



Intersectionality of Queer Female Characters in Alice Oseman's Young Adult Series of Graphic Novels *Heartstopper*

Abstract:

The global success of Alice Oseman's series of young adult graphic novels, *Heartstopper*, may come as a surprise. Initially published as a webcomic on Tumblr and Tapas, it attracted an online audience of over 50 million views. The project's publishing fundraising goal was met in just two hours, and Hachette Children's Group published *Heartstopper: Volume One* as a graphic novel in 2019, followed by four other volumes and extras, all released by 2023. While most readers and critics have focused on the issues of male homo- and bisexuality in *Heartstopper*, this article seeks to analyse the multifaceted identities of trans and cisgender female characters in Oseman's graphic novel series through the lens of intersectionality, focusing on gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity, while addressing the call for diversity in YA literature. Remembering that young adult literature often aims to raise questions about political organisation, ideal society, and the need for social change, the reading of Oseman's *Heartstopper* presented in this paper argues that it is a part of utopian young adult literature due to disregarding many issues connected to the characters' intersections, especially the experiences of women of colour.

Key words:

Alice Oseman, graphic novel, *Heartstopper*, intersectionality, LGBTQ+ literature, young adult literature

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Intersekcjonalność queerowych postaci kobiecych w serii powieści graficznych dla młodzieży *Heartstopper* Alice Oseman

Abstrakt:

Światowy sukces serii powieści graficznych Alice Oseman *Heartstopper* może wydawać się zaskakujący. Po raz pierwszy twórczość Oseman pojawiła się w serwisach Tumblr i Tapas i przyciągnęła ogromną publiczność (ponad 50 milionów wyświetleń). Zbiórka środków na publikację serii zakończyła się sukcesem w zaledwie dwie godziny, dzięki czemu Hachette Children's Group wydało w 2019 roku inicjującą cykl powieści graficzną *Heartstopper*. Do 2023 roku wydano jeszcze cztery tomy oraz dwa książkowe dodatki od osoby autorskiej. Podczas gdy większość czytelników i krytyków rozważało kwestie homo- i biseksualności w tej serii, celem artykułu jest analiza złożonych tożsamości transpłciowych i cispłciowych postaci kobiecych w serii powieści graficznych Oseman poprzez pryzmat intersekcjonalności, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem płci, seksualności, rasy i etniczności oraz jednoczesnym wzięciem pod uwagę zapotrzebowania na różnorodność w literaturze dla młodzieży. Literatura dla tej grupy odbiorczej często ma za zadanie kwestionować organizację polityczną i wzorowe społeczeństwo, w którym żyje czytelnik, oraz przypominać o potrzebie zmian społecznych. Dlatego też autorka artykułu zamierza pokazać, że seria *Heartstopper* może być uważana za część młodzieżowej literatury utopijnej, ponieważ pomija wiele aspektów intersekcjonalności bohaterów i bohaterek, szczególnie kobiet niebiałych.

Słowa kluczowe:

Alice Oseman, powieść graficzna, *Heartstopper*, intersekcjonalność, literatura LGBTQ+, literatura młodzieżowa

Introduction

The global success of Alice Oseman's series of young adult graphic novels may come as a surprise as *Heartstopper* was initially published as a webcomic on Tumblr and Tapas (Oseman & Bookswarm, 2024). After attracting an online audience of over 50 million views, it was issued as a graphic novel by Hachette Children's Group in 2019 and was followed by four additional volumes and extras (Oseman, 2019a–2023). *Heartstopper* tells the story of Nick and Charlie, teenage characters previously mentioned in Oseman's young adult novels *Solitaire* (2014), *This Winter* (2015), and *Nick and Charlie* (2015). The boys meet in an all-boys British school, become friends, and fall in love. Each volume of the graphic novel depicts the ups and downs of teenage friendships, love, coming out, and mental health. Moreover, in *Heartstopper's*

chronotope, the relationship blossoming between Nick and Charlie is accompanied by the experiences of several supporting characters, such as queer non-White women.

Many adult readers have argued that the optimistic, hopeful, and inclusive *Heartstopper* series and its successful Netflix adaptation are what they wish had appeared sooner. For example, in his Goodreads review of the first volume of the graphic novel, Larry H aka the.bookishworld.of.yrralh (2019) writes: “Once again, I’m so happy that books like this exist today, to let LGBTQIA+ kids – and adults – see that whom they choose to love doesn’t doom them to loneliness.” While *Heartstopper* has been met with significant interest among scholars of comic studies and young adult literature, most critics have focused on the issues of male homo- and bisexuality in the series, namely the positive depiction of bisexuality and challenging hegemonic masculinity (Allen, 2023) or machoism (Trisnawati, Sutikno, Agustina, Prameswary, & Mutyas, 2024). In this article, I seek to shift the male- and White-centred focus and analyse queer and female characters of various ethnicities in Oseman’s graphic novel series through the lens of intersectionality while considering the call for diversity in YA literature.

Since the 1960s, Anglophone young adult books have increasingly embraced diversity, with many authors exploring topics such as sex and sexuality, drugs, and racism. In discussing the British context, Melanie Ramdarshan Bold (2019) highlights the pivotal role of the Macmillan Topliner imprint, established in 1968, in popularising inclusive YA literature. The imprint marked a significant departure from publishing for the White, middle-class reader, aiming instead to unalienate non-White adolescent readers as well as separate YA books from children’s literature (p. 26). Ramdarshan Bold notes a notable shift in the number of diverse books published over the last 60 years. From 1962 to 1964, less than 7% percent of 5,000 published books of children’s literature included Black characters, and this percentage decreased even further between 1985 and 1995. It is not only the number that is important in this consideration but also the quality of the representation. In other words, the authenticity and authority of these books matter as well (p. 30). Ten years later, it was finally possible to see some improvement, as studies of the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC), University of Wisconsin-Madison, showed that both the numbers and quality rose “from 7.1 (215 books) in 2006 to 12.9% (439 books) in 2016” (p. 30). However, despite the increase in books written by authors of colour in 2016 compared to 2006, the diversity among the titles by these authors did not reflect the same progress (pp. 30–31). Another aspect of the lack of diversity is what Ramdarshan Bold argues happened in the UK in the 1980s

and early 1990s, when publishers preferred to publish diverse books written by White authors because these were inoffensive to White readers. Often, they explained the absence of authors from minority backgrounds by claiming that they do not want to write for children. However, such authors countered this by explaining that when offered publishing deals, they were often restricted to writing identity books dealing with racism, xenophobia, and homophobia. In addition, they had to be written according to Western interpretations of these problems; otherwise, they would be 'too Black' or 'too Indian' (Ramdarshan Bold, 2019, p. 33). Thus, it may be argued that White standards are usually reinforced on non-White individuals, especially women.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined the term intersectionality in 1989, points out that Black women do not experience oppression strictly racial or gender-oriented but specifically at the intersection of race and gender (p. 140). Thus, Black women are subjected to the two most powerful oppression systems. However, Black lesbians and trans women are even more likely to face discrimination due to their sexuality and gender identity. Crenshaw developed the concept of intersectionality while working on improving the justice system. Since then, however, it has been adopted by scholars studying cultural, social, and political inequalities, as well as their representations in literature and culture (Battle & Colin, 2008; Gill, 2016; Hill Collins, da Silva, Ergun, Furseth, Bond, & Martínez-Palacios, 2021). In my examination of *Heartstopper*, I use this term in the context of the inclusive portrayal of minorities in queer-themed young adult books. Thus, my understanding of intersectionality is closer to Vivian M. May (2015), who argues that it "approaches lived identities as interlaced and systems of oppression as enmeshed and mutually reinforcing: one aspect of identity and/or form of inequality is not treated as separable or as superordinate" (p. 3).

Remembering that young adult literature often aims to raise questions about political organisation, ideal societies, and the need for social change (Hintz & Ostry, 2009, p. 2), I seek to demonstrate in my reading of Oseman's *Heartstopper* that the novel's chronotope emerges as a queer utopia, where there is no room for oppression related to the queer female characters' race, ethnicity, and social background. Considering its focus on homonormativity, which is "favoring norms and ideas traditionally associated with heterosexuality" (Świetlicki, 2023, p. 302), and the simplified depiction of the experiences of women of colour, I argue that Oseman's *Heartstopper* series can be considered an example of utopian literature. Lyman Tower Sargent (2010) defines utopianism as "envisioning a radically different society from the one in which the dreamers live" (p. 5). Therefore, *Heartstopper*'s social context, for example,

the increasing radical gender-critical feminism sentiments in the United Kingdom, positions the series as a work challenging the political organisation of British society.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a way of thinking about inequality, power, and marginalisation. As May (2015) observes, intersectionality involves recognising how various self-identities and levels of oppression are co-constituted axes of selfhood and lived experiences that “intersect in dynamic, shifting ways” (p. 21).

Identities form complex personalities that can and should be analysed on various levels, as individuals can identify with multiple identities simultaneously. Therefore, to address individual needs and expectations from power-wielding individuals, various identities should be considered. For example, the experience of a woman who is Black and with a disability is heavily influenced by her gender, race, and physical ability. Thus, she can face sexism, racism, and ableism simultaneously. However, this does not mean that her identity is cumulative (race + gender + ability), but rather that these categories overlap and can alter each other. The matrix philosophy in intersectionality demonstrates that the ways in which one sees the world are not only plural but can also be conflicted (May, 2015, p. 43).

In an intersectional approach, “inequities are never the result of single, distinct factors”; instead, “they are the outcome of intersections of different social locations, power relations and experiences” (Hankivsky, 2014, p. 2). Time and space are not static or objective but fluid and subjective. Moreover, the unique perspective and expectations of power-wielding individuals are majorly influenced by their social location (p. 10). Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2016, p. 7) argue that power relations should be explored through their intersections – for instance, sexism, racism, and ableism – as well as through their structural, cultural, interpersonal, and disciplinary domains. Where and when one lives and interacts determines the knowledge and power dynamics around them.

In *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Hill Collins (2000) writes:

Oppressed groups are frequently placed in the situation of being listened to only if we frame our ideas in the language that is familiar to and comfortable for a dominant group. This requirement often changes the meaning of our ideas

and works to elevate the ideas of dominant groups. In this volume, by placing African-American women's ideas in the center of analysis, I not only privilege those ideas but encourage White feminists, African-American men, and all others to investigate the similarities and differences among their own standpoints and those of African-American women (p. 7).

In this quotation, Hill Collins highlights the importance of the oppressed, specifically Black women as speakers, and points out how they must adapt to the oppressors, even when discussing such personal experiences as discrimination. Moreover, she calls for confronting one's own views with those of Black women. Intersectionality stresses the importance of including those who are normally excluded from policy conversations. While the lives of Anglophone white and Black women are heavily influenced by their gender and social class, Black women additionally face racism; therefore, in certain circumstances, White women, although oppressed due to their gender, can nevertheless experience privileges stemming from their Whiteness (Hankivsky, 2014, p. 9).

Thus, intersectionality aims to find optimal solutions by understanding intersecting systems of oppression, not just differences. By explaining the causes and roots of social issues, it can help leaders achieve equality in diverse populations (Hankivsky, 2014, p. 7).

L is for Lesbians

Tara in *Heartstopper* is a Black lesbian who stands in contrast to the series' main characters, Nick and Charlie. She attends Higgs School, an all-girls school opposite Truham, the all-boys school the protagonists attend, along with her girlfriend, Darcy, and Charlie's friend – Elle. Although Tara is a homosexual character like Charlie, she cannot completely relate to him. Unlike Charlie, who is half Spanish, Tara is Black, and they each face different inequality issues. However, Oseman does not address any of the Black lesbian struggles in the books, focusing instead solely on the broader issues faced by young lesbians, such as internalised homophobia, misogyny, and stereotypes.

The reader meets Tara at a party organised by Harry, which she attends with Darcy. She is pressured to talk to Nick, who is also invited, because of a kiss they shared years earlier. Despite Tara being publicly out and attending the party with her girlfriend, Harry completely overlooks her sexuality. On the other hand, Nick's sexuality is presumed straight as he kissed a girl when he was younger and does not act in a manner stereotypically attributed to gay

men. Harry's behaviour attributes heteronormativity to Nick and Tara. Heteronormativity in queer theory is a "concept in which patriarchy and heterosexuality are centered as the social norm" (Battle & Ashley, 2008, p. 1). Because of the kiss Tara and Nick shared, Harry automatically concludes they must have had feelings for each other or may still have them, assuming that both of them must be straight as it is the 'default setting.'

The reader gains insight into Tara's inner thoughts when she talks to Charlie at the beach (Oseman, 2020, pp. 704–712). She mentions the process of coming to terms with her sexuality and being officially out as a lesbian with a girlfriend. Tara highlights the negative connotations associated with the words 'gay' and 'lesbian': she tells Charlie that her fear of being out comes from the word 'lesbian' being used as an insult. According to Pat Griffin (1998, p. 87), negative stereotypes about lesbians still instil fear in women, even with societal changes in recent decades. Consequently, 'lesbian' becomes a label that women have to prove they are not (Hartmann-Tews & Soler-Prat, 2022, p. 170). Tara admits to having used the term in such a way herself and goes on to explain that she and Darcy thought pretending to be fully platonic would be easier. Yet, the girls quickly discover they cannot hide their feelings for each other. Tara concludes by saying that she "got comfortable being [herself]" and knew she could withstand any homophobic remarks as she had Darcy by her side and finally learned to love and accept herself the way she is (Oseman, 2020, pp. 708–709).

It is important to note that although Tara occupies the intersections of three identity markers – race, gender, and sexuality – in *Heartstopper*, she is a lesbian first and a Black woman second, which differs from the experiences of many Black women. When addressing intersectionality and the challenges Black lesbians face today, Gabriel Noah Brahm (2019) refers to Sojourner Truth's 1851 oration on the intersection of women's suffrage and Black rights in the United States: "That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody helps me any best place. And ain't I a woman?" (p. 160). In other words, Black women were not treated with the same respect as white middle- and upper-class women because Black people were seen as 'property' regardless of their gender. Truth's speech still resonates with Black women today, who, as Brahm (2019) observes, remain doubly oppressed, while Black lesbians are "trebly subordinated" (p. 160). Oseman's omission of Tara's racial experience as a Black lesbian in the United Kingdom may be explained by *Heartstopper*'s main theme, which is sexuality. However, including Black characters in literature without further exploring their experiences contributes to Black invisibility. As already earlier

observed by Crenshaw (1989, p. 139), Black women's experience is multidimensional, and the single-axis analysis distorts it. By focusing solely on Tara's sexuality, Oseman dismisses her experience as a young Black British woman.

Another character, presumably lesbian, introduced to the reader in the first volume of Oseman's graphic novel is Mrs. Singh. She first appears during a rugby team practice that Charlie is invited to by Nick, where she announces that Charlie is admitted to the team. Mrs. Singh is a middle-aged woman, an ex-pro rugby player, and a P. E. teacher at Truham (Oseman, 2019a, p. 51). The black-and-white illustrations depict her with darker skin colour, but except for her last name, which could suggest she is of British Indian background, there are no mentions of her ethnicity. She comes across as tough and strict, but in the third volume, we see another side of her story. In the first volume, she advocates against stereotypes about gay men, showing that she is an adult ally in the story. She overhears three of Nick's friends discussing whether he is gay or not. When one of them says, "[h]e doesn't look gay" (p. 210), she immediately confronts the boys, stating that it is impossible to determine if someone is gay or not based on their appearance and that gay and heterosexual are not the only options. Thus, she emphasises that discussing someone's sexual orientation is disrespectful.

When Mrs. Singh catches Nick and Charlie in an intimate situation in the school's sports equipment room, she asks Nick to see her in her office (Oseman, 2020, p. 586). Nick feels responsible for his actions and is ready for what Mrs. Singh will bring to him. However, he soon learns that Mrs. Singh is an empathetic ally as she first announces that Nick is the team captain and then addresses the intimate situation she witnessed between the two boys (Oseman, 2020, pp. 595–596). Finally, Oseman shows Mrs. Singh's office from the woman's perspective, where a picture of her with another woman comes into the frame. Mrs. Singh explains to Nick that he can come to her if the two boys ever experience any negative behaviour due to their relationship and sympathises with Nick by coming out to him herself (p. 598). She tells the story of how she and her wife had been the target of very spiteful words in the early 2000s when they met. Therefore, she stresses that, although the world changes and homophobic sentiments decrease, queer people can never be sure how others will treat them.

Mrs. Singh is a successful, presumably British Indian and lesbian athlete who serves as an adult ally in the story. This representation touches on an important issue which is heteronormativity and homophobia in sports. Athletes, both male and female, often hesitate to come out to their fans and teammates for fear of being discriminated against or stereotyped. Due to the heteronormativity

in sport, different expectations are imposed on bisexual or lesbian women and bisexual or gay men. Female athletes are frequently assumed to be lesbians simply because they are sportswomen regardless of their actual sexual orientation, whereas sportsmen are rarely expected to be gay (Soler-Prat, Vilanova, Solanas, Martos-Garcia, & García-Puchades, p. 170). As a consequence, women remain marginalised in sports and their behaviour is being controlled (p. 171). This also further touches on the aforementioned issue of negative stereotypes about lesbians, where 'lesbian' becomes a label that women have to prove they are not (Hartmann-Tews & Soler-Prat, 2022, p. 170). Being at the intersection of two identities, leaves sportswomen face systemic oppression on two levels in the form of reinforcing the heterosexual image and traditional gender roles, undermining their competence, and attacking lesbians (Soler-Prat, Vilanova, Solanas, Martos-Garcia, & García-Puchades, 2022, p. 171).

Oseman provides representation for other British Indian LGBTQ+ women and challenges the previous young adult and children's literature that reinforced the idea of queer adults' hurting. However, she limits the exploration of the intersections of Mrs. Singh by focusing primarily on her sexuality while disregarding race completely. In Mrs. Singh's case, there is an additional intersection of ethnicity, making her life experience even more multidimensional. This is because gender is always entangled with race, class, or geopolitical location, as indicated by Judith Butler (2024, p. 135). As the author observes, all these factors intersect, affecting the individual's "materiality and intelligibility" (p. 85)

T is for Trans

Elle faces oppression best understood by examining the intersecting factors of race and gender, as she is a Black transgender woman. Her experience is defined by the implied lack of understanding from her peers when she comes out as trans in an all-boys school. However, the character possesses a strong support system made of her queer friends and an ally love interest. Oseman, however, disregards Elle's Blackness, focusing solely on her gender identity. Thus, I argue that in Oseman's colour-blind *Heartstopper*, Blackness is positioned as invisible.

According to Tao, Elle's boyfriend, Elle experienced numerous unpleasant situations when she came out as trans at Truham. However, since transferring to Higgs, she has been finally able to enjoy herself at the new school with new friends (Oseman, 2020, p. 719). Elle's place at an all-girl school is never questioned by the other characters in *Heartstopper*. Her transfer to a new school is natural and logical given the circumstances, marking a breakthrough

in portraying trans youth in literature. There are very few moments in the series when someone acknowledges Elle as a trans person by emphasising that she is *now* a girl. When Nick comes to Charlie's birthday party at the bowling alley, he notices Elle sitting next to Tao and asks Charlie if she is not the person who attended the same geography course with him at Truham. He is cut off by Charlie mid-sentence as Charlie explains that *now* this person is Elle and attends Higgs – an all-girl school (Oseman, 2019b, p. 404). Except for this one conversation, the characters never discuss Elle's gender in such a manner. Instead, they naturally accept the reality they find themselves in. Another instance when Elle's identity is addressed is when she is asked whether she visits her grandparents in Egypt. This time, Elle discusses her transness, explaining that she cannot visit her grandparents since coming out as trans because being trans in Egypt is different from being trans in the UK (Oseman, 2021, p. 1056). She implies that transgender people still face severe oppression, sometimes even risking their health and lives to be open about their identity.

As the book is targeted at a young audience and the characters are teens themselves, understandably, mentions of transphobia are very light and mostly implied. Juxtaposing Elle's situation with the socio-political context of *Heartstopper* illustrates the series' utopian theme. The increasing anti-gender sentiments among some British feminists, who seek the "derealization of trans people" and "engage in forms of discrimination that arguably go against the commitment to equality" (Butler, 2024, p. 137), contribute to the severe oppression trans people face. The rise of trans-exclusive radical feminists (TERFs) in the United Kingdom in recent years resulted in "intense public conflict, bullying, censorship campaigns, and claims of hostile workplace environments" due to the opposition to including trans and genderqueer people in feminist alliances (p. 134). Accepting feminism as an alliance affirms that Black and Brown women "live at the intersection of compounded oppressions" (p. 135). Currently, radical feminists undermine gender by referring to it as an artificial construct, which disputes the validity of trans identities (p. 136). This means that TERFs deny the reality of trans lives and claim proprietary rights over gender categories (p. 137). Through Elle's transition from an all-boys to an all-girls school, Oseman envisions a more inclusive society and challenges current anti-gender sentiments.

Additionally, it is worth noting that placing Elle in a heterosexual relationship with Tao makes them an important interracial couple made of a transgender Black woman and a cisgender Asian man who is a lot shorter than her. While the *Heartstopper* series challenges gender stereotypes, such as height differences in heterosexual relationships, and validates Elle's transition, it fails to fully

address Elle's intersections, overlooking her racial experiences. Elle and Tao never speak of the racism they face and the sense of isolation they may feel due to not having more friends similar to them (Woo, 2022). Moreover, this omission can be explained by the utopian character of *Heartstopper's* chronotope.

Oseman's representation of Tara and Elle's Blackness is reduced to the black-and-white illustrations depicting their darker skin colour. Elle embraces her femininity through her hairstyles, using a lot of accessories and often changing them throughout the story. Tao comments on her hair when she lets it down on the beach and compliments her on it. Considering the cultural significance of hair to Black women, Oseman's decision not to delve deeper into this aspect of Elle's identity raises questions. Elle usually wears her hair down with braids on the sides, clipped with accessories, or in a bun when necessary. In contrast, Tara – the other Black female character – wears her natural Afro throughout three volumes and transitions to dreadlocks in the fourth and fifth volumes. Oseman created two Black characters with two distinct approaches to their hair – Elle, who conforms to Eurocentric standards, and Tara, who celebrates her natural hair. However, these nuances are not fully explored in the narrative.

Notwithstanding mentions of a few unpleasant situations in Elle's life, Oseman contributes to the normalisation of trans experiences and positive representation of trans people in literature, one that is not centred on bullying, confusion, or isolation. Instead of showcasing the misogynoir¹ experiences of Black women, Oseman creates a character who has always been sure of who she is and who embraces herself by transferring to an all-girl school despite being bullied during her most formative years for coming out as trans.

Conclusion

In *Heartstopper*, the radically different society in which the dreamer lives, as mentioned by Lyman Tower Sargent (2010, p. 5), is one depicting only homonormative relations and identities, where issues such as racism are not a concern for the characters, and the problems they face due to their sexuality always unfold positively. As Mateusz Świetlicki (2023) argues, studying LGBTQ+-themed books for young people “should not be done without considering the sociopolitical situation in the relevant region” (p. 308). *Heartstopper* has been translated

¹ Misogynoir is a term coined by Moya Bailey in 2008, referring to the intersection of anti-Blackness and misogyny directed at Black trans and cisgender women in American visual and popular culture.

into numerous languages, and its impact has gone beyond the Anglophone world. In the context of countries with limited representation of the LGBTQ+ community in literature, books focusing on homonormativity, including translations from other languages, should not be completely dismissed, as they contribute to the normalisation of various sexual and gender identities in highly homophobic societies. Thus, texts that reinforce marginalisation by favouring norms and ideas traditionally associated with heterosexuality can also be seen “as simple and homonormative or as transformative and revolutionary if read through a different cultural lens” (p. 308). On the other hand, in the context of the present-day United Kingdom, hidden yet distinct transphobia prominent due to the increasing anti-gender sentiments of radical feminists, *Heartstopper*'s racial omission positions the work as a utopian text.

B. J. Epstein (2013) argues that a common problem in children's and YA literature is the ability of books to deal with “one deviation from the supposed norm at a time” (p. 132). With *Heartstopper* featuring such a diverse cast of characters, including Elle and Tara as supporting characters, and with sexual orientation being the main theme of the series, Oseman simply does not have the space to fully represent certain minorities. So far, Oseman has published five volumes of *Heartstopper*, with the first three focusing on sexuality, while *Volume Four* and *Volume Five* depict problems related to growing up, such as long-distance relationships or struggles with low self-esteem.

It is important to note that, as readers, we can also read the series in other cultural, social, historical, or political contexts, such as the geoeconomic context, considering that *Heartstopper* is set in Kent, United Kingdom. Although the series does not specify a particular time period, it is evident that the story takes place post-2010s, as media like Instagram are widely used. Furthermore, the series first reached its audience in 2016, during a period marked by Conservative Party leadership under Prime Ministers David Cameron and Theresa May, as well as the United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union.

Although Oseman introduces diverse characters in terms of various sexual orientations and ethnicities, she does not fully explore their intersectionality, focusing instead on only one part of their identity that shapes their world experience, which is an unlikely scenario in real life. As mentioned earlier, intersectionality aims to find optimal solutions by understanding the intersecting systems of oppression, not just differences. In the *Heartstopper* series, sexuality is highlighted as the main source of discrimination the characters face, which is problematic given the high demand for diversity in young adult literature and intersectionality showcasing the altering of identities, not positioning one as superior to others.

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