

Your hidden freedom

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In America it is an everyday occurrence to wear your own clothes to school. It is something you take for granted. Little do you know there are people like myself for whom this is the dream. I am the average British school girl- forced into uniform since the age of 4. Let me tell you how fortunate you are to have the freedom of your own clothes.

Clothes: what do they show? How much difference can they really make? You'd be surprised! By having the privilege of your own clothes you are given the freedom to express yourself. Even if the effects of this aren't so good, so what! At least you can experiment and find yourself! I am forced into an oppressive bulge of bottle green knit, every day of the year. It is thick, it is uncomfortable and I look just like everybody else. If we are all the same, how will I develop a personality? How will I be known as being my own person. The answer? I won't. It has come to the stage where I am 16 and everyone (bar my few personal friends) sees me as that extra green presence in the corner of class.

Just because I chose not to be rowdy and over powering I am ignored purely because people do not know what type of person I am and they never will at this rate! And then there is ' mufti day'; yes, that one liberating day of the year where I can express who I am without words. When people can observe and make their own judgements of me. For you, this is just like any other day. For me, this is the one day that I have to make my mark on the social page of my school. You would be surprised by the changes that can occur as a direct consequence of one's appearance on this single day. For me, this sudden burst of freedom holds immense pressure because this is my only opportunity to actively show who I am to the rest of my school and I can tell

you it shakes the year! I count the British convention of school uniform as a form of oppression and a flaw in the system.

I think that it prevents me from having access to a basic human right: freedom to express who I am and what makes me an individual. If I cannot show who I am, how will I ever gain respect for being my own person? It is the unfortunate reality that I will just have to wait until I am 17 to be liberated and stand alone as myself. I think that this lack of independence from an early age is a fundamental reason in why so few British teens are able to be independent and form their own opinion and attitude towards key matters in life. The majority of Brits will just follow the crowd. I am not writing this in hope to change things, because I know that this is a battle that has existed for many years now.

Instead I think it is important for American teenagers to have this insight just so they can realise how fortunate they are. It may seem small, but such a tiny issue as your appearance is actually the means to be unique and express yourself. The American teenager is given the opportunity to be their own person, stand out and be recognised everyday of the year and so I think you should take advantage of it. Milk this opportunity for all its worth and take everything you can from it, because you are lucky enough to have independence handed to you on a hanger. WORK IT, BABY.