

Main themes in the commitments novel

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

While commercial success and mainstream attention are two of Jimmy's objectives in forming and managing the band, popularity is never the primary goal of the project. Innovation and escapism are two apparent themes in this novel, and serve as the primary motivations for most of the characters throughout the course of the novel. When Jimmy discusses the approach the band should take towards the beginning of the novel, he expresses, "One edge is escapism [...] Fun. ---Getting' away from it all. Lettin' yourself go. ---Know what I mean?" It is evident that the driving factors of the band, initiated by Jimmy, are innovation and removal from reality, and this remains true throughout the story in its entirety. As most of the characters claim multiple times, Irish are considered the minorities of Europe; so most characters will do anything they can to promote diversity (as shown in both the ethnic makeup of the band and within the music itself) and miscellany. Furthermore, the band seems to care more about their political tract than the success of their music – Jimmy forges a political soul band ("The Irish are the n***** of Europe, lads") from Outspan and Derek, and together they create a band of wild diversity – everyone is distinct in talent, approach, outlook, and it is clear that they attempt to make a statement more so than anything else.

What generalized image of youth culture within this particular area of Dublin is given?

The Commitments suggests that being Irish is synonymous with being Black, because oppression is the only reality that makes the notion of identity meaningful and can offer insight as to what it means to be a minority. In this novel, youth is generally characterized as eager, driven, and determined.

The characters form a band not for money and not really for the love of music. They do it for notability. Jimmy wishes to drive the band into making a social statement, and everyone eagerly agrees and joins in. Jimmy convinces himself that his social identity, which he knows is bound up in his oppression, is strictly local: “ An’ Dubliners are the n***** of Ireland. The culchies have f*****’ everything. An’ the northside Dubliners are the ***** o’ Dublin.” Yet, he feels compelled to realize this social identity through “ soul.” For Jimmy and his band, as for every underprivileged citizen the world, identity is an everlasting impediment. They seek a cure elsewhere because nobody nearby has come up with one. That cure is soul. In *The Commitments*, youth culture is ambitious. This ambition serves as the source for everything the band does or strives for – to make their message known.