major*, *Minuet in G Major* and *Klavierstück in F*. Additionally, his childish aspect was presented in those compositions. Music pieces composed by Mozart when he became an adult contained more dynamics

and ornaments in his compositions but were still cheerful. From his 20's and onwards, his compositions have less joy in the music like *Phantasie No.3 in D Minor*, *Rondo Alla Turca* and *Lacrimosa*.





In conclusion, the musical features of Mozart are somehow related to his personality in composition. Although there is bright music by Mozart, some parts of the music have non-symmetrical, and discordant sounds to make them sound scary and have negative moods. To avoid his deteriorating mental state, he could have played billiards or eaten some food that he enjoys the most to reduce the negativity that he had. The emotions of Mozart, who was both a composer and musician, seemed to affect his compositions, so perhaps the relationship exists.



Wolfgang Amadeus

Mozart

(1756-1791)



How the Environment, Lifestyle and Labels change Identity

Written by Taeyeon Kwun, Y10

Designed by Yoonji Ha, Y9

Opening

'Lucifer', according to Christian lore, was God's favorite angel who was punished and sent to hell for questioning God's authority and trying to turn other angels against God. Thus, he transformed from being the arch angel to a devil and according to Zimbardo, a psychology professor, it is this metaphor which has inspired him to focus his research on "transformations of human character".

The Stanford Prison Experiment (Lucifer effect)

In 1971, Professor Philip Zimbardo of Stanford conducted an interesting psychological experiment. He took 24 healthy people and randomly assigned them to roles as prison guards and prisoners for two weeks to see how things went. He enlisted the help of the police to stage the real situation, visited the prisoners' homes, made actual arrests, and dragged them to a mock prison set up in the basement of Stanford. Afterwards, they had chains attached to their ankles, as they do with real prisoners.

On day one, prison guards began pressuring prisoners to establish their authority and their language became violent. Those who resisted were put in solitary confinement, undressed, humiliated, and subdued with fire extinguishers. The next day, prisoners rioted. Prison guards recreated the shameful punishments of World War II without any training or instruction. On the second day, Professor Zimbardo also forgot the purpose of the experiment and began to act like a real prison warden rather than an observer. On day three, during the interview with a Catholic priest, nine of the prisoners (except for two) gave their prisoner numbers instead of their names. They asked for a lawyer to get them out of here, and they changed into the psychology of a prisoner before they knew it, even though they could leave whenever they wanted. By the fifth day, several prisoners had

already given up on the experiment, and the experiment ended after five days as the experiment's behavioral intensity increased.

Introduction

The lessons from this experiment are very diverse. How frighteningly someone's identity changes depending on how they define themselves. These 24 ordinary people might have had social interactions and become close friends if they had met in society. However, while participating in the experiment, as they defined themselves as a prison guard or prisoner, their personalities and behaviors completely changed depending on their role, and they even reached the point of abusing people. Just as there is a common saying that the "office makes manners", the environment we are in and the label that define us have an absolute influence. As I researched about this experiment, I got to know the inner side of human beings and by using this, I was able to find clues to live the life we wanted.

Body 1 (Change in identity)

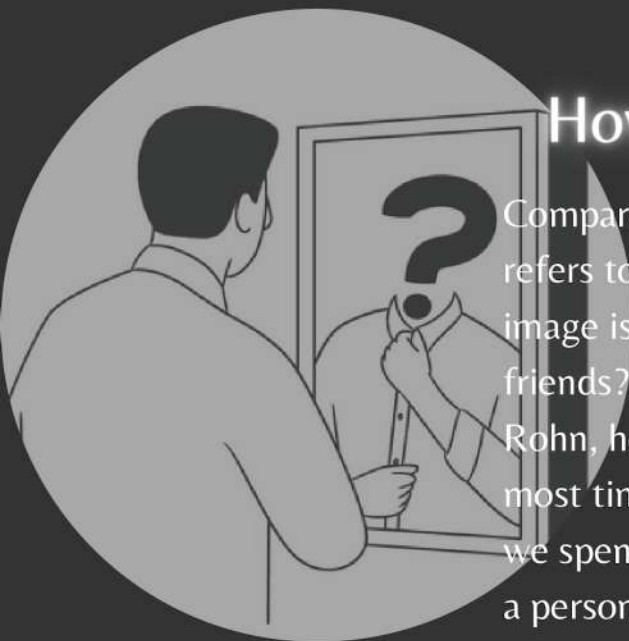
What phrase/labels define you right now? There will be phrase/word that indicate social status such as student, teacher, housewife, businessman, unemployed, etc. There will also be words that indicate one's own characteristics, such as introvert, extrovert, man, woman, lazy person, workaholic, etc. The words that represent your identity that you have come up with may be words you have given to yourself or words that people around you have given to you. And among these words, there will be identities that you're desire to change.

The reason why some people change their identity is due to facilitate modifying their unhealthy behaviors, or to adapt to new circumstances. In order to change your habits and live your life the way you want, you need to promote a change in your identity.

How do labels and self-identification change your internal identity?

The term internal identity refers to your ideal image of who you are and who you want to be. This identity comes about as you journey through life and use your past experiences and their emotional facets as guidepost for evaluating yourself, constructing your internal identity. It's such an important part that we don't even try to change our identity. The reason is that people think that humans never change or think that it is not easy. If you look at the Stanford Prison Experiment, which lasted only about five days, you

can see that people can change infinitely in just three days depending on how they define themselves. The one you live in now is not an established identity that will never change. For example, if you define yourself as a 'poor person', you cannot get out of the mire of poverty. To change your identity, you need to look back at your current environment and your day-to-day actions and know what identity and beliefs you hold. You must know what identity I have, so I can understand myself and figure out the basis of the habits I want to change.



How environment changes identity

Compare internal identity to external identity, external identity refers to how 'others' interpret who you are and what your public image is as an outcome of your behavior. Who are your closest friends? According to entrepreneur and motivational speaker Jim Rohn, he said "You are the average of five people you spend the most time with". In other words, the average of the five people we spend the most time with is the person who we are. If you are a person who lives roughly, is full of complaints, and throws away opportunities, your surroundings will be full of such losers, and if you have a goal and try to achieve, there will inevitably be people around you who want to achieve the same dream. So, in the process of carving a new identity, what you must do at the same time is to change the environment. The inertia of life is like hanging hundreds of ropes and pulling me, and the strongest rope of the two is carried out in the surrounding environment.

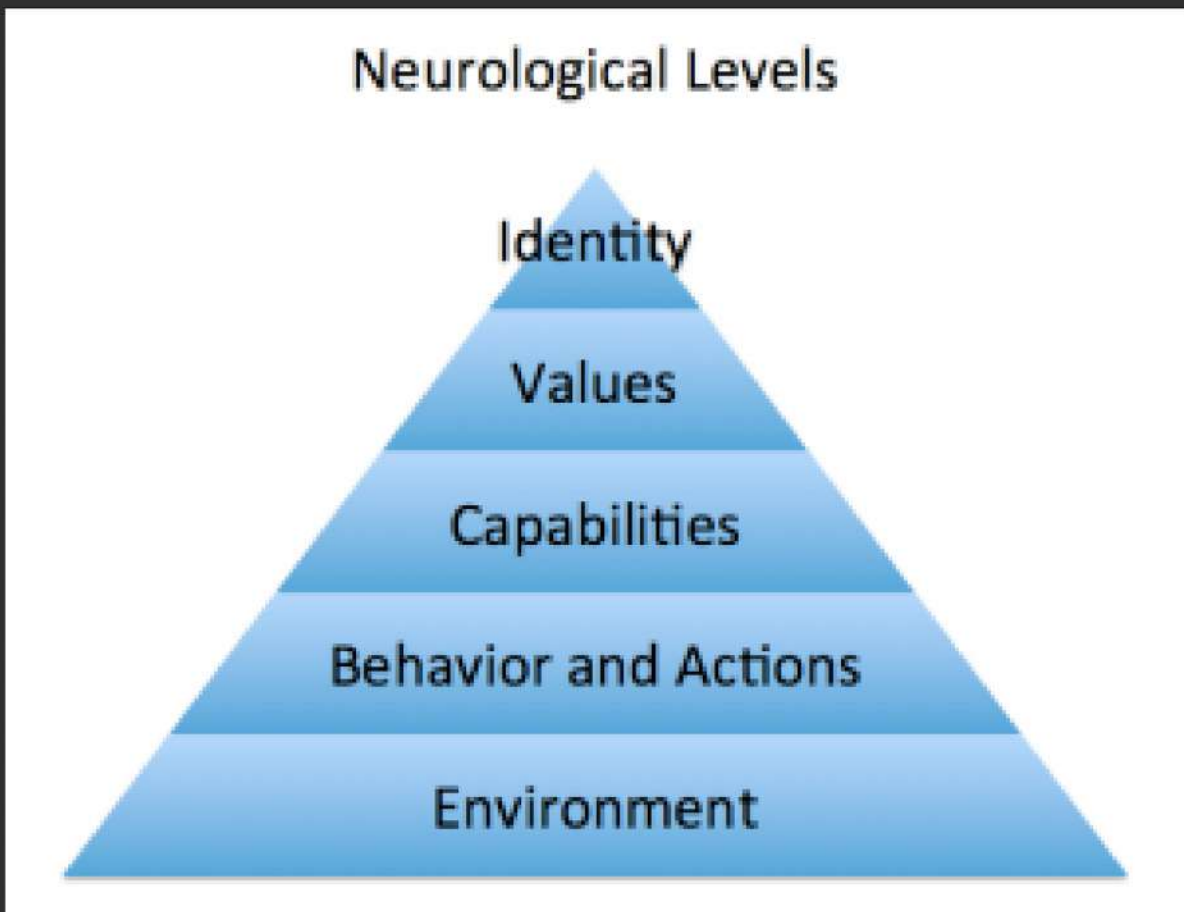
DILT's neurological level

According to Dilt's neurological level, humans affect life in five stages: Identity, Values/Beliefs, Skills, Behavior and lastly, environment. Identity and beliefs, these two levels at the top of the pyramid, even small changes can have a huge impact on the lower levels. Likewise, habits that do not match our identity and beliefs can be maintained for a short time through effort, but they cannot last long and can be maintained for the rest of our lives only when our beliefs and identity are aligned in the unconscious.



Conclusion

Most people in this world think as they live. This is because they cannot change the direction of the huge ship called 'life', they think only about how much they live and live by lying and rationalizing themselves to avoid cognitive dissonance. But now we know how to take the helm of our lives, set the direction, and take control. From the lesson of The Stanford Prison experiment, define yourself as your role model. Start to build up your new identity by reflecting on the past and changing your environment. Changing identity is not easy, if you want to live the life you like, you should try hard to erase your current mindset or identity and carve a new identity. We have found the key to no longer thinking the way we live but living the way we think.



Gregory Batesons & Robert Dilts, 1980s, Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

TRENCH (2018): THE INTRICATE MUSICAL EXPLORATION OF ONE'S IDENTITY

WRITTEN BY TO NGUYEN THUC ANH Y12

DESIGNED BY MIA VU Y12

“Welcome to Trench...”

The recurring disembodied voice with its synthetically deep and dark tone echoes this line ominously between the final chorus – an intense rap by singer-songwriter Tyler Joseph – and the epic drum outro by drummer Josh Dun. In this song Levitate, it officially welcomes us to the world of Trench (2018), the fifth addition to Ohio duo twenty one pilots' (no capitals intentional) diverse and impressive discography. In a fictional world called 'Dema', which takes place in the surrounding valley 'Trench', the duo take listeners on a tumultuous journey by plummeting strongly in media res with the hard and heavy, rock-influenced Jumpsuit, slowing down to contemplate alongside Joseph in Morph and Chlorine, picking up the pace to contest against the fictional bishops in Nico and the Niners, revving it up to a hip-hop style beat and slick raps in Pet Cheetah, then finally ending on the symphonic Leave the City.

The album has been highly acclaimed by critics and fans alike, who all pointed to the ambitious music, mature song-writing, and cohesive production as unique highlights worth celebrating. Rock Sound Magazine proclaimed it the best album of 2018. Part of the intrigue with Trench is that it is the direct continuation, a development of its predecessor, Blurryface (2015), an album that discusses similar themes regarding mental health albeit, in a completely different style and genre. One of the most notable aspects of the 2015 album is the titular character, Blurryface, who Joseph describes as “represent[ing] all the things that I, as an individual, but also everyone around me, are insecure about.” Insecurities are fundamentally the feeling of inadequacy and uncertainty in oneself, negatively affecting one's abilities, goals, relationships etc. Insecurity is quite normal, and no one is exempt from any level of insecurity: it is that anxious feeling of doing bad in a test or the jealousy one may feel in a romantic relationship. However, insecurities can devolve into something severe and worse – such as depression and anxiety – and its effects cannot be ignored. The personification of insecurities almost shows the reality of insecurities and how it is far beyond just an internal battle, and unfortunately it can actively hurt the insecure person and others surrounding, like friends and family. Furthermore, Blurryface is confirmed to be representing Joseph's alter-ego in their musical universe, adding another complex layer to insecurities which is its relationship with someone's identity.



TRENCH

1. Jumpsuit
2. Levitate
3. Morph
4. My Blood
5. Chlorine
6. Smithereens
7. Neon Gravestones
8. The Hype
9. Nico And The Niners
10. Cut My Lip
11. Bandito
12. Pet Cheetah
13. Legend
14. Leave The City



In Trench, it further explores mental health as a whole rather than on one specific aspect of it like Blurryface. To add more intricate complexity into this, the lore and fictional world acts as an overall allegory for Joseph's mental health struggles. In this article, it explores how the songs take us on a journey exploring one's mental health specifically related to identity.

The Journey Through Trench: The Tripartite Ideas of Identity

As aforementioned, the story of Trench originates in "Dema", a secluded fortress, hidden and isolated just like how it isolates their prisoners. Inside the fortress, nine malicious and cunning bishops run it, trapping their inhabitants, and forcing them to follow their religion like a cult. Before the release of the album itself, the duo started establishing its existence through cryptic messages via their social media and a special website called dmaorg.info. While this article will not go into too much detail about the website as it is incredibly intricate, cryptic, and complicated, it is crucial to mention a new character introduced:

Clancy. Clancy has been journaling his life in Dema and one day, makes a hectic and heart-pounding escape out of it and into Trench. However, what is known of Clancy is limited, and even after five years the identity of Clancy has not been confirmed. The most popular theory is that Clancy is another one of Tyler Joseph's alter-egos because much of the events detailed in Clancy's journals are eerily similar, if not identical to the visuals of the music videos featuring Joseph and the lyrics in the songs. Entertaining this theory, it links perfectly back to Joseph's discussion on insecurities back in Blurryface: an identity crisis, the inability to let many parts of oneself coexist, possibly due to dissatisfaction with oneself. This is just the surface and hidden below is the first main idea of this album: insecurity with one's ability.

The most significant insecurity of Joseph's is to do with the music itself and how twenty one pilots have been making music. This relationship between Joseph and the music-making process would grow complicated and serious, especially then in 2018 when the duo just had their first mainstream success with Blurryface and were facing the aftermath of such massive stardom. In Chlorine, an electronic yet symphonic track spanning five minutes, Joseph walks us through his mental health's complicated relationship with music. On one hand, it is a toxic relationship since chlorine is a bleaching device, an agent regularly used in pools to kill bacteria. Therefore, describing it as chlorine suggests that music and his depressive, often even suicidal and harmful thoughts, create this "poisonous" relationship including dependence ("venom on my tongue, dependent at times"). On the other hand, music can be freeing and cathartic. Chlorine is a dangerous chemical, but it is and used as a cleansing and sanitation device. This different angle of what chlorine can be suggests that music is Joseph's only way of relieving his pain; it allows Joseph to "plan [his] escape from walls they confined". Reiterating back to the story of Dema, music rewards freedom and peace, however, perhaps at some sort of unknown price unless one is willing to risk it. He acknowledges this love-hate relationship, claiming he "love[s] to hate to fight" it. Similarly, Joseph continues this idea of struggling with music-making in Pet Cheetah. A chaotic song, much different to Chlorine as the raps are faster, the drum groove more intense, and the choruses are even more profound. It ironically tackles the idea of 'writer's block'. Joseph sings about his defeated and saddened feelings when hit with such a massive writer's block, literally blocking him from making music which – while not a completely harmonious relationship – is what he needs. He asks to "stop time" and repeats his desire to "sit here until he finds the problem", despite in being quite a lonely journey ("I am on an island, no one to confide"). Through these two songs, the process of making music can have such a huge toll on their respective artists, even more so on their sense of self. Music has historically been very harsh on their own musicians,

like condemning experimental music and expecting they suffer when touring/performing, so this pressure can cause them to lose sense, lose sight of who they are because they prioritise the art over themselves. Joseph highlights his fears in this arduous process and though it hurts him sometimes, he enjoys it for the sake of the listeners, the fans. Another way we can say this is that perhaps he is willing to take those risks and venture through the ups and downs as he is dedicated to his craft and know how special it is once the finished product finally comes about.

Another main idea throughout this album is community and relationships. The songs My Blood, Smithereens, and Legend are unique additions to the album as, on first listen, they seem standalone and lyrically unrelated to the story, the lore, and mental health themes. As one's mental health journey are usually internal, that journey usually is quite lonely, further differentiating these three songs from the rest of the tracklist. My Blood is a dark, bittersweet song about brotherhood; Smithereens is a cute and subtly juvenile song about love, dedicated to Joseph's wife, Jenna; Legend is a 'good-bye' song dedicated to Joseph's late grandfather, Robert. Relationships and community are an integral part to someone's identity as how someone acts with another is crucial to understanding personality, beliefs, values etc. Not only that but relationships also affect someone's identity, such as encouraging a change or addition or removal of certain traits, beliefs, values. However, there could be a side-effect to this as shown in The Hype. Naturally, after the tremendous success of Blurryface there was a lot of attention, colloquially known as 'hype', surrounding the duo ranging from scrutiny to praise. He very plainly sings "yeah, they might be talking behind your head", mimicking the mockery and verbal mistreatment someone may experience. Therefore, the 'hype' here is not great at all, rather it is more like a weight pushing one down because it intensifies the bullying, the scrutiny, the unwelcoming comments. Especially now when social media and Internet usage has completely integrated itself into daily life, this negative attention only grows. So just like the song itself, the simplistic yet effective lyrics perfectly encapsulates the importance of keeping close friends and family, keeping your "kind" as they will be "by your side". The song itself only has two verses, one bridge, and the majority of the song is built on repeating the chorus: sometimes, less is more, quality over quantity.

Finally, a crucial idea that twenty one pilots extensively explore in Trench is the relationship between one's self and one's dark thoughts. Dark is euphemistic, a metaphorical way of using brightness to describe the dangerous depths one's thoughts might take, deep into the void where negative thoughts can seem endless and unfortunately for many, like a trap where they cannot escape. Are these dark thoughts able to define one's identity? Are they separate? Can it coexist with one's identity? The prevailing theme surrounding this battle between self and thought is death with the most direct and confrontational song being Neon Gravestones, a serious commentary about suicide. The introduction to the song – a simple piano arpeggio – is a nod to Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, fitting as through the irony in these titles (such as the associating darkness like gravestones or the moon with neon and light) it reflects the deception in glorifying darkness, in venerating one's death over one's life. As Joseph puts it "our culture can treat a loss like it's a win." Globally, 800,000 people die of suicide every year and it is more common within teens and young adults. We mourn these losses, but it is important that the distinction between honouring one's life and glorifying one's death is made; one celebrates the life they live and appreciate their efforts of surviving, their perseverance, while the other celebrates a defeat masked as a win, a loss of not only a precious life but a loss that took away someone's son, someone's daughter, someone's best friend. Joseph urges listeners to not take these similar paths, instead to "find your grandparents or someone of age / Pay some respects for the path that they paved

/ To life, they were dedicated / Now, that should be celebrated.” Suicide is not the option, it never was. Death does not define the person; their life does. In Cut My Lip, it continues the idea of suicide through the perspective of someone struggling through these dark thoughts. The song is slow-paced, taking its time, which perhaps reflect the idea that healing is slow, gradual process, and throughout even if one has a “bruised, face of contusions” there needs to be some sort of perseverance and stubbornness in a sense to power through. “Know I’ll keep moving” Joseph sings, and he repeats this line many times in the song as it is the hook, letting each repetition emphasise his adamant efforts to heal. In relation to the story and lore, one might notice that it is eerily similar to Clancy’s escape detailed in those cryptic websites; there are mentions a lot of mentions of movement like through “know I’ll keep moving” and “I keep on going back. The latter perhaps refers to how Clancy was later found and returned to Dema. From this, we can also interpret the song as determination to escape Dema, therefore to escape the dark thoughts though there may be some sacrifices and pain along the way, like how Joseph “cut[s his] lip”; after all, no process is ever linear. Furthermore, the song Morph presents another complex way of healing though in an unconventional way. With all those dark thoughts about death, Joseph sings that he will “morph to someone else”, become a “ghost” as a “defence mechanism mode”. Though on the surface, it seems like a good solution especially considering the lore where disguising himself can allow Joseph to escape Dema, he is also distancing himself further and further away from his true identity. It is very similar to the imposter syndrome where one acts as someone else generally due to inadequacy – circling right back to Joseph’s insecurities – and Morph perfectly demonstrates how far one’s ‘Blurryface’ can push them, that they move further away from who they are. Though, similarly to Cut My Lip, this can be optimistically interpreted as one dip, one trough in the overall big-picture progression towards healing. In summary, while the dark thoughts may seem so overbearing that one may feel like they are the thoughts, these songs show otherwise. Often times, they are intrusive and invasive and maybe entrapping like Dema, and the only way to deal with it is to battle it head-on, headstrong, and understand that the process will not be easy but will be worth it at the end.

Overall, the 14 songs on this emotion-packed albums are filled with messages – both explicit and implicit – to keep any listeners contemplating and thinking about their identities from their personal struggles to their relationships to their career and so on. The continued discussions on insecurities in the perspective of a music artist is interesting because it is a niche topic. However, the relatability of it by turning the music-making process which seems esoteric and detached from the typical listener, into something personal, and something many can understand and interpret their own way. And the intense exploration of dark thoughts, even though uncomfortable, confrontational, and complex, is necessary as it is crucial to understand that sometimes thought is separate from oneself, one’s identity, and the only way to protect oneself from it is to battle it directly and establish one’s identity. Plus, the additional songs discussing relationships are also equally important as identity does not consist of the internal but the external too, and how one interacts with others obviously influences their overall identity.

As an avid music listener, I personally encourage you to listen to this wonderful album. This album explores far beyond identity and another element of its uniqueness is how it is equally vague as it is detailed, so listeners can interpret it however they want based on their own terms and experience. It truly is an esoteric experience to listen and analyse this album. Obviously, it may not be everyone’s favourite as the sound and music are an acquired taste, however, the introspective nature of this album is enough for any casual listener to be hooked on and hopefully; one may learn something new about themselves, about one’s mental health, and about others surrounding them.

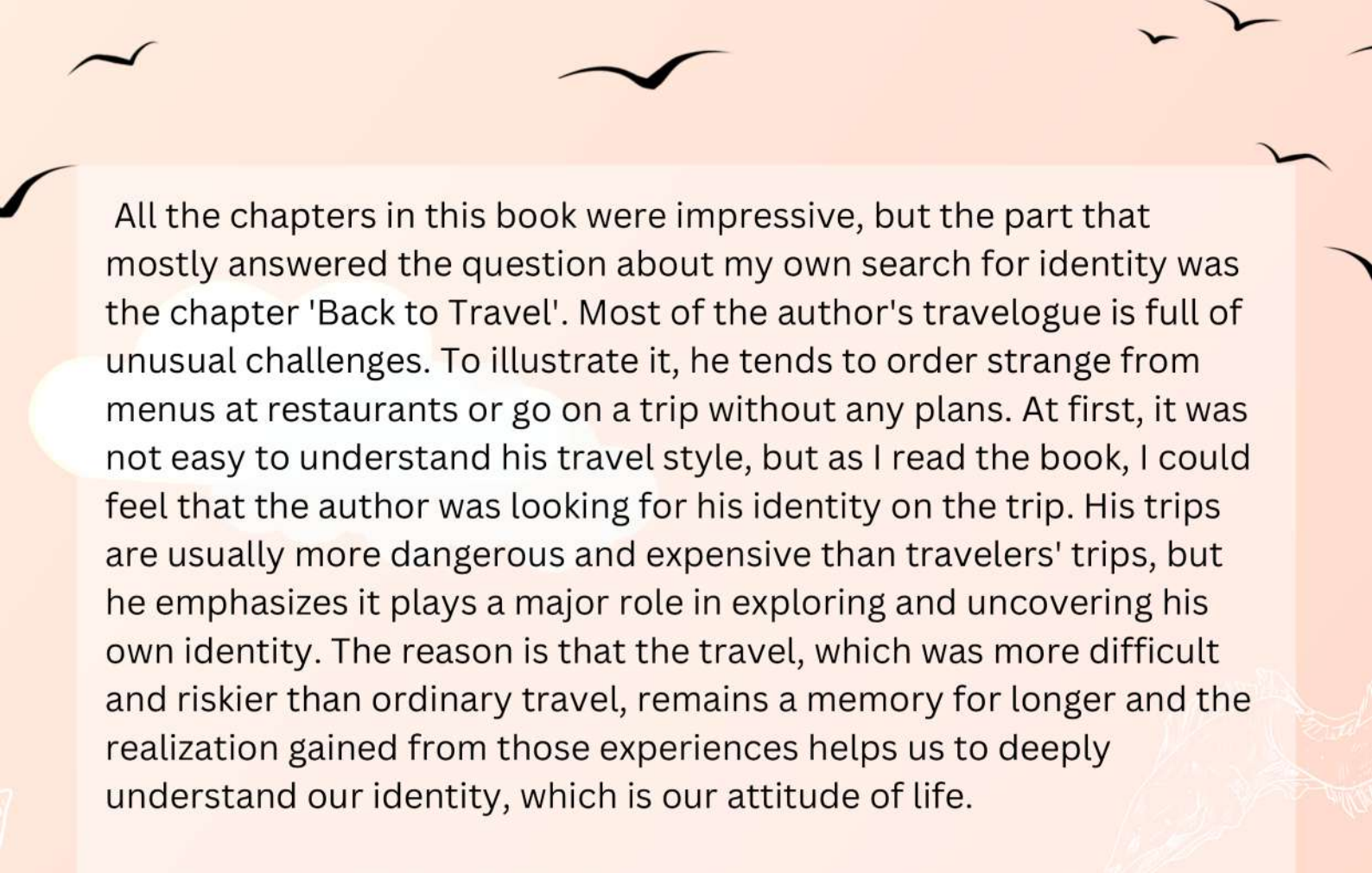
Travelling to Find Our Identity

Written by Y12- Geonhee
Designed by Y11- Rebecca

Identity serves as a map to guide people's lives. People are always confused about what they will do in the future and what goals they will live with in life. And this confusion affects our identity formation. While thinking about who I am, I decided to answer questions about my identity by reading Kim Young-ha's book *The Reason for Travel* in Korean class.

The Reason for Travel consists of nine travel stories. These include *Expulsion and Motion Sickness*, a chapter about the author's expulsion from China without a visa; a trip to escape from his frustrating daily life; a trip during filming the Korean TV show *The Dictionary of Useless Knowledge*, and even a trip to forget himself for a while! Unlike other travel books, the author does not focus much on what he ate during the trip or where to take good pictures but focuses on showing the process of answering spiritual questions such as "What is the reason for this trip?", what travel is, why he particularly enjoys traveling, and why people travel. And these processes allow readers to think about what they are living for and what goals they are pursuing and strengthen their identity.





All the chapters in this book were impressive, but the part that mostly answered the question about my own search for identity was the chapter 'Back to Travel'. Most of the author's travelogue is full of unusual challenges. To illustrate it, he tends to order strange from menus at restaurants or go on a trip without any plans. At first, it was not easy to understand his travel style, but as I read the book, I could feel that the author was looking for his identity on the trip. His trips are usually more dangerous and expensive than travelers' trips, but he emphasizes it plays a major role in exploring and uncovering his own identity. The reason is that the travel, which was more difficult and riskier than ordinary travel, remains a memory for longer and the realization gained from those experiences helps us to deeply understand our identity, which is our attitude of life.

While reading this book, I had a lot of time to reflect on what my identity has been. In my 17 years of life, I have asked myself countless questions, “What do I want to do?” and “What kind of person am I?” However, whenever that happens, the answer does not come out easily, and I wanted to leave for a while because I was frustrated. Perhaps, I reasoned, I need to travel like this writer and the process would help me find my true self. Traveling is a way to give me the best opportunity to answer questions about my identity because travel is filled with people who don't know me. And when I realized that my characteristics and thoughts are better revealed in unexpected situations while traveling without a plan like a writer, I can already feel my identity becoming clearer. Therefore, people always want to travel and people can find themselves there.



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WHAT IS
YOUR
IDENTITY?