Aletheia

FACADES   *- an outward appearance that is maintained to conceal a less pleasant or creditable reality*

Aletheia

[A-LEY-THEE-A]

[A-LEY-THEE-A] (greek) the state of not being hidden, a fundamental and sincere reality; truth

Aletheia is a student outreach publication that strives to provide a voice for all students at Lynbrook High School in San Jose, California. Aletheia was created to facilitate communication and overcome stigmas concerning prevalent and taboo issues within Lynbrook.

Every year, the Aletheia staff chooses topics that pertain to the realities of our high school community. The issues are comprised of firsthand experiences submitted anonymously by Lynbrook students and alumni, among many other components as described on the *contents* page. Finalized issues are distributed in Lynbrook High School, uploaded online, and emailed to our subscribers. Past issues can be found on lhsaletheia.com/archive.

Note that ideas and opinions expressed within the publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Aletheia staff or the school administration.

STUDENT STAFF:

Manasa Gudapti
Shannon Tai
Chloe Min
Sangie Wu
Quincy Wu
Jenny Suh
Irene Hwang
Ivy Hoo
Grace Zhu
Irene Chung
Rayna Kumar
Charlie Dai
Hao Gu

ADVISORS:

Sylvia Leong
Anna Kirsh

Student Submissions

all submissions were submitted anonymously. Note that the views of the submissions do not necessarily reflect the views of Aletheia or of Lynbrook High School

I truly believe that people would go above and behind to hide themselves. This is to protect themselves rather than showing that vulnerability that one can have. I personally believe that a smart person must have facades. If a person doesn't have facades they are an easy target and most likely won't be super likable.

It's easier to fit in and you'll have a better time in society rather than just doing what you want to do. It's hard but over the years I've learned that you need to be careful about what you say and how you act. This is all part of the facades act one can put up. I think reputation is necessary. Yeah I think a reputation is great, especially a good one. However it takes the uniqueness out of you. I personally think there is a limit to facades before one slips up. The best thing to do is just to show parts of you that people want to see and hide the rest. It makes life easier.

"It's easier to fit in and you'll have a better time in society rather than just doing what you want to do."

My online persona is often more selective than how I present myself to others in real life because I get to choose how much I want to reveal about myself to other people. For example, when I played among us online with friends it was easier for me to conceal my laughter and facial expressions and no one could tell when I was lying. However, I played it again with my friends when we met up and I was voted out quickly because I couldn't lie to their faces. This situation also applies to my texts. The texts I send are more up to interpretation because the other people cannot see the emotion behind it (as much).
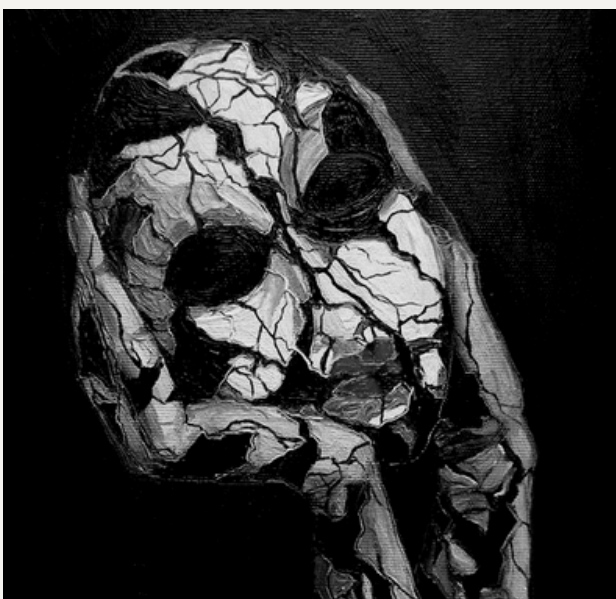
When it comes to interactions in person, i feel like I don't really have a facade.

_____

"Obviously I act slightly different depending on who I am talking to in order to fit a persona"

_____

but in general I feel like I am the same around most people. I know when I need to be more tame dependent on a situation or the people I am surrounded by, but I think my personality is the same with all my friends. I know that is not always the case and it's pretty common for people to change their personas with different friends and I get that because different people fit different niches and have different interests.

As someone who is relatively active on social media I think it's really easy to get carried away with the persona we try to show. Online I like to seem friendly and approachable so people will want to be my friend, but the reality of it is my real life persona doesn't reflect my facade online. Its easy and fun to pretend to be someone I am not especially because none of my friends online know what I am like at school. I am definitely not as friendly in person and al actually rather introverted.

"Its easy for me to hide behind a screen and make friends online but it is all a facade."

The reality of it is that I wish I could be that social in person but I am scared. Perhaps my facade online is a practice for how I am going to try to he in person, or perhaps its an outlet of my failures to be social at school, either way, I like that I can be someone who I've always wanted to be, even if it is online.
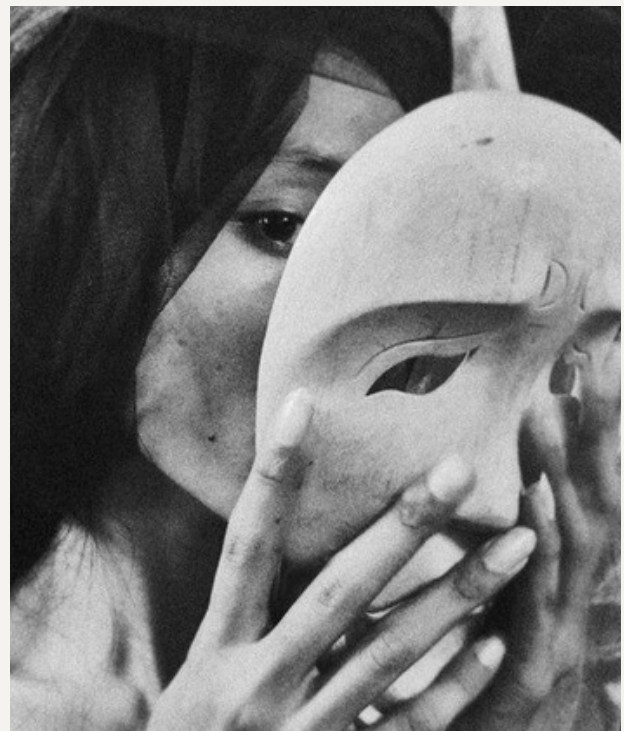
There's a deliberate effort to present a version of myself that fits into the societal mold of success and happiness. In person, it's more unfiltered, raw, and vulnerable.

Having a filter, especially online, often feels like a protective shield. It shields me from the judgment of others and allows me to control how I am perceived. But, there's always two sides. The distance it creates can make genuine connections challenging. There's a constant tug-of-war between wanting to be authentic and the fear of exposing vulnerabilities.

In real life, societal expectations also shape the filter I apply. Whether it's conforming to the office culture or adapting my behavior to fit into social circles, it sometimes feels like I'm playing a role rather than being myself. Sartre's idea of losing one's true self in conforming to societal roles hits close to home. There's a trade-off between fitting in and staying true to who I am, and it's not always an easy balance to strike.
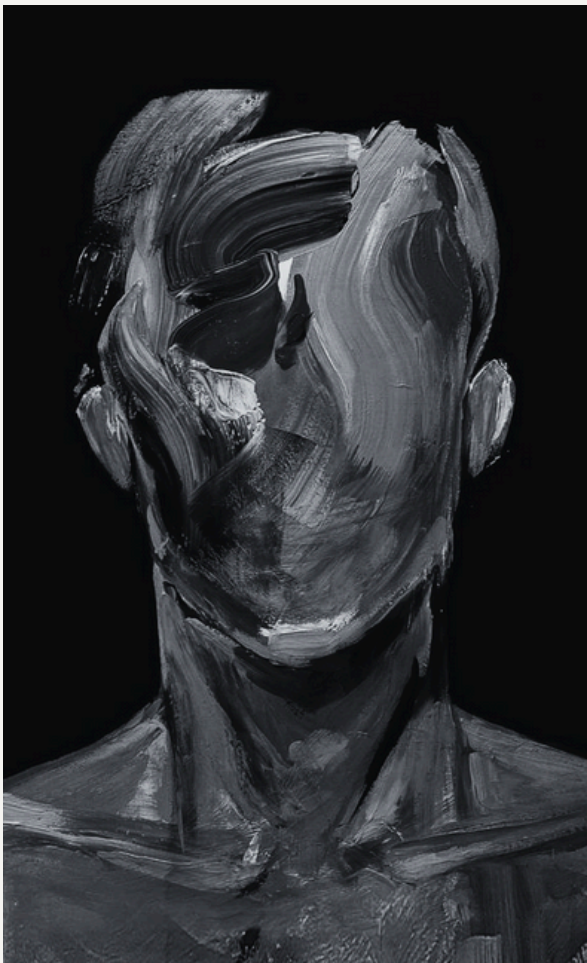
Confiding in someone about my true self is a delicate dance. The outcome varies – sometimes resulting in a deeper connection, while other times leading to misunderstanding. It makes me wonder whether the risk of being authentic is worth the potential rewards.

"Authenticity, I've come to realize, is the bedrock of genuine connections. The more the facade veers from reality, the more it erodes the trust necessary for meaningful relationships."

I once told someone i was sad
"but you dont seem sad"

oh.
well im sorry.
im sorry for not tell you earlier.
im sorry for acting as if nothing
was wrong.
im sorry for not trusting you.
...
but are you sorry?
for never checking if my joy was
geneuine.
for making excuses not to worry
about me.
for pointing out the mask i wore
rather than assuring me that
everything will be ok.

i put the mask back on
"..."
"..."
"oh."

"but you don't seem sad"

I feel that I definitely put on a different persona with different friends.

"It does make me feel guilty sometimes, like I'm lying to myself and my friends."

Sometimes I wonder if they would still want to be friends with me if I changed the way I acted, like if I switched my personality for my different friend groups if that makes sense.

It hasn't, but I hope that these different personalities that I make for different friends don't become a problem in the future.

I can sort of see how it could be a problem though, my friend groups say things that contradict each other.

I can't see my friend groups getting along in the slightest. Anyways, I hope that I can be a little bit more honest in my "true nature" to both friend groups in the future.

*"It's good to be honest with friends, so that you know they like you for who you are."*

Teacher Interview

with Mrs. Otto

Q: Our topic is facades, which are parts of yourself you don't show to others. Have you experienced this yourself or have people in your life experienced this?

Yes, definitely, primarily as it relates to stress. Trying to keep it hidden or contained, feeling overwhelmed with work but not wanting to share that or express that with others for fear that you might be seen as someone who can't handle a lot of responsibilities. You want to be seen as someone that's capable. I think that's a common thing with teachers and students, feeling overwhelmed but having this facade of "I have everything under control." Or, maybe not understanding something but not going and asking for help when you're struggling because you don't want to be seen as not getting or understanding something.

You want to have this appearance or this facade of competence at all times in all areas.
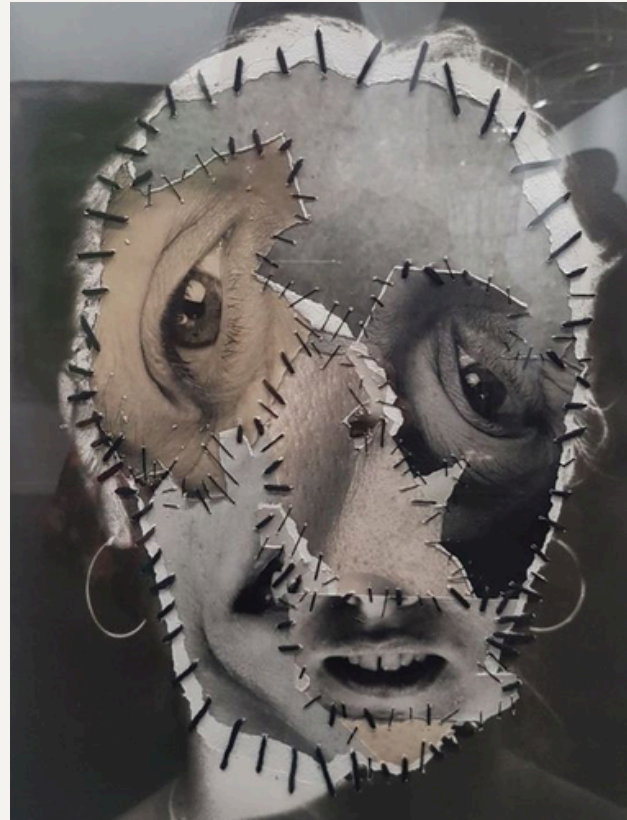
Q: Why do you think people choose to hide parts of themselves? Do you think there are strict societal pressures that cause people to choose facades, especially in school?

Sure. Sometimes I see it when students are reluctant to participate. I know they have good ideas, I've read them and I've heard them in a small context, like with a person

they feel comfortable speaking with. But when it turns into a Socratic seminar or a larger class discussion there's this hesitancy to put yourself out there for a variety of reasons. There are a variety of factors that are probably at play - self-consciousness, introversion, fear of being judged, fear of not having the right answer, or of repeating something someone else has said, fear of being judged for abilities or comprehension of what we're talking about. That's normal, but it's important to push through that and following day. And that's fine, that's what learning is.

it takes practice.

Q: How did you get over that?

Honestly, through practice. I still viscerally remember the feeling of being in lit class as a high schooler and the teacher asking a question, and me desperately wanting to respond. All I can feel is perspiration, my heart thumping in my ears, and "Am I going to do this? Am I going to raise my hand?" and just feeling so disappointed in myself when the bell would ring and I didn't contribute. Honestly I think it

"Honestly I think it just took being an English teacher where you're literally forced to be in front of the class every single day talking to get over that fear."

just took being an English teacher where you're literally forced to be in front of the class every single day talking to get over that fear. And there are going to be times where you mess up or forget something or you need to clarify something the

following day. And that's fine, that's what learning is.

Q: Do you think the rise of social media in the last few decades has contributed to people hiding parts of themselves?

Oh, yes, what do they call that? The highlights reel? People only put the highlights reel, the curated Instagram, "my life is perfect" picture of themselves. That's all pretty to look at, but if you're exposed to that too much, it can create that erroneous perception that this is what people's actual lives are like. They're just picking and choosing, and exaggerating the good parts. We don't see the vulnerability very often, or the struggles. It definitely exists, but it takes honest conversations, repeated conversations with people, opportunities to get to know people so that you feel comfortable sharing those parts of you.

Q: Do you have advice for your younger self?

My younger self? Take the risk. Make the leap. It's worth it.

"People only put the highlights reel, the curated Instagram, "my life is perfect" picture of themselves."
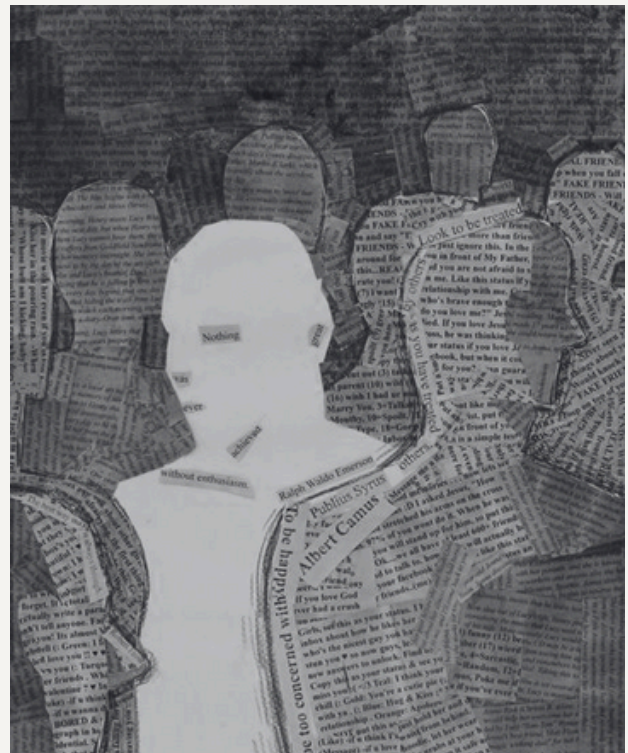

Q: Is it worth it?

Yeah, I totally think it's worth it. Because what's worse? Feeling awkward for a moment or feeling alone and unseen and unsupported? I choose the temporary awkwardness rather than no one knowing what I'm thinking or my thoughts. I think the feeling of being in an awkward position is so debilitating because it makes us freeze.

Professional Article: Facades

Dr. Brittany Stevens
School Psychologist
Lynbrook High School

This issue of Aletheia centers on the concept of façades, which has been defined as a form of personality change one uses to fulfill a particular emotion or behavior they wish to portray. In my work as a school psychologist, I think a lot about personality, behavior, emotions, and thinking itself. People put up façades for numerous reasons, generally due to social expectations, personal insecurities, or the desire for acceptance. This is rooted in a core belief that we will find more success, professionally and personally, if we behave in ways we feel are expected, even if that means masking our unique quirks or honest opinions and choices. The digital world makes façade use even easier – courtesy of technology, we curate, edit, and filter ourselves with ease. In the era of social media, fitting in and being liked are now actually quantifiable (e.g., number of
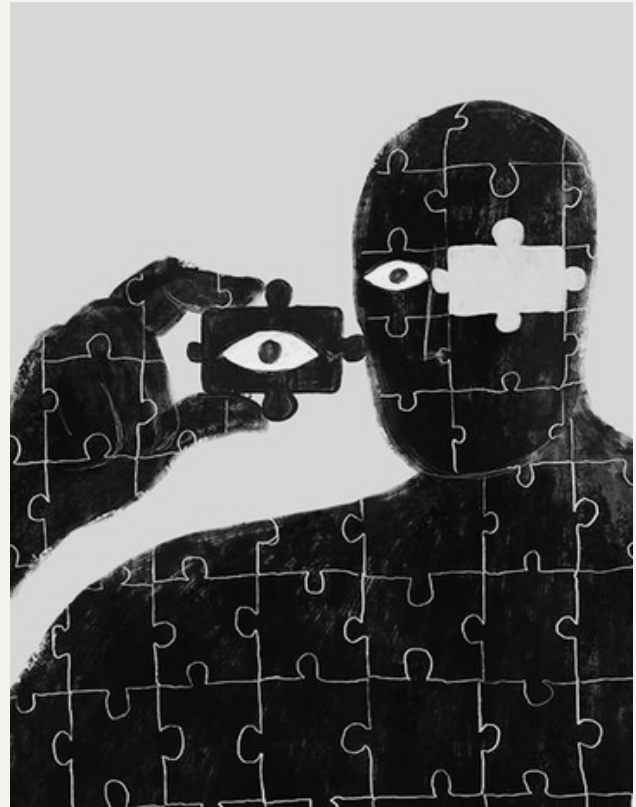
"likes" and followers, "upvoting" opinions). *The increasingly quantifiable nature of acceptance leads us to believe that the feeling of acceptance and being liked is a fact.* Here is the real fact: however much of a dopamine surge these "likes" provide, psychologists agree that the key to lasting joy and personal growth lies in integrity and authenticity. Speaking of joy, psychologists often believe that joy is created from congruence. In other words, joy is defined as heightened positive emotion created from a "just right" fit between our identity and the moment we are experiencing. Identity formation is considered the developmental job for teenagers, so it is a time where many

people try on various façades in search of that "just right" fit. Using a façade means that one is adapting their identity to the moment – although this be a protective mechanism and can even create temporary joy from positive feedback, if that façade is not congruent with one's core beliefs and personality traits, the feeling can be empty and fleeting. The use of a façade is not valuable unless it is coupled with reflection as to how that façade served you and made you feel. Humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers believed that individuals have an innate drive toward realizing their full potential. He developed an effective, person-centered approach to therapy that is very much in use today. Rogers opined that using façades impedes our ability to make progress and reach our potential as human beings. He felt that the best way to break through façades in our lives is through approaching others and ourselves with empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness. Rogers believed that when these conditions are present, individuals are better able to tap into their inner resources, engage in self-exploration, and move toward self-actualization. So what does this all mean for us? I believe this gives us all permission to have empathy and grace,

for ourselves and for each other. Self-actualization is a human need, and façades can distract from this fundamental human quest. While façades can have a useful protective function in terms of avoiding rejection, they can also distort the essence of our true selves and lead to greater unhappiness. When we all employ empathy and grace in our thoughts and actions, we help others feel brave enough to drop their façades, and to do the same ourselves. I am heartened regularly by the teenagers in my professional life bravely balancing their own identity formation while actively choosing kindness and inclusiveness. This generation, more than others before it, has broadened the definition of acceptableness and has prioritized individuality, which makes the world a safer, healthier place for all. The contributors to this issue of Aletheia delve into the complex interplay between authenticity and the various masks we all wear. These writers explore the multidimensionality of façades, and how façades impact mental health and interpersonal connections, as well as the broader societal implications of living behind a mask. I am heartened that the insightful words of these contributors resonate with the essence of Rogers'

belief in the value of authenticity. When we are simultaneously authentic and accepting, we find our truest potential for profound and fulfilling connections, as well as personal capacity for joy and a more meaningful engagement with the world.
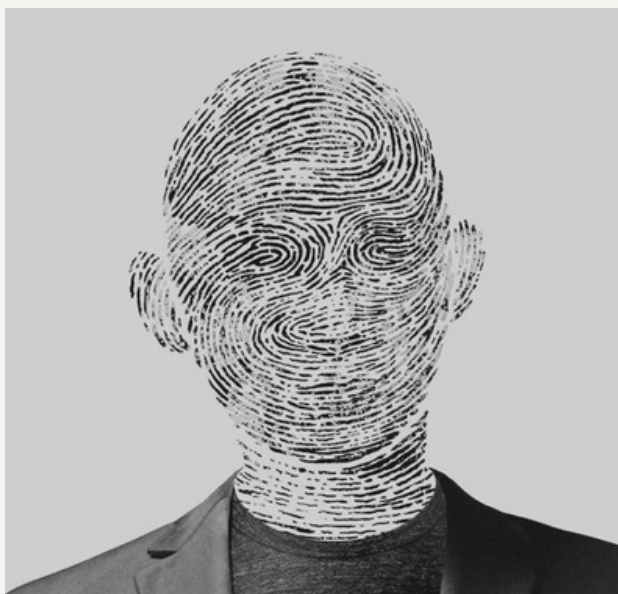
About the Author

Brittany Stevens is in her 23rd year as a school psychologist at Lynbrook High School. Dr. Stevens has amassed many years of experience as a special education teacher, educational psychologist, and graduate level professor. She possesses a research background in developmental and educational psychology (MA, PhD) and often consults with parent groups, student organizations, and schools on a variety of psychoeducational topics.

Resources

Youth Mental Health Guide - https://namica.org/student-guide-to-mental-health/
Kids, Teens, and Young Adults– NAMI Resources - https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults
Mental Health Literacy - https://mentalhealthliteracy.org/
Half of Us - https://www.mentalhealthishealth.us/
Suicide Prevention Resource Center - http://didihirsch.org/spc
The Trevor Project - https://www.thetrevorproject.org/

Picture Credits