

# Editor's Note

Firsts, premieres, and inaugural moments are always worth celebrating. The work that was completed to make this magazine come to life was filled with these moments, as every member brought a unique and creatively driven perspective that elevated Volume 35 altogether. Alongside one another, we grew from our mistakes, we leaned into our creative sides, and we shared a passion for media-making. In relation to our ever-growing narrative, we decided upon the theme of "Youth" for this year's edition, commemorating moments in media that expanded our relationship with ourselves and with the outside world.

During such unprecedented times, our job as media makers is to amplify the voices of underrepresented perspectives. EyeCandy's unique nature shines a light on the power and unification of diversity and how working towards this narrative will guide us into a just society. Throughout this edition, we carry forth this notion as we connect with culturally relevant topics that continue to divide the space in which we live. As these disparities continue to grow, we stand in coalition with one another until we are all provided equal rights and equal opportunities.

We'd like to welcome you all to this year's edition of EyeCandy Film Journal. Through the hard work, dedication, tenacity, and pure passion of the EyeCandy team, the magazine before you stands as a true testament to the art and criticality of media-making and its precedence in elevating various thematics. As this team continued to grow alongside one another, I am endlessly thankful and proud to be a part of such a talented group of people who showed up every week with fresh ideas and perspectives. This magazine would never have come into fruition if it were not for the amazing editors, writers, and designers, who put their heart and soul into every page of this magazine.

Together, we all grew in understanding what it means to be a part of something bigger than ourselves, as our overarching theme of "Youth" called upon narratives towards growth and engagement.

I hope you enjoy :)  
With Love,  
Avalon Neal  
Editor-in-Chief 2024-2025



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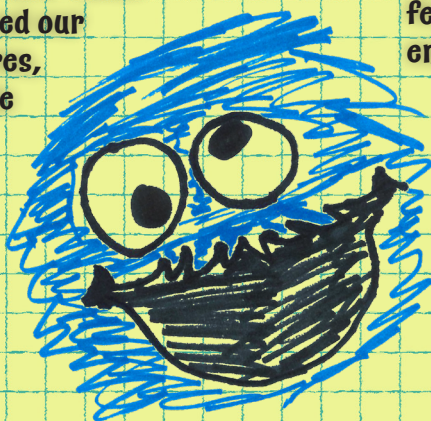
# YOU'RE WATCHING YOUR CHILDHOOD SLIP AWAY... UP NEXT: KIDS' SHOWS AND THEIR LASTING LESSONS

Written by Nora Ligotti

Designed by Tiernan Bonifassi

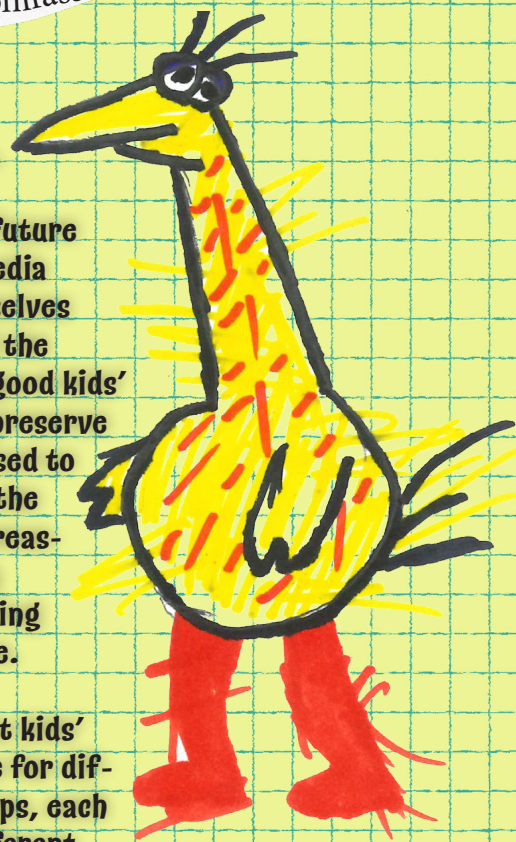
If you watched TV growing up, you probably (hopefully) watched some shows that have stuck with you through the years. Programming on Disney Channel, Cartoon Network, PBS Kids, Nickelodeon, and more engaged our creativity, taught us new skills, and offered us new points of view that laid the foundations of our interests and values as adults. Many of the most impactful of those shows seem to be the ones we can look back on now and find new layers we might not have grasped as kids. In the chaos of our generation's coming-of-age— a time of political, environmental, and socio-cultural strife that feels like the end of the world— I find comfort in re-watching the shows I loved in my childhood. With the added dimensions of retrospect, social context, and creator background, it becomes clear how these shows have shaped our minds and cultures, created by people who have hope and care for the growing generations.

By reflecting  
on these



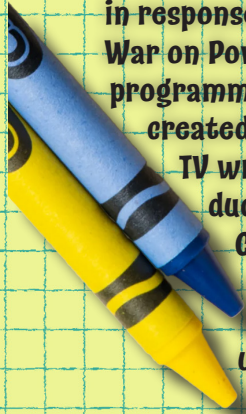
dimensions of some of our favorite shows, we as big siblings, cousins, future parents, and media consumers ourselves can understand the importance of good kids' TV and push to preserve it for those poised to suffer most at the hands of an increasingly predatory and mind-numbing media landscape.

Different kids' shows are made for different age groups, each engaging in different types of educational and social development. Programming for toddlers and younger kids often does double duty, teaching skills like literacy and math in addition to basic social mores. For lots of us, Sesame Street (1969-Present, created by Lloyd Morissett & Jean Ganz



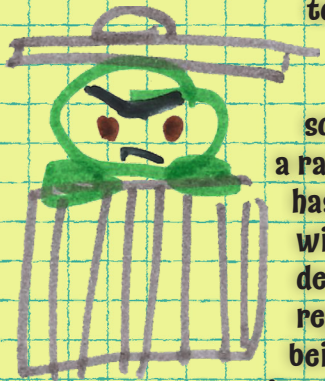


Cooney) might have been an early staple of our TV viewership. *Sesame Street*, and its parent non-profit *Sesame Workshop*, is a trailblazer of educational programming for kids. Conceived in response to the Civil Rights movement, the War on Poverty, and the consumption-driven programming of the sixties. *Sesame Street* was created by psychologist Lloyd Morrisett and



TV writer/producer Joan Ganz Cooney with the integral help of educators like psychiatrist Dr. Chester

Pierce. Its intent from the beginning was to offer early education



to disenfranchised Black children, and has since worked to address a broad range of social issues. The show sports a racially diverse human cast and has featured several Muppets with disabilities, like Autism and deafness, as well as some who represent circumstances like being in foster care or having an incarcerated parent. Even now,

clips from the show and its related video series proliferate on the Internet, with celebrity guests like Andrew Garfield discussing topics like grief, with gentleness and grace, giving children vocabulary to understand and cope with the more devastating dimensions of the human condition. Focusing on the education and empowerment of (disenfranchised) children increases their likelihood of success and reminds us as adults of the things that really matter: kindness, compassion, and curiosity. *Sesame Street* is the longest-surviving cornerstone of meaningful American kids' programming,



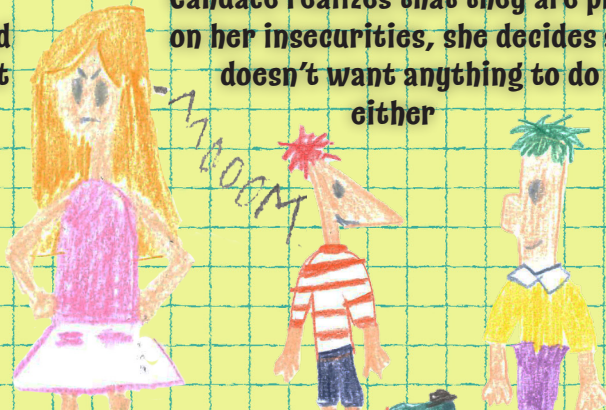
proving time and time again that serving the most disadvantaged of us serves all of us.

In shows for older elementary-aged kids, whimsy, humor, and more complex plots become the main vehicles for lessons about

"We as big siblings, cousins, future parents, and media consumers ourselves can understand the importance of good kids' TV and push to preserve it for those poised to suffer most at the hands of an increasingly predatory and mind-numbing media landscape"

life and growing up. The crown jewel of my childhood TV experience was *Phineas and Ferb* (2007-2015, created by Dan Povenmire and Jeff "Swampy" Marsh). I rewatch this show often, marveling at the vibrant characters, the steady but never boring

formula, and the stunning musical numbers (I think they might have done a song in almost every genre). Among the many episodes that strike a chord is Season 2, episode 3, "Attack of the 50-Foot Sister:" Candace, Phineas and Ferb's bust-crazy older sister, uses a growth serum of the boys' invention to grow the 2 inches of height that would qualify her as a "Flawless Girl" modeling candidate for an illustrious makeup brand. The growth serum backfires, however, making her a freakish 50 feet tall. The Flawless Girl CEO and a P.T. Barnum-esque carnival showman proceed to fight over Candace, each hoping to profit off of her ridiculous size. The back-and-forth satirizes the unattainable standards of the beauty industry, and the showman's desire for "oddballs" satirizes the act of objectifying people for shock value. When Candace realizes that they are preying on her insecurities, she decides she doesn't want anything to do with either party.





Though ten-year-old me was still blissfully unaware of capitalism, I know in hindsight that this indictment influenced my thinking today, teaching me to be wary of predatory business practices and to appreciate beauty beyond the norm. This creative, fantastical framing of real, serious issues makes *Phineas & Ferb* a delightful and multidimensional watch that holds up spectacularly in its sharp-witted fun.

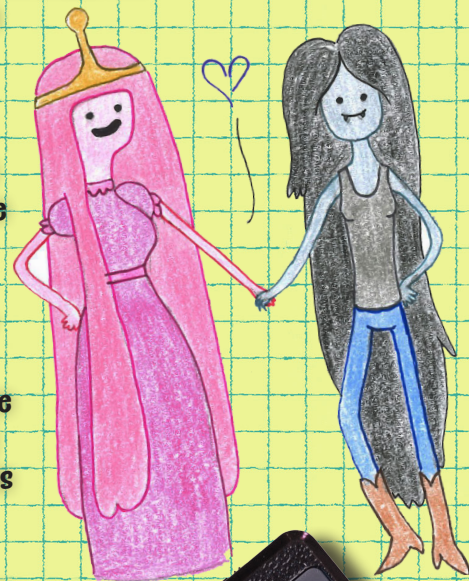
Based on the iconic comic by Charles M. Schulz, a series of Peanuts TV specials like *Why, Charlie Brown, Why?* have aired across the last 5 decades. Much like the print comic, these specials have a way of telling meaningful stories with humor and lightheartedness that made them impactful for both children and adults. *Why, Charlie Brown, Why?* deals with themes of illness and mortality through Janice's journey with leukemia. Linus and Charlie visit Janice in the hospital and learn from her about how certain medical tests work. They shed tears of anger and fear over her condition, and when people are unkind about her condition, Linus calls them out. Implicitly and explicitly, the story humanizes the experience of being sick with cancer, emphasizing that getting cancer is not someone's fault and that chemo-related hair loss isn't something to make fun of, and making room for optimism in the presence of fear. Schulz's wife Jean recalls that he wrote this particular story because of a letter he received from a Stanford nurse, with whom he worked closely to produce the episode. By creating a piece meant to help sick children and their friends to understand and cope, Schulz further cemented Peanuts as an inter-generational icon and a driver of moral development for kids learning how to treat themselves and each other.



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Kids' shows become

even more action-packed and plot-driven for tweens, often reflecting the loss of innocence and the angst of becoming self-aware. *Adventure Time* (2010-2017, created by Pendleton Ward) is among a particular handful of "tween" shows that stuck with me and my peers. Colorful and ridiculous on the surface, *Adventure Time* descends slowly into darker and more mature themes like abandonment and loss through its seasons, mirroring the emotional progression of our own teen years. In addition to episodes on deadbeat parents, balancing friendship with romantic relationships, and the importance of empathy, the show also performs really creative queer representation: BMO is a robot character who regularly switches personal pronouns; Marceline the Vampire Queen and Princess Bubblegum fall in love, their relationship subtly hinted at and later made canon through an on-screen kiss at the end of the show's finale. For myself and many of my friends, representation like this held up a mirror that reflected our evolving gender and sexual identities as we came to understand them. Though institutional violence against trans and queer people (especially kids) is hitting a fever pitch today, shows like *Adventure Time* that helped many of us to feel more comfortable in our identities can continue to give a voice to kids discovering their own identities in adolescence.



Though many thought-provoking and creative shows like these are still being made, the broader kids' media landscape is





devolving into something much more dangerous and much less constructive for kids growing up today. We ourselves have experienced mass declines in mental health that correlate with the overwhelming presence of social media in our lives, and now our younger siblings, cousins, and our own children are growing up in a world that is even more saturated. Increasingly shorter-form content on platforms like YouTube and TikTok are increasingly popular among young viewers. YouTubers like Mr. Beast and Brent Rivera make content that is marketed toward, yet not age-appropriate for, kids, exploiting their young audiences' impressionability for financial gain



"For myself and many of my friends, representation like this held up a mirror that reflected our evolving gender and sexual identities as we came to understand"

through targeted business ventures. I would need a whole other article to cover everything wrong with those guys (instead, I recommend video essays by creators like Kurtis Conner on YouTube) but for my purposes they are simply examples of a rising trend of "kids" media that isn't really for kids. Despite the privileges that may come with growing up in a self-proclaimed "first-world country," predatory media adds to the long list of ways that American children continue to fall behind. Between high infant mortality, childhood obesity, poverty, gun violence, social media, and worsening mental health, society is failing to provide our children with the education and support they deserve. It is a failure of a society to not invest in its future. We ourselves know what it feels like to be preyed on by modern media;

preserving the educational power & vital lessons of kids' shows is a reinvestment effort that can at least continue to bring children joy, if not also promote kindness, critical thinking, and overall health. The positive influence of a good kids' show is immeasurable, and we need to hold on to the shows that have done good while also looking to a future where we think critically about the content we make and show to the next generations of children.

With all this in mind, think back: what were some of your favorite childhood shows? Do you still watch any of them now? Fire up your TV and put one on; see what it can tell you about yourself, your values, and the world you (want to) see reflected on-screen.

*Endnotes:*

Sesame Street. Created by Joan Ganz Cooney and Lloyd Morrisett. Aired November 10, 1969, on PBS.

Kelly, Mary Louise, and Sam Gringlas. "The Story of 'Sesame Street': From Radical Experiment to Beloved TV Mainstay." NPR, May 8, 2021. URL.

Lochner, Conrad. "Dr. Chester Pierce and the 'Hidden Curriculum' of Sesame Street." Joan Ganz Cooney Center, February 23, 2021. URL.

"Andrew Garfield and Elmo Explain Grief | Sesame Workshop." YouTube, October 18, 2024. URL.

Phineas and Ferb. Created by Dan Povenmire and Jeff "Swampy" Marsh. Aired August 17th, 2007, on The Disney Channel.

Moncrief, Zac, and Robert Hughes, dir: Phineas and Ferb. Season 2, Episode 3, "Attack of the 50 Foot Sister." Aired August 17th, 2007, on The Disney Channel.

Jaimes, Sam, dir: "Why, Charlie Brown, Why?" Aired March 16, 1990, on CBS.

Schulz, Jean. "Why, Charlie Brown, Why?" Charles M. Schulz Museum, October 22, 2024. URL.

Adventure Time. Created by Pendleton Ward. Aired April 5, 2010, on Cartoon Network.

Cocco-Klein, Samantha. "At The Bottom Again: Child Wellbeing in the U.S." Equity for Children, September 14, 2020. URL.



# Forever Young: The Reimagining of Youth in Miyazaki's Films

**Written By: Sarah Zhang**  
**Field Designed by: Stuthi Kandula**

Since its inception, cinema has functioned as a medium for capturing and extending human creativity and curiosity. Studio Ghibli, founded in 1985 by Isao Takahata and Hayao Miyazaki, epitomizes this ethos, crafting narratives that seamlessly blend fantasy with deeply humanistic themes. Miyazaki, widely regarded as one of animation's most influential auteurs, presents a distinctive vision of youth—one that transcends age and biological constraints. His non-human creatures, from the enigmatic No-Face to the playful Kodama, serve as embodiments of this vision, challenging societal norms that frame youth as a fleeting physical state, particularly for women. Instead, Miyazaki conceptualizes youth as an intrinsic mindset—one defined by curiosity, adaptability, and resilience—rather than a biological stage. Through these characters, Miyazaki subverts

rigid expectations of age, gender, and species, offering a more expansive and inclusive understanding of youthfulness.

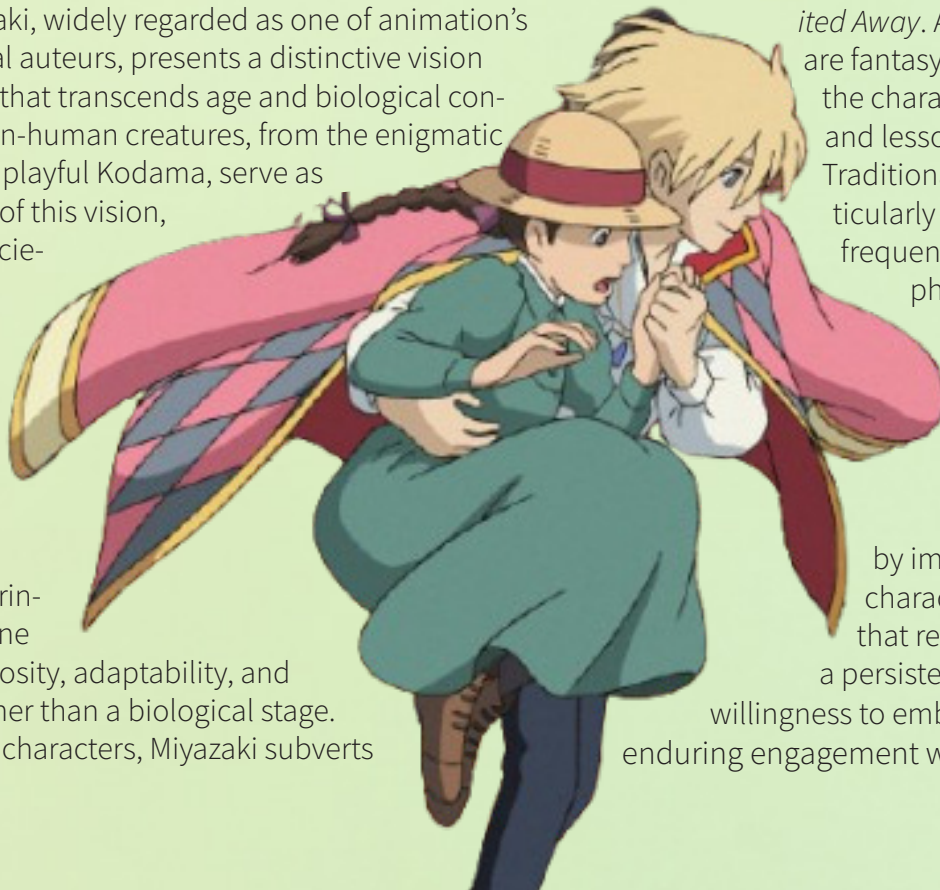
I grew up with Studio Ghibli. As I aged out of the traditional audience for the studio's films, the emotional depth and characters still strongly influence my understanding of life and what youth means to me. I aspire to be as curious as Mei from *My Neighbor Totoro*, as brave as Kiki from *Kiki's Delivery Service* and as kind as Chihiro from *Spirited Away*.

Although these stories are fantasy, the real-world issues the characters face tell stories and lessons like no other.

Traditional narratives, particularly in Western media, frequently equate youth with physical beauty, naivety, and potential, while aging is depicted as a process of decline, especially for women. Miyazaki disrupts this paradigm

by imbuing his non-human characters with qualities that redefine youthfulness:

a persistent sense of wonder, a willingness to embrace change, and an enduring engagement with the world.



Rather than reinforcing the notion that youth is a transient stage, his creatures suggest that youth is a perspective—a way of interacting with the world that values curiosity and transformation over stagnation and resignation. Miyazaki’s non-human entities are not merely whimsical additions to his narratives; they serve as active agents that influence and shape the journeys of his human protagonists. Through their interactions, these creatures challenge the societal expectation that maturity necessitates the abandonment of playfulness and imagination. Instead,



**Miyazaki’s films assert that true youthfulness is not constrained by time but rather an ongoing state of being, one that remains accessible, regardless of age**

One of the most emblematic representations of this philosophy is Totoro from *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988). Despite his immense size and ancient, mystical nature, Totoro exhibits an unguarded curiosity and playful energy typically associated with childhood. His interactions with Mei and Satsuki reinforce the notion that youthful wonder is not exclusive to human children but is instead a universal characteristic. By responding to Mei’s excitement with equal enthusiasm and engaging in seemingly nonsensical activities—such as his midnight crop-growing dance—Totoro embodies unbounded joy, existing outside the constraints of adult rationality and societal expectations of maturity. Similarly, the Kodama in *Princess Mononoke* (1997) exemplifies youthfulness through their responsiveness to their environment. These ethereal tree spirits, characterized by their small, spectral appearances and subtle yet lively



mannerisms engage with Ashitaka and San in ways that highlight the interconnectedness of nature and youth. Unlike the film’s adult characters, who perceive nature through the lenses of ownership, exploitation, or destruction, the Kodama exist in a state of pure, unmediated engagement with their surroundings. Their presence suggests that youth is not merely a biological phase but a way of perceiving and interacting with the world that prioritizes awe and wonder over control and dominance. The Soot Spirits, appearing in both *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Spirited Away* (2001), further reinforce this theme. These diminutive, soot-like beings embody both the mischief and resilience characteristic of youth. Their joy in performing simple tasks—carrying coal, scurrying about—mirrors the play-based learning of children. In *Spirited Away*, their



interactions with Chihiro underscore the transformative power of curiosity; by engaging with them, Chihiro is invited into a world where youthfulness is not a liability but a source of strength and connection. Through these creatures,

**Miyazaki illustrates how youthful qualities such as playfulness and adaptability can be sources of empowerment rather than signs of immaturity.**

Beyond their symbolic representation of youth, Miyazaki's creatures actively challenge the rigid social constructs that confine youth to a particular phase of life. This is particularly significant in relation to gender expectations. In many cultural narratives, girls are often expected to transition rapidly from childhood to adulthood, leaving behind playfulness in favor of responsibility and self-restraint.

**Miyazaki resists this narrative, portraying youth as an enduring quality that exists beyond human timelines.**

His non-human characters model an alternative vision of growing up—one that allows for both maturity and wonder to coexist. This dynamic is particularly evident in *Spirited Away*, where No Face serves as a complex mirror to Chihiro's journey.



Initially exhibiting a childlike need for acceptance, No Face consumes everything around him in an effort to fill an emotional void. His transformation, however, suggests that youth is not defined by inexperience but by the capacity to learn and change. Chihiro, too, undergoes a profound evolution—her growth is not marked by the loss of innocence but by her increasing ability to navigate and understand the world around her. In this way, Miyazaki's portrayal of youth challenges the notion that growing up requires the abandonment of curiosity; instead, he posits that maturity is an expansion of youthfulness rather than its end.

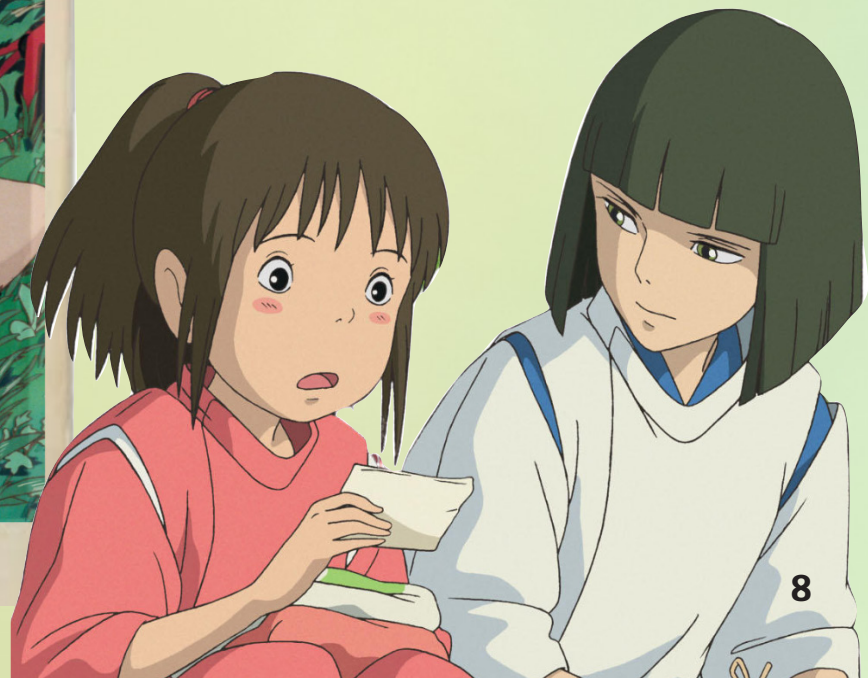
## **Miyazaki's work offers a radical redefinition of youth—one that is unbound by age, gender, or species.**

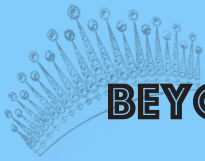
By centering his non-human creatures as symbols of curiosity, playfulness, and transformation, he presents youthfulness as a perspective rather than a biological stage. This perspective serves as a powerful counterpoint to societal expectations that equate aging with loss and rigidity.

Miyazaki's films provide a compelling alternative in a cultural landscape that often seeks to commodify and constrain youth: the idea that the essence of being young is not something inevitably lost but something consciously maintained. His magical creatures invite audiences to reconsider what it means to be youthful, demonstrating that the spirit of youth is not confined to childhood but is instead a limitless force—one that can be embraced at any stage of life. By rejecting the notion that youth is a temporary state, Miyazaki affirms that curiosity, wonder, and playfulness are not merely traits of the young but fundamental aspects of what it means to be truly alive.

## **Endnotes**

- 1. *The Borrower Arrietty*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli, 2010**
- 2. *Howls Moving Castle*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli, 2005.**
- 3. *Ponyo*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli, 2008**
- 4. *My Neighbor Totoro*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli, 1988.**
- 5. *Spirited Away*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli, 2001.**
- 6. *Princess Mononoke*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli, 1997.**
- 7. *Kiki's Delivery Service*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli, 1989.**





## BEYOND THE TIARAS: DISNEY PRINCESSES AND FEMINIST TRIUMPHS

Written by : Alexandra Guerrero    Designed by: Andrea Martinez

Throughout decades, we have experienced the evolution of Disney princesses alongside the evolution of women. Disney princesses have not only represented the different values of each generation but have exemplified the different moments of turbulence in women's history and recorded successes and losses. Using movies across several decades, we can learn about the fight for women's rights and representation. Princesses from the early 1900s, like Snow White and Cinderella, play the damsel in distress trope, while

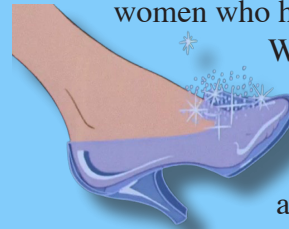
princesses from the 1990s to 2010, like Mulan, Merida, Tiana, Elsa, and Anna, represent the values women have been fighting for.



**“Disney princesses have not only represented the different values of each generation but have exemplified the different moments of turbulence in women’s history and recorded our successes and losses.”**

In 1929, during the Great Depression, the United States experienced one of the most significant economic crashes in history. The Stock Market Crash caused by overproduction after World War I urged women to increasingly participate in the economy and workforce, as thousands of men who were once the “breadwinners” lost their jobs. Women worked as clerks, teachers, and nurses. For the first time in history, women made up around 25% of the workforce. From 1930 to the 1940s,

the number of employed women rose by 24%, in part because industries where women worked were less impacted by the stock market. Marriage rates also declined by 22%, leaving more single women who had to support themselves.



Women throughout this era demonstrated a strong front against the Great Depression, leading with perseverance and self-determination.

Around the same time, in the early 1930s, the movie Snow White became a household classic. This movie plays into the damsel-in-distress trope when Snow White falls into a coma and is saved by her Prince, but Snow is also self-determined, compassionate, and caring, representing the admirable qualities of women from this period. She was exiled into the woods by the evil queen and has fended for herself as well as taken care of seven dwarfs.

Another notable movie from this period would be The Wizard of Oz (1939), which, unlike Snow White, brightly contrasted Snow's fairytale, as Dorothy does not seek salvation from men. The only characters who hold any power in Oz are female, working as a feminist statement by the author, L. Frank Baum, who was the secretary of his local women's suffrage club.



## Cinderella

Throughout the 1960s to 1970s, a second wave of feminism surged for almost two decades and focused on issues of equality, reproductive rights, and discrimination. The catalyst for this second wave of feminism was Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). Women across the nation cared about overcoming systematic racism and political inequality. Women celebrated many wins thanks to this movement, like the approval of the contraceptive pill by the Food and Drug Administration in 1960, as well as the Equal Pay Act in 1963, Title IX in 1972, and *Roe v. Wade* in 1973. During this surge, the movie *Cinderella* (1950s) portrayed the struggles and battles that women fought for in the following decade. *Cinderella* represents courage and a strong work ethic as she is trapped with her evil stepmother and sisters but is always kind and respectful. *Cinderella* was arguably saved by her bravery and determination, and with the help of her fairy godmother, not by her Prince. This movie demonstrates the courage, self-determination, and enlightenment of young women at this time as they began to express their anxieties.

Another movie during this era, *Father of the Bride* (1950), showcases young women being married off to successful men, but *Cinderella* surpasses this stereotype. *Cinderella*'s happiness was brought by her courage to escape an undesirable situation and by her Prince, proving the duality of an independent woman during this period.

## Mulan

After many decades of women advocating for themselves and fighting for their rights, we started to experience quite a shift in Disney princesses. *Mulan* (1998) represents women from the 1990s and their ability to balance strength with femininity. *Mulan*, unlike *Snow* and *Cinderella*, refused to fit into societal norms. Instead, she is the heroine in her story and takes on a stereotypical "masculine" role. She represents bravery when

she protects her father by going to war in his place. This movie overshadows past Disney princesses as *Mulan* was able to find happiness within herself and did not need the saving of a Prince.

*Mulan* wholeheartedly represents women from this era, as women were expressing themselves in a way that didn't "fit" into societal expectations. Women were experiencing a shift where they wanted to showcase their strengths and opinions and were proud of not fitting into certain categories. These feelings were represented in media, even in music, with bands like *Bikini Kill*, *Bratmobile*, and *Heavens to Betsy*. At the same time, another category of film, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1990), sends a loud message by showcasing a then-dystopian future, maybe not so much now, where women's rights have been stripped away and have been forced to obey gender stereotypes. *Mulan* has demonstrated her distaste for these stereotypes and has fought to go beyond them. She represents the strong-willed, yet still feminine nature of women from this decade, and started a movement with her princess successors.

During the 21st century, women experienced a fourth wave of feminism where women have become vocal about intersecting issues. Women began to speak out against issues like oppression, race, class, sexuality, reproductive rights, and gender identity. We can observe these changes through the following movies.

**"she represents the strong-willed, yet still feminine nature of women from this decade, and started a movement with her princess successors."**



## Tiana

In 2009, Princess Tiana became the first Black princess in *Princess and the Frog* (2009). The movie was set in 1920s New Orleans, which has a very distinct racial history, as it was a time when the Black community fought for equal pay and representation. In the movie, Tiana fights for her dreams even though the odds are against her, and heavily contrasts with past princesses being saved by a prince, as Tiana saved her prince. This movie highly contrasts with the Eurocentric beauty standards that past movies have perpetuated, allowing for representation that has never been seen before in Disney movies. Up to this date, Princess Tiana is still the only black princess, except for Princess Ariel from the live-action remake, which we hope changes in the next couple of decades, as Disney princesses are meant to represent all women. On a positive note, in the 2010s, Black representation in film increased in hit movies like *Black Panther* (2018) and *Get Out* (2017).

## Merida

Similar to Princess Tiana, we started to receive storylines of Princesses who did not care for searching for their prince but to solidify their identity and dreams. At the same time, women everywhere



were beginning to embrace each other's differences. During this era, women became increasingly outspoken, empowering movements like the #MeToo political movement and educating women on terms like "manspreading" and "mansplaining." Enlightening a surge of political consciousness, granting women a platform to speak on issues that they haven't been able to. We can see this through the storyline of the movie *Brave* (2012), featuring Princess Merida, who bravely contrasts with earlier princesses by embracing individuality and leadership. In the movie, her mother serves a contrasting role as she falls into traditional stereotypes by participating in household activities, while Merida prefers archery and outdoor activities. Their relationship evolves due to Merida's accidental transformation of her mother into a bear, and throughout the search for reversal, both of them learn from each other and begin to embrace each other's differences instead of being frustrated by them. This movie sends a powerful message to young girls and women to embrace individuality within themselves and with other people.



**“we started to receive storylines of Princesses who did not care for searching for their prince, but to solidify their identity and dreams.”**

## Elsa & Anna

While embracing each other's differences, women began to embrace independence and take on leadership roles without the help of men. Around this time, women began to receive recognition for their bravery and resilience. In the same year, Malala Yousafzai published her bestselling book, *I Am Malala* (2013), inspiring women to stand up for themselves. Yousafzai represents the spirit of young women during this era as women began to



take and demand positions of power. Some notable mentions are Jill Abramson, who became the first female executive editor of the New York Times, as well as Park Geun-hye, making her the first female head of state in the modern history of Northeast Asia, both in 2013. *Frozen* (2013) encapsulates this spirit as it represents the companionship of strong women who occupy positions of authority without the help of men. Princess Anna and Elsa represent companionship and the ability to feel fulfilled independently. Princess Elsa flees after becoming Queen due to insecurities about her strong abilities, leaving Princess Anna as the primary leader, with no male assistance. The hit song “Let it Go” from the movie shows Elsa letting go of her insecurities and accepting her abilities and being uniquely her own. In *Frozen*, there is no masculine heroine, Kristoff represents the strengths that are important in a partnership, but Anna is not dependent on him. Together, they look for Elsa in an attempt to defeat Prince Han, who is the villain of the story.

Disney Princess, proudly reflecting the progress of the feminist movement. With newer movies like *Moana* (2016), and the 2024 sequel, we continue to see Princesses take the independent heroine role and continue to inspire generations of women. I hope that Disney continues to expand their catalog of inclusivity moves to represent all women and continues to record our insistence for women’s reproductive rights, workplace equality, and many more intersecting issues.

End notes:

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**“Kristoff represents the strengths that are important in a partnership, but Anna is not dependent on him.”**

Across decades and many generations, Disney Princesses have evolved through waves of feminism and have reflected its triumphs as well as its moments of trial and

tribulation. Throughout each generation, the corresponding Disney Princess has reflected the character and aspirations of women of the generation. From Snow White to Elsa and Anna, we have experienced a gradual conveyance of the

# FOLLIE À DEUX

## *Meditations of a Doppelgänger*

*Devils breed in still waters.<sup>1</sup>*



The cuckoo is a bizarre creature. Master deceivers, they routinely trick other species into raising their young by laying eggs in foreign nests— at times, even resorting to cannibalism. (Who knew birds could be this ruthless?) Like young cuckoos infiltrating and taking advantage of other birds' nests, some relationships thrive by manipulating the natural order—one person reaping all support and shelter, while the other is left high and dry. In a world answering to no one, girls are left to reckon with themselves, through hundreds of mirrors in their daily lives: their mothers, sisters, best friends, and enemies. Often, women share extremely complex relationships with one another due to a system that fosters constant competition and exploitation, still sustaining room for comfort, familiarity, and unconditional love. The friendship between two girls can be so transcendent of worldly emotions that it becomes sacred, ubiquitous, and even suffocating, at times. In such a bond, emotional support may become parasitic, with one girl cradled in the warmth of the other, simultaneously draining

the latter's stability. A protective bubble forms around the two, insulating them from the outside world. In *Soulmate* (Min, 2023), the kindred thread between two best friends frays as they navigate the uncertainties of growing up. The story cannot be reduced to simply two girls drifting apart. Their growing distance only intensifies the lingering attachment like a haunting manifestation, as each girl's memory of the other is slowly broken down and reconstructed, eroding the true form of what they once represented to each other. What remains unspoken between the two echoes like a shadow of what once was, blurring the line between absence and presence, the self and the other. *Violet Perfume: No One Is Listening* (Sistach, 2001) explores the obsessive entanglement of the Doppelgänger and self, as a wild misfit captivates an unsuspecting paragon of virtue, pulling them both into slow, inescapable destruction. Hanging on a tone of utter despair, *Violet Perfume* captures how one girl, hardened by cruelty and neglect, gravitates toward another's solicitude, all while testing the limits of their relationship. Both films pierce the ephemeral veil of innocence, revealing the kamikaze mentality that

Written by Annette Mathew  
Designed by Phoebe Rettberg



female friendships can instill, driving both characters toward mutual, inevitable ruin.

*“She is both a liberator and a destroyer...”*

*He tried to run, but his legs gave way under him. With a look of open-mouthed astonishment on his countenance, feeling crushed and shrivelled up, he leaned helplessly against a lamp post, and remained so for some minutes in the middle of the pavement. It seemed as though all were over for Mr. Golyadkin.<sup>2</sup>*

Some friendships don't just nurture—they desecrate. Parasitic female friendships, born from insecurity and lack of regulation, trap both girls in a false preservation of innocence and escape from reality. There is almost always an imbalance between these girls, whether social, economic, or interpersonal. *Violet Perfume* and *Soulmate* expertly depict the circumstances leading close friendships astray and explore the constraints of such camaraderie. There is something to be said about the electricity flowing from one girl to another, as if they have merged into one being: thinking, acting, and feeling in unison, despite oftentimes being polar opposites and foils to one another. *Violet Perfume* confronts these shifting boundaries, constantly challenging the question: how close is too close? The film builds an ever-present tone of tension and melancholy, as each twist tightens the grip of anxiety and dread. Yessica, navigating her own abusive homelife, is driven to rebel against the structures that have failed her. She seeks to control the narrative of her life through her defiant actions, using a fellow classmate, Miriam's innocence, as a vessel for her own escape. She beckons Miriam's curiosity by drawing out ferocity in the other girl that she herself struggles to contain, encouraging her naïve peer to experiment with makeup, blast loud music, and steal—each act pushing Miriam further from her sheltered life. Through Yessica's influence, Miriam is led to em-

brace a sense of freedom she's never known, but also a heightened risk—each indulgence fueling the catastrophic force of their bond. Yessica's emotional disparity—her longing for power in a life that feels out of her control—provokes her need to manipulate Miriam. She is both a liberator and a destroyer, revealing Miriam's potential to step outside of her limitations, but also pulling her into a world of recklessness and consequence. As their dynamic deepens, Miriam becomes increasingly entangled in Yessica's web, drawn to the danger, the thrill, the life she never knew she craved. Yet, Yessica's actions remain selfish, a slow consumption of her friend's warmth, whilst she continues to commit acts further and further from sanity and respectability. She revels in a ritualistic cleansing, assuming Miriam's life as her own to escape the horrors she is forced to live through. Yessica's influence extends beyond physical acts; she works her way into Miriam's life in a way that feels like an inescapable pull. This parasitic relationship is captured poignantly as Yessica, having embedded herself so deeply in Miriam's world, finds comfort in Miriam's home. A final scene of Yessica embraced by Miriam's mother is a moment eerily reminiscent of a cuckoo bird's success in infiltrating a foreign nest—an innocent embrace masking the darker undercurrents of deceit and expropriation.

*Sorrow is concealed in gilded palaces, and there's no escaping it.<sup>3</sup>*

While *Violet Perfume* exposes the more overtly malignant nature of these friendships, *Soulmate* directs its gaze towards their tender yet insidious side, uncovering a pernicious growth of toxic dependence.



Miso represents to Ha-eun freedom, creativity, exploration, escape, and independence. Ha-eun offers Miso consistency, stability, care, and love in a way she's never known. Together, they build a twinship that shields their innocence as they experience the turbulence of adolescence. They share an existence so deeply intertwined it borders on otherworldly, where unspoken desires flicker between them, understood but never voiced. But as they mature, this shield becomes fragile, around the very points it was formed upon. Ha-eun grows to feel at odds with herself, hungry for volition, but refusing to succumb to her deepest desires and leave the constraints of the life that's expected of her. Miso, a romantic, yearns to travel the world, to achieve beyond what her current reality has amounted to, but finds herself in a bottomless pit of financial instability, and often hides her deep insecurity and sensitivity. As Miso's deepest fears of inadequacy eat away at her, an ocean of insecurity lies, and the ache of her unfulfilled desires spills over into her relationship with Ha-eun, the one person who always seemed to understand her. *It felt weird seeing your back as you took off. I realized that I don't remember seeing your back. Because you were always beside me.* The two lose touch, in part due to a man getting involved, but this difference in ideology is really what sets them on opposite sides. The guilt Miso comes face to face with after Ha-eun's boyfriend makes a move on her torments Miso and causes her to grow increasingly distant with her best friend. A quote describing their companionship is repeated throughout the film,



ways there in the distance. so the sun was never lonely, and is able to shine." The loss of Ha-eun is like a death in its own right—an ache that will not subside. Miso's innocence is no longer protected and so she runs away.

Over and over again, while Ha-eun notices these changes and faces the hurt from losing her soulmate head-on. Each girl longs for the soulmate she took for granted in a desperation that cannot be contained. Miso and

Ha-eun are each other's strength in ways neither could find elsewhere, and that is why they remain the perfect mirror to one another. The cruel indifference of losing a friend destroys each girl from the inside out. As they reach their final confrontation, Miso is left to preserve the essence of Ha-eun in the ways she knows how, holding onto fragments of her that can't be forgotten. The film closes with the once wild, outwardly confident, and

spontaneous girl—who spurned the idea of being tethered down—now quietly stepping into a role that keeps Ha-eun's spirit alive,

*"How close is too close?"*

one that she never expected for herself. The hunger for something more—something beyond the ache of their shared past—remains ever present, pulling Miso toward a future she never imagined. *You'll be like the old me... and I'll be like the old you..*

"The sun can shine brightly because of the shadow. Even though they can't become one. The shadow is al-

*One may say more: Mr. Golyadkin did not want only to run away from himself, but to be obliterated, to cease to be, to return to dust. At the moment he took in nothing surrounding him, understood nothing of what was going on about him, and looked as though the miseries of the stormy night, of the long tramp, the rain, the snow, the wind, all the cruelty of the weather, did not exist for him.<sup>4</sup>*

As an aside, I'd like to explore two films that also en-



gage with the toxic cycles of doubling. The ungovernable and isolating nature of dependence is vividly portrayed in *Heavenly Creatures* (Jackson, 1994) and *My Summer of Love* (Pawlikowski, 2004). Each film offers a distinct lens on the complexities of female friendships and how they can quickly descend into corruption. In *Heavenly Creatures*, two girls find solace in each other through their shared sense of alienation from respectable society. Their bond is fueled by grandiose fantasies, immaturity, and an increasing disregard for responsibility—each act of defiance strengthening their devotion to one another. A reverse cuckoo effect unfolds as the moody Pauline rejects her own home life in favor of the opulent, carefree lifestyle of the new British student, Juliet, whose parents willingly embrace Pauline into their household. The film captures shared delusion, illustrating the girls' connection as a product of their self-contained fantasy world together. Through heightened theatrics and drama, *Heavenly Creatures* reflects the apocalyptic fervor of teenage girlhood. Similarly, *My Summer of Love* unravels the rich depth to female love, though here, the dynamic is shifted. Mona, an impressionable teen seeking a superficial escape from purity through promiscuity, yearns for a life beyond the constraints of her stifling home life. She crosses paths with Tamsin, whose magnetic allure is as tantalizing as it is enigmatic. The girls appear to undergo a joint loss of innocence, marked by mind-altering substances, rebellion, and explorations of lesbianism. However, what begins as an intoxicating codependence slowly reveals itself as an exchange of deception, where one girl's loyalty is met with abandonment rather than reciprocity. Through a suicide pact, the girls strive to preserve their unbreakable bond, but it becomes clear that their relationship is built on self-serving illusions.

*But at the same time it was all so strange, incomprehensible, wild, it seemed so impossible, that it was really hard to credit the whole business; Mr. Goyaldkin was, indeed, ready to admit himself that it was all an incredible delusion, a passing aberration of the fancy, a darkening of the mind, if he had not fortunately known by bitter experience to what lengths spite will sometimes carry any one, what a pitch of ferocity*

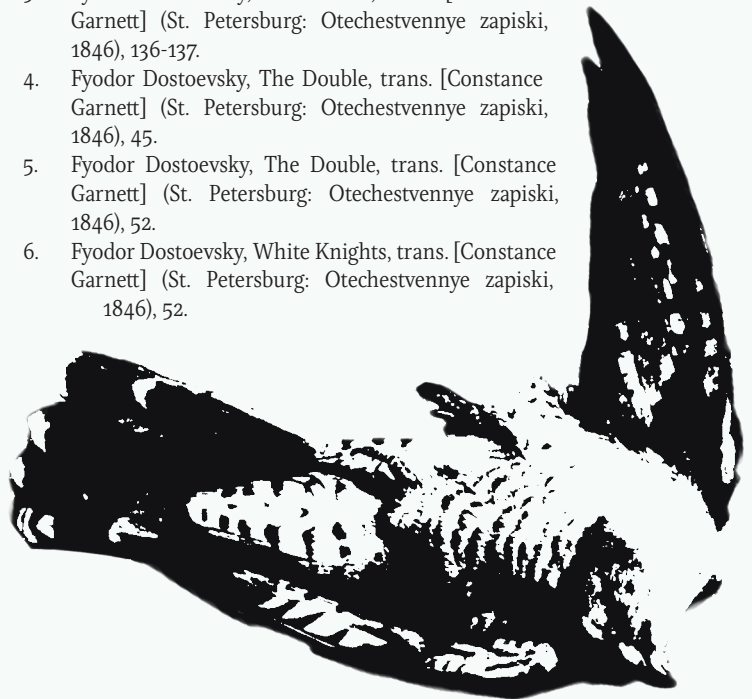
*an enemy may reach when he is bent on revenging his honour and prestige.*<sup>5</sup>

When successfully executed, films can comprise a likeness so evocative of our daily lives they implore us to contemplate our own such behavior. *Violet Perfume* implores its audience to revel in the discomfort of unbalanced relationships, while *Soulmate* clings to the tender bliss in youth. Through the push and pull of sisterhood, tensions rise, and a thousand sentiments—love, disdain, compassion, and horror—are whispered amid the intense awakening of female maturation.

*But how could you live and have no story to tell?*<sup>6</sup>

## Notes

1. I introduce my piece with a solemn quote from Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Double* (page 60). As someone fascinated by the concept of doubling and characters who seem to complete one another, referencing such a powerful and relevant work felt essential—without it, my article would feel incomplete. In a Jekyll-and-Hyde-esque sequence of events, a typical Dostoevsky protagonist, Mr. Golyadkin, a man who insists on his own respectability despite his disordered existence in St. Petersburg, experiences a terror-stricken descent into madness upon meeting his double—a figure who, at face value, appears utterly evil. I hope you, the reader, can enjoy my usage of such passages that, I felt, aligned with the subjects covered henceforth.
2. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Double*, trans. [Constance Garnett] (St. Petersburg: Otechestvennye zapiski, 1846), 85.
3. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Double*, trans. [Constance Garnett] (St. Petersburg: Otechestvennye zapiski, 1846), 136-137.
4. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Double*, trans. [Constance Garnett] (St. Petersburg: Otechestvennye zapiski, 1846), 45.
5. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Double*, trans. [Constance Garnett] (St. Petersburg: Otechestvennye zapiski, 1846), 52.
6. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *White Knights*, trans. [Constance Garnett] (St. Petersburg: Otechestvennye zapiski, 1846), 52.



# PERSONALITY QUIZ

Which one are you?

Disney, Nickelodeon, OR  
Cartoon Network?



Disney



Nickelodeon



Cartoon  
Network

**BTS drama! What can be done to save child stars?**

# **GIRLS GONE WILD**

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Lohan,  
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**18**

**Child** actors have been a staple of Hollywood for decades, captivating audiences with their young talent. However, behind this curtain of charm, most child actors have admitted to facing unique challenges such as: financial exploitation, psychological distress, and a lack of proper labor protections. While there are some child stars who seemingly transition smoothly into adulthood, many struggle because of the lack of safeguards. The entertainment industry's current child labor laws are lacking, and they leave young actors vulnerable to financial and emotional exploitation. Stricter regulations — specifically in regards to financial status and psychological well-being — are necessary to make sure child performers aren't being taken advantage of by parents, studios, or managers.

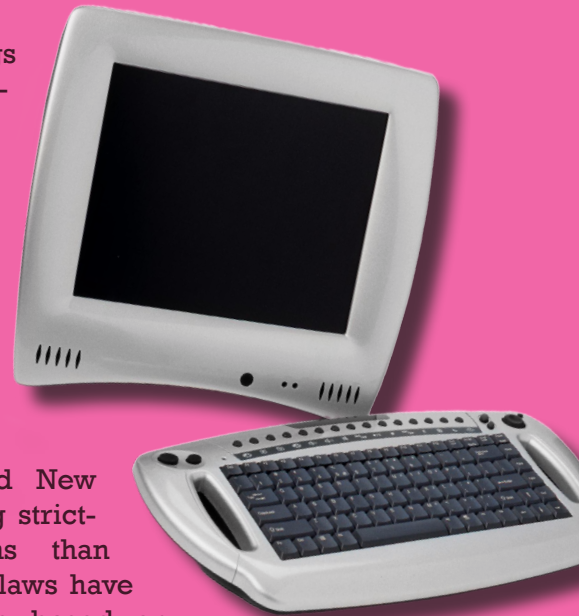
**In** the early stages of Hollywood, there were practically no protections for child actors which led to extreme cases of financial and personal exploitation. One of the most famous of these cases is Jackie Coogan, a silent film star whose parents used nearly all his earnings; In response, California passed the Coogan Law in 1939 as a response to this case, requiring that a portion of a child actor's income be set aside in a trust. Currently most states mandate that 15% of a mi-

nor's earnings be protected, but loopholes still allow parents and managers to misuse funds.

**Labor** laws for child actors vary by state, with California and New York enforcing stricter regulations than others. These laws have working hours based on age, with infants allowed to work only a few minutes at a time while teenagers can work longer hours. Child actors are also required to receive tutoring on set if they miss school, but enforcement of this tends to be inconsistent. Another thing to note is that reality TV stars and social media influencers don't have these legal protections, leaving them especially vulnerable to financial and emotional harm from authority figures. Interestingly, European countries tend to have stronger child labor protections such as stricter financial safeguards and mandatory psychological evaluations for these young stars.

**So** why do the experiences of child actors vary so widely? How come some transition smoothly into adulthood while others struggle under the pressure of fame? A number of factors contribute to these different outcomes with the most prominent being parental influence, access to education, work-life balance, and media exposure. Child actors who receive strong family support, focus on their education, and get to experience lives outside of acting tend to have better results. Children who are overworked, denied a real childhood, or forced into constant spotlight experience severe mental health struggles, issues with substance abuse, and legal troubles.

Comparing the careers of women who appear to have transitioned successfully such as Natalie Portman, Emma Watson, and Jodie Foster, against the celebrities we look at as horror stories like Lindsay Lohan, Aman-



da Bynes, and the Olsen Twins, we can examine the long-term impact of all of these factors.

**The** demanding schedules of child actors keep them from experiencing a normal childhood. While most of us spent our childhoods going to school, interacting with other kids, and having fun with hobbies or games, these child stars dedicate their lives to filming, rehearsing, and press appearances. Their lack of time outside of their profession can make it difficult to form healthy lasting friendships with others their age, leading to feelings of isolation. While we get the privilege of going through our childhoods and early experiences in mostly private settings, child actors don't have this same privilege. Instead are forced to grow up in the public eye

with everyone tuning in to their every move.

**Another** major setback is the social environment on set. Instead of spending time with other children, child actors are mostly around adults such as the directors, producers, and crew members. This dynamic can lead to feelings of loneliness and a disconnect from their own age group. Not only do they lack these social interactions but they are also expected to maintain the same level of professionalism and behaviors as their adult co-stars. The fear of disappointing their superiors — even fans — can lead to perfectionist tendencies and anxiety from an early age. Emma Watson, best known for playing Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter series, has openly spoken about these pressures. She nearly walked away from the franchise due to the overwhelming expectations placed on her from

such a young age. So many child actors struggle to balance their personal well-being with professional obligations, and the need to constantly meet these high standards typically results in burnout.

**Not** only do child actors deal with intense pressure on set, but they also face intense pressures



**click!**

from the public. Every single mistake, struggle, or personal issue is magnified and broadcasted to the entire world, making it impossible for them to go through life without insane levels of public judgment. Constant discussions about their appearance, weight, and personal relationships often lead to body image issues and inse-

# What does it take to be a star?

curity. This intense media attention can be especially harmful during our younger teenage years when self-esteem is still developing. These children are forced to grow up feeling the need to conform to impossible beauty standards even more than the average person, leading to long-term struggles with self-worth and identity. **The** lack of normal developmental milestones can also make independence difficult later in life. Many child actors deal with financial instability because of mismanaged earnings or family members who take advantage of their fame. Some are left dependent on their parents even into adulthood with their absolute lack of financial literacy or job experience outside of the entertainment industry. A concerning amount of child stars struggle with mental health issues and substance abuse as they try to find ways to cope with the pressures of early fame. Without a strong support system and effective legal protections, many child actors find it impossible to transition into adulthood. **The** main predictor of a child actor's success is looking at their parents. Supportive parents prioritize their child's well-being over everything else. They make sure their children receive an education and do their best to help them avoid industry exploitation. Natalie Portman, for example, has mentioned how her parents emphasized the importance of academics alongside her acting career. While starring in films she attended Harvard University, carefully selecting roles that worked with her long-term career goals. Her parents helped her avoid excessive media attention, allowing her to maintain privacy and avoid intense scrutiny. Similarly, Emma Watson balanced an education at Brown University with her acting career, taking breaks when necessary to avoid burnout. Outside of acting, she pursued a life of charity and activist work with a focus on gender equality giving

her a sense of purpose outside of Hollywood. Jodie Foster, another example of a "successful" child star, attended Yale University despite gaining fame at age 12 for her unconventional role in *Taxi Driver*. Her strong support system and academic pursuits allowed her to transition into adulthood, where she continues to act and direct on her own terms.

**Children** with exploitative parents, however, often faced severe consequences. Lindsay Lohan's father was infamous for taking advantage of her fame, giving her a relentless work schedule from childhood into her teenage years that left little to no room for personal development. By the time she became an adult, she was already stuck in a cycle of substance abuse and



# HOLLYWOOD

legal troubles, which were made even worse by the constant media coverage. Similarly, Amanda Bynes was pushed into the industry at a young age and had a highly public breakdown. The media's persistent focus on her mental health struggles only worsened her challenges, leaving her without the privacy or support needed to recover. The story of the Olsen Twins completely highlights the dangers of early fame and media scrutiny. Once cast in *Full House* as infants, Mary-Kate and Ashley worked nonstop throughout the entirety of their childhoods, starring in movies, TV shows, and everything possible. The intense pressure to maintain a brand combined with invasive media speculation about their appearances and eating habits contributed to long-term struggles with body image and mental health. The constant public attention throughout the entirety of their lives made it impossible for them to have normal lives, ultimately leading them to step away from Hollywood and the spotlight entirely.

**To** better protect these children we must focus on financial safeguards, mental health support, and stricter enforcement of existing laws. While some regulations exist, loopholes and weak oversight allow for continued exploitation. Strengthening financial protections, improving educational and mental health resources, and increasing accountability within the industry are necessary for child actors to have both a successful career and a stable transition into adulthood.

**1.** The most influential issue is financial security. Currently, only 15% of a child actor's earnings are required to be placed in a trust, but this percentage should be increased to give these kids more substantial financial stability. Regular financial audits should also be mandated to make sure that these earnings are properly managed and accessible to these stars once they become an adult. Often, young actors go into adulthood only to find that their money has been mismanaged or spent by parents or managers which leaves them financially unstable despite their many years of work.

**2.** Outside of financial protections, men-

health support should be a priority. Sets should be required to provide their employees with licensed therapists in order to ensure they have regular check-ins throughout their careers. The pressures of fame, public scrutiny, and demanding work schedules can take a major psychological toll and having mental health resources available can help children navigate these issues. Post-career programs should be established in order to help former child actors transition into adulthood whether they continue acting or choose a different career path. Education is another area in desperate need of reform. Studios should be required to hire actual teachers instead of unregulated studio tutors in order to be sure that child actors receive a genuine quality education. Existing laws regarding on-set schooling need to start being strictly enforced in order to truly prevent studios from prioritizing work over a child's development. Increased oversight of work-hour regulations is necessary to prevent overwork-



**“(Lohan)...was already stuck in a cycle of substance abuse and legal troubles...”**

ing these young kids so they can have the needed time for rest, schooling, and personal growth. The gaps in protection for reality TV stars and social media influencers needs to finally be addressed. Not only do they go through similar issues as traditional child actors, but they also lack even more legal safeguards, leaving them vulnerable to more financial and emotional exploitation. Establishing an independent institution to investigate potential abuse, instead of just relying on self-reported cases, would provide the much needed accountability.

lic scrutiny, and demanding work schedules can take a major psychological toll. Having mental health resources available can help children navigate these issues. Post-career programs should be established in order to help former child actors transition into adulthood whether they continue acting or choose a different career path.

**3. Education** is another area in desperate need of reform. Studios should be required to hire actual teachers instead of unregulated studio tutors in order to be sure that child actors receive a genuine quality education. Existing laws regarding on-set schooling need to start being strictly enforced in order to truly prevent studios from prioritizing work over a child's development. Increased oversight of work-hour regulations is necessary to prevent overworking these young kids so they can have the needed time for rest, schooling, and personal growth.

**4. The** gaps in protection for reality TV stars and social media influencers needs to finally be addressed. Not only do they go through similar issues as traditional child actors, but they also lack even more legal safeguards, leaving them vulnerable to more financial and emotional exploitation. Establishing an independent institution to investigate potential abuse, instead of just relying on self-reported cases, would provide the much needed accountability Hollywood lacks and help prevent future cases of exploitation in the entertainment industry.

The public's complete obsession with young celebrities only worsens all of these issues. Tabloid culture profits from all of the struggles of child actors, turning their mistakes and mental health challenges into entertainment. Ethical media consumption requires us to question the treatment of child actors behind the scenes so that studios can finally be held accountable for prioritizing profit over the mental and emotional well being of their employees. Raising awareness is the first step toward real change. Recent documentaries, like *Quiet on Set*, expose these dark realities of child acting which prompts the necessary conversations about reform and

change. By advocating for stronger protections and accountability, we can help create a safer environment for the next generations of child actors.

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# HANGER

*How Survival Affects*

*Adolescent Development*  
*showcased in*

*Lord of the Flies*  
*& Yellowjackets*



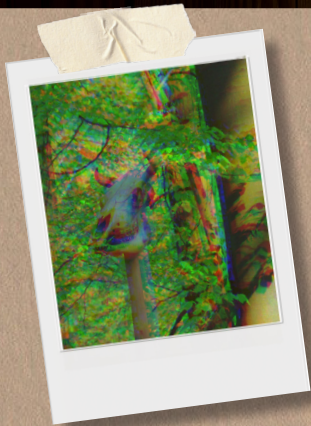
*Written by: JC Toringan*  
*Concept by: Chris Sta Maria*  
*Design by: Avalon Neal & Sofia Najera*

“*Hangry*”—a word that combines two of the most natural and primal feelings: hunger and anger. Whether it be an empty stomach or an ideological gluttony for power, it is an emotion so powerful that it moves people to act cruelly and viciously until their appetite is satisfied. The popular teen survival genre showcases this through its depiction of young characters’ struggles to keep their morality in the face of life-or-death hardships. Some of the most notable stories within this genre of media are Henry Hook’s adaptation of William Golding’s literary classic *Lord of the Flies* (1990) and the rising Showtime television sensation *Yellowjackets* (2021). These two pieces of media showcase how the level of maturity influences the choices characters make in order to see another day. Childhood is tough. Adolescence itself is wild. Through *Yellowjackets* and its predecessor *Lord of the Flies* and the overall exploration of the genre, we can discover who we become when we are removed from the confines

of societal institutions. How easily does hunger and tragedy catalyst savagery and cruelty when in the hands of underdeveloped children?

The relational gap between authority and children is instilled within our society’s values. Youth are often associated with traits of naivety and even physical weakness. This is due to the expectation that the older person or mentor figure is supposed to take responsibility for the children’s safety. But what happens when a large group of kids loses this authority figure? The answer is the same as when you leave them unsupervised: they form their own cliques and choose their own leaders. Writers Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler study social dynamics between teens in their article “Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Preadolescent Clique.” They describe, “To begin this process, people at the top made sure that those directly below them remained firmly placed where they could count on them. Any defection, especially by the more popular members of a clique, could threaten their standing. Leaders often employed ma-





nipulation to hold clique members' attention and loyalty. Oswald et al. [1987] noted that one way in which children assert superiority over others and obligate them with loyalty is to offer them 'help, either materially or social-

ly" (Adler 152). The Adlers' description of how leaders take charge and maintain power is accurately displayed in both narratives. The theme of control is present in the pack mentality, as it remains necessary for surviving these harsh environments.

Before they crash into the Canadian wilderness, the Yellowjackets soccer team is used to the social structure of 90's high school dynamics. Their lives follow the rules of conventional society, and they listen to their main authority figures, Coach Martinez and Coach Scott. However, the person who has the most social influence is their team captain, Jackie Taylor, who's classic "pretty girl next door" popularity gives her power among her peers. In the pilot episode, Coach Martinez even calls Jackie in to remind her of her leadership abilities. He states, "Jackie, you possess something no one else on this team has: influence. When things get tough out there, those girls are going to need someone to guide them" (S 1, Ep 1, 17:40). At home, these characters provide security and structure, but things quickly turn around as the team finds itself strand-

ed in the woods. Coach Martinez's early death and the disfigurement of Coach Scott's right leg limit the amount of control the adults have.

Similar to the adults, the downfall of Jackie's influence is directly tied to her inability to adapt to this new lifestyle, making her vulnerable. Out in the wilderness, the girls' main priority is survival via labor and productivity—things that Jackie nor Coach Scott can provide. Thus, Lottie Matthews easily takes the group's attention as her schizophrenic-induced proph-



ecies provide spiritual comfort to many of the characters' fears.

She brings religious influence as she begins to deify the wilderness itself as its own entity. The wilderness then becomes something that the girls revere and want to appease for their survival. Lottie follows the Adlers' formula of leading cliques through her unique connection to the wilderness. This then be-

comes a valued asset that only she can provide, making her a spiritual leader among the girls. An example of Lottie's transition into leadership is displayed in the episode "Burial," where Lottie allows one of the principal characters, Shauna, to brutally and violently assault her as a way for Shauna to release her anger. This display of sacrifice earns Lottie social respect and fully converts everyone to the ways of the wilderness.

Furthermore, as the boys from *Lord of the Flies* wash up on the shore, they immediately look to and listen to the hierarchical social structure of what they are used to. Based on their usage of ranks and their soldier uniforms, it is inferable that the boys come from





a militaristic background. Their initial instinct is to follow the boy with the highest rank: Ralph. But similar to the Yellowjackets girls, hunger plays a critical role in who receives attention within the group. Once Ralph isn't available to provide the boys with security, comfort, or food, they immediately turn to the rebellious Jack, who embraces the feral lifestyle needed for survival. By following Jack, they can organize and build weapons in order to hunt the wild pigs that inhabit the island. With both Lottie and Jack, the groups they lead are able to feel safe and are both emotionally and physically fed. This trust is naturally gained through their

erence for "The Wilderness," and in *Lord of the Flies*, it is the fear caused by "The Monster." Both offer sacrifices, craft idols, and participate in rituals in the name of their new god-like idols.

Author Gavin Brown, in his 2003 journal article, "Theorizing Ritual as Performance: Explorations of Ritual Indeterminacy," describes the importance of ritualistic behavior within community spaces: "Rituals are meant to mean certain things: in a ritual, one assents to a given ideology or belief system because one is trapped within strong processes of conformity" (Brown 8). Brown's assessment fully aligns with how the everyday practices of the survivors within both narratives utilize these rituals as a way to normalize their behavior. One of *Lord of the Flies'*

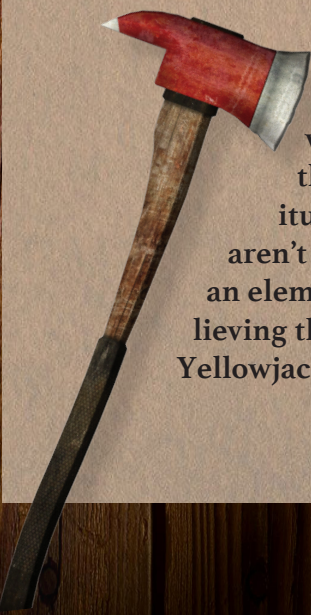
## YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

services and rejection of outward despair. They thrive in the wild, and it makes the others feel better about their dire situations. This hunger for comfort is powerful enough to go against the normality that Jackie and Ralph cling to.

In the typical nature of power, the social geography of group dynamics often gets shared and passed around as new ideas and feats persuade people to place their trust in others over time. This is the delicate relationship between

how control is gained and how it is maintained. However, in these narratives, one of the ways we see power sustained is through the use of religious/spiritual entities. Both of these stories aren't just based on survival but have an element that forces the kids into believing that their savagery is justified. In *Yellowjackets*, it is through the girls' rev-

most famous icons is the sacrifice the boys leave to the monster in the cave. The decapitated pig's head on a stick becomes a symbol of fear around which the boys' paranoia centers. In preparation for hunting the monster down, the boys perform a ritualistic dance around a fire, where they choose an individual to crawl on all fours while the rest of the group beats them with their makeshift spears. This level of cruelty and abuse is normalized out of fear for the imaginary monster. This aggression inevitably leads the boys to mistakenly believe that their friend Simon is the monster, as they accidentally kill him in cold blood—a behavior that they will soon intentionally repeat when dealing with people who disagree with the new status quo. In *Yellowjackets*, they justify their ritualistic bloodshed as a means of appeasing the wilderness. To them, the concept of sacrifice becomes sacred as they interpret any positive outcomes





as a reward for their reverence. In one of the most horrifying scenes in the show, they hunt down one of their principal characters in order to satisfy the group's collective starvation. As they do, they perform many rituals that liken them to animals. When confronted about their cannibalism of one of their own, one of the main characters, Van, states, "I'm not ashamed, Travis, I'm glad I'm alive" (S2, Ep 9, 21:06).

An interesting similarity shared between these stories is their use of clothing to represent their depravity and adaptability to their new environment. As their clothing becomes more and more tattered, they begin to match the climate of their surroundings. The girls in *Yellowjackets* face fierce winters and begin to use their distressed clothes along with animal hides to warm themselves. The boys' tropical environment converts their neat clothing to mostly loincloths. But what is particularly interesting is their use of cosmetics in their costuming. The boys paint each other with pig's blood to represent their tribalism, while the girls decorate themselves with animal-like features. Their clothing and rituals mean more than adjusting to their climate; they find comfort in feeling like they belong to their new environments. Despite the horrors that these children experience, the environments they build for themselves are without the safety of society but also its restrictions. The boys can freely play without the strictness of their militaristic lifestyles. Jack's ability to provide entertainment to the boys is another factor in convincing them to adopt his way. *Yellowjackets* displays open queer relationships and people that their 1996 world was extremely prejudiced against. But in the wilderness, sexuality doesn't

become something that anyone should be afraid of. These children lose their humanity due to the traumatic environments they are forced to deal with. The expression "You are what you eat" comes to mind, as both groups become so focused on surviving that they lose what makes them human. Ultimately, *Yellowjackets* and *Lord of the Flies*' characters lose their humanity just to see another day. This goes to show the importance of children needing systems where they feel comforted, where building positive relationships and community values is critical for adolescent development. In their hysteria caused by their traumatic circumstances, they eat and kill each other because they are afraid. These youths are forced to use their anger and ferocity as a way to prove that they have what it takes to survive. To fill this "hanger," we must recognize that it is not enough to simply feed children but to satisfy their appetite for belonging.



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2. Brown, Gavin. THEORIZING RITUAL AS PERFORMANCE: EXPLORATIONS OF RITUAL INDETERMINACY. *Journal of Ritual Studies*. Vol. 17, No. 1. 2003.
3. Hook, Harry. *Lord of the Flies*. Columbia Pictures. 1990.
4. Lyle, Ashley. Nickerson, Bart. *Yellowjackets*. Showtime. 2021.



# Music Break!

Created by Sophia Santana, Kathryn Mora, and Annette Mathew



**Youth**  
Daughter



**Kids**  
MGMT



**Like a Raspberry**  
宇宙ネコ子



**Once Upon a Dream**

Lana Del Ray



**Pretend**  
Alex G



**Lucky**  
Britney Spears



**Supernova**  
Liz Phair



**Hasta La Raíz**  
Natalia Lafourcade



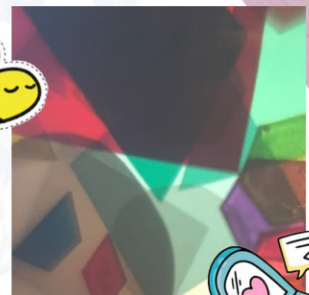
**Clara Bow**  
Taylor Swift



**Bitch**  
Allie X



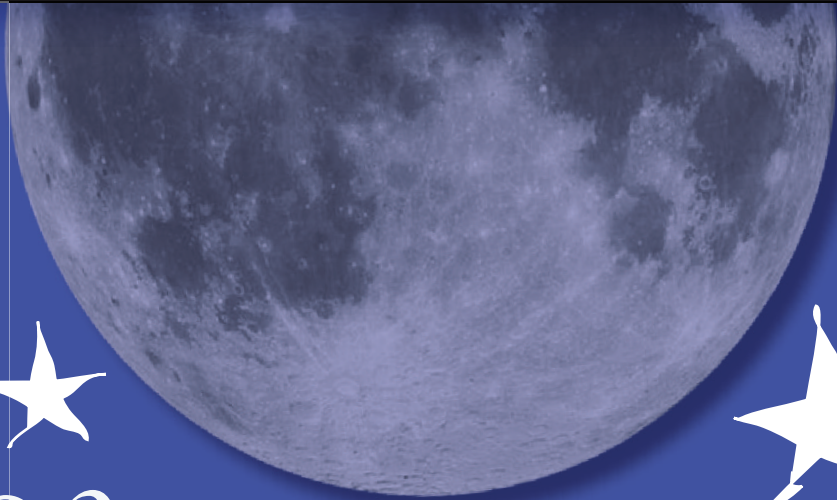
**Eyes Without a Face**  
Billy Idol



**Ribs**  
Lorde



# Bajo La Misma Luna



*Written By: Kathryn Mora*  
*Designed By: Claire Teymouri*

The first time I watched *Bajo La Misma Luna* (2007), it left me in shambles for over an hour. My chest felt so tight, and my face was soaked from the hour and forty five minutes that I spent crying. Maybe it was the actors' performances, or maybe it was the familiarity of the story and characters themselves; but it felt like a hole in my heart had been filled. It felt like I had spent my entire life searching for films that told stories I could see myself and my family in. Stories that shared the voices of people of color in an authentic and genuine way. *Bajo La Misma Luna* showed the world how crucial the stories of immigrants are, instead of criminalizing or 'blaming' them.

Released in 2007, *Bajo La Misma Luna* follows the story of Rosario (Kate del Castillo), a young mother who illegally crosses the border to the United States to provide for her son Carlitos (Adrian Alonso). Being left behind with his sick grandmother, Carlitos longs for the day he and his mother could be reunited. After 4 years apart, Rosario lives in Los Angeles and works as a housekeeper, but every Sunday, she calls Carlitos from the same pay phone. This weekly phone call becomes the lifeline between the mother and son, and though the distance is rough on both sides, Rosario reassures Carlitos that

she's working hard to bring him to Los Angeles so they can finally be together again. Back in Juchitepec, Mexico, Carlitos lives with his loving grandmother, and an aunt and uncle who only care about the money Rosario sends from LA.

In need of extra money, Carlitos works for the local coyote, Doña Carmen (Carmen Salinas), who organizes illicit border crossings. One day he meets siblings Martha (America Ferrera) and David (Jesse Garcia), who come to Doña Carmen for a job of driving people across the border. Overhearing this, Carlitos keeps this idea in the back of his head as he thinks more and more about his mom. After his grandmother unexpectedly dies on his ninth birthday, Carlitos overhears his aunt and uncle talking about gaining





Heights is a predominantly Hispanic community, full of rich culture and hardworking people. Though it doesn't get much screen time, seeing it in the film was a significant moment for many community members, including myself. This small-town neighborhood saw itself on the big screen in an accurate and empathetic lens, something that wasn't done often. *Bajo La Misma Luna* took a crucial story, one that many in my community could relate to, and made sure it was told.

Now, in 2025, with ICE raids happening all over California, history has yet again repeated itself. Just like we see in the film, families are being torn apart

custody of him to keep the money Rosario sends. Committed to reuniting with his mother, Carlitos pays the coyotes to help him cross the border. His journey is long and difficult, and while he makes it across the border safely, he gets separated from the coyotes and searches for his mother with the help of Enrique (Eugenio Derbez), another undocumented worker he meets and grows attached to. I could go on for pages about what happens to Carlitos and Enrique, but instead I'll give the main gist of the story: Enrique sacrifices himself to ICE officers in order for Carlitos to get away, and in the end, we are shown this beautiful scene of Carlitos and Rosario reconnecting after so long. Seeing each other at a crosswalk, Rosario frantically pushes the crossing button, and when the light turns green, the end credits begin to roll.

This end credit scene is unafraid to show the pain that is deeply embedded in these stories. All of the sacrifices that were made and the struggle that comes with these realities are woven into every second of this film, but especially the acting in the final scene. Maybe it's this sincerity in filmmaking that makes this movie so special; it took the story of so many and showed the depth and humanity within it.

This movie was filmed in both Mexico and Boyle Heights, Los Angeles (which happens to be my hometown). Boyle

“I had spent my entire life searching for films that told stories I could see myself and my family in.”

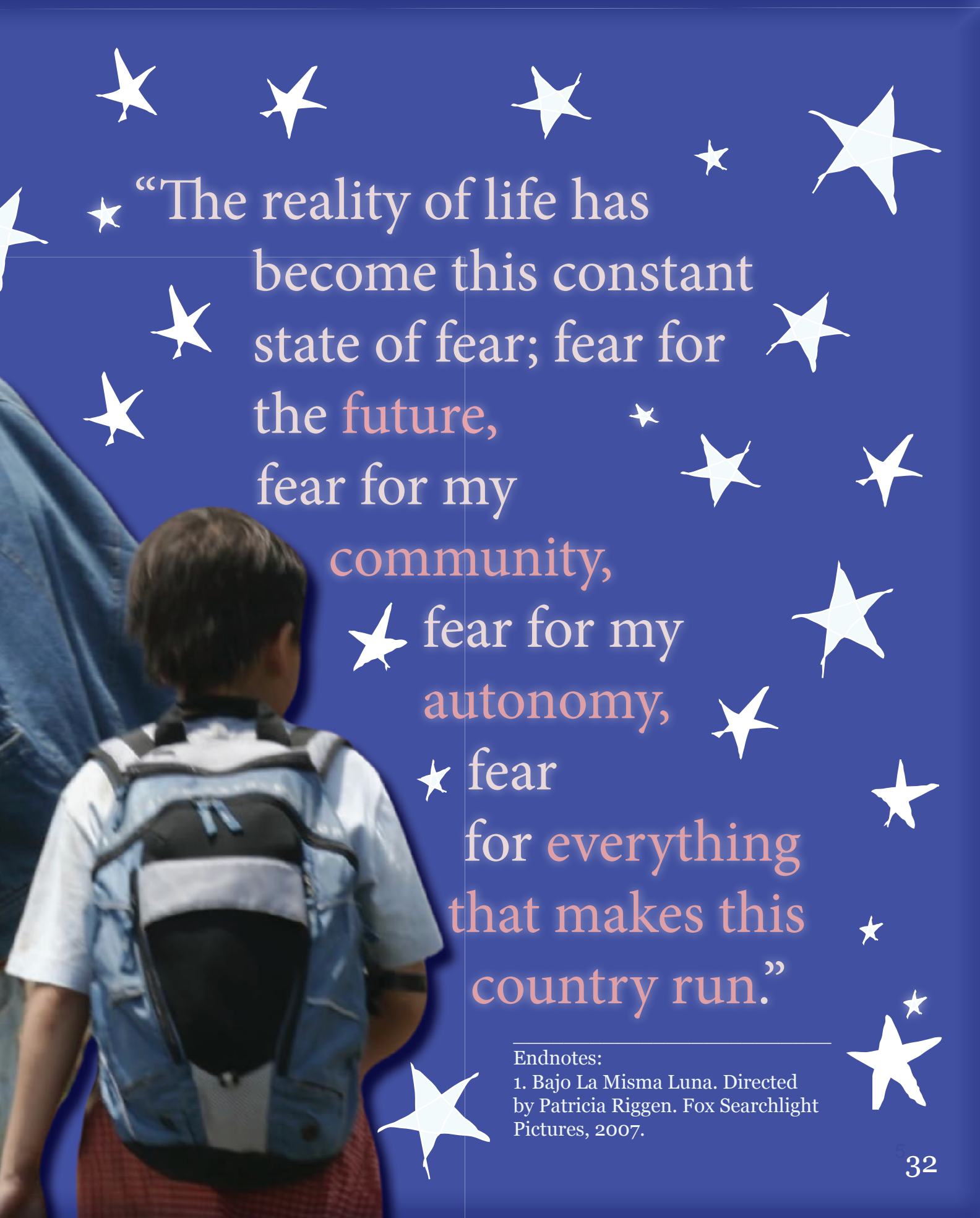


because of deportation orders. Beloved community spots in Boyle Heights that are usually full of bustling life and music, are empty. These driven, loving, and hardworking people have persevered through so much to provide for their families, and to build better lives than the ones they had to leave behind. All of their sacrifices and hardships get swept under the rug when ignorant, and racist leaders criminalize the existence of these human beings. Immigrants cannot be “illegal” on stolen land. This country is built on the backs of immigrants, yet, they’re treated like criminals and “problems.” The root of this issue is not that Americans are in “danger,” or that there’s a “border issue,” but that this country is built on racism and white supremacy. As long as we maintain that foundation as the building blocks of this country, we’ll forever live in a place that does not treat people of color like human beings, or worthy of equality. Ignorance flows out of the government like a decades old river. The choices our governmental officials make have historically failed people of color, and history just continues to repeat itself; racism has been rewritten as “patriotism.” We are living under a plutocracy that punishes people of color, and the working class. The reality of life has become this constant state of fear; fear for the future, fear for my community, fear for my autonomy, fear for everything that makes this country run.

These stories show the genuine hardships and sacrifices made by people of color to get the same opportunities white people are awarded at birth. It’s these stories, the ones that are so often silenced, that need to be told in film now more than ever. We are living through a historical time. It’s a time where rights that were fought for are being threatened to be taken away; a time where we most likely will be taking steps back into the conservative past. As discouraging as that

sounds, it’s this exact moment that we need to remain united, and fight for those who can’t. Creating films that tell the stories of all groups of people, whether that be undocumented folks, people of color, queer people, etc., is one step towards fighting against the inequality they face every single day and creating a world that values differences rather than discriminating against them.





“The reality of life has  
become this constant  
state of fear; fear for  
the future,  
fear for my  
community,  
fear for my  
autonomy,  
fear  
for everything  
that makes this  
country run.”

Endnotes:

1. Bajo La Misma Luna. Directed by Patricia Rikken. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2007.

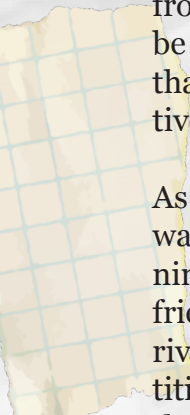


# Girls in Pop Culture!



Written by Lena Szerwo Designed by Kathleen Balaioing

Do you ever decide on some random evening, when every show looks boring and you're aimlessly scrolling, to rewatch something? A little tile catches your eye - a name surfaces from your childhood. You've watched this before! Why not again, as an adult? But wait, rewatching media from one's youth is always very risky - will it be as you remember it, or will you discover that something you once loved is now objectively bad, or worse, wildly problematic?



As a child and teenager I was (and still am) a watcher of "girls" shows - usually long-running, female main characters, and themes of friendship, romance, and coming of age. I derived comfort from the expected and the repetition. But what was I actually absorbing from the shows? Or internalizing? Some such series that I have rewatched in college are *Gilmore Girls* (2000-2007), *Gossip Girl* (2007-2012), and *Derry Girls* (2018-2022). I now put forth the case to you to watch these shows, and reflect on the media that you have consumed as a child. Through analyzing shows across a two-decade time span, each featuring female leads and strong friendships between women, we can see how media has changed to reflect the time it was created in and the growing feminist movement in film and society. Each show I watched in my youth and have subsequently rewatched, allowing for comparison and critique as my views have changed.

## Case 1: *Gilmore Girls*

I may be too bold to say that everyone has heard of this, but indeed who hasn't?

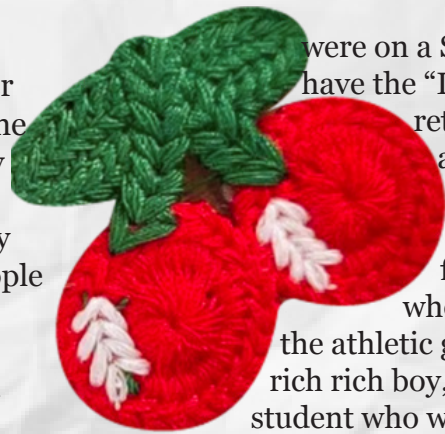
From writer Amy Sherman-Palladino comes a slice-of-life, small town rom-com about Rory Gilmore and her mother Lorelai, who had her as a teenager. The story follows Rory as she attends a private school, fortunately funded by her grandparents, which subsequently propels her into a prestigious college. I think what keeps me coming back to this series is the feeling of home and nostalgia, infused with that 2000s charm. This story signifies hope and the tumultuous feelings that many Americans were feeling at the time - the start of the new century encouraged an optimism in the people as the "Y2K" crisis, the potential apocalypse, was avoided. The 90's and 2000's witnessed a technological boom and the growth of a consumer economy, yet political polarization was rising and recessions growing in scale.



One of *Gilmore Girls*' hallmarks is its many references and fast-talking pace, clocking in at 167.8 words per minute according to a study by WordFinderX. This high speed helps create the impression of witty banter and keeps the watcher intrigued, as most of the show focuses on characters' lives and the way they navigate them, rather than huge plot twists (although there are definitely a few thrown in there). *Gilmore Girls*' success is in its ability to produce such a strong aesthetic - New England fall, studying in hardwood halls, books, coffee, and growing up in a small town where everyone knows each other in a good way. People watch this show to take part in this



community, and those who grew up in and around the 2000's are reminded of "simpler times." Rewatching this show led me to some critical findings: the relationships were way more toxic than I realized. The lack of communication and guilt-tripping from one party to another is not a good example of what people should do in real life, but it sure makes good TV! It is also disheartening to see Lane Kim, Rory's best friend of Korean descent, pushed into roles our main character Rory never has to face. This is not to say that Lane's agency is taken away - she always stands by herself - but I wish she was given the chance to flourish and live out some more of her dreams. This seems to reflect the issue of racial erasure in film, as Lane had the chance to be a standout character but is relegated to the sidelines. Additionally, the portrayal of Lane's mother falls back on exaggerated stereotypes that don't reflect the nuances of Asian-American households. While *Gilmore Girls* focuses on one mother-daughter relationship, it lets another fall through the cracks. Still, it is a classic and does do a lot right in portraying complex relationships and parental dynamics.



were on a SWAT team. You have the "It" girl who has returned to New York after a mysterious disappearance, her cold-hearted best friend who runs the school, the athletic golden boy, the cocky rich rich boy, the scholarship student who wants to make something of himself, and a host of other memorable characters. This show's ability to create such vivid imagery is its main accomplishment, and its affluent undertones reflect the upwards trend of the American economy coming out of the recession — wealth was back, baby. The women are the stars of the show, and at the heart of it is their friendship, love, and life trajectories (to say character growth would probably be a mistake).

## Case 2: Gossip Girls



Next up on the watchlist is *Gossip Girl*, chock-full of New York air, rich people, class debates, and drama. This is a show that you have to approach as dramatic satire because some of it just gets so crazy, it's laughable. No matter what, you will be entertained. Rich high schoolers on the Upper East Side go through love and life while a blogger, "*Gossip Girl*," anonymously posts about them, dropping truth bombs that our characters couldn't avoid even if they

This show handles a lot of heavy themes that went over my head as a kid, but now stand out starkly; there is some really intimate coverage of eating disorders and the toll they play on many young girls. Surprisingly, there's a well-fleshed-out queer character but many homophobic (and other insensitive) jokes are made over the show's runtime. Doubly, there's a lot of dubious consent and I think some of the characters definitely did not make up for it. I still haven't finished my college rewatch of this series but I certainly appreciate its escapist role in the media I consume. Maybe you'll enjoy it too, if you dare.

"You know you love me  
XOXO Gossip Girl."



## Case 3: Derry Girls

I have been waiting throughout this whole article to talk about this show – that’s how good it is. *Derry Girls* is an Irish comedy about teens growing up in war-filled, 1990s Northern Ireland, and it manages to masterfully portray the perseverance of everyday life even during dark times. People will always be people, and for the *Derry Girls*, contentiously including the British James, life will not be put on hold.

"People will always be people, and for the *Derry Girls*, contentiously including the British James, life will not be put on hold."

I think many flock to this show because of its authenticity - despite the despairs of life, people will always find something to smile about (and this something is usually found amongst a group of friends). Offbeat humor and plenty of Irish accents keep this show going, and its easily-consumable 20-minute episodes certainly help. As a non-Irish viewer you may learn a thing or two, but what we all do share is adolescence: being crazy, stupid, and free together, which is beautifully captured in the series. I think Lisa McGee understands that, for most people, being a teenager wasn't wild in a partying-all-the-time way, but more of a longing and feeling-too-much sort of way.

I've lost count of how many times I've watched *Derry Girls* over the years, despite its recency. The plot threads weave together nicely but episodes can stand alone. Additionally, the nostalgia factor



does increase the farther away in time I get from being a true “teenager.” I think the great thing about this show is that youthfulness really does seem to be a state of mind and not a place in time.

My one critique is that this show wasn't long enough. In all seriousness though, I think *Derry Girls* does a great job of taking people from different walks of life and fitting them together. Despite the almost-all-white cast (befitting of Derry, Ireland) many people can relate to familial troubles, a political backdrop of turmoil, religious differences as deciding factors in one's lives, and feeling different. Even though *Derry Girls* is set in the 90s, the fact that it was made presently shines through in its centralizing of female characters who aren't afraid to curse and be loud. I'd like to make a side note here that there is also a wonderful bit of queer representation that doesn't feel forced, and is a great addition to the overall theme of growing up and finding oneself. Cue “Dreams” by The Cranberries!

## Moving On: More TV Shows

In tandem with the theme of shows watched in my childhood, an honorable mention must be made: *Strong Girl Bong-soon* (*Himsenyeoja Do Bong-sun*) (2017). This is a Korean drama about a woman with superpowers who is hired as a rich man's undercover bodyguard, in a fun reversal of the damsel-in-distress trope. The female main character has a very dynamic and healthy relationship with the lead love-interest; she is independent yet often immature and still growing throughout the show.





I learned about other cultures, language, and history, especially with shows such as *Story Of A Brave Woman – Queen Of Jhansi (Ek Veer Stree Ki Kahaani - Jhansi Ki Rani)* (2009-2011), an Indian historical drama about Lakshmi Bai, who becomes the queen of Jhansi at a young age. This show especially helped usurp the central American worldview that I held, as the colonial British are the main (and rightful) antagonists.

"Foreign media helps expand the sphere of representation and the portrayal of the world's stories, something Western media often still lacks."

Most of the shows I've discussed have a predominantly white cast, and for shows geared toward American audiences, many people will not find themselves represented. In seeking out more "girls" shows with wider representation, some contemporary additions recommended from the broader film community are:

*Brown Girls* (2018): Focuses on the friendship of two women of color who come from different backgrounds in Chicago.

*Girls from Ipanema (Coisa Mais Linda)* (2019-2020): Set in 1950s Brazil, a young woman starts a club in Rio de Janeiro with her female friends after her husband leaves her.

*The Sex Lives of College Girls* (2021-2025): Four roommates must learn how to navigate their new freedom on the well-known campus of Essex

### Endnotes

1. *Brown Girls*. 2017. Created by Fatimah Asghar. Directed by Sam Bailey. Aired on Open TV.
2. *Derry Girls*. 2018–2022. Created by Lisa McGee. Aired on Channel 4.
3. *Story Of A Brave Woman – Queen Of Jhansi*. 2009–2011. Directed by Jitendra Srivastava and Dharmesh Shah. Aired on Zee TV.
4. *Gilmore Girls*. 2000–2007. Created by Amy Sherman-Palladino. Aired on The WB and The CW.
5. *Girls from Ipanema*. 2019–2020. Created by Giuliano Cedroni and Heather Roth. Aired on Netflix.
6. *Gossip Girl*. 2007–2012. Developed by Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage. Aired on The CW.
7. *Strong Girl Bong-soon*. 2017. Directed by Lee Hyung-min. Written by Baek Mi-kyeong. Aired on JTBC.
8. *The Sex Lives of College Girls*. 2021–2025. Created by Mindy Kaling and Justin Noble. Aired on HBO Max.
9. *Wordfinder X*. "The Most Difficult TV Shows." *WordFinder X*. 2022. Accessed 17 Feb. 2025. <https://wordfinderx.com/blog/subtitles-readability-study/>.

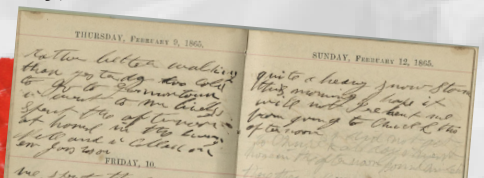


College. Additionally, we must ask ourselves what roles sexism has played in the media and its intersectionality with race and ethnicity. Women's stories are often not given the same focus as men's, and I wanted to write about these shows to celebrate girlhood, and the reclaiming of femininity when it is often stereotyped or undervalued. Media must take responsibility, or rather those who produce and consume it, as viewers' young lives are shaped by it.

The TV shows I've discussed are fundamental case studies in shows about women, reflecting the rise in feminism and the constantly shifting times of the past two decades. These series are full of women, friendship, and life, no matter how fantastical or unrealistic, and people being human and flawed. "Rom-coms," "dramedies," and the like offer us an escape and simultaneous look into reality that can give us a smile.

"Even though I've referred to the shows in this article as 'girls' shows, they are very much for everyone."

These seemingly "silly" series provide comfort, role models, and hope for the future. There's a trust in people that is established, and tangibly at that — jobs are created for people in the creative industries, and people can work on making things that matter. Storytelling is innate to humanity, and as children we certainly know that. When we grow up sometimes we just need a TV show or two to remind us.



# Girlly Cannibalism

Written by: Tírean Harvey

Designed by: Yenting Lin

## IT'S A GIRL EAT GIRL WORLD

I've cared more about women than I ever cared about men. I've hated women so much more deeply than I've hated a man. I have hated men the way I hate my friend's old dog that bit me. I have hated women for being everything I wish I was. For being closer to perfect, for being cooler, more nonchalant, for getting more attention, being smarter, prettier, more easy going. For something within them that is intangible.

The idea of cannibalism specifically surrounding the experience of growing up as a woman takes into account the idea of violence against women. During adolescence young women are being introduced to the dangers that the world has to offer. Young women are being shown the violence that women have been subject to. These cannibalistic stories are a response to this. You could say that these stories are reclaiming violence and turning it into something beautiful, intimate, and disgusting. The girls crave something more exciting, more complex, and with higher stakes.

These films show us two types of girls who are victims of girlhood: the idols and the idolizers. They take on similar characteristics like a madonna and a whore but both are ostracized, victimized, and told they are not being the right kind of girl. The idol: a mean girl who is beautiful and confident. She is untamed and afraid of what being a woman brings. She understands that womanhood means violence; it's a dog eat dog world. She embraces this power and uses it to get ahead. This position makes her harsh, honest but cruel. She tears down the girl closest to her in an attempt to mold her into an idol as well, or because she is desperate to be a different girl... something more innocent, with an attitude that's more acceptable, safer.

Our other girl is the idolizer or the prude or the madonna. She is quietly beautiful, keeping to herself and giving up the spotlight to instead inhabit the shadow. She is the brunt of the joke by the idol, but takes the cruelty in stride. Love for her is cruel. She is modest and resisting of puberty and adulthood although she idealizes the idol in their friendship. She is afraid of sexuality and views it as something to be ashamed of and to hide. Both are victims of the teen experience. They are told to be someone they are not. As women, they are put into boxes and told that they are wrong, no matter the choices they make. These desire are seen as impure and taboo. Through the media, these character's shame and desire gets amplified as something monstrous and carnal: cannibalism.

DO I WANT TO  
BE HER? OR BE  
WITH HER?

Violence, anger, being untamed are things that are expected of young men. Growing up as a young woman, I found that these things were quiet and shameful feelings that were often laughed at. I felt that I was otherworldly when I was young, because I was just so angry and so emotional.

Classic puberty feelings. It should be comforting to hear that everyone feels like this growing up, but it never felt comforting to me. I felt like I had something fundamentally broken within me. I felt alone in the feeling.

Cannibalism is fun. It's a fun concept. I think that it scratches an itch for me as a viewer because, as an angry girl in my youth, I wanted to be off putting, I wanted to accept that I was never getting the approval of those around me and I wanted to defy my position as a vulnerable young girl. Girly cannibalism is an exaggerated defiance against this. Being socialized as a young girl means being given warnings of the truth of how you are seen in the world. I was small, naive, a victim in waiting. That blows chunks, I want to be a wild beast.

Girly cannibalism is all about personifying the fears and confusion of youth as a girl and just running with it

Everyone hates the mean girl. Jennifer Check is a classic mean girl. She flaunts her beauty and wears her sexuality on the sleeve of her skin tight shirt. Through the halls as boys try to work up the courage as she walks. She cuts down Needy constantly. But this is just how their friendship goes, it's cruelty masking love masking hatred. Girls aren't supposed to know they are hot, that's too much power. It has always been this way, ancient greek statues of nude women are almost always paired with bathing supplies to prove that she didn't mean to be seen, you've caught her. Or in a more contemporary example: "You don't know you're beautiful, that's what makes you beautiful."

Jennifer's power through her sexuality is her statement saying she knows her position in society as a sexual object; which scares the men around her, but doesn't save her from being a victim of the culture. Let's not forget: she's still a kid. This power she holds is just a facade.

Her innocent nature is taken advantage of when she is taken by the boy band that sacrifices her for the success of their band. In an analytical sense, she is punished for being young, beautiful, and sexual.

## JENNIFER'S HUNGER: WHAT DOES IT REPRESENT?



Jennifer becomes a demon cannibal who eats boys. To her it is a gift, it frees her from the curses of girlhood. She is no longer a victim in waiting---She is a predator in more ways than one.

Jennifer's cannibalism is tied to menstruation. Before blood spills she is dull, lifeless, sick, and horny.

Needy is the best friend of the mean girl. She's an innocent and kind, sexually repressed madonna. Jennifer and Needy are cruel to each other, but closer than anyone can understand. These kinds of adolescent relationships are the ones that can ruin a good day or traumatize you for life. Jennifer means everything to Needy, and vice versa. This is shown through a psychic sort of twin connection between them. Needy understands Jennifer on a deeper level that others cannot see. When Jennifer begins her monstrous journey she confides in Needy that she didn't gain "power" until she became a victim. Her innocence was taken away from her, and only Needy gets to see the soft underbelly of the beast. Jennifer's relationship to Needy is paradoxical---She calls her "Needy" to cover up that Needy is all she has. She has the power to consume and take whatever she wants but she can't have Needy. She can't have Needy or destroy her, so she takes to destroying everything around her in a desperate act to be closer.

# OBVIOUSLY GIRLS SHOULD BE SEXUAL ENOUGH TO GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT, BUT THEY SHOULDN'T ENJOY IT, THAT'S DISGUSTING.

"Jeff" is the perfect boyfriend. The first time we see Jackie, she is getting a very displeasing handjob from her perfect boyfriend. When Jackie gets in Shauna's car, she is fired up immediately. She is yelling about nationals, screaming "fuck you" to the sign cheering on the boys. These girls are under-respected and underutilized.



Shauna is obsessed with Jackie---she loves her and kind of hates her. Their relationship is cruel, in the playful and half truthful way that teen girls treat each other. Jackie shits on Shauna's outfit choices and Shauna is fucking Jackie's boyfriend behind her back. Shauna wants to be Jackie. She has something untamed within her. She is a champion on her team and she knows she can be a leader. Jackie represents something to her, something that brings out desire. Does she want Jackie's life or does she want to be with her? Shauna says to a lifeless Jackie that she has kept as a doll that she only slept with Jeff so that she could pretend she was Jackie. We've seen this before, maybe we've all had that girl in our lives. That girl that lights up a room. She is gorgeous, funny, charismatic, and seemingly effortless as she floats through life. Maybe if she chooses you, everyone else will too. Maybe you'll wear her skin and become her. Maybe you'll be so close that one day, you'll fuse together and what is hers will be yours. Shauna's jealousy of Jackie builds into a desire and a violence. Shauna's love for Jackie is so strong that it

looms around her, she holds it in her until it curdles and turns to hate. When the cannibalism takes place, she is finally able to have Jackie in a carnal and perverse way.

## JUSTINE IN RAW

Raw takes on the same innocent and perverted relationship between women coming of age through a story of sisters. Justine is the wonder child/girl next door. She is naive and being ushered into a new world of sexuality and depravity. She gets her first tastes of adulthood and her first taste of meat, pushed by her older sister, Alex. After, she is consumed by a hunger for human flesh. Justine's cannibalism represents blossoming sexuality in a space where this is shameful for women.

The scene that best displays this is the paint scene. Justine walks in a room and is covered in blue paint. An upper-classman brings a man covered in yellow paint and forces both of them into a bathroom saying "Don't come out until you both are green." In the bathroom the man pushes Justine to kiss him,

grabbing her and telling her that it is okay and he will go slow.

Justine is timid at first but accepts the invitation.

Unable to suppress the hunger, she bites a chunk of his lip off. Her classmates are horrified.

Her sexuality is posed as something disgusting and untamable. Carnal attitudes are celebrated in these sweaty, gorgeously lit party scenes but when Justine adds to the carnage the men around her turn on her. Because obviously girls should be sexual enough to give the people what they want but they shouldn't enjoy it, that's disgusting.

Alex acts as the mean girl in the story, sexually open and proud of it. She is also leading Justine on her cannibal journey. Both of them share a hunger that is insatiable and Alex tries to show Justine how to feed it. This is a take on girly cannibalism that shows sisterhood more than sexual desire.

Womanhood brings about carnage and horror in the eyes of a young girl, but in Justine's case, Alex is there to help.

Raw takes an interesting position at the end of the film, showing us that the parents knew about the hunger. The father describes his daughter as a victim of the untamable curse of womanhood saying, "she got too used to being herself." This made me reflect on the cruelty that grows from the intense feelings of love and desire. Why do we hurt those we love the most? Can you grow out of the cruelty found in girlhood? Should we try to tame the hunger, or should we find someone who can manage?

## FOOTNOTES:

Fox Atomic presents a Dubiecki/Novick/Reitman production ; produced by Mason Novick, Daniel Dubiecki, Jason Reitman ; written by Diablo Cody ; directed by Karyn Kusama. Jennifer's Body. Beverly Hills, Calif. :20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2009.

Yellowjackets [United States] Melanie, Lynskey et al. : Showtime, 2022.

Raw, directed by Julia Ducournau (Wild Bunch, 2016)

Tabitha Wilson, "The Rise of Girly Cannibalism," Dilettante Magazine (blog), June 13, 2024, <https://www.magdilettante.com/post/the-rise-of-girly-cannibalism>.

Tyler Foggatt, "Yellowjackets, and the Problem of Women Eating One Another," The New Yorker, April 11, 2023, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/yellowjackets-and-the-problem-of-women-eating-one-another>.

Alex Godfrey, "Raw Director Julia Ducournau: 'Cannibalism Is Part of Humanity,'" The Guardian, December 3, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/mar/30/raw-director-julia-ducournau-cannibalism-is-part-of-humanity>.



# Fables in Film: Childhood Through a Dark Mirror

Layout By: Manuel Garcia Written By: Erin Coffing

*In* fables, youth is seen through a macabre lens. The powerlessness that comes with being young and 'inexperienced with the realities of the world' is its own kind of horror. A collection of films take the inspiration and logic of dark fairytales to depict youth in a uniquely tragic light; through the adaptation of the distinctive characteristics of fables, they portray the often-overlooked facets of childhood. As one of the oldest forms of storytelling, fables carry a unique position within current media. The prototypical fable is regarded as too simplistic

and formulaic in its straightforward narrative structure and overt moral. However, fables have come to shape our current understanding of stories. The modern fairytale takes the

legacy of the original and shapes it to fit modern fears. The following films, in one way or another, reform the narrative of childhood.

Youth is Grimm in Charles Laughton's *The Night of the Hunter* (Laughton, 1955), a film from the point of view of two small children—an older brother and a younger sister. The film follows the fantasy trope of the disbelieved children who are the only ones who perceive the darkness of the much beloved Reverend who's new in town. A prolific murderer and religious zealot, Reverend Harry Powell seeks to gain the children's trust

to attain the whereabouts of their father's stolen loot. The film begins with children singing and playing outside, a heart-warming sight until they come upon the body of a dead woman, one of Reverend Powell's victims. The movie constantly plays within the intersection of blissful youth and the dark human

forces that threaten their safety.

The film begins with children singing and playing outside, a heart-warming sight until they come upon the body of a dead woman, one of Reverend Powell's victims. The movie constantly plays within the intersection of blissful youth and the dark human forces that threaten their safety. Ms. Cooper's shotgun, scrambling under the hands of the officers who she had earlier called in. John rushes out, ripping the stashed money out from Pearl's cloth doll and throwing it against Powell while tears stream down his face. "I don't want it!" he screams, falling to his knees.

The film narrates the fears of youth in a sincere way that is a staple of classic dark fables. The Criterion Collection calls it "A horror movie with qualities of a Grimm fairy tale." The children, faced with the evil of men, reject their father's wish and start to live for themselves.

Although Reverend Powell serves as the physical perpetrator of evil, it was the sins of the father, the familial curse that led them down the road of loss and pain. This fabulistic trope is drawn from the archetypal appearance of the "Evil Stepmother" and "Negligent Father" in fairytales. But, it was the kindheartedness and strength of their surrogate mother who saved them. Unlike many stories of its origins, this tale has a happy ending.

Much like *The Night of the Hunter*, the '60s cult-classic, *Eyes Without a Face* (Franju, 1960), views youth through a dark perspective. After a car accident that leaves a surgeon's daughter disfigured, he attempts to right his wrong by kidnapping and stealing young women's faces to artificially graft onto his daughter's. His plan unravels as his daughter begins to find out the morbid truth.

This ghastly plot is the most striking resemblance between the film and a dark fairytale. Grimm tales are filled with

beheadings, murder, even cannibalism, but especially the corruption of youth. In *Eyes Without a Face*, Christiane's white plaster mask reminds us of this corruption. Youth defaced within the hands of a dark and uncaring reality. The film follows a tradition of French Fantasy that had petered out following the trend towards "serious cinema" in the 60s. Franju, however, was unafraid to blend the genre of the fantastique and ghastly reality—what film analyst David Kalat calls "fairy-tale realism." The black-and-white cinematography and striking frames invoke this feeling of a lucid fantasy.

In fairytales and as in real life, children are smaller, weaker, and more vulnerable. They are put at a disadvantage compared to their more life-experienced counterparts.

Though, like Christiane, their strengths lie in their purity of heart. Her essentially good-natured soul puts her at odds with her guilt-ridden

father, motivated by shame rather than by love for his daughter. Like the previous film, the appearance of animals serves as symbols of the fantastical. The dichotomy between her father's caged dogs and silent doves reflects the same conflict between the brutality and innocence of father and daughter.

Again (as in *The Night of the Hunter*), the sins of the father are placed upon his kin. Christiane, horrified by her father's actions, is thrust into the position of the heroine—the eternal struggle of good and evil resurrected in her plight against her father.

Disillusioned by her father's act, Christiane frees his most recent victim, kills his assistant, and releases the dogs and doves from their cages. Finally, Christiane is welcomed into the forest, escaping into the darkness along with the freed doves. The final shot:

Christiane, back facing the screen beside a leafless tree reminiscent of a fantasy book illustration. Here, the struggles of growing



up are explored in explicit detail. The inevitable loss of innocence is an integral aspect of growing up. All of us must grow and enter the unknown as Christiane does.

The protagonists of fairy tales are often explorers of a world unknown to them. Whether it's Alice, Gretel, or the sisters of "The Juniper Tree," these protagonists are often young girls. Following this legacy, the protagonist of *Suspiria* (Argento, 1977), Suzy, starts to uncover the dark secret hiding beneath the surface. She's a young American girl accepted into the world-renowned ballet academy in Germany (home of Hansel & Gretel), where she discovers the wicked secret hiding behind the academy's pink-painted walls. Childlike wonder clouds her clarity of judgment.

Following the same characteristics of a fable, *Suspiria* calls on the same tropes of a dark fairytale—images of a wide-eyed girl stumbling down red-drenched hallways, reminiscent of a modernized Grimm's tale. The plot follows the sequential nature of fairy tales, events intensifying as more is uncovered about the occultist origins of the academy.

While the cinematography of *The Night of the Hunter* is muted and gritty, *Suspiria* projects the perils of youth through vivid colors. Fluorescent pinks and greens accompany Suzy as she enters the academy. The cinematography is meant to absorb the viewer into a world of youthful horror. In an interview, the director, Dario Argento explains his use of color: "to immediately make *Suspiria* a total abstraction from what we call 'everyday reality,' I used the usually-reassuring primary colors only in their purest essence, making them immediately, surprisingly violent, and placed upon his kin. Christiane, horrified by her father's actions, is thrust into the position of the heroine—the eternal struggle of good and evil resurrected in her plight against her father.

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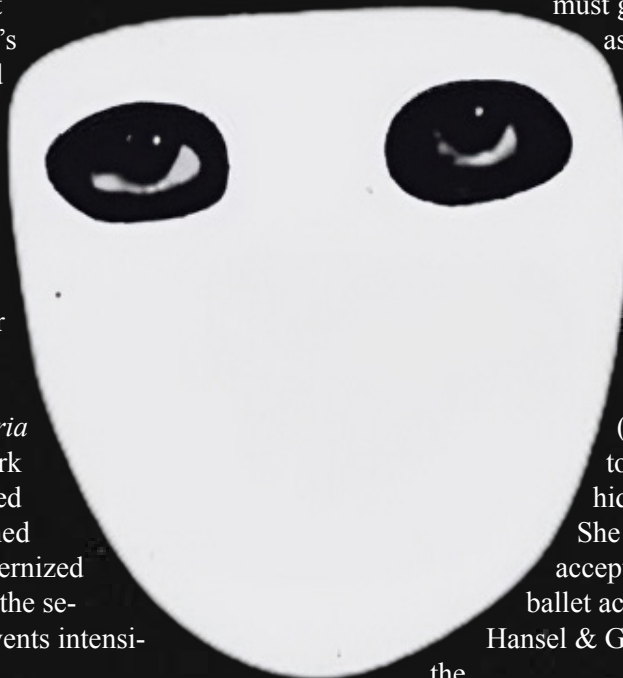
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USING SURREALISM REVEALS THE UNIQUE ABILITY  
OF FANTASY TO DEPICT REALITY AND SET THE  
FEARS OF YOUTH IN VIVID COLOR

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gento explains his use of color: “to immediately make *Suspiria* a total abstraction from what we call ‘everyday reality,’ I used the usually-reassuring primary colors only in their purest essence, making them immediately, surprisingly violent, and Fables are traditionally meant to teach children a lesson. But instead, these films reveal that adults themselves don’t have all the answers. They hold up a black mirror from which we see our own dark reality reflected.

ENDNOTES:

1. “The Night of the Hunter.” The Criterion Collection.
2. Kalat David. “Eyes without a Face: The Unreal Reality.” The Criterion Collection, 16 Oct. 2016.
3. “*Suspiria* Explained (1977).” Film Colossus, 11 June 2024.
4. Pasternack, Jesse. “‘Malefic, Negative and Destructive:’ *Suspiria* (1977) as Fairy Tale Horror.” *Establishing Shot*, 12 Oct. 2022.
5. *The Night of The Hunter*. Directed by Charles Laughton, Paul Gregory Productions, 1955.
6. *Eyes Without a Face*. Directed by Georges Franju, Criterion Collection, 1960.
7. *Suspiria*. Directed by Dario Argento, 20th Century Fox, 1977.

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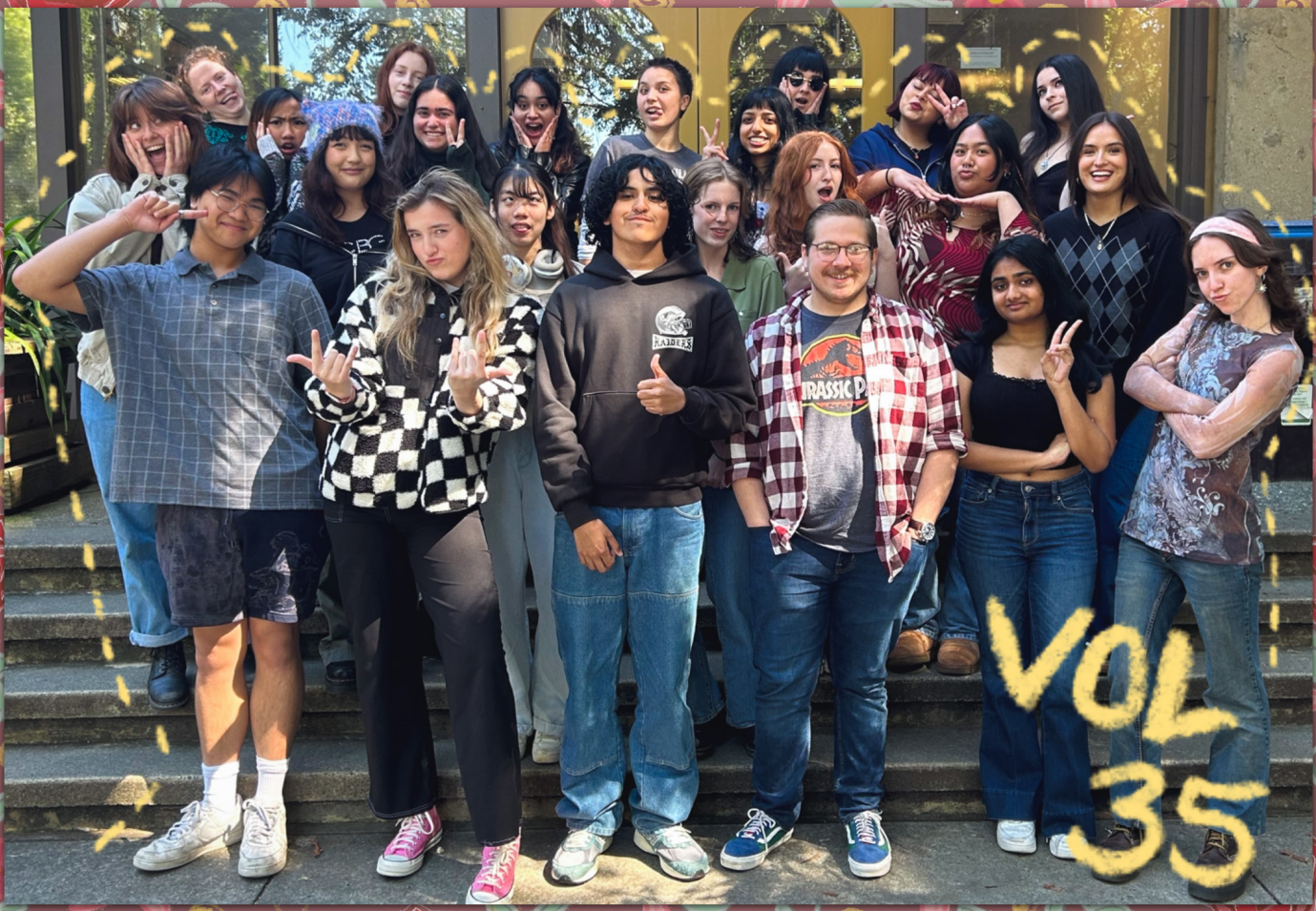


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plants need to require less maintenance  
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if it is on the dry side or if it retains  
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it perennials for your shade.

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Alexandra Guerrero

PLUR



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Phoebe Retting

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Andrea Martinez

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Con amor,  
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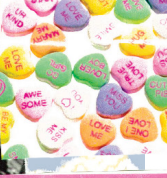
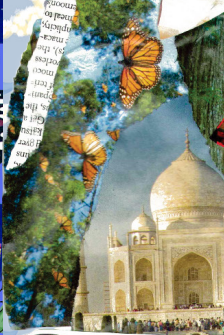
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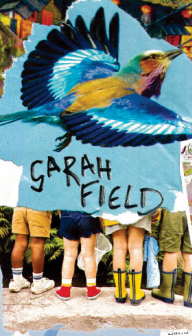


KITTY CON: A SINGULAR EVENT  
When Kitty turned 40 in 2014, thousands of fans flocked to Kitty Con in Los Angeles for workshops, lectures, a fashion exhibit, tattoo opportunities, and panel discussions. Clockwise from top left: Keith Nance and his wife, Carolina; Jennifer Masoony and Jaycee Castillo; a man dressed as Bugs Bunny; Kitty activity time; fans; and more fans.

SUN TIME

Nora Ligotti

Audrey Guess



GARAH FIELD



SOPHIA COFFING

A KID CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

Wendy



Mind



Goplna Santana

Lia DeForce-Martini

Tieran Harvey

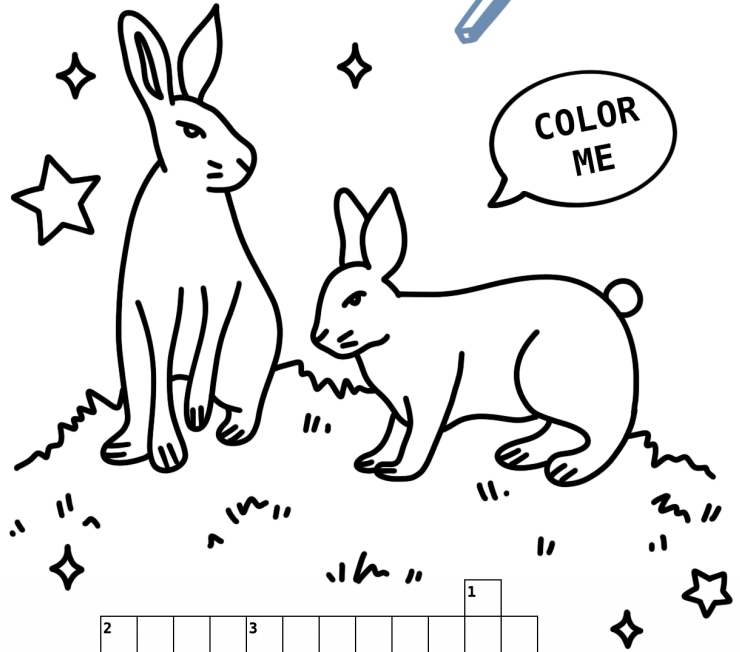


# EYE CANDY

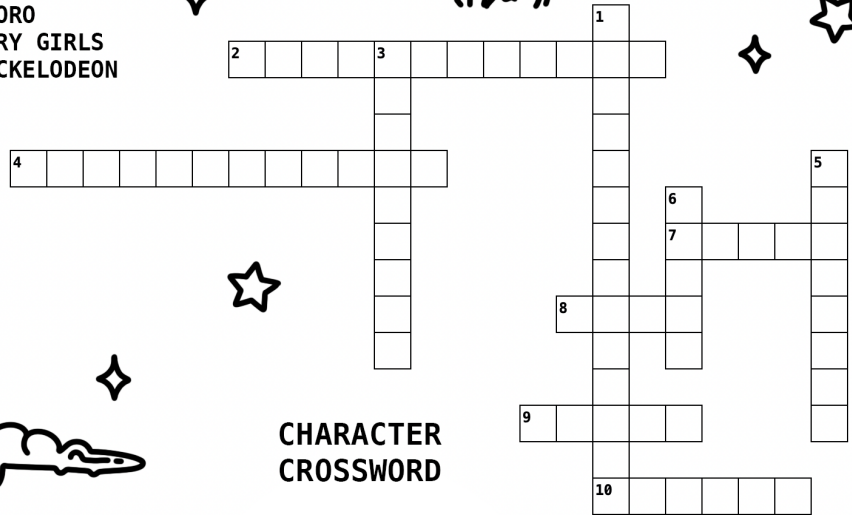
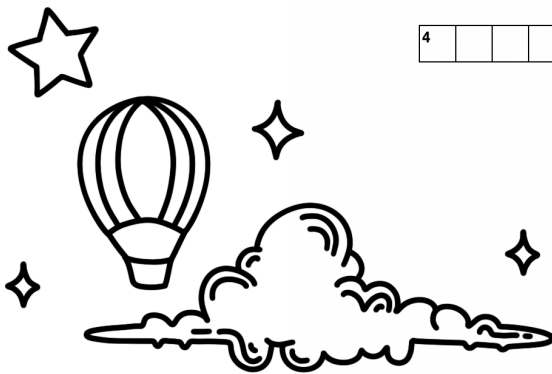
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## ACTIVITIES PAGE



- VIOLET PERFUME
- BAJO LA MISMA LUNA
- YELLOWJACKETS
- ADVENTURE TIME
- SESAME STREET
- SUSPIRIA
- MULAN
- TOTORO
- DERRY GIRLS
- NICKELODEON



### CHARACTER CROSSWORD

#### ACROSS

- 1998 Parent Trap Star
- Peanuts' Main Character
- Famous Twins
- Young Protagonist of Gilmore Girls
- First Boy Sacrifice in the Lord of the Flies
- Villian of Spirited Away

#### DOWN

- Padmé actress in the Star Wars Prequel
- First Disney Princess
- \_\_\_'s Body
- Miyazaki's Beloved Pink and Orange Character