

Why I Am Different

As a middle class white girl who owns more than a few Abercrombie shirts and can sing along knowledgably to Miley Cyrus, I must confess there is little that makes me different from my kind. I say my *kind* not for lack of a better word, but because I truly believe that the middle class white girl is becoming a kind. We are growing in numbers, slowly depleting the earth of its supply of North Face jackets and Uggs. We inhabit the malls of America, lurking in the dark shadows of Hollister, a store that expects to be recognized primarily from the stench of its signature perfume, sprayed all over the store by an employee hired specifically for the purpose of spraying its signature perfume. We middle class white girls have noses trained for this specific purpose: built-in store locators. We have honed our senses over the years, as the only other ways to recognize Hollister are from the blinds on its front windows, installed to try and keep out the incandescent light radiating from the mall, and the fat people.

You can also find us girls in Claire's, purchasing cheap earrings shaped like strawberries, and blackening our waterlines with eyeliner. This is part of our rediscovering of our femininity, lost at age six, when grass-stained jeans and knee scars became the new hottest thing, and skirts, repulsive. Desperate to preserve the asexuality of our youth, we became tomboys. Now, like divorcees or newly-released prison inmates, we're unsure how to get back into the game.

As with every specie, there are bound to be some differences from type to type. For those of us cursed with uncontrollable acne, social awkwardness, or insufficient courage to set foot in an Abercrombie and Fitch, there is always Hot Topic. Filled with black skulls, hot pink roses, and Edward Cullen, Hot Topic is the store where goth went

to die. The Hot Topic girl is very pale, having fully embraced the current vampire phase. She enjoys sitting at home and writing poetry to reflect the vast amount of pain and suffering she has experienced being white and privileged.

Of course, not all middle-class teenage white girls spend their time in malls. Some choose to bore a different path. Generally referred to as the “artsy” type, they enjoy such hobbies as: dying their hair, coloring on clothing in Sharpies, advertising their taste in obscure music, and vegetarianism. Though they swear by Birkenstocks and Converse, do not be surprised to find a pair of Uggs hidden in their closets.

Despite the differences from type to type, we are still similar in several key ways, as we share the same primal instincts of our kind.

- At nighttime we like to see movies in huge packs in the middle of which, a boy or two stands awkwardly, face uglified by a puberty moustache he isn't brave enough to shave. We claw each other to get at these boys, to get to the center and bitch about other girls to them. We long to tell them about Alie's backne, Kyleigh's chronic unibrow, or Jessalyn's facebook-stalking problems. The boy-and-girl dynamic at this age is a curious thing. Though we girls are physically ready to rear children and wear heels, the boys our age are often heads shorter than us and oblivious to many of our pre-teen feminine wiles. The inside joke, the hair flip, and the coy text is lost on them. While we vigilantly study magazines and pour over chick-lit to try and figure out how many coats of mascara to apply, they play video games, having no need to brush up on their game. We go to them. The boy may be toddler-sized, scare small children and rodents, or possess blatantly psychopathic qualities, but in the middle-class white girl's sorry universe, he is acceptable. We

must lower our standards so we can take males as battle trophies--spoils of war to establish our dominance. They are what we defend and honor. Perhaps a step backward for feminism, but one giant step forward for suburbanism.

- Our texting speed is the fastest known to man.
- We take entire albums of photographs of ourselves having immense amounts of fun on Photobooth. If one were to go through these albums quickly, it would appear to be a flip-book. That is just how swift and eagle-like our fingers move to press the camera button. Popular poses among us are the peace sign (flashed at various angles), the kissy lip, the pursed lip with eyes looking upward, and the “surprised” look. The more rebellious type will even brandish the middle finger. Mix and match to find your favorite! Extra points if taken with a cell phone in a mirror!
- We have an instinctive cattiness that is hard to control. When I see a girl my age, the first thing I do is give her a look, up and down, scanning for mistakes (frizzy hair, chipped nail polish, muffin top). Then I look away. This tells her that I am done with her. I then play with my nails to let her know they are more interesting than her.

These features create the middle class white girl, my kind, my kin. This part of me is hard to suppress, this way that I am most definitely on Team Jacob. The way I can quote “Mean Girls”, and do the Hoedown Throwdown. The way I saw High School Musical 3 opening night, and clapped when Zac Efron took off his shirt. My main distinction from my kind is the fact I know I am part of a kind, that I am aware of these strange customs I don’t fully understand but do fully participate in.

I know that my kind, the middle class white girl, will be a phenomenon laughed at in fifty years. Little children will look at pictures of us and think of how weird the past was, how weird that everyone back then did not have an off button on their elbow, or worship St. Kanye, patron god of sunglasses. They won't understand skinny jeans, just as I don't quite understand parachute pants. I know that I will feel old and silly, as I drool into my spit cup and show the pictures of my youth to my grandchildren, Walmartella and little Google. Still though, I would like to be the one to remove Nick Jonas' purity ring.