



The team has been outstanding in the production of this Literary Magazine. Their attitude, endeavour and creativity has been something breathtaking to behold. That this project has been completed so well is a testament to their hard work and commitment.

Also, huge thanks to **Choni Wong-Cotter** for the fantastic cover design. It perfectly captures the essence of the contributions you are about to read.



Literary Magazine Team
Lucy Curran, Charlie Geelon and Cathy Keogh

Foreword

David Wall



The magic of reading lies in how it changes us. We become more aware, more engaged, more empathetic. We view people, events, and circumstances in a more nuanced manner. The world is not binary. It is complex and multilayered, and the more we read the more we can navigate our desired route. In an ever changing world, a world of uncertainty and upheaval, a world of misinformation and disinformation, it is becoming ever more important to be as informed as possible, to read as much as possible and to maintain the ability to create. The pleasure of managing the creation of the St. Gerard's Literary Magazine lies in the fact that research, create, edit the material themselves. The poems, short stories, personal essays and speeches are uniquely individual and something that each of our contributors should be proud of. And so, I urge you to read on and enjoy this year's offering.

FIELDS I KNOW



CANDICE YU

2nd Year

All the thunder and storms I suffered,
Ravens stopping on my shoulders.
I'm standing in this field all alone,
With no family, friends or home.

I could've cry but I've no tears,
So I'm standing here with no fear.
With a smile hanging on my face,
From my heart I love this place.

I'm standing here all day and night,
Looking at the scenes in my sight.
cold winter snows,
summer sun glows.
But I'm always here,
The fields I know.

Patches of the long golden grain,
And sometimes comes the pouring rain.
Every day I stay here on the watch,
About the storms I don't care not much.

I could've cry but I've no tears,
So I'm standing here with no fear.
With a smile hanging on my face,
From my heart I love this place.

I'm standing here all day and night,
Looking at the scenes in my sight.
cold winter snows,
summer sun glows.
But I'm always here,
The fields I know.

So this is my life,
In this field I thrive.
Everything is not a fear,
For I am always here.

I'm standing here all day and night,
Looking at the scenes in my sight.
cold winter snows,
summer sun glows.
But I'm always here,
The fields I know.

Everything's not a fear,
I'm always here.
Fields I know,
I'm always here.

THE MAN WHO LOST HIS SMILE



JACK DELMAR ANDERSON

2nd Year

The man who lost his smile
Sat outside the garage a while.
Young but looking quite old,
In weather so dreary and cold,

Begging with a cup in his hand,
Sinking in life's sand.
Staring at the concrete ground
Among the lost, not found.

Invisible to most ,
Appearing like a ghost.
I offered to buy him food,
That put him in a cheerful mood.

Homeless, adrift and sad,
I wonder what happened this lad.
From our school less than a mile
The man who lost his smile

EXPLORING NEW HORIZONS



HANNAH MAGEE

5th Year

Everything around me captivated me greatly when I was younger. I was curious about life's workings, the reasons behind humanity's wants and precious needs. Certain questions never got answered. Thus, one day I sat down and wrote "Bucket List" on top of a page using my rainbow gel pen. I was overcome by a strong need to learn, to create, and to satisfy an itch that had been bothering me for a while. On my vast list of goals, though, travel was my top priority. I think we were all told to "explore the world" when we were kids, so I took this advice to heart. I once read an incredible and meaningful quote that has truly resonated with me ever since; "The very basic core of a man's living spirit is his passion for adventure. The joy of life comes from our encounters with new experiences, and hence there is no greater joy than to have an endlessly changing horizon, for each day to have a new and different sun." The endlessly changing horizons of skyscrapers winding towards the clouds contrasted with small countryside villages has always intrigued me. The smell of spices wafting through the air from local markets, the 'ding' created from homely convenience stores and the stir of students hanging out in karaoke rooms. My readers, my Seoul-searching journey begins now. Welcome to South Korea!

South Korea has always held a certain magical fascination for me. It is a country that has been through thick and thin. From conflicting kingdoms that carried down their traditions to the now diverse and multicultural land, South Korea has learnt to adapt well to sudden changes. The country has been writing a rich and lengthy history for over 4000 years, yet it is only within the last 200 where the new South Korea has emerged. Between Ireland and South Korea, they both hold such similar histories that were extremely intriguing to discover. Both countries have felt the sorrow and hate from the shadows of colonial power. South Korea's case being Japan. It fought like Ireland, to gain independence, and that it did. This new independence was the correct call for the country, because ever since it got the sense of fresh air, its economy has been booming.

The nation loves to promote tourists to go see the phenomenal architecture that stretches along the coast. These include the stunning views of Buddhist temples and the nearby local fishing communities. Ascend steep mountains in the direction of the summit, where golden Buddha's statues lie, extending a warm greeting and inviting you inside its precious palace of prayer. On your way

down, why don't you stop off at one of the hot springs? Then you should hop on one of the extremely accessible modes of public transport and travel to a market.

Personally I would surprise my taste buds by trying the traditional Korean cuisine. From the tangy taste of crunchy kimchi to the thick slurpy noodles of jjajangmyeon, followed by a smile full of gooey hotteok pancakes. Why not finish off the night by treating yourself to the smooth, traditional bubbles of soju? Cheers, or as the Koreans say; "Jjang!"

Within the last 10 years, South Korea has become a powerhouse of integrating culture into Western media. My readers may have noted from my previous articles that I am a very passionate music listener. Nowadays, my spotify may consist of one or two k-pop songs. K-pop is a very wonderful rabbit hole many people trip headfirst into. This 'rabbit hole' is very hard to get out of indeed. The history of kpop ranges from 20 to 30 years ago, yet it has absolutely blown up in the media within the last 10 years. You may or may not know a little niche song named "Gangnam Style". A sight to be visited is of the two hands folded upon one another in the Gangnam district in Seoul, a remembrance of the unique and funky tune. Many k-pop music videos have been recorded in various locations around Korea and a lot of these places have become popular among mainstream fans and tourists as they would like to stand where their idols once stood. A thoughtful and funny thing to do, is it not? These fans will go out of their way to learn the beautiful language of Korea. Korean is a language that is everywhere nowadays, from car brands to skincare labels, it is a language that is hard to neglect. Korean is such an ancient language and has such an interesting structure, I have often pondered what it would be like to speak with fluency.

After completely immersing myself into Korean culture, reaching out for reality seems entirely impossible. It seems the adults were correct, my need to "explore the world" is greater than I have ever known. However, I do know that my eagerness to travel to this spectacular country will never fade and I know that someday, somehow, my shoes will squeak against the cobblestone sidewalks as I walk towards the parks of cherry blossoms. My travel and time spent in South Korea will inevitably be the highlight of my life's journey. As I will, some time in the future, breathe my final breaths, I will softly smile to myself, knowing that South Korea will be ticked off my bucket list.

SHORT STORY



EMILY ROCHE

Transition Year

Meghan stood face to face with the birch wooden door that led to her new summer job. The cafe was definitely welcoming. A sign hanging by the door read, "we're open!" and a bright sky blue exterior with bay windows on either side gave a glimpse into the cozy interior. Having the establishment situated on the busy pier walk also helped. It was the go-to place for everyone that still had the salty residue of sea water on their lips, to grab a quick drink or a bite to eat. The aroma of coffee and fresh pastries mixed with the laughter of people dripping water onto the hardwood floors from their soaked swimsuits made for a beautiful summer image.

But Meghan wasn't fooled. She had visited the cafe a few months earlier in order to hand in her CV, hoping to talk to the owners or the manager who ran the place. Without the bustling atmosphere of the townsfolk and the display of baked goods, all that was left in the cafe were the workers.

Meghan walked up to one of the employees who looked around her early twenties and gave her her brightest smile. "Hey! Is the manager here today? I'd like to hand in my CV. You see I'm hoping to get a summer job here and -". "I'm busy. Ask someone else," came the curt reply. The girl didn't even look up from the floor she was sweeping. Pin straight black hair cascaded down the side of her face, hiding it from Meghan's view. Meghan mumbled a quick "Sorry," and went on to ask the boy at the till. As soon as he saw her approaching, his eyes darted down to the screen in front of him and he began tapping rapidly, intensely focused on his task. "Excuse me," she began, "is the manager here today?" "Dunno," he responded begrudgingly. "Ok, is there any way you could check?" She pushed, desperate for an answer. The boy just shrugged, shaking his mop of mousy brown hair. Meghan felt bold and decided to peer over the top of the screen to see what he was so busy with. The screen was turned off. Meghan looked up and stared at the lopsided name tag pinned to his shirt. 'Jacob', it read. "Jacob," she said, forcing him to finally look at her, his expression startled, "You're not even doing anything," she stated in a deadpan voice, an unimpressed look on her face. He puffed out some air and let out a long groan catching the attention

of the girl who was still sweeping. Jacob left his position behind the counter and went down a flight of stairs.

A couple minutes later, he emerged from the stairwell with an older lady in tow. He gestured towards Meghan and grabbed his coat from the rack, heading for the exit.

Meghan took a deep breath as she prepared to make her best impression on her (hopefully) new manager. "Hello!" She exclaimed with all her might, determined to come off as a cheerful, energetic person; the kind of person you'd expect to work in a bustling sea-side cafe, but she was faced with the opposite. The woman gestured towards the two seater table behind Meghan and she plonked heavily onto a wooden chair. Meghan followed swiftly, trying not to stare at the cigarette that dangled limply from the older woman's fingers. The atmosphere at the table was tense. Meghan couldn't believe that just under an hour ago this place had been the liveliest spot in town. Their website even went so far as to say, 'recommended as the new hot spot for teens.' Even in the dim afterglow of the summer evening, nothing could save this place from the horrid attitudes polluting the atmosphere.

Something like dread sprouted in Meghan's stomach as she wondered if the interaction with the manager would be just like the others. The manager had poorly bleached hair, her natural brunette showing at the greasy roots. She was dressed in faded, grubby clothes that made an unflattering first impression. The smoking stub that travelled between yellowed fingers and narrow mouth wasn't helping. "So, you're looking for a job?" she asked, as Meghan clutched her CV in a death grip, wondering if it wasn't enough of a give away. "Yes, just for the summer, while I'm off school." Megan replied, scooting the CV across the table for the woman to examine.

Both gazes fell to the now crumpled piece of paper. The opening page was filled with all of Meghan's greatest achievements, however, this was soon overshadowed by a sudden and unavoidable tickle in her throat. It was hardly the best first impression but Megan couldn't help it. She made several attempts to pull herself together, to stifle the bubbling coughs in her throat, to wade through the fog of cigarette smoke that had settled between her and the manager, deliberately hindering Meghan's chances. Any nerves or tension Megan had felt were now gone; now it was about survival. "Nicotine," she mused, "not my first choice of scents", and she began to wonder if this place could ever really have smelled of freshly baked pastries.

A ROBIN'S WINTER

SHANE WHELAN

Transition Year

As the first winter snow set on the bare branches of the forest, all was silent. Many of the local animals had already either migrated beyond the horizon to someplace more pleasant or stocked up on food to prepare for their deep, long slumber, when the trees were still autumn gold. Many knew of the dangers that would come with the coming months, from the cold temperatures to the growing challenge of finding enough food, and they knew better than to risk their lives trying to survive the coming winter. However there was the faint sound of a chirping coming from deep within the forest. It was the chirping of a creature that met the challenges of winter head on and persisted; the robin.

The robin was entranced by the sound of silence that came with the first snow. As this was only his first winter, he had no idea of what to do or where to go. Silently, he perched on the branch of a now white tree and thought, "Maybe I should go with my gut feeling, that always seems to work out". So, on pure instinct, he decided to go look for food. Although the forest had already been plundered of its fruit by the now slumbering animals, he assumed that the animals wouldn't notice the little berries and fruits that were left behind on the bushes and shrubs and that finding those bushes would do him for a good while.

He searched high and low for those berries, asking "If I was a berry bush, where would I be?", but they were quite hard to find under all of the white snow. Whenever he found one, however, he discovered that the bushes had already been ravaged by animals or other small birds that stayed behind like him. After a few hours of no luck, he stopped on an empty bush, ruffled his feathers and began to think, "Maybe, just this once, I shall go to the forest's edge and see if I can find anything to fill me up."

Since his territory was near the edge of the forest he lived in, he flew past the 'Winter Wonderland' that his forest had now become and came out of the opening to find something he never expected, another robin and other birds. Now, bear in mind, robins are usually quite solitary and territorial creatures, so seeing others of your kind was very unusual. "What on earth is happening here?" he asked the other robin, to which he was met with a loud, "Food! Food!."

As the robin looked down he could see what was, to him, a weird long pinecone with little holes at the sides that hung off a pole, in the open, beside a cabin (he had never seen a cabin, so he thought of it as some sort of large, weird tree). The other birds were now swarming around and pecking at this weird cone.

He was hesitant checking it out but when the other robin said: "If you go down there, you can get your fill and then some, and the best part is: it somehow never runs out of food, and if that wasn't enough, the type of food changes every day, from worms and seeds to berries and grains", he knew he had to check it out now. To his surprise, there was a little green perch growing out of this cone-shaped thing which he could land on and poke at it, as if it wanted to be eaten.

When he poked his beak into the hole, he found surprise when he pulled out a beak full of dried worms and small berries, he had now found a food source! He fed off the cone for a bit while other birds feasted on it as well before he had his fill and decided to call it a day and fly back to his home in the forest. He came back the next day and, to his delight, he found that it was still full and it now had grains and seeds, just like the other robin had said to him. And so, for the following days and weeks, he came back to the same spot whenever he couldn't find enough food in the forest, to feed and to socialise with the other birds that had found this amazing 'cone'. He told other robins and they came to the same place and, thanks to the 'cone', they all made it past the winter.



THE PLEASURES OF YOUTH



MICHEÁL O'CUINN

5th Year

It caught my glance with a despair only something that can't actually feel despair could feel. Desperate for attention, for its purpose to be fulfilled, for someone to acknowledge it. That untouched, dust-caked, once loved piano had sat unplayed, sequestered in the corner of my grandparents' living room for the better part of 20 years. It had been used to being played, too. About four generations and probably hundreds of people had sat down at that piano and played it beautifully. If I had to guess, that's the bit that annoyed the piano the most; it was used. It had a good run. It knew what it was like to be popular, to be loved, to be valued, but that was all gone thanks to arthritis wearing away at my grandparents' joints and natural causes wearing away at their social circle. When you began reading this essay, it might have sounded like a classic story of an ungrateful kid rejecting the passion they once loved, that interest now sitting tucked away in an unvisited crevice of their mind. But this overly-personified piano went through something a lot worse. The reason it lost the favour of those who loved it wasn't because it was annoying to play, it wasn't because some teenager was too unbothered to practice, it wasn't because no one had an interest in it. It was an unblamable, unavoidable, inexorable, time.

My grandparents would wish for nothing more than to be able to give that piano its life back. To be able to put it at the centre of roaring sessions of traditional Irish music, to let anyone from their three year old granddaughter to their concert pianist son have a go, to let it be that hearth of family life it once was. But they can't. Ageing had stolen that opportunity from them, and taken its toll on their joints and their lives - but not on mine. I had every opportunity. As a child, I did reluctantly play piano, being dragged kicking and screaming to lessons once a week from ages six to nine. But once I started playing bodhran, flute and later bass guitar, my musical interests shifted rapidly away from piano. I realized that it simply wasn't for me. But was it not the greatest privilege in the world to be able to have that realization, and act on it? What my grandparents would give to be in that position. To be able to stop yearning for that ability that age cruelly snatches away. That power you always took for granted, to do what you want, when you want, how you want. To make a change. I was so flooded with that power as a child that I was able to look at the opportunity to practise every day at piano, to become exceptional at it, to play as much as I wanted whenever I wanted with no fear of aching backs and painful joints, and reject it. As a young person, I had, and still have, the power of rejection. The power to look at every great opportunity that those who lack this power crave and be able

to say; "Not interested, sorry!." That absolute abundance of opportunities, with the futures arms being so vast you have no idea they could be holding. If one great opportunity comes up, why should you care? An even better one could be just over the horizon. Reject it, say you're not bothered, say you want to have more free time. That freedom, that freedom to simply not do what you'll wish you had done because you believe life will never stop throwing you random opportunities, is one of the greatest pleasures of youth.

The power of rejection, paradoxically, contradicts another one of the greatest pleasures of youth: An absence of absolute control and responsibility for every aspect of your life. While it may be odd to consider that a pleasure, not having control over every aspect of your life is a phenomenon that is prevalent in youth and almost nowhere else in your life. Now, while obviously many people are forced to pick up responsibilities over their life at a young age that my privileged position never made me pick up, in general youth, especially childhood, is a time where far less is expected of you. You don't have to pick where you go to school, you don't have to choose where to live, who to marry, what to wear. That lack of freedom could be superficially viewed as a downside to youth. Why would anyone want to not have absolute control over their lives? Surely being unable to do what you want, when you want, is not only a restriction, but in conflict with that power of rejection I talked about earlier? To respond to the first straw man argument I laid out, you have the rest of your life to have absolute control. You can spend your 20s, your 40s and your 80s writing your to-do lists, fretting over jejune alterations to your CV, and worrying about how you're going to finance literally every single thing you want to do. You can be burdened with all the control, responsibility and decisions you want in that vast swath of your life that isn't your youth. Now while this whole argument heavily depends on how you define youth, you have the least responsibility as a child. And the definition of child isn't really as malleable as the definition of youth. Even if you're still claiming that "36 is still young!" As your hairline slowly evaporates, you're still a 36 year old who is most likely shouldering the weight of his rent, car payments, and employment, along with his upcoming hair transplant surgery. A child is someone so unburdened by responsibility, they often can't even comprehend the responsibilities they are yearning to be burdened by. A child's biggest item on his list of freedoms he desires, the item that could cause him to plead day and night with his parents for liberation from the clutches of their authority, could just be the ability to play in the park on his own, something so minute that an adult wouldn't even consider it as something their control over their own life rewards them with. A child's greatest desires are an adult's most negligible daily happenings. For myself, and I'm sure most other children, it was the sleepover. That scared reprieve from your parents' authoritarian regime into the sanctuary of your friend's house, where those vindictive laws of 8.30 bedtimes and malicious restrictions on iPads were lifted. Staying up until what most adults would consider an unbearably mundane hour of the night felt like a heist of the highest order, stealing away the precious hours of sleep our parents wanted us to have. But as I grew, the sleepover turned from a magical, once in blue moon endeavor to just staying over at a friend's house. This romanticization of the mundane due to both every experience being new to you as a child, and you not knowing that in the context of how free you will be as an adult, the

freedoms you experience as a child will seem negligible in comparison is one of, in my opinion, the greatest pleasures of youth. The classic rose tinted glasses of childhood, tinted that way due to a lack of experience and a lack of just what you could experience.

To respond to the second question potentially posed about the pleasure of a lack of responsibility, a lack of responsibility does not equate to a lack of power. While you might be able to decide where you go to school and when you go to bed, there are some things that no one can control in a child. That power of rejection is one that no one can take away from a kid. No matter how much my parents lambasted me for my lack of interest in piano or shoved me into those lessons like they were the mandatory parole meetings of a prisoner, they couldn't take away my innate rejection of the instrument. The combination of these two things, in my opinion, creates one of the pleasures most unique to youth; the ability to have absolute control over what opportunities you take, but little to no control over the responsibilities you must fulfil.

Going back to that idea of rose tinted glasses, I believe the reason that young people, and children especially, are so joyous and carefree is because you can't be disappointed by what hasn't happened. An adult has to deal with a type of grief that's different from the grief of losing a person. A type of grief that's far more insidious, because what you're grieving is uniquely specific to what you would hate to lose the most. The grief over what could've been. An adult would have opened that bakery. They could have married that person, or taken that job, or played that piano. They have to remember two pasts and be saddened by both: the disappointing reality that came and the desired potential future that didn't. They have to talk about themselves in the past tense, what they were and would have been. And what you could've been is very often something you most likely could not have been. It could have been completely out of the realm of possibility for you to get that record deal or sell that painting, but you'll never stop fantasising about your perfect, flawless version of what you think could have been reality. While I understand not every adult experiences this grief of their potential and this is an incredibly pessimistic view on things, it's a view that's nonetheless near impossible for a child to have. You can't grieve what hasn't happened yet. A child can hide from the torrential rain of a life of unrealized potential under the umbrella of the fact that they haven't had a chance to realize any of their potential yet. All a child sees are possibilities. Possibilities and opportunities to improve, to get better, to grow. And as they grow, they're ostracized for seeing the same opportunities. It becomes a sign of naivety or arrogance to pursue something of great difficulty or with little chances of success. The curiosity and openness to new things is replaced by a norm to stick to. I've done X, why wouldn't I keep doing X? Y would take practice, time and effort to become my new X, so I may as well stick to Y.

Think of it in terms of learning a language. Why do you think kids can pick up on language so easily? While it is partially because their brains are made for it, I'd say it's a lot to do with the fact they're never not allowed to participate. When a child calls a group of octopi "octopuses", do you scorn him and make fun of

how little he knows about octopi? No, you correct him and laugh about it. As we age, people expect us to know things. When I was a kid, I never learnt to speak Arabic despite living in a middle eastern country from age six. None of the other western kids did, either. Why? Because our Arabic teachers shamed us for not knowing the language. As a six year old I can't tell you how many times a certain Ms. Aaziz castigated me for not knowing my Alif Ba Tas. (note that I wouldn't take my word on this being the Arabic version of ABCs, as I was exceptionally bad at Arabic for the precise reasons I'm detailing here.) I never learnt because each mistake became a hot coal to jump over rather than an opportunity to learn from due to my teachers treating each error I made with punishment, not correction. Punishment lead to fear, and fear could never lead to learning. To know the rules and act accordingly, to view mistakes as something to fear and not to learn from. If people were able to speak to one another without fear of correction, the way children can, they also learn just as fast as children do and take up opportunities the way they do. When you have no fear of judgement, you have no reason not to try, and that freedom to try whatever comes your way is the final pleasure I would perceive as particular to youth.

Romanian absurdist philosopher Emilio Cioran once said that "Man accepts death, but not the hour of his death" . I think that unlike Man, Child not only accepts neither death nor the hour of his death, but hasn't really thought about them that much at all yet. Child is going to get new Pokémon cards tomorrow, and that's all he's really thinking about right now. What I'm trying to say is that every pleasure of youth that I've described is some form or another the platitude that "ignorance is bliss". A child is ignorant to what is possible for him to experience and hasn't experienced much of anything, so he treats new experiences with wonder and can't fathom what could be next. A child is ignorant to what a privileged position they find themselves in in regards to how many opportunities are before them, so he views them as unlimited, infinitely at his disposal to reject or accept as he pleases. A child is ignorant to the pressures placed on adults to conform to a status quo or know what they ought to know, letting them question endlessly and annoyingly to try and know as much as they can about the world. The pleasures particular to youth, in my personal opinion, are identical to the ignorances particular to youth. Ignorance is the adult's greatest prison, and the child's greatest freedom.

THE THING I FEEL IS MOST INDISPENSABLE IN MY LIFE

BENJAMIN BILLINGTON

6th Year

The needle drops and the familiar static crackle echoes through my speaker. It serves as a sort of warning, a wake-up call for what is about to come. All of the sudden, the room fills with an all-powerful, soul-resonating burst of energy as Led Zeppelin's iconic, even infamous, 4th album starts to play. The dynamic, shrieking cries of Robert Plant's haunting vocals pierce my very being as the notoriously aggressive, yet simultaneously artistic and masterful riffs bellow from Jimmy Page's twin-neck guitar. This gripping, spine-chilling, mind-bending euphony of chords, drums, riffs and vocals is the embodiment of the drug that is music.

I once heard a line that truly struck me. It claimed that "if visual art is how we decorate space, music is how we decorate time". This elegant description has always stood out to me as it provides a palpable explanation as to why the unbelievably complex, yet refreshingly simple, world of music means so much to so many people, especially to me. Music is, in simple terms, humanity's way of speaking out, of disconnecting or reconnecting to reality, of better understanding ourselves. Its unmatched beauty lies in its ability to hold the most profound and elaborate meanings, or simply just to exist as a soothing background for our mundane day-to-day lives. Every day I feel so lucky to have discovered my deep and unmatched passion for music, and in doing so, unlocking parts of my own being and personality, the very essence of my existence.

For me, the date of my musical renaissance stands to me as the second of February 2024 also known as the day of my 17th birthday. As I walked into the kitchen still dreary eyed, I laid eyes on a somewhat alien device at the time, a record player. Of course, I know its purpose and what it did, but at the time, the idea of playing music from a large, heavy, black disc was simply alien to me. Well, music has always played an integral part in my life. I played piano as a child, and now I play the guitar, as well as having parents who are absolute music fanatics. The true realization of my other appreciation of music, namely 70's rock, hip hop and pop, has only sparked recently. Now this piece of equipment, a black box with a little needle and a spinning circle atop it has become.

Another beautiful aspect of music is the constant learning and discovering. There is no end goal or aim to music, nor is there pressure to expand your horizons and progress as a listener. I believe that every being's musical journey begins

the day they are born and ends with when we take our last breath. This journey does not follow a straight line, either. Its path is rugged and ugly, nonsensical, full of bumps, valleys and confusion in the space of a week, you I may find myself enjoying the late melodies of Bob Marley, promptly followed by classic vintage crunch Led Zeppelin to the thorough and bubbly tracks of Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* rounded off by the experimental synthetic beats of Tyler, The Creator. My point is that there is no right or wrong to music. Its existence is democratic, made for the people by the people. To each is truly their own. People can spend their entire lives chasing the perfect song, album or soundtrack, and never find it, however, it is this journey, this imperfection that makes music so unique. I feel that every day I learn more about my own music, tastes, my likes and dislikes, and while I don't necessarily enjoy someone else's music tastes, I respect it as I know that they are embarking on the same journey as me, only with different stars and end points.

My personal taste in music is somewhat unorthodox among people my age. I think nothing brings me greater relation than the groundbreaking genre defining sounds and quirks of what the music industry has coined *dead rock*. It is difficult to coin such a rich, diverse and complex genre, such a simple term. However, its roots lie in the era of 60s to 90s rock and roll, folk, alternative, psychedelic and progressive rock. Under its enormous wings are some of the most well known names in popular culture, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen and Queen, to name a few. As a guitar player, my true introduction to "Dad Rock" sprouted when I was 15 and trying to pick riffs and licks to learn I sprung a vague interest in the booming and powerfully electric riff of the 70s from big names such as Black Sabbath, Pink Floyd and Eric Clapton. I distinctly remember my dad standing in the doorway as I played quite poorly at first, the risks that defined his teenage years. I remember his smirk and the glint in his eyes. He realized that his interest had been passed down to me. It was almost as if he was saying "I've made it as a parent". Something clicked in my head, this paternal bond strengthening my ever growing passion, without a doubt, being a contributing factor in my burning passion today,

Music is and always will be an outlet that humanity will use to express our deepest concerns, opinions and desires for as long as the human race has walked the earth. Music has been a way to connect with each other, voice our opinions and speak out against the oppressive or unfair systems that govern us. Without a doubt, black history in the United States is one of the darkest and most disturbing periods of human existence. However, the unwilling, unyielding power of music has afforded so many the opportunity to have a voice through their lyrics and beats for songs as powerful and poignant as "Hurricane", the epic ballad by Bob Dylan. Dylan masterfully tells the story of Ruben Carter, a black boxer wrongly convicted of triple homicide, something he never did. The level of depth, meaning and relevance that this song carries even today, 60 years on from its release, frankly, strikes me as it highlights the undying power of lyricism and decorated poetry. Hip Hop is a genre pioneered by black artists living in racist communities in Compton, California, perpetuated by icons such as Tupac and Dr Dre, this ever developing and innovative chapter shows long and complex history gives those with out of Hope become those without

purpose. Compass music truly allows us as humans to escape from the harsh reality and sink into the Word of words of geniuses, while still staying grounded by the relatability and personality that these songs hold. This, without a doubt, is some of the reason why music is so indispensable in not only my life, but the lives of millions upon millions of others who want to grasp onto that power that poignancy apps such as Spotify and Apple Music are essentially, essentially act as virtual art galleries that showcase the absolute with breadth and depth of human emotion and its wonderful uniqueness. Unlike any other form of art, music carries an element of true, one of a kind, freshness. No song tracker album ever created is the same as another, like snowflakes the branches of each and every song sprite to create never before heard patterns and sounds each song giving us as listeners are profound insight into the mind of the Creator a certain song may carry a live training profundity to one individual, or may just act as a fan fun time killer to the next. I have experienced this myself, witnessing a friend listening to one of my favorite songs and passing it off as a good tune. This true personal uniqueness is what music is all about. And there is always some song or even snippet of a track that wrenches someone's heart from their chest and fixates them in clay shin and reflection.

Music has the incredible duality to make a person feel new, nostalgic towards a time when they didn't even exist. When I drop the needle and hear the boner shaking riffs of Jimi Hendrix is Stratocaster blasting my ears, I teleport back to a manicure outside the local newsagent with swarms of craze fans, animastic, anim, animalistically fighting to grab their tickets to the young prodigies of coming concerts. I can see in amazing detail the bell bottom jeans and long frizzy hair. It's the 1970s which is unusual, as I was not born for another 30 years. This capability to transcend time and space with only the use of sound is unlike anything else that we treasure on this planet, from the ethereal melodies of Pink Floyd to the elegantly composed symphonies of Mozart to the shrieking, thumping, darrellish cries of ACDC, music allows us to break free from the societal constraints that bind us to carve our own paths in this world and to be Who we truly want to be, even for the briefest of moments. Each and every song that I listen to allows me to experience the freshness of a different reality or the beauty of my current one. Music is undoubtedly the thing that I value the most in my life, whether I'm driving to school studying or warming up for an important match, music allows me to dictate my own mood and face the things that hold me back. It fuels me with confidence, uplift, calm and grief, all depending on what I want to listen to at the time. The last two years of my life have been years of amazing personal discovery. As I discovered my own identity, personality and passions, I can confidently say that the thing that has steered me the most along this path was my music.

SHORT STORY



CHRIS KELLY
6th Year

Jordan and Ciara found themselves driving together for the last time. The air was cold, the window wipers on full speed, the radio playing at a low volume.

"I'm sorry, Ciara," Jordan whispered, stifling his tears.

Ciara couldn't bring herself to respond.

He looked at her, capturing every feature for the last time; reliving their life in an instant.

The heat finally came on. "Thank God for that" he said to himself.

"Remember this pl..." Jordan stopped as he realised Ciara had started to silently mourn. Memories played like a movie through his head. He laughed to himself. Ciara looked over, "you're never serious J," she mumbled through a blocked nose, sniffing, trying to compose herself.

"I'm sorry Ci, all I can think of is how amazing it was. All of it"

He glanced at the sat nav. 7 minutes. 7 minutes until the end.

He gripped the steering wheel, winced and bit his cheeks. It irritated him. He could never convey his emotions to anyone, not even Ciara. "Where did it go wrong, Ci? I... I mean, we were...amazing. We could take on the world. I have you..." he trailed off, expecting her to finish their saying.

All he could hear was Joe Duffy arguing with a woman about the price of a Fredo.

4 minutes. Jordan could feel his heart in his throat. He racked his brain for something, anything, to fix this.

Ciara's chest was heavy. Her brain was razed due to countless sleepless nights.

"I'm sorry, Ciara," Jordan whispered.

"I know you are, I really do, but please don't make this any more impossible than it already is", she thought to herself. Gripping her jeans, pushing her feet into the cold carpet of the footwell, wishing she could muster up the courage to answer him, she noticed him looking at her. It brought her back to countless times he had looked at her like that. All she could do was keep looking straight at the red light.

The heat finally came on. "Thank God for that", she thought to herself.

She looked out the window and saw the road down to Tramore. All she could do was look at all the happy faces, reminiscing about when they used to look like that. She started to weep, silently, as she had been doing for months.

"Remember this pl..."

Ciara couldn't hear him, consumed by her own thoughts attacking her, praying that this journey had never had to happen.

She heard Jordan laugh, a laugh she'd never forget. A laugh that held more meaning than any word, the only laugh she loved.

"You're never serious J..." a sentence she had said countless times. It enveloped her in memory; back to their vows or even the time he laughed during their favourite teacher's funeral. If she could bottle it up, it would have enough energy to fuel the whole of Waterford for years. "I'm sorry Ci, all I can think of is how amazing it was. All of it." She screams a silent scream that only she can hear. Deep down all she wants to do is to turn the car around and act like nothing happened. She notices him glance at the sat-nav. She notices him grip the wheel. She notices his cheeks go hollow as he bites down on them. She knew all of his tells. All she wants to do is help, she knows she can't. "Where did it go wrong Ci? I mean, we were amazing. We could take on the world. I have you..." "And you have me" she thinks to herself. Screaming at herself for not answering. Her nails digging so hard into her new jeans she can feel them cracking. But she still sits there, with Joe Duffy blabbering about Fredo's being the only sound in the car. She glanced at the sat-nav, 4 minutes, that's all they had left. She noticed his breathing getting rapid, a bead of sweat dripped down his forehead. She wanted to help, but all she could do was notice.

Ciara's heart began to pound, her fingernails bleeding, her seat creaking with the amount of force she was exerting into the carpet. Jordan's mind was racing, his eyes began to water, his cheeks bleeding, the steering wheel starting to almost mould onto his hands.

For two minutes, they could see the building. Ciara finally let go of her jeans, noticing the bloodied - cracked nails. She stopped pushing against the floor and the seat stopped creaking. She silences Joe Duffy and "angry caller #4", "angry caller number 4" Ciara mumbles.

"Angry caller number 4" Jordan whispered back in a raspy tone. An inside joke between the two, said every morning before work.

"Arrived" announced the sat-nav. They stared into each other's souls before Jordan turned the car off. The rumble purr of the 2.5l m54 silenced. The only car Ciara knew. The same one she had seen in her driveway for the last eight years. Jordan looked at her in a way Ciara had never seen before.

"I guess... this...this is goodbye, then." Jordan stutters after every word.

"I guess it is." Ciara exhaled out, not having the strength to speak to him.

"I have you..." Jordan whispered in an attempt to get one more word out of her.

"Goodbye, J. live your best life, always remember me", is what Ciara wanted to say. All she could muster up was a simple "goodbye, J". her hands - shaking as she reaches for the door handle. She begrudgingly gets out and walks to the boot to grab her suitcase, barely being able to pull it out. The only noises being the loud whizz of the aircoaches D8K, diesel engine, and the noise of her bass wheels across the road.

UCD JUNIORS

AIDAN CURRAN

1st Year

Adjudicators and esteemed guests,

I proudly propose the motion that this house prefers independent politicians to political parties. My points will be that independents can adapt and change to solve new problems without the constraints of a party, in addition to some rebuttal

Political parties are all known for their rigid beliefs; the Green Party prioritises the environment, People Before Profit wants the minimum wage to be higher. They have their beliefs and they stick to them, even when their solutions might not be the most reasonable for our problems. But independents can adapt, can change. Independents don't have to stick to some abstract ideal, and can see past what a party prioritises to see what the nation as a whole needs to prioritise.

Independents can also be key in getting parties to work together, they can be the bridge between rival parties. Independents can be this bridge as they are much more neutral and don't have long standing rivalries with any one party. This is possibly the most important thing independents do because, as we see in the USA, not having parties that can work together doesn't make for a very productive government. We see this with Trump whose first order of business was to undo 24 of Biden's 60 executive orders. That's almost half of Biden's entire term undone because these two parties disagree on almost everything. This is seen in Congress and the Senate even more as they can hardly get any bills passed as the Republicans will need to convince the Democrats or the Democrats convince Republicans, this is clearly not an efficient system. You may wonder what effect this has on you, but having an unproductive government and parties constantly squabbling would lead to a sharp decline in the amount of bills and legislations getting passed which would lead to the entire country possibly falling behind in this ever changing world.

Just to remind you that the first opposition claimed that because anyone could be an independent that this made them untrustworthy. While this is true, that does not mean that all independents are untrustworthy. Take a look at the current 17 independent politicians in the Dáil, almost all of them are previous party members who saw the many benefits which the proposition has previously mentioned. Now my question is, if the most popular independents were almost all previously members of significant parties, do you still think independents are more untrustworthy than parties?

Now the second proposition said that parties could agree on goals and get things done. But Sinn Féin and Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael simply don't agree on very much policies, without the use of independents as a bridge between opposing views. The second proposition also said that an independent politician never holding the position of Taoiseach is a bad thing, but that's exactly what makes independents brilliant; they are mediators and diplomats. They are not rivals with major parties because, as the opposition has repeated, they don't have as much resources to rival these major parties, making them much needed mediators in the constant arguments between parties.

Our swing speaker said that the opposition doesn't think that independents are the solution for no new ideas coming into government, but the opposition then doesn't offer a different solution. This is perfect for parties as if independents are not the solution then what is? Parties will tell us to wait for a better solution and if we do, we will continue to vote them in as we wait for this supposed solution that isn't coming. Independents aren't perfect and the proposition doesn't pretend they are, but we do think they could be and deserve a chance. We simply need more neutrality and mediators in the Dáil instead of more party candidates who refuse to work with other parties as they are historical rivals in order to create an efficient system.

The fourth speaker of the proposition used the example of Belgium going 504 days without a single bill getting passed, because parties couldn't agree on anything. Now, I may have misunderstood this statistic but to me it seems that a lack of mediators led to these parties being unable to come together to agree on things, proving exactly what I am saying.

The motion doesn't say that parties are bad or should be abolished, only that independents are preferred. Why? Because they are flexible leaders who will focus on you and get your problems solved quicker. Thank you for listening and I urge you to propose.

CONCERN DEBATE

ISABEL MCKEAGNEY

5th Year

Good morning adjudicators, esteemed guests, timekeeper and my fellow students. My name is Isabel and as my teammates have previously mentioned, we are here to firmly oppose the motion that "feeding the world is increasingly beyond humanity's reach."

It is true that the challenge of feeding a growing global population amid the pressures of climate change and environmental degradation is daunting. However, we have not reached a point of helplessness or inevitability. By utilising climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, and investing in protective measures against extreme weather, we can, indeed, feed the world sustainably.

To understand why, let's first acknowledge the reality of the problem. According to the Concern website; higher temperatures, water scarcity, droughts, floods, and greater CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere all impact staple crops around the world. Crops like corn and wheat have experienced significant declines due to extreme weather events, plant diseases, and a worsening global water crisis. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, climate variability accounts for 80% of the causes behind unpredictable cereal crop harvests in areas like Africa's Sahel. As the impacts of climate change become more pronounced in the Horn of Africa, Southeast Asia, and other vulnerable regions, it's imperative that we develop tailored strategies to mitigate the damage and protect food security.

This is where climate-smart agriculture becomes indispensable. Climate-smart practices like drought-resistant crops, precision irrigation, and improved soil management offer resilient strategies that can be adapted to different regions and climates. For example, in African countries, where climate change hits hardest and food insecurity is most severe, adopting drought-resistant varieties and efficient irrigation allows communities to continue farming despite unpredictable weather patterns. By investing in these adaptive practices, countries struggling with the harshest climate impacts can increase their domestic food production, reducing dependence on international markets and fortifying their self-sufficiency.

Additionally, implementing renewable energy in agriculture is essential to creating a stable and resilient food system. Renewable energy, if distributed equitably, brings reliability to food production by enabling power for water pumps, storage facilities, and processing equipment, even in remote areas.

Solar-powered irrigation, for instance, provides consistent access to water, allowing farmers to irrigate their crops during droughts without relying on erratic fuel supplies. Properly distributed solar, wind, and hydroelectric systems reduce dependence on fossil fuels, cut emissions, and make energy more accessible. If every farm could be powered by reliable, renewable sources, food production would become far more resilient to economic and environmental shocks.

Finally, investing in crop protection and emergency response plans for extreme weather events is a vital part of a sustainable solution. Regions prone to natural disasters need early warning systems, crop insurance, and emergency storage to protect both farmers and their yields from climate impacts like storms and floods. If a farming community is hit by a natural disaster, these protective measures ensure that local food supplies remain stable and accessible, thus averting potential food shortages and strengthening community resilience.

But how does this mean that feeding the world is within humanity's reach? According to the concern website, countries that are hardest hit by climate change, such as African nations and regions in Southeast Asia, are also those facing the greatest levels of food insecurity. By equipping these regions with climate-smart agricultural practices, reliable renewable energy, and protective measures, they can produce more food within their own borders. This will enable them to feed their populations and reduce their vulnerability to global food market fluctuations. Renewable energy access ensures that farmers can reliably produce food, even in difficult conditions, and climate-smart agriculture allows them to maximise crop yields despite climate stress.

When communities are given the tools to produce food in a sustainable way, the entire global food system becomes more resilient. Feeding the world is not beyond us; it is a challenge that can be addressed through intelligent, targeted action. We have the resources, technology, and knowledge necessary to solve this problem. Rather than resigning to defeat, we must take action to protect and empower those most affected.

In conclusion, humanity has within its reach the means to feed the world, even in the face of climate change. Through climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, and protective investments, we can not only meet the challenges ahead but can create a future where all people have reliable access to food. This motion is not only defeatist but inaccurate. Feeding the world is a challenge that we are equipped to meet, and it is our responsibility to rise to this challenge.

Thank you.



UCD LEINSTER DEBATES

CHARLIE GEELON

5th Year

Good afternoon chairperson, adjudicators and esteemed guests. My name is Charlie and today my partner Lucy and I are proposing this motion. I will speak on two points within my speech. Firstly, how charities' use of sensational, graphic or overly-emotional images of suffering in their advertising are inherently unethical and portray complex issues in a far too black and white manner, and secondly, how these advertisement campaigns are not effective in the long term and have not adapted to reflect the developments that have occurred in developing countries. I will also have rebuttals intertwined within my speech.

Now onto my first point, the showing of people in extreme suffering within these ads is dehumanising, they are portrayed as sub-human due to the absence of innate characteristics. These ads dehumanise these people to no more than mere symbols of distress, rather than highlighting the complex realities of their lives. From a deontological perspective, which is an ethics theory used to distinguish right from wrong, the use of graphic images to elicit sympathy or donations can be considered unethical because it exploits the suffering of individuals. This approach treats vulnerable people as tools to achieve a fundraising goal, rather than respecting their dignity and autonomy. It is displaying this unhealthy narrative of helplessness. By focusing on extreme, often dehumanising images of suffering, the individuals depicted are reduced to their suffering rather than recognized as full, dignified human beings. This undermines the intrinsic value of those people and violates the moral duty to treat them with respect. The individuals or communities shown also may not have given explicit consent for their suffering to be used in this way, which can be seen as an unethical breach of personal autonomy. If you turned on your tv tomorrow and saw a picture of you in an advert that you had not consented to, would you not think that it is wrong and unjust? So why isn't it any different for these people's suffering that is being portrayed oftentimes against their own will.

Such advertising campaigns also often rely on oversimplified, black-and-white portrayals of issues. The use of extreme imagery reduces the complexity of social, economic, or environmental problems to a simple matter of right versus wrong. The negative impact of this is that viewers of the adverts may believe that charity is the sole solution to complex systemic issues, like poverty or famine, without addressing the structural and political causes of these problems. This could contribute to a cycle of short-term relief without addressing the root causes of suffering. The miseducation of these advertisements is a gross ethical mishap by charities.

Now onto my second point, advertising campaigns which use the type of images referred to in the motion we acknowledge are effective in the short term, but are less likely to gather lasting support or inspire sustainable action within the long term. Charitable campaigns that have focused on positive stories, tangible results and solutions tend to form a deeper, more lasting connection with their donors and volunteers, because they are informing them on what their donations are actually going towards and achieving! While we on the proposition acknowledge that there is sometimes an initial spike in donations due to these graphic campaigns, this interest rate fluctuates dramatically over time, due to the ad's lack of important information and educational material. Further linking into my first point on the inefficacy of such campaigns, while the goal of such advertisements might be to raise money for charitable causes, the emotional manipulation of viewers often leads to short-term responses rather than long-term, informed actions. New donors might give in to a moment of distress, without fully understanding the complex issues at play, or without considering more sustainable, thoughtful ways of contributing. Simply because they have seen a distressing image, they have now donated to a cause that they may not be fully informed on. Would the opposition not admit that this is a grossly twisted form of emotional manipulation?

Repeated exposure to graphic depictions of suffering can also lead to desensitisation amongst potential donors. Over time, people may become numb to the suffering depicted due to overexposure normalising these graphic images, leading to a reduction in the overall effectiveness of charitable campaigns. These types of ads have been used for decades, we have all no doubt seen them countless times before. And now especially with social media's option to skip advertisements, people have the option to move past these advertisements that have shown up so many times before. This is unfortunately reducing the viewer's overall interest in these global issues, as they have become so accustomed to them. This therefore negatively impacts the charities and those in need as donations begin to fall as the shock factor or graphic images wears away, making them inefficient. We on the prop can clearly see that a new angle is needed in charities advertisement campaigns, and my partner and I find it very hard to believe that opp do not agree with this.

In conclusion, today I have unequivocally proven why this house should ban charities from using sensational, graphic or overly-emotional images of suffering in their advertising. My partner Lucy will summarise the two main points I have brought forward, and close the debate as a whole for the proposition.

SOROPTOMIST

LUCY CURRAN

5th Year

Good afternoon.

I'd like to begin with a moment of reflection. 2024 has flown by, so let's reminisce on the start of this year. Resolutions were fresh, hopes were high, the year was beginning anew. January to July, like every month in our bustling lives, was jam-packed, so I'd like everyone to think back to how they spent this pocket of time in their lives. What fills you with the most nostalgia?

Maybe you were promoted at work or got a H1 in your maths test? Maybe you redecorated your bedroom or garden? Or maybe, you just sat on the couch with a take away pizza warming your lap and watched a movie with the people you love the most. Whatever it may be, I hope you enjoyed it, and based on the soft smiles I see on your faces, I hope those memories are fond.

Within those 6 months, 11, 227 people fled their homes to seek asylum in Ireland. 11, 227 people had to leave their work. 11, 227 people had to leave their familiar bedroom. 11, 227 people didn't have a living room to watch TV in. And that is Ireland alone. Last year there were 1, 129, 800 applications for asylum lodged in the EU. Over 1 million. I ask you, how is this fair? This is such a colossal and complex issue that I cannot possibly hope to examine every aspect of it in a mere 6 minute window. Instead, I will focus on an aspect I believe that we can tackle; the language barrier.

Immersion into new customs, new culture, a new workforce, is challenging enough, even without all of it being through an unfamiliar tongue. However, one of the largest, and most overlooked, impacts this language barrier has, is on asylum seekers' human, and specifically legal, rights. Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law. Everyone has their own, incredibly important, legal rights. The connection between this and the language barrier, that many often miss, is the language and terminology used in law and legislation. This language is so excessively convoluted and formal that it can be hard for native English speakers to understand, let alone a refugee with minimal speaking ability, and that's not to mention literacy, but how does this impact asylum seekers' rights? Well, it's all well and good to have the right to be recognised and protected by the law, but if you do not understand or have any awareness of this law, and if you do not understand how to utilise the legal system and make use of the law that you supposedly have access to, do you truly have this right at all?

This right to access to the legal system is arguably more important for asylum seekers than it is for native citizens. Legislation regarding protection from discrimination, for example, is massively relevant in the lives of refugees, but if they do not understand this legislation how can they use it? As this language is so convoluted and regularly involves Latin terms, online translation services do not suffice as a solution to this issue, as they cannot deal with the complexity of the language. So how can this be tackled? Well, it's simple actually: AI.

Artificial intelligence is something many fear. We fear that services such as ChatGPT will cause increases in plagiarism. We fear it will replace meaningful human interaction. We fear it will inhibit online user's data privacy. We fear a lot of things when it comes to AI, but the positives it can bring, particularly in the lives of asylum seekers, are unparalleled. AI such as ChatGPT has the ability to condense convoluted language accurately into simple terms. These terms that are so much simpler, so much more concise, are therefore so much easier to accurately translate. Which is yet another task AI can do, translate text far more accurately than services such as Google Translate. This is why AI should be developed and utilised as it can have so many benefits, including providing asylum seekers with true access to the law, as they can actually understand it. Everything requires improvement and development before it is perfected. AI should not be dismissed and pushed away just because we have some concerns about it. Instead these worries should be considered by scientists and developers of AI, and changes and developments can be made accordingly. Technology is foreign, and it is new, of course it can be scary. But it can also be so incredibly useful that we must utilise it.

As Marie Curie once said; the quote that elucidates my topic today, and what inspired this speech. "Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less". Now is the time to understand AI, and to develop it in ways that make it safer and address our fears. And in doing so we can revolutionise asylum seekers' access to and understanding of their legal rights, making the incredibly difficult experience that is fleeing one's home country that little bit more doable.

And that can be life-changing.

Thank you.

MODEL UN ROCKMUN

JACK LEAHY

5th Year

Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)

The Question of: Preventing the Militarisation of Outer Space

Delegation: Luxembourg

The General Assembly,

Acknowledging Article 2 (4) of Chapter I of the UN charter, prohibiting the threat or use of force in the international relations of member states,

Emphasising that outer space shall be the province of all mankind and that the Moon and other celestial bodies shall be used exclusively for peaceful purposes,

Noting the existence of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, prohibiting the placement of weapons of mass destruction in outer space,

Further noting that this treaty does not prevent the placement or usage of conventional weapons in space,

Concerned by the development and usage of anti-satellite weapons (ASATs) by state actors,

weapons that can generate orbital debris and damage other satellites, causing a phenomenon known as Kessler syndrome,

Reminding that as of 2024 there are 28,300 satellites orbiting the earth,

Recognizing that neither the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) nor the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) has a sub-body dedicated to the prevention of the militarisation of outer space,

1. Calls for the creation of a sub-committee of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) to oversee and coordinate the initiative of regulating and preventing the militarisation of outer space and the use of conventional weapons in outer space, called the United Nations Associated Space Treaty Regulation Authority (UNASTRA):
 - a. This sub-committee will be dedicated to preventing the militarisation of outer space and carrying out of all proposed solutions in this resolution,
 - b. This sub-committee will be composed of representatives of all United Nations member states with space assets:
 - i. This sub-committee will also include non-permanent members without space assets elected for 2-year terms by the General Assembly, to ensure equity,
 - c. This sub-committee will be under the authority of COPUOS, from which it will obtain funding,
 - d. This sub-committee will hold a biannual conference of representative nations in the COPUOS headquarters in Vienna, Austria;

2. Invites leading space powers, such as India, the USA, and the PRC to convene and agree to prohibit the stationing of weapons in space and the use of military force against space objects, with the objective of:
 - a. Preventing future military escalation in outer space,
 - b. Increasing transparency and communication between nations with space assets,
 - c. Encouraging all parties to stop the development and usage of ASATs and begin decommissioning these weapons,
 - d. Preventing the usage of cyberwarfare in space, especially in relation to essential satellite networks;
3. Affirms the Convention on the Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space and the purpose it serves in preventing the placement of weapons in space;
4. Expresses its appreciation for the Proposed Prevention of an Arms Race in Space (PAROS) Treaty which would build upon and develop the Outer Space Treaty and prevent any nation from placing weapons in orbit, agreeing that:
 - a. The Outer Space Treaty is not sufficient in preventing the use of conventional weapons in space,
 - b. The Outer Space Treaty does not meet the needs of modern actors with economic and scientific interests in outer space;
5. Recommends the regulation and monitoring of satellites and outer space assets with the potential to be used for military or espionage purposes, with measures including but not limited to:
 - a. Enhancing the regulations of the Convention on the Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space to include restricting the launch of conventional weapons into orbit,
 - b. Monitoring potential cyberwarfare and espionage satellites in the earth's orbit,
 - c. Encouraging the usage of existing resources and monitoring networks to prevent hostile actions in space;
6. Urges the implementation of safeguards to prevent conflict in outer space, including but not limited to:
 - a. Developing codes of conduct for state interactions in space to promote safety, peace, and equality,
 - b. Promoting responsible methods of satellite decommissioning that do not endanger outer space assets,
 - i. Such methods include lunar impact, earth reentry, and graveyard orbits, and do not involve the use of ASATs,
 - c. Preventing the usage of conventional weapons in outer space,
 - d. Containing warfare to the earth and maintaining space's position as place of peace and exploration for all mankind:
 - i. Such measures would include the implementation of sanctions against nations that perform hostile actions in space such as the use of ASATs and the aggressive maneuvering of satellites;

7. Endorses education programs about the consequences ASATs could have on world peace, communication networks, navigation systems, and markets that rely on satellite infrastructure, which would include:
 - a. Defining Kessler syndrome as a scenario in which collisions between objects orbiting earth could cause a cascading effect, creating debris that would collide with other objects and generate more debris, rendering space activities in low earth orbit difficult,
 - b. Recognizing the detrimental effects Kessler syndrome could have on future economic and scientific endeavours in space,
 - c. Recalling the usage of an ASAT weapon by the Russian Federation on the 15th of November 2021 to destroy an inactive Russian satellite, resulting in a cloud of space debris which risked colliding with the International Space Station;

8. Advises private spaceflight companies against providing military services such as Earth observation, space situational awareness, and satellite service denial to state actors engaged in conflicts, due to the following risks and precedents:
 - a. The involvement of spaceflight companies in terrestrial conflicts increases the risk of aggression in space and makes commercial space objects potential targets of military aggression,
 - b. Private spaceflight companies have intervened on both sides of the recent conflict in Ukraine, providing real time satellite data;

9. Requests the creation of modern legislation to codify the rights of state and non-state actors engaging in economic activities in space in order to prevent resource conflicts, which would include:
 - a. In-situ resource utilisation (ISRU) rights in accordance with the Outer Space Treaty that would work to prevent conflict,
 - b. Upholding laws outlined in the Outer Space Treaty that prevent any one nation from claiming ownership of space or a celestial body,
 - c. Regulations to prevent of the utilisation of resources from celestial bodies for military purposes in space:
 - i. Including preventing of the use of asteroids as kinetic kill vehicles (KKVs),
 - d. Preventing the operation of private military companies (PMCs) in outer space.

INDEPENDENCE

ANNIKA JÁUREGUI

5th Year

As an international student, this year has been a year full of exciting experiences that will make me a better person, a more independent person and moments and memories that will help me mature and learn things for life.

One of the things that I've learnt this year and that I will forever cherish and will always be in my heart, is the ability to say goodbye to old people, past memories and past experiences and be able to welcome to my life new people, new moments and new experiences. I am just 3 months away from finishing one of the most wonderful years in my life and I couldn't be more thankful.

Being independent is indeed one of the most important things in life because if you don't do things for yourself nobody else will. This year has shown me how important it is to be almost completely independent, even small things like going for a cup of water on your own, to big things like driving a car on your own or making life decisions on your own. I've learnt to make decisions on my own, I've learnt to always listen to my heart, and I've learnt to always prioritize myself before helping others because how can you help someone else if you can't even deal with yourself?

This year has shown me that independence and loneliness are not supposed to go together and I will always have that in my mind. The worst feeling in this world is to feel lonely. Having friends and people who can help you and people that you know you can always count on is not a synonym of being dependent on other people, actually these people compliment your abilities to keep going on your own. Your friends will always be the motor of your heart, they are the ones who will keep you going. You should never feel alone, in fact you should always feel like you can rely on your friends whenever you need someone to advise you or help you with whatever situation and that doesn't mean you're not independent.

Independence is all about having the ability to be on your own and accompanied and never feel lonely. It is about being capable of taking your own decisions for life, about being able to leave your family, friends, even your home country and feel like you're in control of yourself and the situations that surround you. Feeling independent also means that you feel confident about yourself and that you trust your mind, your body and your heart. The people who will boost and will power your confidence and your self esteem are and will always be your friends.

When I arrived in Ireland, I felt alone and left behind by my family and friends, I felt like they disappeared from my life. However, they didn't, no one forgot about me, my friends still text, I still talk a lot to my parents and I still feel loved, I'd say I feel more loved than ever, they are the reason why I can keep going and still trust myself. I miss everything from my old life but I would also not change this year for anything. This year will forever be the greatest year of my life and the one that I will cherish the most.

This year has taught me that if you feel independent you'll be able to do whatever you propose.

INDEPENDENCE

VLADISLAV KNIAZEV

5th Year

What shall be considered independence? There are far too many categories of independence to start off. Although fact stays fact, you are always independent from something or someone, be it governmental control, parents or your psyche. The rooting of the word lies somewhere in the 17th century, whether it be the French 'independant' or the Italian 'independente', doesn't matter to us, because the 'independence' of those times isn't applicable to our realities nowadays.

The biggest manifestation of independence in the history of mankind was done on July the 4th, 1776. Whereby a record number of people, for the time being, secured their independence from English reign. This is an act of asserting independence, but that's too pretentious and bold for our times, that is the bygone era of independence. Yet fact stays fact; that was an applicable act of independence.

On an extremely personal level I can talk about my 'independence' from my parents. I wouldn't say I'm some kind of outlier, yet since I was about twelve,

I had almost full independence from my parents, which they granted to me themselves, so long as "my body stays intact". This is a very eye-opening experience, since I got to see the daily struggles of adult life, not that it's that awful, but I was shocked to see my childlike world shattered, especially living in Russia, where there isn't such a huge culture of babying your children until they are eighteen or nineteen. Back there, once you're about seventeen you're booted out of the house to meet the bright world on your own. Which I admit does seem a better option, however many may disagree.

On a more metaphysical level, we can try to talk about being independent from your psyche, your own self. Where do you let your emotions through? Or would you rather not? I see myself reflecting on situations where I would have rather stayed composed. There's about a dozen, yet there are about a dozen more situations where I would've liked to more closely connect to a person's emotions. That is a centuries old debate between productivists and moralists; where do you draw the line? There are arguments for both, although people seem to float towards the extremes. The ethics of independence or dependence on your psyche are questionable, although understandable. You are either not affected by hardships mentally but can't emotionally relate to people e.g feel their despair, happiness, or any other sensation, or, on the other hand, you feel everything to the extreme, the highs and lows seem like heaven and the seventh ring of hell. However, there is still too much room for debate for it to be put to bed, so the dialogue is still open.

In conclusion, independence may be as bright as a volcano's crater or as dark as the ash. You can't look at independence from one perspective of it being the absolute good, nor can you say that independence is the root of all evil, it just stays a fascinating theory applicable to both our daily lives and whole centuries.

Katie Murphy



Author Katie Murphy came to talk with out Sixth Years

Debbie Thomas



Debbie Thomas visited our Second Years to give workshops to our First Years.

DENISE DEEGAN



RETIREMENTS



MR GERAGHTY



MS MAGUIRE

LUCA GHETA MEMORIAL



Winners of the Luca Gheta Memorial Debate:
Mortimer Walters, Tim Langan, Thea Whelehan



Vladislav Kniazev

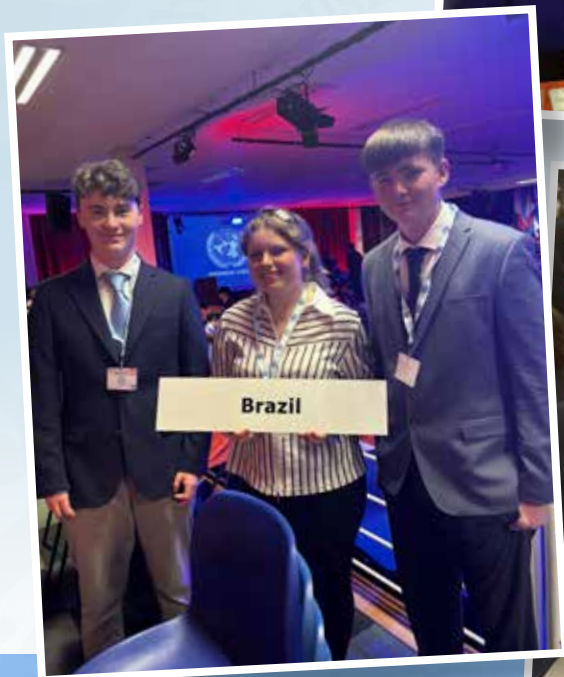


Mortimer Walters



Luca Gheta Finalists:
Vladislav Kniazev,
Michael O' Cuinn,
Matthew Burke

Model United Nations



AN INTERVIEW WITH SHARON QUIGLEY



What is the first song on your playlist?

I have so many, but I'm going to go with Tina Turner, "Simply the Best".

Describe yourself in three words - Energetic, happy, and kind.

Do you prefer ebooks or hard copy books?

Oh hard copy books all day long. I have never tried ebooks and I don't want to. I like to turn a physical page. I like to hold a book.

What would you do if you won the lottery?

If I won the lotto and it was a big amount, the first thing I would do is book a villa for a month, and then decide what I'm going to do with the money. I would probably phone Joy and say I won't be in, I'm going off for a month, and then I'll get back to you! I think I would go along the Costa del Sol coast, probably to Nerja. I would definitely bring my family and close friends.

What is your favourite film that's been adapted from a book?

The Bridget Jones's Diary series.

What are your top 3 favourite books of all time?

I'm a murder mystery reader. I can give you some of my favourite authors. My favourite English author is Martina Cole and my favourite Irish author is Patricia Gibney. They're all crime, detectives, murder, yeah. So they're my favourite two authors and there's loads of brilliant books within that.

What are major changes that you've noticed in the school since you started?

I think from my perspective from where I work, I think the area where I am is a much more open, welcoming, friendlier area for students to be able to come down if they need anything. I think that's a massive change. I think the students feel it and the parents feel it. As regards to the school itself, it would be the new wing building. The whole new area, the assembly steps, biology labs is something to behold.



AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. GERAGHTY

What books would be on your to-read list for retirement?

I would have a lot of sports biographies to get through, with the Sexton one being at the top of the list! When I have time, there is going to be no problem whatsoever picking up books and getting books to read, that I can assure you. I would definitely use the time to travel.

For relaxation, I would actually much prefer to watch a good movie or series, but it would have to be of a certain genre or quality. There are certain actors who no matter what they would be in, I would watch it. Anything with Denzel Washington, Robert de Niro or Ralph Fiennes. As a family, there is a soft spot for James Bond at Christmas. Movies relating to history would also be of immense interest.

What is the biggest change you have seen in St. Gerard's School over the course of your time as headmaster?

There's nothing I can take all the credit for, because everything is done working in teams, and working with other people. I'm a great believer in surrounding yourself with people who know more than you do

about what they are doing.

It's only 20 years but there weren't that many girls in the school, and we really struggled to attract girls to the school. But now, we are nearly 50/50 of boys and girls, and I would be very proud of that. Our population has increased by 105 since 2011, and of that is 100 girls and 5 boys.

What will you miss the most about St Gerard's after you retire?

The vitality, noise and liveliness of a school in action. There's a particular noise here, by my office, while Junior School pupils are in their playground, screaming and roaring and having fun. Very few people get to work in an environment where there's almost a thousand pupils, teachers and staff all in the one place going about their day, and I consider myself very lucky to work in an environment such as that. Also the excitement during activities. Whether it be casual days, face painting before an important match or bake sales, I will miss hearing the sounds of students enjoying these events.

Will I miss the office? Absolutely not.



What do you consider to be the best contribution you have made to St Gerard's?

There's a number of sections to the answer of that question.

The first is ensuring that Memor and the mission of the school have been brought to, and maintained at, the highest possible level. The school community lives by Memor as much as is humanly possible. That is certainly the most important thing I have contributed in my time here.

Another aspect is the development of students. I always say that in the case of every pupil, you only get the chance to wear the Gerard's jersey for a certain amount of time, and all we ask is that you leave this jersey in a better place than when you got it. Leave a legacy in the school, even in the tiniest of ways.

Finally there's the physical aspect. When I started here 20 years ago the Junior School was a building site, and in my first summer here one of the first things I had to deal with was a fire that completely destroyed the dining hall... it was horrific. The place was water-damaged and out of commission for almost 2 years. There was huge smoke damage throughout the whole school, but we opened, and we improved our facilities and we

overcame those challenges.

I'm very happy, and very proud to say that I am leaving the school in a better place than where I found it. It's the little things; the music festivals and receptions after matches, the fantastic relationships between the pupils and the teachers, the warmth here that is unique to the school, that have made all the difference.

Out of your 20 years as principal of St Gerard's is there any particular memory that stands out as a favourite to you and if so why?

Certainly the girls winning the Leinster Senior Cup. That was incredibly special. Also the boys beating Blackrock in the Leinster Cup quarterfinal in 2011/12. They were the big, stand-out memories for me.

Otherwise my favourite memories would be our ceremonies throughout the year. The Carol Service is very special, as is the music festival and summer concert; the fact that we were so good we could take Hozier for granted when he was here. I've always found attending all the activities has been a brilliant thing. They're the things I'll always remember the most.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MS MAGUIRE



What is your fondest memory from your time in St Gerard's?

I think it would be, and I know this sounds crazy, but we did the ice bucket challenge. I thought that it was great how everybody enjoyed it and everybody got involved. We raised a lot of money from it and everyone got behind it. Tom, Victor and I did it and it would be one of the first things that pops into my mind.

Another thing would have to be the valedictory speeches. They're always just really wonderful.

If you happen to be doing any travelling in your retirement what would be your dream travel destination?

Oh great question! Well I definitely want to do Egypt; I want to go to the Nile, the pyramids, all of that kind of thing. I would love to go to Machu Picchu and Peru. I've been to a lot of places already, but they would be the next three on my bucket list.

Sounds great. And if you are going on holidays, what would be your 3 favourite books that would be a staple in your suitcase?

My favourite book of all time is 'The Professor and the Housekeeper'. It's just magical, an amazing book. It's about

maths, it's a really lovely book everyone should read. 'The Last Bookshop' is a recent read, another great book. Or 'Brave New World', that's another brilliant one.

What is the biggest change you've seen in the school during your time here?

It's got so much bigger, way more students. It's harder to keep in touch with everyone, but still we do it. The systems that we have in place for students are just phenomenal, the amount of support our students get is amazing, and I've seen that develop during my years here.

Final question; what will you miss the most about St Gerard's?

Oh there's so much. I have to say I'll miss the students because I get to meet them in a different way, entirely one-to-one. Every 6th year student has come through this office; about two and a half thousand students. I'm a great believer to always being open to learning, and I've learned a lot from students. I think that it is so important that you are open to everything and everyone, because I'm a great believer in the idea that everybody you meet gives you something, in some way or another, and you give them something in return. So that relationship between myself and the students is really special.

