

Clava ad prandium: A Synthesis of Societal Stereotypes

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Abstract

We are not our tribe.

(Nut) Case Study

Five students assembled in the library of Shermer High School (Shermer, Illinois, USA) at 7.06 am on Saturday March 24th, 1984, to serve a one-day detention. Their task, until 4 pm that day, was to write an essay "of no less than a thousand words" telling their teacher, Mr. Vernon, who they think they are. The following is a transcript of that essay...

"Dear Mr. Vernon, we accept the fact that we had to sacrifice a whole Saturday in detention for whatever it was that we did wrong. What we did was wrong. But we think you're crazy to make us write this essay telling you who we think we are. What do you care? You see us as you want to see us... in the simplest terms and the most convenient definitions. You see us as a brain, an athlete, a basket case, a princess and a criminal. Correct? That's the way we saw each other at seven o'clock this morning. We were brainwashed..."

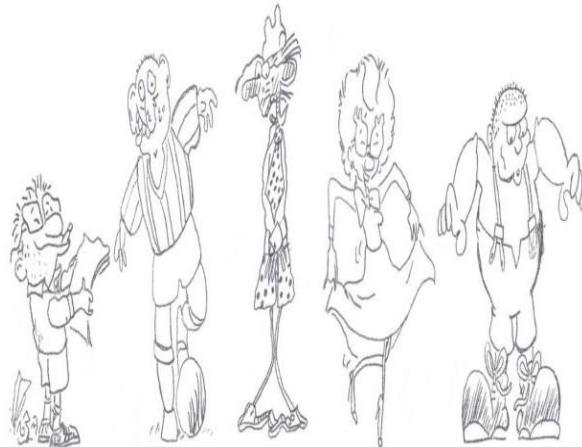
But what we found out is that each one of us is a brain and an athlete and a basket case, a princess and a criminal. Does that answer your question? Sincerely yours, The Breakfast Club". (Hughes et al., 1985)

In the course of that one day, each of our five protagonists abandons the affectations of externally imposed adolescent identity (as popularised in modern culture; Fig. 1), and through a shared introspective journey, awakens to the fact that all of us share the same hopes,

dreams and fears; we are, each of us, a brain, an athlete, a basket case, a princess and a criminal (Kaye and Ets-Hokin, 2000).

Clava ad prandium reminds us that "we're all pretty bizarre! Some of us are just better at hiding it, that's all."

Figure (1): Clava ad prandium. The Brain (Hadrian Vile), the Athlete (Horace Watkins), the Basket Case (Weedy Willy), the Princess (Mary Lighthouse) and the Criminal (Tom Thug); as popularised in modern culture.



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