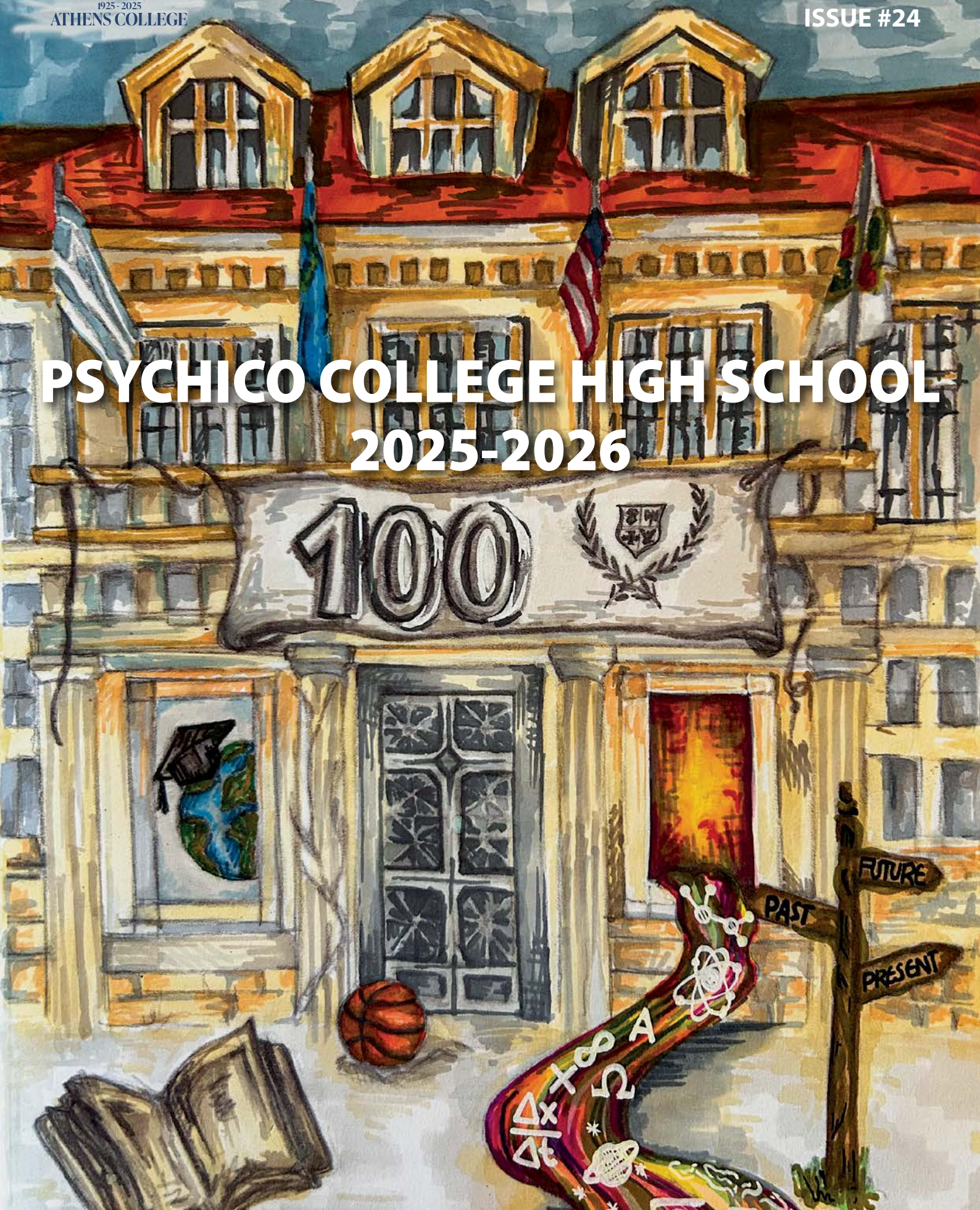




Punchline

ISSUE #24

PSYCHICO COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL 2025-2026



NOTE FROM OLGA DANILATOU, FEATURED COVER ARTIST

Students walking up the Benakeion stairs.

A fast-changing image, from black-and-white to full colour.

Past, present, and future.

First-day arrivals filled with excitement;
schoolbags brimming with dreams
and hopes.

Childhood happiness, tracing the
steps to graduation day.

100 years. Thousands of faces. Wide-
open windows to new worlds.

You cannot cross the same river
twice: times change, faces change,
graduating classes change.

But the bonds, the dreams, the
aspirations, come together;
interconnecting, into the everlasting
chain that makes up the College
family.



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Psychico College Media Club: Voices in Print, Voices on Air

*MEMBERS IN ALPHABETICAL
ORDER:*

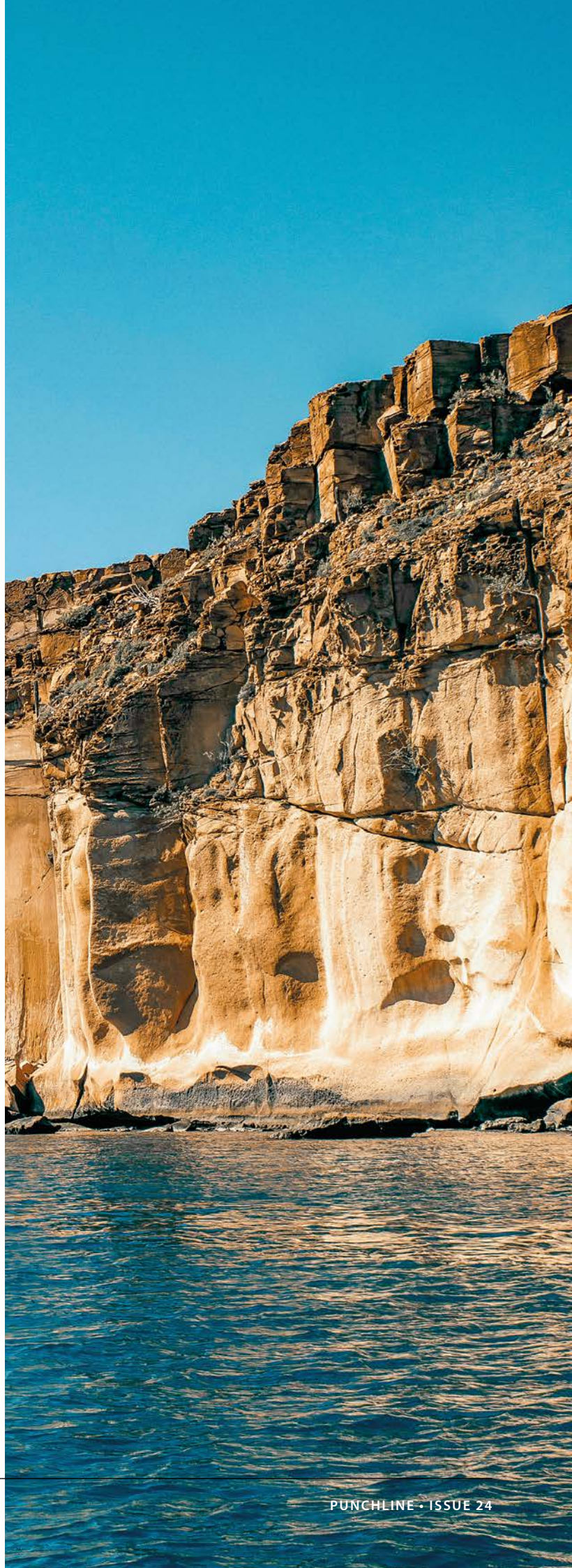
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Margarita Gyftaki**

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF:

**Jacqueline Kelley
Michael Tiffin**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to warmly thank all the people who contributed to this year's special edition of our Psychico College English Magazine, *Punchline*. The realization of this project is the fruit harvested from dedicated and creative HS1, HS2, and HS3 students, with exceptional writing, editing, photographing, and designing skills. Our gratitude also extends to the Psychico College English Department members, as well as the school administration for their unwavering support and encouragement. Last but not least, a special thanks to all of you, readers of our magazine, who never cease to inspire us to share heartfelt stories and inspiring art.



FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

We are beyond excited to welcome you to the 24th issue of *Punchline*. It is not crazy to say that this may be the best issue yet, considering how every page is full of incredibly thoughtful and creative demonstrations of our students' impressive abilities. *Punchline* is, and always has been, an amazing testament to how powerful and expressive language can be in the hands of students as gifted as our contributors.

This year's issue holds an incredible range of student creations inside of its pages. A reader can find anything from the fascinating analysis of *Lord of the Flies* to the winning entry into this year's Delta Speech competition. The variety truly speaks to the legacy of Psychico College encouraging students' growth and natural abilities in every facet of their life. There is no better representation of the well-rounded Psychico College student than this edition of *Punchline*.

As Fulbright Fellows at Psychico College High School, we have been amazed by the dedication, work ethic, and passion that our students have demonstrated through the contributions to the magazine. We both want to thank all of the students from all our classes for bringing incredible energy and intelligence to the classroom each and every day. It truly has been our pleasure to be a part of your education journey.

We are immensely proud of all our contributors. Your unique perspectives and fascinating real-world connections are what made this year's *Punchline*, and the year as a whole, so extraordinary. We also simply must thank the entire Psychico College English Department. Not only were you exceptionally warm and welcoming to the two of us, but also you have all cultivated an amazing environment of intellectual enthusiasm where students feel comfortable sharing their work.

Thank you for taking the time to celebrate both the fruits of our students' academic labours and the traditions of Psychico College.

Jacqueline Kelley
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

&

Michael Tiffin
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



FROM THE CLUB MEMBERS

Dear Readers,

Welcome to this year's edition of our *Punchline* issue! This magazine is a celebration of the creativity, talent, and very hard work of our high school classmates. As always, this year we have once again attempted to make our magazine as fun and innovative as possible. From engaging articles to inspiring podcasts and interesting interviews, this magazine aims to highlight all the memorable events and initiatives of our dear friends and school. Every page of our magazine, or better yet, every second, reflects the creative spirit of Psychico College. Putting this magazine together has been an exciting journey, full of new experiences and ideas, and we would like to thank all those who contributed their time and ideas in order to make this magazine possible! As you read through these pages and listen to our podcasts, we hope you learn something new that interests and inspires you. Our school is full of amazing people and unforgettable moments, and we hope our magazine reflects just that!

As our school proudly celebrated its centennial last year with a special *Punchline* edition, the magazine you are holding in your hands now becomes even more meaningful. For one hundred years, our school has been a place of learning, growth, friendship, and inspiration, shaping generations of students and creating a strong and lasting community. This milestone reminds us not only of the rich history and traditions of our school, but also of the bright future ahead. Through this magazine, we honor the legacy of those who came before us while celebrating the voices and achievements of today's students, who continue to contribute to the story of our school in their own unique way!

As we look ahead to the next hundred years, we are reminded that the future of our school now rests in our hands. The students of today will become the leaders, dreamers, and change makers of tomorrow, carrying forward the values and spirit that have defined our community for a century. Just as past generations built the foundation, we proudly stand on today, we too have the responsibility to leave behind a legacy of kindness, excellence, creativity, and unity for those who will walk these halls in the future.

Perhaps one hundred years from now, another generation of students will open a new edition of *Punchline* and look back at us with the same sense of pride and gratitude. They will read about our achievements, our dreams, and the challenges we overcome together. In that way, this magazine becomes more than just a collection of pages; it becomes a bridge connecting the past, present, and future of our school. With hope, ambition, and a shared sense of belonging, we move forward together, ready to inspire the next centennial story yet to be written.

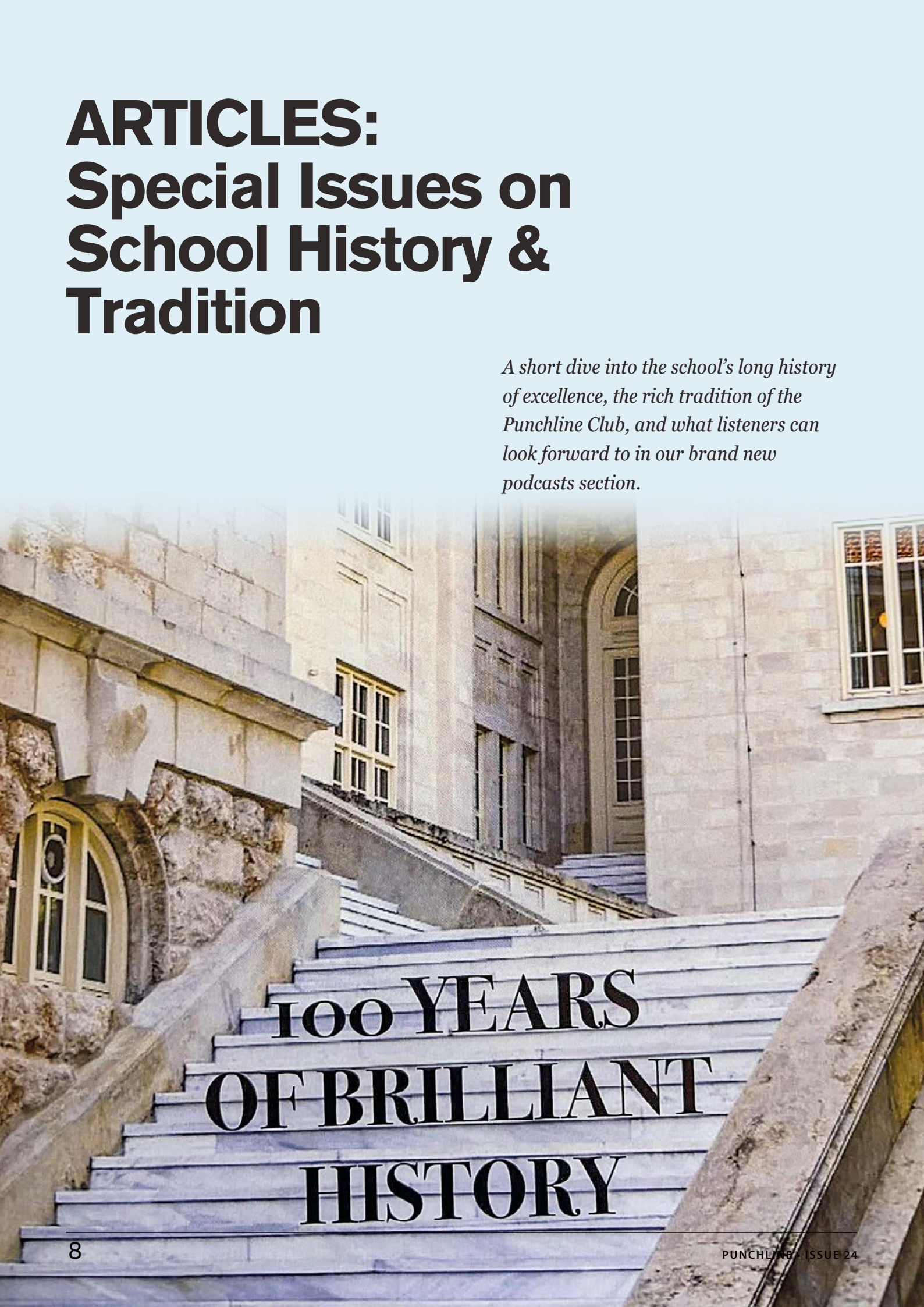
Thank you for all your support, and we hope you enjoy this year's edition!

Electra Karamousli, Louiza Kosti, & Maro Fragaki

Electra Karamousli, Louiza Kosti & Maro Fragaki

ARTICLES: Special Issues on School History & Tradition

A short dive into the school's long history of excellence, the rich tradition of the Punchline Club, and what listeners can look forward to in our brand new podcasts section.



100 YEARS
OF BRILLIANT
HISTORY

A Century Behind Us, a Century Ahead of Us

By Tania Katsarou, English Teacher

Last year, our school marked a milestone that few institutions ever reach: one hundred years of life, learning, and shared history. A centennial is more than a date on a calendar or a ceremonial celebration. It is a moment of reflection, an invitation to look back at a century of voices that shaped classrooms, corridors, and communities and, at the same time, to look forward with responsibility and imagination.



For one hundred years, this school has been more than a place of education. It has been a living community. Within its walls, generations of students have arrived carrying uncertainty and curiosity, and have left carrying knowledge, friendships, and identity. Teachers have guided not only lessons but lives. Families have entrusted their children to a shared mission of growth. And together, we have built something far greater than any individual achievement: a tradition of belonging.

A centennial reminds us that we are not the beginning of this story. We are chapters in the middle of it.

And yet, the most powerful question a centennial raises, is not what we have been, but what we will become.

As we step into the next hundred years, we find ourselves standing at a threshold shaped by both heritage and possibility. The world our students will inherit is changing faster than ever before, defined by technology, global interconnection, new forms of knowledge, and challenges that demand not only intelligence, but empathy, resilience, and moral clarity. In such a world, education cannot remain static. It must evolve, while staying anchored in its most essential purpose: to form human beings who can think, feel, question, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Our school has always been more than its curriculum. It has been a place where identity is formed, where confidence is discovered, where mistakes become lessons, and where diversity of thought is not only accepted but valued. That legacy is our foundation, but it is also our responsibility.

Because a centennial is not an endpoint. It is a renewal of commitment.

To our students: you are not only the beneficiaries of this institution; you are its future authors. The ideas you form today, the courage you develop, and the values you choose to uphold will define what this school becomes tomorrow. Your voices matter not because you will lead someday, but because you are already shaping the present.

To our teachers: your influence extends far beyond the classroom. You are the custodians of curiosity, the quiet architects of confidence, and the steady presence behind countless moments of discovery. The next century of this school will be built on the same dedication that has carried it through the first.

To parents and families: your trust is the invisible thread that binds this community together. Every milestone achieved within these walls is also a reflection of your support, your hopes, and your belief in education as a force for growth.

And to all who are part of this wider community, past, present, and future: this school belongs to you as much as it belongs to anyone who walks its corridors. It is a shared legacy, continuously shaped by every generation that passes through it.

As we imagine the next one hundred years, we do not seek certainty. We seek purpose. We do not promise perfection.

We promise continuity of effort, openness to change, and commitment to values that endure beyond time: respect, curiosity, integrity, and unity.

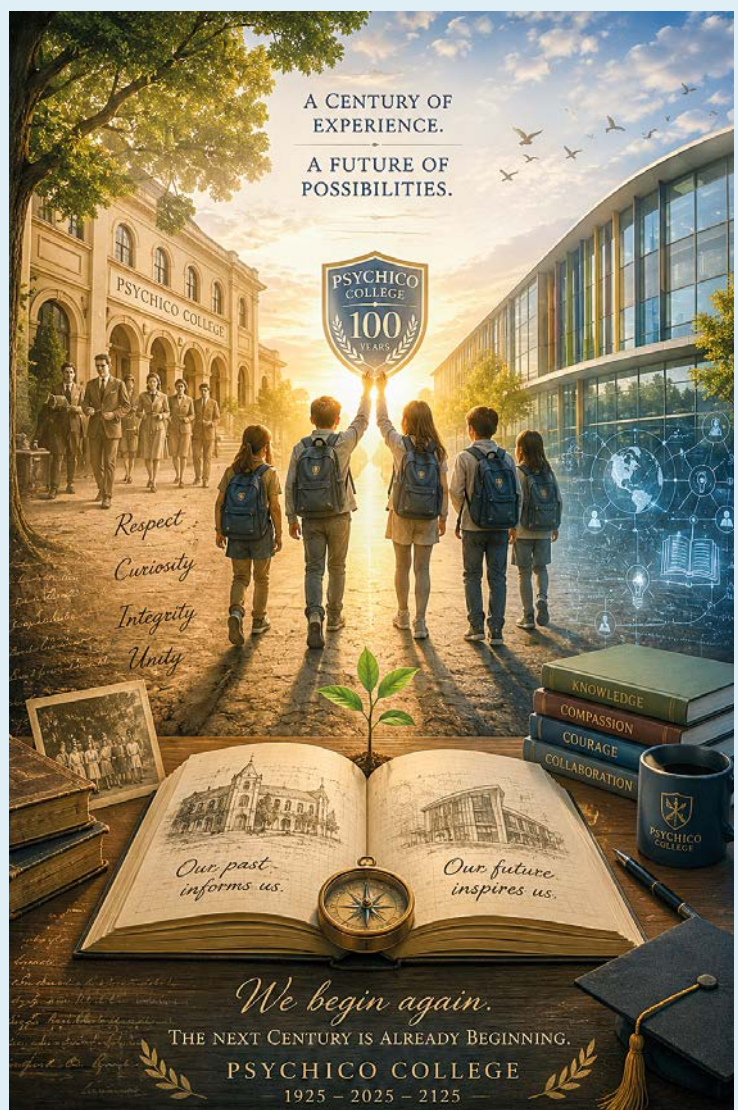
If the first century of our school taught us anything, it is that education is not only about preparing for life; it is life itself, unfolding in real time through thousands of small, meaningful moments.

And so, we begin again.

Not from zero, but from one hundred years of experience, memory, and hope.

The next century is not waiting to be written. It has already begun, with every question asked, every lesson taught, every friendship formed, and every dream quietly taking shape within these walls.

And when, one day, future generations gather to celebrate the bicentenary of this school, may they look back at us, not as people who simply preserved a tradition, but as those who had the courage to imagine its future.





A WINDOW TO THE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE OF READING

By Margarita Gyftaki, English Teacher

I was only 9 years old when I committed my first petty crime. I was strolling around the corridors of the school library when a beautiful, little book hidden in a dusty corner of a shelf caught my eye. “A cloud in love”, by Nazim Hikmet, it read and it landed in my hands in a split second. Caught up in the reading of the beautiful fairy tales that this mastermind of an author had conceived, I missed a whole period of my classes! “This must be the ONE”, I thought to myself! The book that spoke to my heart words of love, compassion, courage, and dreaming big. A beacon of light for a child whose journey of self-exploration had just begun and was only looking for a sign to the road less traveled. A compass for a soul in the beginning of this lifelong trip of finding my own voice. “A cloud in love” for me has been more of a bright sun; golden fingers stretched across the sky to caress and embrace my childhood dreams. My world was bathed in a honeyed light that very day and ever since my love for reading has never betrayed me!

I reckon many of us, lovers of words and their sounds, have found ourselves in awe when delving into the lengths and widths of literature and poetry. Let us rediscover this thirst for self-exploration within the pages of undiscovered treasures and reassess the value of reading in our lives! May this coming summer be our starting point! Sweet travels onto the clouds!



PSYCHICO COLLEGE MEDIA CLUB: “VOICES IN PRINT, VOICES ON AIR”

A Year of Creativity, Journalism, and Meaningful Dialogue

The Club “Psychico College Media: Voices in Print, Voices On Air” proudly concludes an extraordinary and unprecedented year of creativity, collaboration, and dynamic student expression. This year marked a milestone in the history of the Club, as our members not only successfully produced the 24th issue of PUNCHLINE, our school’s distinguished and highly acclaimed magazine, but also expanded their horizons by launching an ambitious and innovative podcast series in both English and Greek.

Through journalism, broadcasting, discussion, and audiovisual production, students demonstrated exceptional dedication, intellectual curiosity, and teamwork, transforming the Club into a vibrant platform where voices were heard, ideas were exchanged, and meaningful stories were shared with the wider school community.



24 YEARS OF TRADITION

VOICES IN PRINT, VOICES ON AIR



Voices In Print — 24 Years of Tradition

The publication of the 24th issue of *PUNCHLINE* stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of student journalism at Psychico College. Widely recognized for its high standards, insightful articles, creativity, and professional presentation, this year's issue once again reflects the talent and commitment of our student editors, writers, designers, photographers, and contributors.

Our magazine explores a wide range of topics, from school life and current affairs to culture, literature, social issues, and student perspectives, offering readers thoughtful commentary and inspiring content. Every page represents countless hours of research, editing, teamwork, and artistic effort.

Voices On Air — The Launch of Our Podcast Series

In an exciting new initiative, the Club introduced a bilingual podcast series, allowing students to engage in authentic discussions, interviews, and reflections on topics of social, educational, cultural, and historical importance. The podcasts gave students the opportunity to develop skills in communication, interviewing, public speaking, audio production, and collaborative storytelling.

**TAKE A SNEAK PEEK AT THE EPISODES
BEING RELEASED!**

EPISODE ONE

A Discussion with Mr. Iaveris — Road Safety Awareness

Our opening episode featured a remarkable discussion with the renowned road safety expert Mr. Konstantinos Iaveris, who shared invaluable insights on responsible driving, accident prevention, and the importance of cultivating a culture of road safety among young people. Students had the opportunity to ask questions, reflect on real-life situations, and better understand the responsibilities that accompany life on the road. This collaboration inspired not only meaningful discussion but also further creative action by the Club later in the year (audio commercial on road safety, in collaboration with Mr. Vassilis Dimopoulos, PC HS physics teacher).



(Left to right: Tania Katsarou, Vicky Mavrika, Eleni Gkolemi, Amalia Anastopoulou, Margarita Gyftaki, Evi Kavroulaki)



EPISODE TWO

Behind the Scenes of Our Thanksgiving Celebration 2025

This episode offered listeners an exclusive look into the preparation and organization of the school's Thanksgiving Celebration. Students, teachers, and organizers reflected on the spirit of gratitude, cooperation, and community that characterized the event. Through interviews and personal accounts, listeners can experience the dedication, enthusiasm, and teamwork required to bring such an important celebration to life.



EPISODE THREE

Visit to the Bookstore “ANESTIOS” in Athens

One of the most moving episodes of the series documented our students' visit to the remarkable “ANESTIOS” bookstore in Athens. This discussion highlighted the transformative power of books, education, and human solidarity. Students reflected on issues of homelessness, social inclusion, and volunteerism, while also emphasizing the inspiring mission of individuals who strive to support vulnerable members of society through culture and literature.



EPISODE FOUR

International Student Dialogue — Psychico College, Athens College, and Gaston Thorn International School of Luxembourg

This unique collaborative episode brought together students from Psychico College, Athens College, and the International School of Gaston Thorn in Luxembourg for a thoughtful and engaging discussion on education, youth perspectives, international cooperation, and contemporary global challenges. The exchange of ideas fostered intercultural understanding and demonstrated the importance of communication across borders. Students shared experiences from their schools and communities, creating a truly international dialogue marked by respect, curiosity, and intellectual openness.



EPISODE FIVE

Discussion on the School Project for Refugee Children

This deeply meaningful episode focused on the school's humanitarian project supporting refugee children through the dedicated efforts of volunteers from our school community, including both students and teachers.

Participants discussed the importance of empathy, inclusion, and social responsibility, while sharing personal experiences from their involvement in the program. The episode highlighted how education can become a bridge of hope and opportunity, reinforcing the values of compassion and active citizenship that define our school community.



EPISODE SIX

Freedom 250

One of the most ambitious and intellectually stimulating productions of the year was the special podcast episode entitled "Freedom 250", celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Hosted by the American Fulbright Fellows at Psychico College, the episode explored the concepts of freedom, democracy, leadership, and rhetorical power through the lens of American history and contemporary youth perspectives. The podcast featured six student participants who reflected on how the activity transformed their understanding of communication, leadership, civic responsibility, and freedom itself. The discussion demonstrated remarkable maturity, critical thinking, and eloquence, illustrating the intellectual vitality of our students.



AVAILABLE ON THE SCHOOL PORTAL

We are delighted to announce that **all podcast episodes are available on the school portal**, where students, parents, teachers, and members of the wider community may listen to and enjoy!

This year's accomplishments demonstrate that **Psychico College Media: Voices in Print, Voices On Air** is far more than a school club. It is a living forum of ideas, creativity, dialogue, and responsible communication; a space where students learn not only to inform, but also to inspire.

We look forward to the new ideas, voices, and initiatives that the coming year will bring!



A NOTE

None of these remarkable achievements would have been possible without the dedication, enthusiasm, and collaborative spirit of so many individuals.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to:

- all student members of the Club for their creative ideas, professionalism, and tireless commitment,
- the teachers and coordinators who guided and supported every stage of production,
- the American Fulbright Fellows (Alexandra Berardelli, Jacqueline Kelley & Michael Tiffin) for their inspiring contribution to the Freedom 250 initiative,
- our special guests and interview participants,
- the technical team (Mr. Politis and our club member, Panos Marinopoulos) who worked behind the scenes on recording, editing, and production,
- and the entire school community for continuously encouraging student expression and innovation.

**AN EVEN MORE
BRILLIANT
FUTURE**

Interview

May 25th, 2026

“It is a fact that Athens College taught me the value of continuous education.”



Mr. Demetrios Iatrides

We are honored to welcome Mr. Demetrios Iatrides to our school magazine, and we would like to thank him wholeheartedly for kindly accepting our invitation for an interview that we are sure you will also find inspiring.

Mr. Iatrides, a College graduate himself, has built a distinguished profile in the fields of education, international engagement, and public affairs, with strong academic ties to institutions such as Brown University and active involvement in global educational and alumni networks, including the University of Edinburgh community in Greece. His work reflects a consistent commitment to lifelong learning, civic participation, and fostering meaningful dialogue across cultures and generations. In addition, he has been engaged in international programs and forums, including initiatives connected to the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, where discussions on diplomacy, global cooperation, and sustainable development bring together leaders and students from around the world. His perspective on education and global citizenship aligns closely with our school's values and mission.

We are particularly grateful for his willingness to engage directly with our school, offering insight into his experiences and encouraging meaningful reflection on the role of education, leadership, and international cooperation in today's world. We warmly welcome him to this edition of our magazine and look forward to an inspiring and thought-provoking conversation.

Interview by Irene Tzortzi

Q. Your career spans law, banking, public administration, government advisory roles, and academia. How would you describe the common thread connecting these different paths?

Throughout my career, the common denominator has been public responsibility, strategic thinking, and swift action. Whether working in law, banking, government, or academia, I have always been interested in how institutions best function, how decisions are efficiently reached and implemented, and how leadership can create long-term value for society. Each professional chapter offers me a different perspective, but all of them contribute to a broader understanding of policy, the economy, and governance. However, and above all, my focus, through my professional career, has been on how to contribute to society and the citizens.

Q. You have held senior advisory positions in multiple ministries. What distinguishes effective political advisory work from technical administration?

Technical administration focuses on implementation and results, while political advisory work requires balancing institutional realities, political priorities, public expectations, and international developments at the same time. Effective advisory work demands not only expertise, but also judgment and confidentiality, together with communication skills, and the ability to operate under pressure while maintaining strategic clarity.

Q. Having served as General Secretary in the Ministry of Migration, what do you consider the most complex challenges in managing migration and asylum systems today?

Migration management is one of the most demanding policy areas because it combines humanitarian, geopolitical, legal, and security dimensions. The greatest challenge is creating systems that are both humane and operationally sustainable. Governments must ensure respect for international law and human dignity, while also protecting national sovereignty, institutional capacity, social cohesion, and border management effectiveness.

Q. How can governments balance humanitarian responsibility with institutional capacity and national strategy in migration policy?

Balance comes through organization, coordination, and realism. Migration cannot be addressed emotionally or ideologically alone. It requires effective state structures, cooperation with European institutions, international partnerships, and long-term planning. At the same time, we must never lose sight of the human aspect behind every refugee and migration case. During my time as Secretary, we successfully addressed the challenge of a rapid surge in the numbers of migrants coming to the Aegean islands, but also Crete and the mainland.

Q. What leadership skills are essential when dealing with high-pressure portfolios such as migration and infrastructure?

Leaders should, in fact, be able to absorb large amounts of information quickly, make decisions with incomplete data, and maintain institutional stability during crises. Strategic thinking, adaptability, teamwork, and effective communication are also critical.

Q. You have worked both in strategic planning roles and operational positions, such as during the Athens Olympic Games. How does crisis-style management differ from long-term policy design?

Operational management during major events like the Olympic Games requires immediate execution, precision, rapid problem-solving, and distinct ability in crisis management. Long-term policy design, on the other hand, requires patience, consultation, institutional continuity, scenario planning, and strategic vision. However, both environments demand discipline, coordination, and the ability to work effectively with diverse teams.

Q. In your experience, how important is European Union coordination in areas such as migration, infrastructure, and rural development?

European coordination is essential but cannot automatically address all complex issues. Of course, challenges such as migration, infrastructure investment, and regional development require cooperation and cannot be dealt with by individual states acting alone. European cooperation provides funding mechanisms, institutional frameworks, and strategic alignment. Our country's position within the European Union, a historic necessity, and definitely positive at political, economic, and social level, creates both immense opportunities, but also grave responsibilities.

Q. As Secretary Special for European Resources and Infrastructure, how did you approach aligning national priorities with EU funding mechanisms?

The key priority was to ensure that European resources translated into measurable results for society and the economy. This required careful planning, management competence, drive, transparency, and realistic prioritization. And we succeeded at difficult times to multiply absorption rates by 600% in absolute terms and promote a number of projects with a special focus on rural areas, the islands, and the mountains. European Funding is an opportunity for modernization and long-term development, for areas as diverse as the islands of Ereikousa and Mathraki to the north of Corfu, to Gavdos to the south of Crete, and Karpenisi in the center of our country.

Q. Your legal practice focuses on corporate, EU, and administrative law. How does legal expertise strengthen public-sector governance?

Legal expertise provides analytical thinking, institutional discipline, and clarity in decision-making. In public administration, legal understanding is essential for ensuring accountability, transparency, and compliance with both national and European frameworks. Law provides a distinct framework for balancing competing interests fairly and justly.

Q. Having moved between the private and public sectors, what are the main differences in accountability and decision-making culture?

The private sector should be and usually is driven by speed, efficiency, and measurable outcomes. The public sector, by definition, must also take into account institutional legitimacy, democratic accountability, and social impact. Decision-making in government is naturally more complex because it affects a broader range of stakeholders and operates within strict institutional frameworks and bureaucracy, an issue we need to tackle more effectively.

Q. You have pursued extensive academic qualifications alongside your professional career. What role does continuous education play in effective leadership?

It is a fact that Athens College taught me the value of continuous education. Having spent 13 years as a student at this extraordinary school, arguably one of the top in Europe and globally, I strongly believe in both lifelong learning but also teaching and transferring knowledge at university level. A month ago, I participated in a great Georgetown School of Foreign Service program in Washington D.C. with leaders from 23 countries exchanging views and ideas for avoidance of conflicts, economic prosperity and, in fact, a better global future. On the same trip I also had the opportunity to visit my alma mater Brown University, a stronghold of liberal education and academic excellence. I also head the University of Edinburgh Alumni Association of Greece retaining close ties with this distinguished academic institution and promoting civil service and contribution to society.

Q. Looking at the broader picture of Greece's institutional development, what reforms do you believe are most urgent in the coming decade?

Greece has made significant progress in the past 7 years, but there is still a strong need for reforms that further improve institutional efficiency, digital transformation, education, health and administrative coordination. Long-term competitiveness for our Country, depends on continuing in the path of creating a modern state that combines effectiveness with social cohesion, international credibility and meritocracy.

Proust Questionnaires

The Proust Questionnaire is a set of questions popularized by the French author, Marcel Proust. The questionnaire is designed to review a person's deepest feelings and their most sacred values.



Interviewees left to right: Ms. Margarita Gyftaki, Ms. Tania Katsarou, Ms. Jacqueline Kelley, and Mr. Michael Tiffin

Your favorite virtue :

Margarita Gyftaki: Integrity

Michael Tiffin: Kindness and empathy are the most important virtues for me, personally.

Jacqueline Kelley: Faith

Tania Katsarou: Authenticity

Qualities you appreciate in a man:

MG: Respect, truth, and kindness

MT: In friends, I search for humor and empathy towards the world.

JK: Thoughtfulness, humility, and diligence

TK: Kindness, generosity, empathy

Qualities you appreciate in a woman:

MG: Respect, truth, and kindness

MT: I would say I appreciate the same qualities in both men and women.

JK: Kindness, thoughtfulness, and authenticity

TK: Kindness, generosity, empathy

Your favorite occupation:

MG: English Teacher

MT: I may be biased, but I would say, teacher.

JK: Teacher

TK: Anything that has to do with the theater.

Your main characteristic:

MG: Compassion

MT: I have been most often described as "smiley."

JK: Faithfulness

TK: Keeping my composure under adverse circumstances!

Your idea of happiness:

MG: Inner peace

MT: My idea of happiness is pretty connected to my concept of freedom. The freedom to pursue my interests and follow what makes me happy is very important to me. However, a book on the beach is a good start.

JK: A home cooked meal with everything made from scratch and food fresh from the garden, paired with a summery drink and my favorite people in the world watching the sunset on the Florida coastline.

TK: Living moments of peace and creativity among people who love and understand you, who allow you to be yourself and live authentically according to your principles, while making the world a little better for everyone.

Your idea of misery:

MG: Hatred in the hearts of people.

MT: Never seeing my friends again.

JK: TV Dinners paired with bad TV

TK: The exact opposite of the above!

Your favorite color and flower:

MG: White and gardenia.

MT: Dark green and carnations.

JK: Light blue for color and red roses paired with baby's breath for the flower.

TK: Purple / Purple lisianthus.

If you were not yourself, who would you like to be?

MG: Me, myself, and I.

MT: Matthew McConaughey

JK: No one else

TK: Maria Themeli, an award-winning Greek researcher for her contribution to the fight against cancer.

Where would you most like to live?

MG: In a wooden cabin on a mountain in Pelion.

MT: Where else but Athens?

JK: By my friends and family near a beach.

TK: Somewhere in the Caribbean!

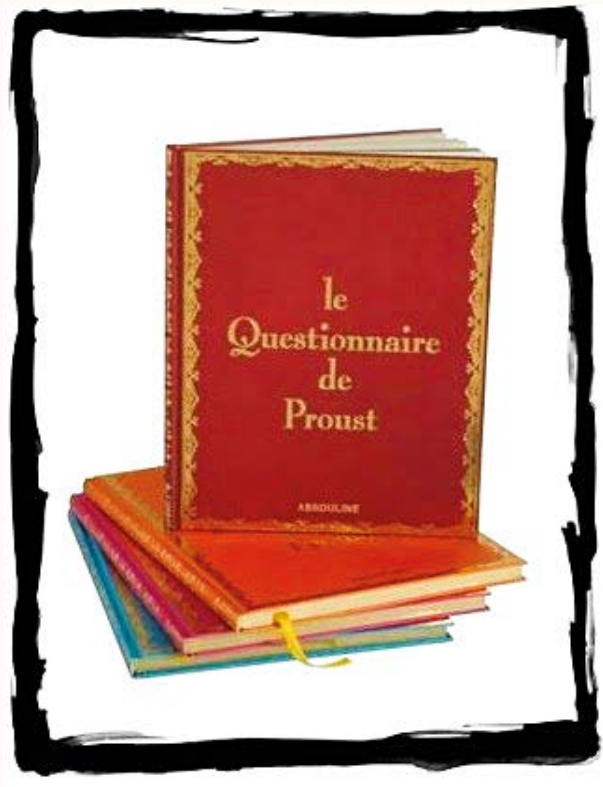
Your favorite authors:

MG: Elytis, Kavafis, Seferis

MT: My favorite authors are Kurt Vonnegut and Ned Vizzini. Both had a very large impact on me during my teenage years.

JK: Jessa Hastings, Chloe Walsh, Ina Garten, etc.

TK: Albert Camus, Leo Buscaglia, Dario Fo, Jane Austen, Margaret Atwood



Your favorite poets:

MG: Elytis, Kavafis, Seferis

MT: I haven't read a large amount of poetry, but William Carlos Williams is a favorite of mine.

JK: Robert Frost

TK: Federico García Lorca, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Kostas Karyotakis, Maria Polydouri

Your favorite painters and composers:

MG: Painters: Michelangelo, Botticelli, Gkyzis. Composers: Hatzidakis, Theodorakis, Ennio Morricone

JK: Henri Edmond-Cross and Claude Monet as artists, Ludovico Einaudi as a composer

MT: Van Gogh, Frida Kahlo, and John Williams as a composer.

TK: Vincent van Gogh, Henri Matisse, Salvador Dalí, Frida Kahlo, Igor Stravinsky, Lili Boulanger

Your heroes in real life:

MG: Devoted parents

MT: Anthony Bourdain and Kurt Vonnegut!

JK: Jesus

TK: People who lend a helping hand and offer their services selflessly as volunteers, researchers who strive to discover medicines and treatments to combat diseases, and all those who do not lose their humanity and smile despite the daily hardships and the dysfunctions of the society they live in.

Your heroines in real life:

MG: Devoted parents

MT: I really look up to R.F Kuang as a writer.

JK: My mom

TK: Same as above

Your favorite heroes in fiction:

MG: Superheroes

MT: I would say, Sherlock Holmes and Atticus Finch.

JK: Spiderman

TK: Rodion Raskolnikov (Crime and Punishment / Dostoevsky)

Meursault (The Stranger / Camus)

The Little Prince (The Little Prince / Saint-Exupéry)

Your favorite heroines in fiction. :

MG: Superheroines

MT: Jane Eyre and Scout Finch

JK: Ms. Honey

TK: Lady Macbeth (Macbeth / Shakespeare)

Elizabeth Bennet (Pride and Prejudice / Austen)

Emma Bovary (Madame Bovary / Flaubert)

Your favorite food and drink:

MG: Wild rice and Mastiha water.

MT: Kleftiko and Diet Coke!

JK: A cheeseburger with caramelized onions, bacon, and aioli paired with crispy French fries and barbeque sauce for dipping along with a root beer

TK: Linguini with seafood / Pink Martini

Your favorite names:

MG: Anna and Philip

MT: Thanos, Michael, and Alexandra

JK: Zach, Bella, Maddie, Junie, Melissa, Jack, Cassidy, Addie, Dinah

TK: Angelos, Elpida, Alan

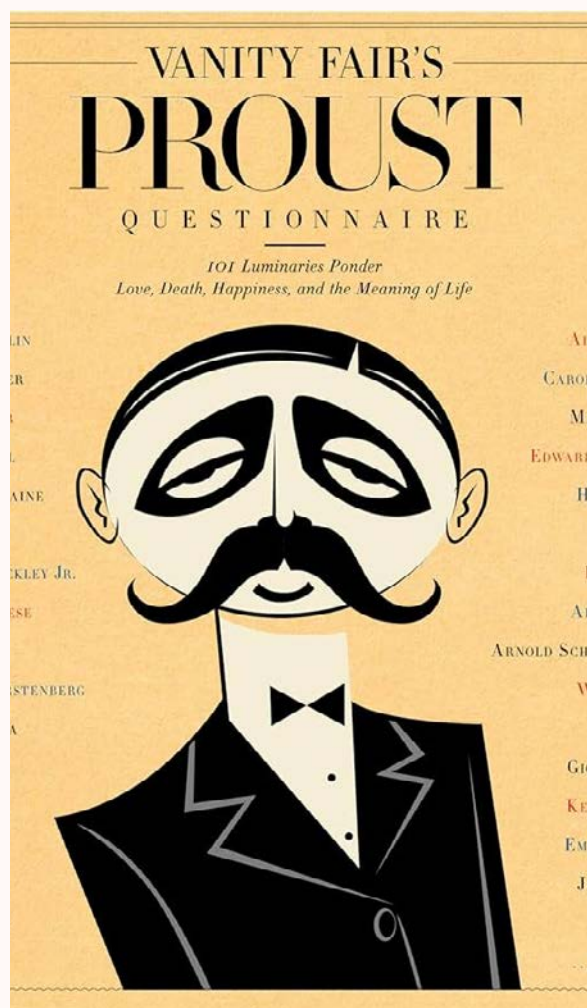
What do you most dislike?

MG: Lies

MT: Traffic and crowded buses

JK: Bugs being inside my house

TK: Arrogance, hypocrisy, and the lack of justice



What is your present state of mind?

MG: In transition towards calmness

MT: Hopeful, yet confused.

JK: Overjoyed and feeling blessed beyond imagine

TK: Absolute zen (another school year is almost over and summer is just around the corner).

For which fault do you have the most tolerance?

MG: Naivety

MT: People retelling the same stories over and over again, because I do the same thing.

JK: Those who whistle

TK: Jealousy

Your favorite motto:

MG: What goes around, comes around.

MT: Who dares, wins.

JK: I'm rich! I'm rich! I get to do the things I love everyday!

TK: Success is not final, failure is not fatal!



Literary Reflections

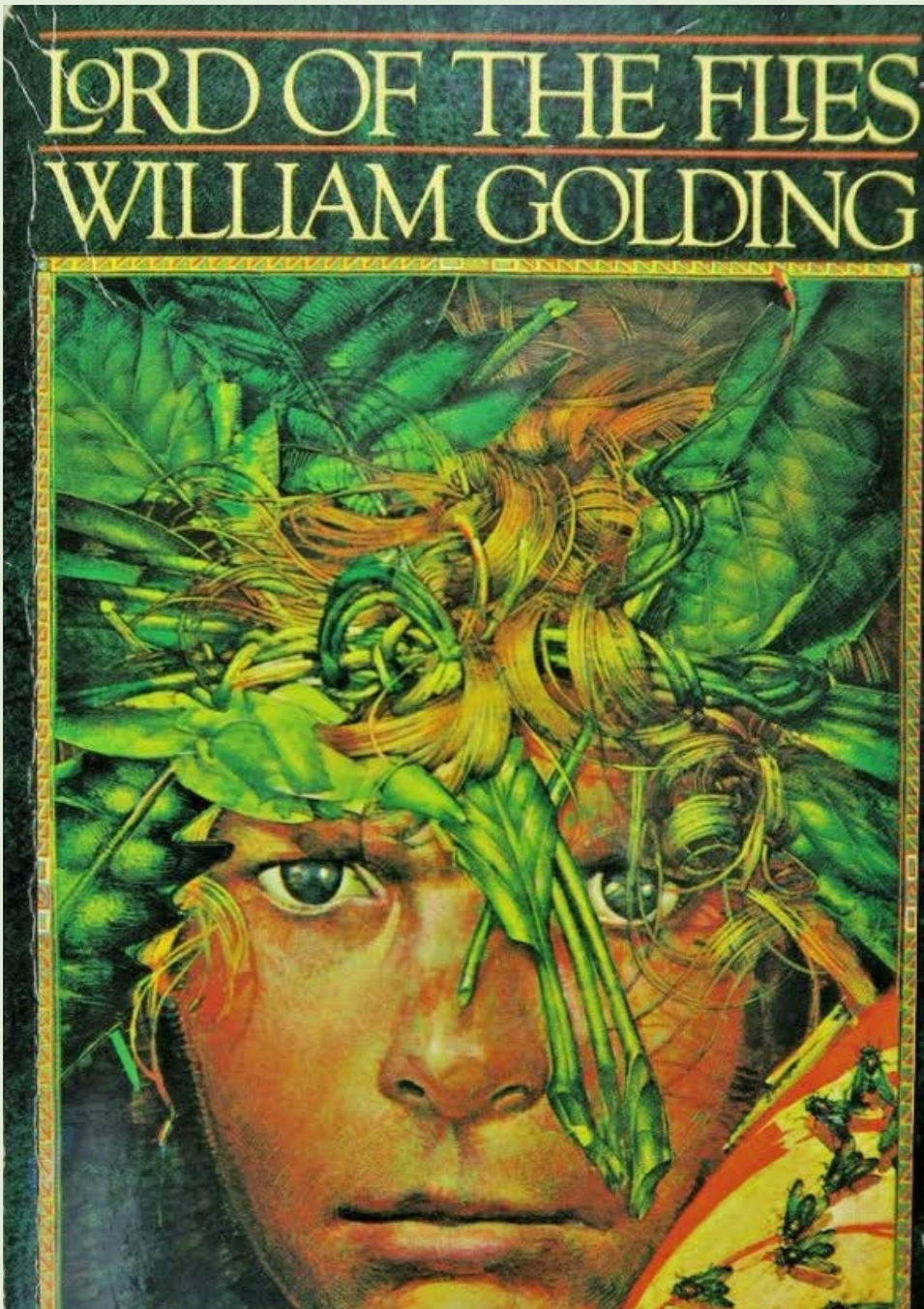


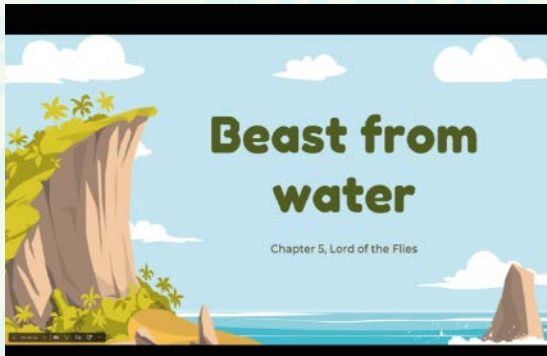
Art work by Kirra Christakopoulou

Lord of the Flies

**By William
Golding**

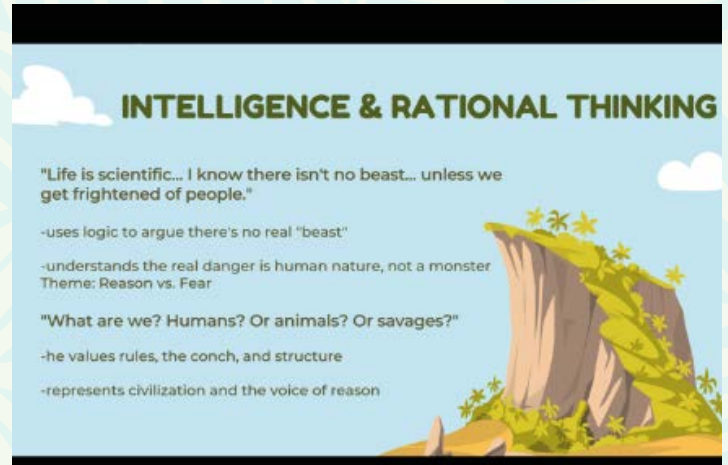
British boys stuck on an inhabitable island. They try to govern themselves with disastrous results.



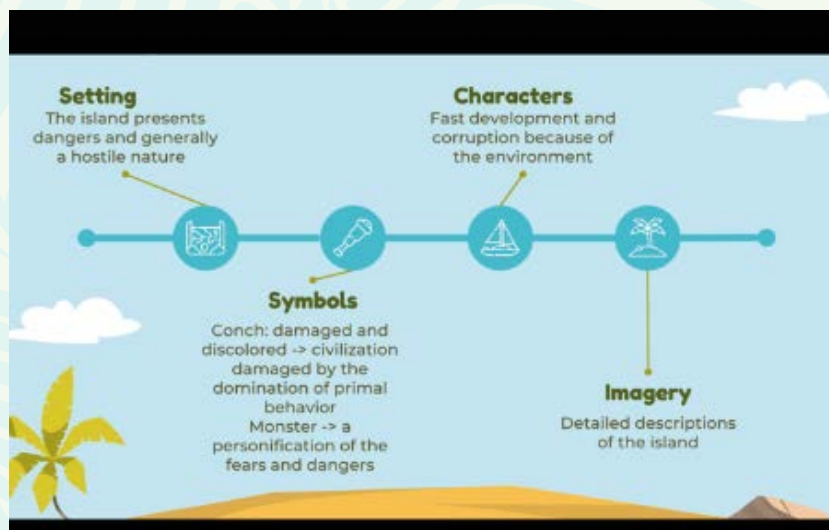


My classmates and I were asked to present Chapter 5 of the book *Lord of the Flies*. Preparing our presentation was quite fun, and I found this chapter very interesting. There were many crucial events that took place, and I'm glad we got to present them to the rest of our classmates.

We started off by giving a brief summary of the key events and then proceeded to describe each character and their actions in our chapter, as well as analyzing specific events, themes, symbols, and stylistic devices. There were no difficulties in the creation of our presentation, and we tried to make it as creative as possible.



I think we all felt a bit nervous when it was time for us to present, but we got more comfortable as we kept talking, and that made the delivery of our presentation much better. Even though it felt like much less time, it took us the whole period to finish, and that really surprised me because I've never made such a long presentation. When we were done, I felt a sense of accomplishment and relief. Our classmates gave us some positive feedback and said they enjoyed our work.



By Chrysa Vekri

Given that our class was separated into groups of two and assigned a chapter of W. Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, my classmate and I took up the analysis of Chapter 8, "Gift for the Darkness". Our final product consisted of a complete PowerPoint presentation, as we agreed that it was the simplest to effectively showcase the points of our analysis to our classmates. We also included two prompts at the end of it to stimulate active discussion amongst our classmates and further our investigation.

As we were assigned this task weeks in advance, we had the chance to appropriately manage our time and catch up on the previous chapters in order to delve deeper into the novel. This type of project fostered my interest, as it is rare that teachers assign such a task in which we are given freedom to create within our own time, relying solely on whatever analysis we could generate.

In this way, we were truly able to unleash our creativity and combine our talents and diverse approaches to create a presentation that was unique to our style. It also instilled a sense of shared responsibility and work ethic into all students, as the presentations of each chapter of the novel were the only source given to us for our note-taking during class.

Therefore, we all put in immense effort into creating content-rich and quality presentations for the benefit of our peers and to achieve the level of analysis we are striving for. However, this posed a challenge for my classmate and me, as we felt pressure to provide a full and in-depth analysis of all aspects and themes touched upon in the book. However, it was this that drove us further during the process and motivated us to produce our best work in the tight schedule of balancing our other schoolwork. Leading up to the day of our presentation, we, undeniably, felt quite stressed about the speaking component of the task.

Nevertheless, our preparation and knowledge of our chapter led to a seamless presentation with the participation of our classmates, allowing us to develop our public speaking skills and to dispel our anxiety regarding that.



The process of presenting and preparing Chapter Eight of *Lord of the Flies* was a task that pulled me in on a much deeper level than I had anticipated, which encouraged me to not only think about the novel but also about the ways I could communicate its themes in an engaging and clear way.

The part that stood out for me during the whole preparation was when we organized all the material from Chapter Eight of the novel and divided it into structured sections, such as summary, themes, characterization, symbolism, and finally, a quiz, in order for the presentation to explain the chapter to the audience through multiple aspects of it.

One thing I enjoyed was choosing which quotes, titles, and backgrounds to put on each slide, so we could make the analysis easier for the audience to follow and more visually appealing. For me, one of the most challenging parts was when I had to summarize deep symbolic elements. A distinct example of the complex symbols was when Simon encountered the Lord of the Flies, a symbol that I had to present in a way that was coherent but without oversimplifying it.

As I worked on the presentation, I gained confidence in analyzing the text on a deeper level and designing a visual presentation that had the same appeal as the chapter to the audience.

While my partner and I were presenting, I felt a mix of emotions. I felt nervous but at the same time enthusiastic, but by the end of the presentation, I was proud of how everything came together nicely. The discussion that followed made me feel that my choices in design and word choice had helped others fully understand the chapter to a deeper level.



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Summary & Setting

<i>Setting</i> 🏖️ 🌴	<i>Summary</i> 🌴 🍌
Tropical deserted island, two locations: Ralph's camp - beach Jack's camp - Castle Rock Forest clearing - pig's head placed. Daytime, morning → late afternoon	- Boys terrified → beast - Jack challenges Ralph's authority → fails - Jack → own tribe (savage) - Jack's tribe kills a mother pig - Head → offering to beast - Lord of the Flies - Simon alone → forest - vision Lord of the Flies - real beast inside boys

By Electra Karamousli

During our analysis of the novel “Lord of the Flies”, I was assigned to present Chapter Six, entitled “Beast from Air”. Along with my classmate, we decided not to present it in a typical way but instead make it special and interactive, as the chapter itself is driven by strong emotions of terror and fear. In order to evoke such feelings and enhance the suspense of the atmosphere, we thought of the concept of a puzzle game. We clearly stated the instructions of the game at the beginning of our presentation so that our classmates could easily follow the analysis.

Game format-instructions-goal:

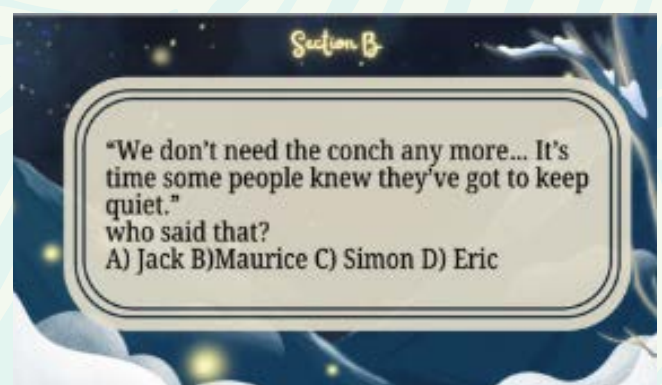
- Each section of the presentation covers different parts of the literary analysis and corresponds to a puzzle piece.
- In each section, there are questions that must be answered by our classmates. For each correct answer, they win a key.
- Keys unlock puzzle pieces, slowly revealing parts of the hidden image.
- The final image captures a scene of the chapter filled with suspense and strong emotions.

This clear layout kept our audience's attention and encouraged discussion, especially during the challenges.

What I found interesting and fascinating was designing questions and making connections to highlight the significance of certain key themes and quotes. The most challenging part was selecting the most notable quotes and examples to showcase the key aspects of the chapter.

Thankfully, I did not feel nervous, but instead I felt excited to expose my work and interact with my classmates. My confidence grew as I observed the way everyone engaged in the puzzle game. After the presentation, I was relieved that everything went as planned! It was rewarding to see that such a creative project offered deep analysis in a memorable way.

Overall, this experience allowed us to explore not only the novel's content but more importantly its emotional impact!



By Elli Triantopoulou

After presenting Chapter Eight of *Lord of the Flies*, “Gift for the Darkness,” I can with confidence say that through this process, I was able to thoroughly analyze and understand the complexity of this chapter. Although this chapter was filled with a myriad of unexpected events, what I found most engaging was the psychological depth the author brought to the chapter. William Golding highlights the fact that the threat of the “beast” is under no circumstances what the children originally thought it was, but instead it is an internal truth that exposes the darkness of their own wrongdoings, and was the result of the immature young children stranded on an island. This realization, or in other words, this cognitive awakening, assisted me in shaping my presentation’s structure.

I started my presentation emphasizing the summary and the setting (referring to picture one), and then I delved into the analysis of the themes (referring to picture two), the symbolism (referring to picture three), and lastly the characterization of the main characters that took place during this particular chapter of the novel. Designing the slides was both challenging and rewarding.

With this presentation, I got the chance to select quotations, decipher the symbols that are hidden throughout the chapter, and discover the visual elements that the author uses to construct a captivating story. Through this intellectual exploration, I was able to capture the tension between civilization and chaos.

Throughout the chapter, I was particularly drawn to highlighting the symbolism of the Lord of the Flies, especially Simon’s vision, as this moment was what made this specific chapter so extraordinary and crystallized the novel’s central message with precision.

While preparing the presentation of Chapter Eight, I felt a mix of curiosity and responsibility, since I was assigned not only to recount events and give a description of the children’s adventures, but also to understand the chapter in-depth and critically analyze to my peers the understanding I derived from the chapter.

During my presentation to my classmates, I felt that my confidence grew steadily as I progressed through each slide that was individually enriched with imagery, key quotes, and structured analysis that supported my explanation and captivated the audience throughout the presentation.

After completing my presentation, I felt a strong sense of accomplishment, as I confidently presented my project to my classmates, reflecting the considerable effort and work I had invested in my presentation. I also felt a sense of intellectual growth, since the process of making my presentation deepened my appreciation of William Golding’s work and strengthened my ability to communicate complex literary messages in a clear and creative way.

When we started brainstorming how we would like to go about our chapter presentation, my classmate and I decided that we wanted to teach the chapter in a creative way. Our assigned chapter, “Beast from the Air” from *Lord of the Flies*, explores how fear and terror spread among the boys on the island as a result of misunderstanding and imagination rather than a real threat.

Instead of opting for a conventional presentation, simply including information on Canva, we thought it would be more interesting to create a game to present the content and context of our chapter. The game we finally came up with aimed at collecting keys and unlocking all the puzzle pieces related to our chapter in order to uncover a hidden image. More specifically, our game was separated into four categories: identifying the key events of the chapter, analyzing the main characters’ thoughts and ideas, interpreting symbols and figurative language, and reflecting on the main themes of our chapter.

In the end, we used a picture to which students had to respond critically and synthesize all the information we had included in our overall presentation.

The challenge we encountered while creating this task was ensuring that we covered all the key features of our chapter. Upon completion, we found the experience fulfilling, as we managed to successfully combine information in a creative way.

While presenting, we were focused on not omitting any important information that needed to be mentioned regarding the content and analysis of our chapter. We were extremely satisfied with our classmates’ participation, which was both educational and entertaining, as we received positive feedback from them. They particularly enjoyed the interactive nature of our presentation, because they were actively involved.

By George Antonakopoulos

Personally, “Lord of the Flies” was definitely a quite unique novel, thus the presentation of Chapter 11, created by my teammate and me, aimed to fully analyze the nucleus of the literary terms and symbolisms, the plot, and the key themes.

Concerning uniqueness, it is incontestable that I found numerous interesting and inspiring things along the way, mainly concerning the use of figurative language to convey the theme of the descent from civilization to savagery, and at the same time to utilize symbolism and a distinct speech register, to appropriately and effectively transmit the events and incidents taking place in the plot. That’s why the proper analysis of every quote and every literary choice was imperative in the presentation, as we aimed to convey their purpose and meaning as objectively as possible, since we didn’t want to corrode the central idea of the chapter, which we found quite daunting at the beginning. Our presentation describes this escalation of feelings from images and character expressions to deeper meanings.

Moving on, it was really interesting the fact that the specific chapter, along with chapter 9, serves as a major climax of the whole novel, as it is shown how herd mentality, conformity, assimilation and deindividuation can lead to a form of dictatorship and supreme authority, as people will tend to give up their character if not careful, in order to fit with the mass, to feel stronger, something which can lead to irreversible consequences, like death. To transmit this, we carefully summarized the chapter and explained its link with the whole story, to project clearly the variation of the characters and the plot.

As a result, when we completed this project, even if many things weren’t executed to perfection, I felt a sense of fulfilment, as if we had served our purpose very successfully, since I realized that not only analyzing, but also conveying a piece of literature respectfully and objectively to the public, without distorting it by subjectivity, is a crucial skill, from a moral lens.

By George Georgantzis

My assigned presentation focused on Chapter Ten of *Lord of the Flies*, “The Shell and the Glasses,” a chapter that focused mostly on the aftermath of Simon's death. It was a rather interesting chapter showing how the importance of a very important symbol, the conch, was in ruins.

The once highly regarded conch was now useless since Jack, one of the main characters who highly opposed Ralph, the elected leader of the island, had disbanded from the group with a group of his hunters and a few followers to create a sort of tribe opposing Ralph. Those events led to the disregard of the conch and the destruction of democracy, teamwork, and society.

The most challenging and interesting part for me was showing how Piggy's glasses, the only tool left for making fire, had also changed meaning. They became a symbol of stolen power and savagery, not intelligence.

I decided to build my presentation around the comparison of these two objects—the broken conch and the stolen glasses—to show the collapse of the boys' world.

Overall, this process of creating a presentation with another classmate was very interesting and not only provided me with various information about the topic, but it also helped me learn new skills.

My classmate and I presented chapter ten of William Golding's novel "Lord of the Flies" in a creative and effective way. For our analysis of the chapter, we created a PowerPoint Presentation accompanied by an engaging group activity. Our presentation began with an introduction, in the form of a video, which quoted excerpts from previous chapters, mentioning the two most prominent symbols of chapter ten, the conch and Piggy's glasses. We then distributed to our classmates cardboard glasses we had created, which had a crack on one lens, just like in the novel. On the other lens, we had written a letter and covered it with black ink. Together, all the letters spelled out the question "Who is truly blind?" We asked our classmates to clean the glasses with a tissue in order to uncover the hidden text and then tell us the letter that they saw.

After having written all the letters on the board, we asked them to guess what the message was. When our classmates had decoded the message, we continued with our presentation, focusing on fundamental quotes from the chapter, key themes, literary devices, and characterizations of the protagonists.



Finally, after we finished our analysis, we had a vote where everyone cast their ballots inside the conch, giving their answer to the question "Who is truly blind?" and then we revealed the results. We chose to create a PowerPoint Presentation and include an engaging activity in order to present the information in an orderly and comprehensive manner while simultaneously having an unconventional lesson with creative elements as well as teamwork. We landed on this activity because we thought that a sensory experience with tangible "props" would facilitate the understanding of the chapter. This was an incredibly interesting aspect of our analysis as we took the objects the author described off the pages and brought them to life. One challenge that we faced with our analysis was the time constraints, because our presentation included so many factors. Despite this fear of not respecting the time given, we were not overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety or panic, as we were well prepared. Upon finishing our analysis, we felt relieved, since our presentation had gone well. Ultimately, we presented chapter ten of William Golding's novel Lord of the Flies, including engaging and original elements.

In my presentation of Chapter 9 of *Lord of the Flies*, I emphasized how this chapter shows the climax of the novel, which is a major turning point in the boys' descent into barbarity. This chapter displays how fear completely prevailed over individuality and rational judgment, leading to extreme violence. What I found shocking is how quickly the boys lose their sense of responsibility once they act as part of a frenzied group. I also found the chapter challenging as it presents Simon's death, which is unexpected and emotionally distressing.

Simon's realization that the "beast" is not a real creature, but the evil within the boys themselves, is one of the strongest symbolic moments in the novel. Simon represents innocence, truth, and moral clarity, in contrast to the anarchy and violent scenes that follow. Such chaos is symbolized by the storm. The darkness mirrors the boys' declining morality.

SIMON DISCOVERS THE TRUTH

- Approaching the "beast" he realizes that it is only a dead pilot
 - Determined to bring the truth to others: "*The beast was harmless and horrible; and the news must reach the others as soon as possible*" (p. 161)
 - Despite his exhaustion and injuries he makes his way to the crowd
 - The storm and thunders make visibility and hearing almost impossible
 - The boys are frantically performing a ritual
 - In their panic they mistake Simon for the imagined beast
- Violent feelings blind people leading to their acting without thinking

SYMBOLISM: POLITICAL ALLEGORY

- Breakdown of democratic order (Ralph), which is replaced by authoritarian rule (Jack) p.166
- The "dictator" Jack is bloodthirsty for his authority and power
- He can do anything to maintain his throne
- Jack exploits the instinctive and innate human capacity for violence
- leading to :
 - the breakdown of civilization and
 - illogical violence and eruption of chaos

While preparing this presentation, I felt strong anger and frustration, and Simon's death deeply shocked and concerned me. It makes me think of the real world, where fanaticism, authoritarian regimes, dictatorships, and wars still cause immense suffering, making Golding's message painfully relevant today.

Overall, I presented this chapter in this way to show that Chapter 9 is not only tragic but also a strong alarm about human nature, mob mentality, and the fragile nature of civilization.

- In this chapter the plot reaches its **tipping point**
- the boys **completely** cross the line into savagery with the killing of a human being (p.167-169)
- **Simon's death** is a point of no return and violent actions are awaited
- His death stands for the **loss of logic and civility and the prevalence of barbarity and terror**

By Konstantinos Karamanlis

A couple of months ago, we were asked to create and present an analysis of a chapter from *Lord of the Flies*, and specifically, one of my classmates and I were assigned chapter 9. First of all, my partner and I created a rough draft about what the content of our presentation will be. After we finished brainstorming, we put all our ideas on PowerPoint.

Our main concern was making the presentation interactive, in order to secure the audience's attention, while also making it informative. In the end, we came up with the idea of adding a group discussion about the topics we covered during our presentation, which also included critical thinking questions. Overall, we really enjoyed the process of creating and presenting an informational analysis, and we mainly focused on catching the attention of the viewers.

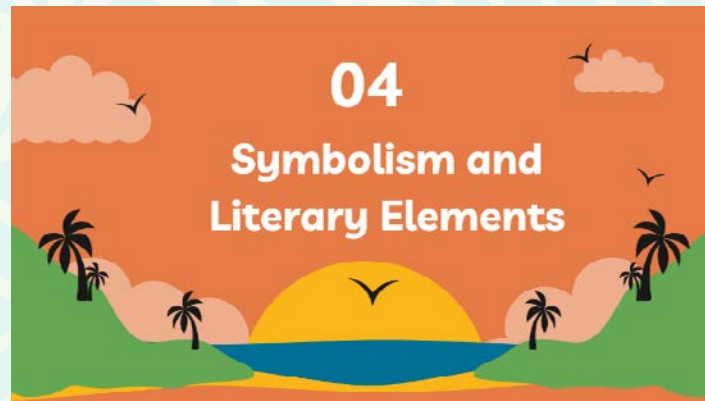
By Maria Kalitsounaki

I was assigned Chapter 8, "Gift for the Darkness," from *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, and I wanted my presentation to feel alive rather than just informative. What interested me most about this chapter was how fear slowly takes control of the boys and how Jack uses that fear to gain power. I found it challenging to explain these ideas clearly because the chapter is very intense and symbolic, especially the idea of the "beast."

To make it easier and more engaging, I decided to turn the presentation into a game-based group activity. I asked the class to work in small groups, discuss short questions related to the chapter, and then answer multiple-choice questions on the slides, following clear instructions just like we had done in previous games.

This approach helped everyone participate and reflect on how group influence works in the story. During the presentation, I felt nervous at first, especially when managing the discussion.

However, as soon as I saw my classmates getting involved, I felt more confident and relaxed. After finishing, I felt proud and relieved because the presentation went well and the class seemed genuinely engaged with the chapter.

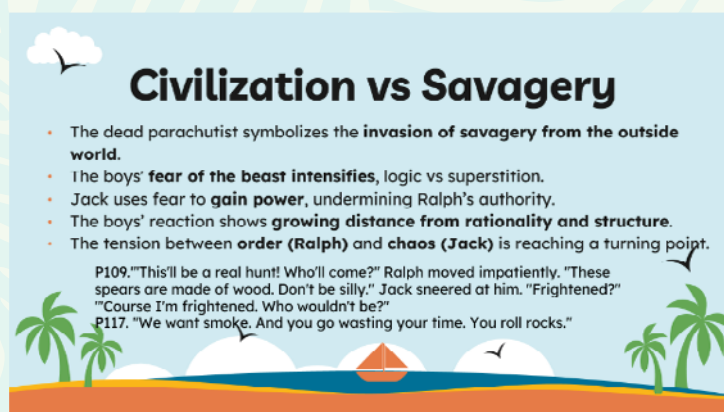


When we were first assigned to create a PowerPoint presentation of one of the chapters of the book *Lord of the Flies*, we were instantly excited at the idea of creating an interactive and meaningful presentation for our classmates, but also for ourselves.

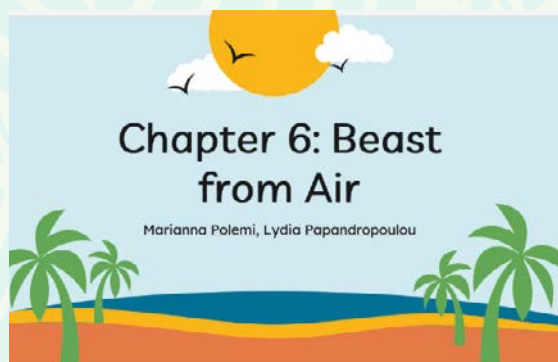
In order to make a coherent and structured PowerPoint, we had to discuss what the most important elements of the chapter were to add to our presentation. The process itself was very enjoyable as our collaboration was very effective and flowed well, allowing us to have an enjoyable experience but also a productive time.

We made a mutual decision on what the template of our PowerPoint would be, since we selected one that perfectly reflected some core ideas of the book but was also visually appealing. The only challenge that we came across was actually condensing the information into PowerPoint bullet points without compromising any of the meanings or core ideas that might need more analysis.

We were excited to be able to show our work to our classmates and share all the important concepts we had considered during our preparation. Having improved my analytical, critical thinking, and teamwork skills, I can reflect back on this experience and say that it was both helpful and enjoyable.



When we were first assigned the task of creating a PowerPoint presentation based on a chapter from *Lord of the Flies*, my partner, Lydia, and I were intrigued by the opportunity to delve deeper into the brilliance of Golding's story and present our findings to our classmates. We wanted to design a presentation that would be engaging and informative not only for our classmates, but also for ourselves. To ensure our PowerPoint was clear and well-organized, we collaborated to identify the most significant aspects of the chapter that needed to be highlighted. This planning process was both enjoyable and efficient, as our teamwork was strong and ideas flowed easily, allowing us to be productive while still fully embracing the amusement such a project comes with.



As a group, we agreed on a PowerPoint template that effectively captured key themes of the novel while remaining visually appealing. One challenge we encountered was summarizing complex ideas into concise bullet points without losing their deeper meaning or analytical value. However, we managed to overcome this hurdle by deliberating on which information should be prioritised and then synthesizing bullet points that only contained the core meaning of each point we wanted to get across. As a result, our final product included a comprehensive analysis without overwhelming our audience with visually heavy slides. Overall, this experience helped me hone my analytical thinking, critical reasoning, and collaboration skills, especially when it comes to overcoming challenges. Together we learned to truly value quality over quantity which is a principle we will both surely apply in other aspects of our lives. Looking back, I can confidently say that the project was very successful on both an educational and personal level.

By Maria Prokopi

My classmates and I presented Chapter Five, “Beast from Water,” in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, as we thought that the class would better understand the chapter's analysis through visuals. This way, the complex ideas presented in the chapter would be clearer, and the audience would be more engaged. While preparing the presentation, I found it interesting how the fear of the beast could control the boys and how that reveals inner insights into the darkness in human nature. Simultaneously, I found it challenging to choose specific quotes from the book, the ones that were the most important to mention, without overwhelming the class.

We split our roles, and we each analyzed a specific character while also interpreting the themes, symbols, and summary of the chapter. This way, our classmates would easily follow the flow of our presentation. Even though I felt nervous before oral presentations, the fact that I was not standing alone really helped me relieve stress and even made the process more enjoyable. After completing the presentation, I felt a sense of relief, and I was proud of myself for successfully analyzing the chapter for the class and slowly overcoming my stress for oral presentations.

By Melita Brili

For my class presentation, I was assigned Chapter 7 of *Lord of the Flies*, and I chose to present it in an interactive and creative way by designing a board game. During the presentation, students rolled the dice and moved the pawns across the board, landing on different boxes.

Each box represented a category, such as a summary of the chapter, a symbol, a theme, a characterization of a character, the setting, literary elements, or conflicts. After a student landed on a box, my partner and I randomly selected a flashcard related to that category and explained it to the class.

I found it really interesting to turn such a dark and tense chapter into a game, as it made the discussion more engaging, but it was also challenging to organise the content clearly and manage time during the presentation. I decided to present it this way because Chapter 7 focuses heavily on fear, power, and division, and the game format helped keep everyone focused and involved. Throughout the process, I felt nervous at first, especially about whether the game would run smoothly, but once it started, I felt more confident and enjoyed presenting. After completing the presentation, I felt proud and relieved, especially because the class interacted with the game and understood the chapter better.

By Menelaos Papandreou

Understanding and presenting our assigned chapter revolving around Simon's death, went beyond simply retelling the story, as it required careful interpretation and deliberate choices to convey its deeper meaning. Although the chapter was comparatively short, it marks a turning point in the novel, where the boys descend from civilization into savagery, and the author communicates many underlying messages.

Therefore, the most interesting challenge included deciding the way in which we would present the key aspects of the chapter without overwhelming our audience. We structured our presentation by focusing on the chapter's emotional impact and symbolic significance.

SIMON'S DEATH

- Signals the most tragic moment in the novel
- Mob mentality and panic lead to Simon's attacking
- The killing was brutal "At once the crowd ... claws" p. 169
- Ralph, Sam and Eric also participate indicating how anyone can be dragged into violence
- His body is later washed away by the sea: "The water rose further and dressed Simon's coarse hair with brightness... moved out towards the open sea" p.170

His death symbolizes the death of innocence and the triumph of savagery over civilization

Specifically, we included characterizations, symbolism, and themes, which allowed us not only to explain the chapter clearly but also to grasp a better understanding of it. Throughout the process, we were challenged, but our engagement and collaboration allowed us to determine the best course of action. After completing the presentation, we felt satisfied and confident, as we had helped our classmates better understand this chapter's profound meaning.

THEME: MOB MENTALITY

- One of the strongest themes is mob mentality
- The boys lose individual judgment and act as a single, frenzied group
- The author shows how dangerous groups can become when emotion overpowers reason
- Individuals stop thinking for themselves
- Fear + group pressure = violence
- Group frenzy overcomes individual morality
- Chant: "Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!" escalates into chaos
- Finally, no one takes responsibility afterward

By Nafsika Goudeli

My team and I were assigned to present Chapter Five of *Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding, to our fellow classmates. For our presentation, we decided to use a PowerPoint presentation. This was because we wanted to make it as interesting as possible and have some background notes while speaking, so that the audience can know what exactly we are presenting and talking about.

It also helped that we chose an on-topic background design that incorporated elements of a tropical island and kept our audience hooked while its unique layout refreshed their interest in each slide.

Regarding the contents, we first gave a brief summary of the chapter's plot, so we could later shed light on specific situations that took place. Furthermore, we decided to work on one character each and describe important aspects of their personalities, including quotes and particular incidents that highlighted their individual traits and differentiated them from others.

Relationships and their interactions were also mentioned. We focused on symbols as well, because we found that they represent key concepts of the book and are a very distinctive characteristic of Golding's writing style. Then, the presentation itself was put together with our own knowledge of the entire book, with which we enriched it orally.

We included body language and voice tone changes to emphasize and highlight. The overall experience was, while stressful, freeing and creative, as we got to express ourselves on a topic of interest, while addressing our peers. It was a wonderful opportunity to organize our thoughts and express ourselves through an alternative approach.

By Nafsika Korlira

My classmate and I, having been assigned to present chapter eight of *Lord of the Flies*, which we've been studying at school, decided to go beyond a simple summary of this chapter, but rather focus on exploring and analyzing deeply the events and elements that make this part of the book such a crucial turning point in the plot.

What I personally found most interesting in the process, while also being the most challenging, was analyzing how the author, William Golding, combines all sorts of elements, such as themes, characterization, figures of speech, allusions, and even symbolism, to show the group of boys' moral decline and descent into savagery vividly. While being a very fascinating and engaging thing to do, it was also very challenging as the analysis required very close reading and interpretation of the text, particularly the part of Simon's realization of the beast, as even if it was the central message of the chapter, it was rendered with subtle details.

We decided to present the chapter through a PowerPoint presentation followed by an oral presentation, so that our classmates could have both visual and acoustic experiences, explaining and analyzing orally even more in depth the information included in digital form.

We structured our presentation through clear and organized slides, each dedicated to something specific, allowing us to present our ideas thoroughly and in a logical manner.

During the preparation, while feeling intellectually challenged, it brought me genuine engagement and curiosity, as this chapter, being especially powerful, brings to the surface various questions about leadership, morality, and human nature.

Presenting our final project in class was both demanding and rewarding. We had to meet some specific criteria by maintaining eye contact with the audience, involving the audience with discussion questions, and generally conveying our key points in a coherent and understandable way.

The completion of our presentation, even if not being the first time I've done such an assignment, left me feeling accomplished but also joy because even if it was tiring, it was also an amusing experience, deepening not only my understanding of "Lord of the Flies" but also contributing effectively to my development into a more confident speaker.

By Olga Danilatou

In the words of Pedro Almodóvar, “A book gives you the seed. What grows from it must be something new.” Our assignment, analyzing a chapter from *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding in a 45-minute presentation, had to abide by similar rules in order to bring the book to life. So, with this quotation as a starting point, we sought to create an engaging and creative presentation on Chapter Ten. My main challenge was to transfer the mood and tone of one of the darkest chapters in the book to our classroom; to bring the analysis to life by engaging the senses (sight, hearing, and touch) in order to explore key themes not only within the set boundaries of the novel’s plot and characters but also by drawing analogies to our own reality which was also the author aim. To do this, I created an atmospheric introduction by designing a short video of key quotes from the previous chapters, dwelling on the symbolic nature of the conch (democracy, civilization, order) and the glasses (sight, and the steady loss of it, as savagery seeps into the characters’ hearts, blinding them to what is ethical).

Using the video, I aimed to capture the audience’s attention by bringing the quotes to life through sight and sound: a tropical, unspoiled island, crashing waves, a crackling fire, a thudding heartbeat as the tone darkens, and the boys descend into savagery, shocking both themselves and the reader, quickening the pace with dread and anticipation.

To make the presentation engaging and participatory, I wanted to create a group activity that brought the boys’ reality to life and help the audience imagine the scenes through their own involvement in them, in this way seeing the characters as whole personalities. These activities were voting (mimicking the democratic process initially followed on the island), along with wearing and cleaning a set of ‘Piggy’s glasses’ (encapsulating the symbolic nature of sight as represented by one of the most clear-sighted characters in the book, Piggy). This developed into a game, aimed to serve as food for thought: decoding a hidden message, as each pair of glasses had a broken and a smudged lens, which, when cleaned, revealed a letter. These, combined with the collaboration of the whole class, spelled out the phrase: “Who is truly blind?” The audience then had to answer the question, after the chapter analysis, through a voting process. For this, we used a real-life conch so that the audience could see and touch the most symbolic object on the island: used to call meetings, it conveyed democracy, the universal right to speak enjoyed by all boys. Overall, following Almodovar’s dictum, the book became a reference point, a seed from which we created a wholly new narrative, a unique experience for the audience.

The dominant themes of the chapter came to light through these engaging processes, through our narration, as well as through a PowerPoint presentation, which included key quotes on the plot, themes, character development, and the author's purpose. We added images to the slides to make them visually appealing and to illustrate even complicated points through the juxtaposition of image and text.

I felt that, through my presentation, I gained an in-depth understanding of the chapter and felt confident and at ease in presenting it to my classmates and in creating interesting activities stemming from it.

The experience helped me grow, as I practiced literary analysis, public speaking, and my synthetic skills, linking the book to objects (like the conch and glasses) and activities (like voting). Finally, through the collective experience of creating our own presentation and participating in those of my classmates, I realized the importance of subjectivity in literary analysis as we all made different decisions about the nature of our presentations, each highlighting different aspects of the novel.

We all had the same “seed” (chapters from the same book), but we represented a different narrative stemming from it: our own unique presentations.

TIME FOR VOTING...



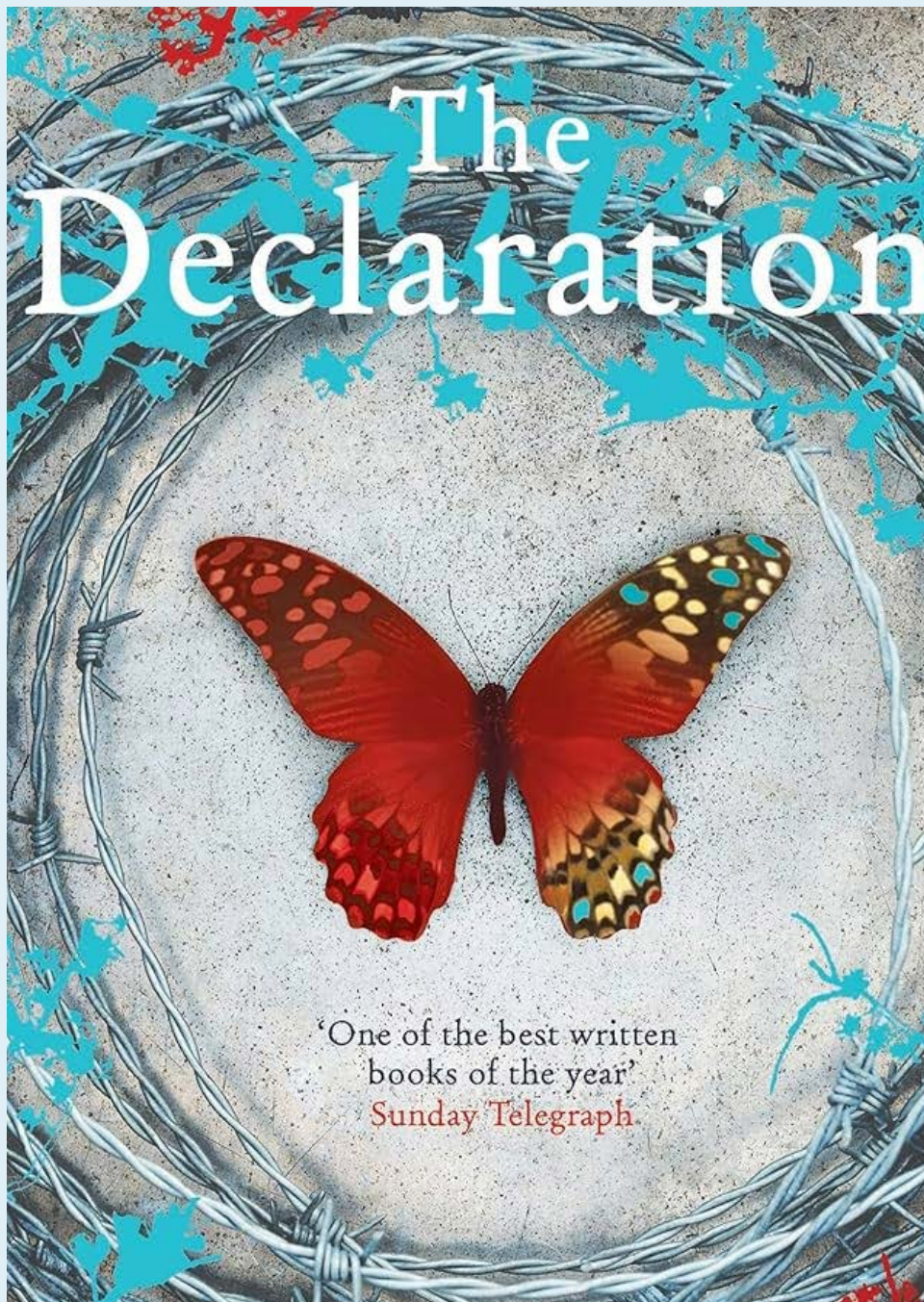
"HE TOUCHED RALPH'S BARE SHOULDER AND RALPH SHUDDERED AT THE HUMAN CONTACT"

P. 174 OR P.194

- Comprehends dark side of human nature
- Rethinks human presence
- Questions human intentions
- has grown unaccustomed to human contact



The Declaration



By Gemma Malley

When you can live forever by taking a tablet...

When no one needs to die...

Anna Covey should have never been born.

By Eva Chatzieleftheriou

What kind of things do children bring to society? What do you think the world would lose if there were no more young people?

Children are forces of nature that bear significant value to humanity's evolution. Specifically, young minds are the future since they offer a unique sense of perspective and imagination, which leads to fresh and creative ideas, pushing for advancement in every field, from science to politics and society. They also tend to maintain a curious and inquiring nature, often questioning the opinions of the majority and constantly researching and adapting their knowledge base. In addition, they are a glimmer of hope, carrying enthusiasm and optimism, while keeping a positive outlook and focusing on the bright side of matters. I firmly believe that the absence of children would result in an obsolete way of living, which would lead to a world incapable of progression. Hence, a crucial viewpoint representing new ideas would have been eradicated, condemning humanity to face the repercussions of pessimism and stagnation.

Can you think of a moment in the novel when silence and obedience are more dangerous than rebellion? How can silence support injustice?

In *The Declaration*, Malley presents a clear discrepancy between following the rules and blindly obeying them to reinforce the idea that a fair society only prevails when citizens constantly dispute immoral laws. The book's dystopian society conditions its citizens to follow strict rules and suppress personal beliefs to maintain order. Hence, all privileged members of this society did not once stop to question the treatment of the Surpluses, allowing for their enslavement and dehumanization to continue. This stresses that if we do not doubt laws and orders that seem unfair and unjust, then inequity and bias will persist, allowing oppressive laws and institutionalized policies to go unchallenged. If we as individuals do not fight for the rights of those who have been marginalized or unfairly convicted, then we can call ourselves law-abiding citizens but not ethically responsible members of society. Ultimately, knowledge is power. In a world full of propaganda and fake news, it is crucial for citizens to remain focused and well-educated, prohibiting the manipulation of information and indoctrination of our brains.

Is it ever right to break the rules if the rules themselves are wrong?

It is sometimes morally right to break the rules when those rules are unjust and cause harm. In *The Declaration* by Gemma Malley, the Declaration outlaws Surplus children in order to maintain stability after the discovery of longevity, yet this law leads to the systematic mistreatment of innocent children. Anna is labelled illegal simply because she was born, and at Grange Hall, she and others are conditioned to believe they are responsible for society's problems, despite having no control over their existence. This demonstrates that the law is not based on justice or morality, but on fear and the desire for control. By enforcing obedience without questioning the ethical consequences, society normalizes cruelty and strips Surplus children of their humanity. When Anna and Peter begin to resist the system, their actions suggest that following unjust rules only allows injustice to continue, while breaking them becomes an act of moral responsibility rather than wrongdoing. This idea strongly connects to modern society, where civil disobedience has often been necessary to expose and challenge unjust systems. Historical and contemporary movements for civil rights, gender equality, and freedom of expression show that progress frequently begins when individuals refuse to comply with laws that discriminate or cause harm. Like Anna and Peter, people

in the real world have had to question authority and risk punishment in order to protect human dignity and push society toward greater fairness and justice.

Would you sign a Declaration agreeing to opt out of ever having children if it meant you could live forever?

I think I would sign a Declaration agreeing to never have children if it meant I could live forever. The idea of dying honestly scares me; I don't like thinking about everything simply ending. The thought of darkness, of not knowing what happens next, and of losing all the people and experiences I love feels overwhelming. Choosing immortality would give me a sense of security, a guarantee, I suppose, that I wouldn't have to face the unknown. Even though giving up the possibility of having children is a huge decision, the fear of disappearing forever would outweigh it for me. Living forever would mean being able to keep learning, exploring, and staying connected to the people I care about, instead of having everything cut short. So, even though it's a complicated choice, I would sign it because the fear of death and the unknown is something I'd rather avoid if I had the option.

By Panagiota Chrysospathi

Is it ever right to break the rules if the rules themselves are wrong?

There are circumstances where breaking the rules is not only justified but even morally necessary, in particular when those rules perpetuate harm or injustice. In the article we read, teenage rebellion is often depicted as mere opposition, yet it is also noted that rebellion can be a search for identity and generally independence, especially when young people feel confined by limiting definitions of who they are supposed to be. Moreover, it is suggested that resistance can, in certain cases, serve a developmental purpose when authority suppresses growth rather than guiding it. Additionally, a similar idea is illustrated in *The Declaration* by Gemma Malley, where the ruling system criminalizes children born outside specific government rules in that dystopian society, and obedience means accepting a law that denies vital human worth. Anna's gradual shift from a compliant "Surplus" to an individual with formed opinions, who questions things, shows that rebellion becomes an ethical response when rules are fundamentally unjust. Furthermore, her defiance is not reckless or seeking adventure but a reclaiming of identity and dignity. Obviously, the writer of the article also warns that rebellion can be self-destructive if it rejects all types of structure without having any purpose, so the key that truly differentiates lies in motivation and consequence. By and large, in cases when

rule-breaking protects human rights or personal integrity rather than just simply provoking authority, it moves from impulsive rebellion to principled resistance.

By Artemis Pergamali

Is it ever right to break the rules if the rules themselves are wrong?

It is vital for a contemporary society to set rules in order for it to evolve. But if the rules are wrong, is it unlawful to disobey them? I believe that wrong rules should not always be followed, because unjustifiably limiting one's actions can cause serious ramifications to society. Being constantly deprived of free will creates an impulse for unscrupulous behavior, which can create rules that are wrong and will damage society. Throughout the book, *The Declaration*, only the elite and the legals had rights, while the other citizens worked as human slaves. As Anna and Peter were both treated with great unfairness, they decided to take matters into their own hands and escape Grange Hall. This big risk resulted in the best decision they ever made because after facing many impediments, they finally got the freedom they deserved. Malley wants to convey to the readers the message that sometimes rules are placed unlawfully, so it shouldn't be wrong to break them if it means retrieving freedom. By escaping this vicious cycle, an individual can reclaim their territory, creating hope for life, rather than obeying unfair rules set by a brainwashing

Can you think of a moment in the novel when silence or obedience is more dangerous than rebellion? How can silence support injustice?

The Declaration portrays that silence and obedience can be far more harmful than that of actual revolt, especially within social systems based upon ideas of inequity. The story provides a vision of humanity in a world governed by strict regulations, succeeding in protecting the immortal population while at the same time denying basic rights to children and demanding their compliance. The author's perspective overlaps with Dr. Carl Pickhardt's in "Rebel with a Cause...Rebellion in Adolescence," regarding how rebellion is one of many required avenues of transition to a healthy sense of independence and ethical development. By choosing to be silent rather than resisting the unjust or improper way of being treated, they give tacit permission for exploitative behavior to continue.

A significant illustration of how silence allows for injustice is evident in the way that surplus children are treated. Throughout the book, many individuals follow the rules and regulations of the system blindly, even though people in authority treat them like they are expendable and imprison them. The government's consistent abuse of power is facilitated by the passive acceptance of the system rules by superior individuals.

By contrast, Anna's disobedience and escape prove that one can morally justify acts of rebellion. This idea is similar to the concept put forth by Pickhardt that rebellion can sometimes be an act of self-definition and a rejection of harmful societal norms and standards, not necessarily an action of destruction. Pickhardt states that rebellion is dangerous only when it becomes an act of self-destruction, as a reasoned act of rebellion has the potential to lead to personal development. Thus, in *The Declaration*, the act of rebellion is presented as a means of demonstrating the cruelty of established oppression, while silence serves to perpetuate it as an effective means of control.

The Declaration implies that when laws are unjust, being silent and obedient can be more damaging than rebelling against them. If people remain silent, they are complicit in oppression. The novel and Pickhardt's article demonstrate that rebellion is not just an act of defiance but rather a positive response to an unjust act. They both raise the question for readers: if we know there is a problem, do we have an obligation to say something? Each text supports the idea that challenging an unjust authority is often one of the first steps towards enacting change.

By Antony Salmas

Is it ever right to break the rules if the rules themselves are wrong?

We grow up hearing that rules keep us safe and make life fair. But sometimes, a rule just feels wrong, or worse, it actually hurts people. So what then? Is it okay to break it? It's a difficult decision, and I believe there isn't a single right answer. Life is messy. And it's never picture perfect. You see it in stories and in real life, too. In Gemma Malley's, *The Declaration*, people push back against cruel rules to make things better. In the article "*Rebel with a Cause: Rebellion in Adolescence*," it simply says that sometimes breaking bad rules is not just fine, but necessary. Both show how standing up to unfair rules can help people grow and even change the world.

In *The Declaration*, the year is 2140. People don't die anymore because there is a drug that keeps them alive. But here is the problematic rule: the government says people cannot have any more kids, all to stop overpopulation. Anyone who breaks that rule and has a child, their children become "surpluses," who are illegal kids treated as if they do not matter. Anna is one of the surpluses. She grows up locked away in Grange Hall, following every rule because she thinks that is what she is supposed to do. Then Peter shows up. He tells Anna the truth: the rules are not fair, and her parents do love her. Suddenly, Anna starts questioning everything she has been taught.

Peter's arrival changes everything. Anna decides not to sign the Declaration, a promise to never have children in exchange for living forever. She says, "Because no one needs to live forever. I think that sometimes you can outstay your welcome." Simple as that. She realizes the rule against new life is just plain wrong, and by breaking out, she fights for her own freedom. The book makes it clear: when rules take away your worth or stop you from living a real life, breaking them isn't just okay, it is the right thing to do.

The article helps explain why teenagers rebel. A doctor explains that rebellion is a normal part of growing up. Kids start pushing back on their parents around ages 9 to 13. It's their way of saying, "Hey, I'm not a little kid anymore." By the time they reach high school, teens have been experimenting with their identity, and breaking a few rules is part of figuring out who they are. The doctor says rebellion actually helps teens grow up. If parents or society lay down rules that are too strict or unfair, pushing back is healthy because it is how teens learn to make their own choices.

The book and the article really connect. Anna rebels against a whole system that says she shouldn't even exist, which is not so different from a teenager pushing back against unfair rules at home. When rebellion is for a good reason, it can help define themselves and take control of their lives. Anna's story is proof that fighting unfair rules can make a real difference, just like people in history who broke laws to

By Antony Salmas

win equal rights. The point isn't to cause chaos, but to make things fairer for everyone.

So, is it ever right to break the rules? Yeah, sometimes it is, especially when those rules do real harm. Both the Declaration and the article show that rules are supposed to protect and value everyone. If they don't, it takes courage to challenge them. That is how growth happens, how freedom is won, and how the world changes for the better. Sometimes, the bravest thing you can do is say "no" to a bad rule. Quite honestly, if you look closely, the people who make the rules are usually the first ones to break them anyway (but that's a whole other story).

By Artemis Pergamali

Is our life really ours?

As Gemma Malley expressed in her interview, *The Declaration* is a thought-provoking dystopian novel. As readers take a deep dive, mindlessly flipping the pages waiting for the agonizing finale, the message that has been thoroughly conveyed through these pages is often dismissed, the point that Anna represents for most of us as citizens. We are constantly surrounded by rules, whether we choose to question them or follow them to fit into the norm. Through the book, Anna struggles with the constant dilemma of whether to follow the rules. From that moment on, I found myself sympathizing

with her, especially after realizing everything she was taught was all a realm far from reality.

This made me think about the world we live in today. Although our rules are not as extreme, Anna's determination to escape this brainwashing atmosphere reminds us of how important it is to question authority and stand up for ourselves, especially when something as valuable as freedom is on the line.

As I was finishing the book, I was left thinking: how much of our life is really ours? Our brains nowadays are constantly fed with widespread misinformation, expectations, and social pressures, making it hard for us to know what we truly want. Just like Anna, we go through life based on reassured paths that others have set for us, and when we notice, it's too late. And the question remains, how much of our life is actually ours?



By Danae Kolotoura

Is it ever right to break the rules if the rules themselves are wrong?

Breaking the rules generally is considered an act of impulse from teens and must be restrained. However, sometimes it is right to break the rules if the rules themselves are wrong. As we saw in the article we read, teenagers break the rules and rebel because it is in their nature. It is natural for teenagers to misbehave, especially when they are trying to find their identity. It is not against their parents themselves, but against control and outdated expectations. As they mature fast in their teenage years, many rules that had been set by their parents two years ago may now be considered by teenagers as insufficient and no longer serving their best interests. This suggests that the teenager feels that the rules are wrong and breaks them. The parents have to adapt and learn from this rule-breaking and continue to reset their children's boundaries. It is always important to remember that just because a rule exists, it does not automatically make it correct. As well as if they suppress autonomy or force others to remain dependent, especially for older teens, breaking the rules can be a step forward, not the opposite. However, we ought not to dismiss the fact that rule-breaking can be harmful for a teenager. When reaching that point, the teenager can either learn from the consequences and evolve or get dragged deeper into it. To sum up, rule-breaking, if

done for the "right" reasons, can lead to growth, fairness, and justice, especially if the rules prevent independence or positive development.



By Maro Fragaki

One of the biggest questions that the Declaration raised in me is whether the state has the right to intervene in people's lives and violate one of the most important human rights, their freedom of choice. In the novel, the government deprives citizens of experiencing one of the most important biological functions of humanity, that of reproduction. Because of overpopulation and the opportunity to enjoy a limitless life, people may be able to live indefinitely. However, they cannot have children and thus rip the benefit of nurturing another human being and see it flourish and progress. This brought to my mind the one-child policy in China, where people were not allowed to have a second child because of overpopulation. This policy was announced in 1979 and was implemented in 1980. This, like in the Declaration, has had numerous social repercussions, negatively impacting the lives of people.

What I realized is that there are a great number of parallels between the one-child policy in China and the no-child policy in the dystopian society of *The Declaration*. Firstly, in both cases, people lost their bodily autonomy. The governments intervened in the reproductive decisions of people, raising the question of whether the human body is owned by the individual or the state. While in China, men and women were coercively sterilized, becoming victims of the governmental policy, in the society of *The*

Declaration, born children were the victims who underwent great hardships and suffering for being born. This emphasizes that both states, China and the dystopian society in *The Declaration*, prioritized resource management over the well-being of people. They discarded the individual freedom of citizens to make decisions for their own lives.

Similarly, both policies aimed at ensuring the survival of citizens. The Chinese government implemented this policy to control population growth since overpopulation would thwart economic development. In *The Declaration*, the government prevented overpopulation to ensure that people can live indefinitely. If people were allowed to have children freely, the population growth would reach unprecedented proportions. As a result, the resources available would not suffice to sustain this population increase. Therefore, restrictions were considered rational and were designed aiming at ensuring stability for the existing population.

Finally, it is evident that both policies impact individuals, families, and children. In China, the one-child policy led to forced abortions, hidden pregnancies, and generally psychological pressure on families that had to adhere to a policy that altered their outlook on life. Accordingly, in *The Declaration*, the impact of the policy was even harder because it impacted the lives of children. Those children who were born illegally were

called “Surplus” and were sent to institutions where they were mistreated, as their role was to serve the rest of the citizens. Although in China, illegal children were not criminalized, both policies put a burden on families and posed a lot of dilemmas regarding having children.

In conclusion, both in the real and the fictional world, the deprivation of people’s freedom regarding reproduction has devastating consequences. In China, the policy was revoked in 2016, when it was replaced with a two-child policy. The rapidly ageing population, gender imbalance, and a decreasing workforce led the Chinese government to revise the policy. In *The Declaration*, on the other hand, it can be said that people always sought their freedom from extreme restrictions in the effort to live an ordinary life. *The Declaration* stands as a warning, underscoring the ethical implications when the state intervenes in the personal freedoms of citizens.



A World Without End — But Also Without Meaning?

When I finished *The Declaration*, I didn't feel relieved; I felt unsettled. The world Gemma Malley creates isn't chaotic or broken in the usual way. It's controlled, stable, and "perfect." And that's exactly what makes it disturbing.

The idea that stayed with me the most is the concept of immortality, not as a gift, but as a quiet kind of prison. At first glance, living forever might sound like something everyone would want. But in the novel, it comes with a cost: no children, no renewal, no real future. It made me wonder if nothing ever ends, does anything still matter?

Anna's journey really left an impression on me. She begins as someone who completely follows and is a "slave" of the system, even believing she is "surplus," someone who doesn't have the right to exist. That was hard to swallow at first. How can someone believe they don't deserve to live? But as the story unfolded, I started to see how powerful control, brainwashing, and fear can be. Anna's transformation from blind obedience to "out of the box" questioning felt like the most human part of the novel. It reminded me that identity isn't fixed; it can change when we begin to question the granted.

What also struck me was how society in the

novel doesn't feel entirely unrealistic and distant. Even though we don't have Longevity drugs, we already live in a world that is obsessed with youth, control, and progress. People are desperately trying to delay aging, improve themselves, and avoid death. The book made me think: are we slowly moving in that direction without realizing it?

At the same time, the story raises a dilemma about choice. Do people in the novel really choose immortality, or are they pressured into it? And in our world, how free are our choices if society is constantly shaping what we believe is "right" or "desirable"?

By the end, I was left with more questions than answers. Is a long but meaningless life better than a meaningful one? Is it natural or even right to try to escape death? But who defines the "right" and the "wrong"? And what gives life value in the first place?

For me, *The Declaration* isn't just a story about the future. It's a warning. It shows us that a "perfect" world without balance, without new life, and without freedom to choose isn't really perfect at all.

Maybe what makes life meaningful isn't how long it lasts, but the fact that it doesn't.

By Eva Chatzieleftheriou

Passion or Safety?

Throughout our lives most of us remain trapped in our own minds, relentlessly calculating expectations and perception, while rarely stopping to consider our own aspirations. Anna, a young character portrayed in “*The Declaration*” was at ease knowing she had limited freedom to explore what truly defined her. Being trapped in a hostile facility, she experienced abuse as well as anguish. Despite the fact that she was oppressed and was constantly manipulated, she chose to believe that her life was worthless, which was partially shadowed by her fear of the unknown. Hence, if we take a moment to reflect, we can ask ourselves: “In a world that can be so cruel, do we stop ourselves from chasing our true goals – not because we cannot, but because we fear failing? And in that fear, do we settle for lives that are safe, but quietly devoid of passion?” In contemporary society, plagued by uncertainty, every single one of us should strive to achieve their truest desires, without allowing fear or doubt to hold us back.

Characters like Anna should act as a reminder that you can truly have it all, but not if you don’t try. So, we face the question: “Is it better to exist with no life or die full of experiences?”



make use of psychological manipulation to predict and control human behavior. Characters like Anna initially conform to these regulations, showing how patterns can be inescapable when reinforced by authority. However, Malley also shows that awareness, relationships, and moral questioning are able to disrupt these patterns. Peter's defiance and Anna's gradual awakening reveal that individuals can resist psychological conditioning once they begin to question the beliefs imposed on them. The tension as to why they behave as they do does not eliminate free will.

It's a bit odd being here. I didn't ask to be born. But that mightn't be any better than I was. They caught me early, which beds well. That's what Mrs Pincet says anyway. She's the lady that runs Grange Hall. We call her House Matron. Grange Hall is where I live. Where people like me are brought up to be useful—the best of a bad situation. Mrs Pincet says.

I don't have another name. Not like Mrs Pincet

**THE
DECLARATION**

Says she. It's a stupid name, really. Stupid. House Matron. Lately I've started to call her Mrs Pincet. Not as stupid as you think it is.

**The chance to live forever comes with a price:
would you opt in or opt out?**

Legal people generally have at least two names, sometimes more. Not me, though. I'm just Anna. People like me don't need more than one name, Mrs

GEMMA MALLEY

By Virgil Benakis

Reading *The Declaration* made me think about something we usually take for granted: the idea that life should have limits. In the world of the novel, people can live forever, but only if they promise never to have children. At first, this might sound like a perfect solution to aging and death, but the story quickly shows that immortality can come with a huge cost; lack of freedom.

The character who stayed with me the most was Anna Covey. Anna grows up believing that she should not exist because her parents broke the law by having a child. She has been taught to feel guilty simply for being alive. I found this very powerful because it shows how strongly society can shape the way people think about themselves. When Anna starts questioning the system, we see her slowly discovering her own worth and identity. Watching her change made me think about how important it is to question rules and decide what is truly right.

Another character who stood out to me was Peter. Peter represents hope and rebellion. Unlike Anna at the beginning of the novel, he refuses to accept the world as it is. Through him, the story shows that change often begins with someone who is brave enough to challenge unfair systems.

The novel also made me reflect on our own world. Today, science and technology are

constantly advancing, and people are always searching for ways to live longer. While this can be positive, *The Declaration* reminds us that every scientific breakthrough raises ethical questions. If people could live forever, what would happen to the next generation? Who would have the right to exist? These questions made me realize that progress is not only about what we *can* do, but also about what we *should* do.

One of the biggest ideas in the book is freedom. In the novel, the government controls one of the most basic human choices: having children. This made me think about how important personal freedom is and how dangerous it can be when a society sacrifices humanity for the sake of order or convenience.

Even after finishing the novel, I am left with an important question: is a long life really valuable if it jeopardizes love, family, and the future? *The Declaration* suggests that life may be meaningful precisely because it is limited. Overall, the novel made me appreciate the balance between generations and the importance of human choice. It is a story about courage, identity, and the right to exist; and it reminds us that a society without compassion can never truly be perfect.

By Marko Kontogouris

Devastating. Devastatingly beautiful. A book that doesn't just amuse the reader or simply kills their time. A book that doesn't just tell another story. A book that has a message; "*The Declaration*." It is a book that hasn't reached the publicity or fame of thrilling adventures and world-known tales, such as "*Harry Potter*" or "*Peter Pan*," yet the weight of it manages to be equal, even superseding possibly, to renowned works such as these. While achieving enviable feats, others could merely dream of, such as the pure emotion it conveys and the lessons it carries, the narration remains unambiguous, utilizing straightforward vocabulary and pension throughout its entirety. It is, without a doubt, a statement regarding the importance of the cycle of life, an affirmation that it is crucial not to lose the spark which the youth embody, a declaration that despite the worst of conditions and humble beginnings, real, impactful, necessary change is possible.

Though the scenario has an ever-flowing nature, the author includes major plot-twists in her book's final pages. The one which had a substantial impact on me, personally, was the moment when both Anna's parents simultaneously decided to purposefully end their lives in order to grant a real one to Anna and her baby brother, Ben. The suddenness of the scene combined with their last, moving moments together and Peter's horror for what was to come, truly made it shattering...

In addition, it is further touching to think about her parents' willingness to sacrifice themselves for their children, even after having spent so many years apart, expressing their deep desire to do what is right. At heart, the excerpt captures the readers' attention and emotion, captivating their inability to put the book down.

In summary, "*The Declaration*" manages to consistently surprise its readers with unfathomably moving writing and storytelling. It encapsulates the very essence of humanity, contrasting it against a harsh, dystopian environment and promoting the vitality of adaptability. Furthermore, the book effectively makes its audience think, rendering it a worthwhile read.



By Kirra Christakopoulou

In the novel *"The Declaration,"* Gemma Malley intricately showcases a dystopian, futuristic society, where reproduction rights are limited and birth might be punished. She highlights the tormenting conditions under which "illegal" children grow up and also reflects on the topics of discrimination and social mobility, life and existence. However, what truly made me skeptical were the actions of one character: Mrs. Sharpe. An affluent powerful woman, enjoying every luxury. A privileged woman who seems to have it all, enjoying both eternal life and children. A sensible woman who initially chose to rescue the protagonists. A scared woman who ended up betraying them. More specifically, due to her approachable character, the protagonists seek her aid in a moment of true helplessness. Against every given norm, Mrs. Sharpe comes to their rescue. Despite her kind actions, when being interrogated by the police and her privileges are at stake she reports them. Were her actions rational? Could she be characterized as selfish? What does this show about human nature?

Some could argue that her actions were wrong. Helping someone and then betraying them might be even worse than refusing to help in the first place. She gave them hope. Hope for a better life. And then what did she do? She gave them in to protect herself. Despite the fact that she had already been alive for more than a century, she was not

eager to die to offer two adolescents the most precious gift: a free life. "Forgive me, Anna, she said silently. I'm sorry I'm not stronger. But I'm not ready to die-not yet. I've got too much to lose. It's all right for you, you're still young."

However, taking into consideration the humans' tendency to preserve life and act according to their own interests, some could justify her actions. In an extremely oppressing society, she was one of the privileged ones. She was not obliged to sacrifice everything, including her life, to rescue two strangers. From an objective point of view, the majority would choose to save the children. If one experienced it and stood in front of the dilemma, though, most probably they would adopt Mrs. Sharpe's perspective...

I cannot tell whether she was right or wrong. I cannot tell how I would have reacted. What I can say is that her actions reflect the way people tend to evaluate their priorities to make their choices.



By Vaggelis Kourtidis

When I finished "*The Declaration*" by Gemma Malley, the idea that stayed with me the most was not just the futuristic world where people can live forever, but the system of oppression that controls how everyone thinks. In the novel, Surpluses like Anna are constantly told that they are a mistake. The government spreads propaganda to convince society that these children are the reason the world is struggling. What makes this especially powerful is how believable it feels. Even though the novel takes place in a dystopian future, the warning Malley is communicating feels uncomfortably close to our own reality. The society in *The Declaration* runs on bias and carefully controlled information. People accept the rules because they have been taught the same message their entire lives: that longevity is a right and that Surpluses are selfish. This is how propaganda works; it repeats an idea so many times that it starts to sound like the truth. Anna believes it at first. She thinks she deserves punishment simply for existing. Watching her slowly question that belief is one of the most powerful parts of the book. Peter plays an important role in this change. While Anna's character development shows someone learning to challenge the system she grew up in, Peter already represents resistance and curiosity. Together, their perspectives highlight how powerful independent thinking can be. Their growth does not dominate the story for me, but it strengthens the theme

that people can unlearn the lies they are raised with. What makes the novel especially meaningful is how easily its themes connect to the real world. We might not live in a society where people are labeled "Surpluses," but bias, discrimination, and propaganda still exist today. Governments, media, and social groups can sometimes shape narratives that divide people or blame certain groups for larger problems. History, and even current events, shows how dangerous it can be when people accept these messages without questioning them.

For me, *The Declaration* is more than a dystopian story about immortality. It is a reminder that freedom is closely tied to the ability to think critically and challenge the stories we are told. And maybe the most important question the novel leaves us with is this: if we lived in Anna's world, would we have the courage to question it?



By Tasos Kantas

Reading “*The Declaration*” by Gemma Malley was an unsettling experience in the best sense of the word. It is one of those novels that quietly rearrange the way you see the world, not through spectacles, but through moral pressure. Long after I closed the book, its questions lingered about obedience, about silence, about the frightening ease with which injustice can be normalized when it is wrapped in the language of progress. As a reader, I did not simply observe the world Malley created; I felt implicated in it.



At its core, “*The Declaration*” explores a society that has traded humanity for longevity. The so-called “Declaration of Interdependence” promises immortality to some at the cost of existence for others, creating a rigid hierarchy where Surplus people are denied basic rights simply for having been born. What struck me most was not the cruelty itself, but how calmly it was administered. The novel taught me to recognize rebellion not as loud chaos, but as quiet refusal, the moment when a character begins to question what has always been

presented as “necessary.” It reminded me that unjust systems rarely appear unjust to those raised inside them.

One of the most powerful lessons I took from the book is that silence is not neutral. In “*The Declaration*,” propaganda does not rely on constant violence; it relies on repetition, education, and fear disguised as logic. Children are taught from a young age that Surpluses are a problem, a threat, a burden. This mirrors the way modern societies often justify inequality through statistics, narratives of efficiency, or appeals to security. Malley’s world made me more aware of how easily people, including myself, can accept injustice when it is framed as unavoidable or “for the greater good.” Silence, in this context, becomes a form of complicity.

As a reader, I also learned how fragile truth is when it competes with comfort. Many characters in the novel sense that something is wrong yet choose not to act because action would require sacrifice. This resonated deeply with me. It forced me to confront an uncomfortable question. “How often do we recognize injustice in our own world, yet choose inaction because resistance is inconvenient?” The novel does not offer easy heroism. Instead, it shows that moral courage often begins with loneliness and doubts.

What makes “*The Declaration*” especially relevant today is its portrayal of propaganda.

The regime does not merely control laws; it controls language. Words like “Surplus,” “Illegal,” and “Declaration” reshape reality, turning human beings into abstract problems. This reflects modern societies where media, algorithms, and political rhetoric shape public perception more powerfully than facts themselves. The book sharpened my awareness of how narratives are constructed and how critical thinking is not just an intellectual skill, but a moral responsibility.

Perhaps most strikingly, Malley’s novel left me with a heightened sensitivity to time. Immortality in “The Declaration” is portrayed not as a gift, but as stagnation. Progress halts, creativity withers, and fear of death becomes fear of change. This inversion challenged my assumptions about human ambition. It suggests that mortality is not a flaw to be eliminated, but a force that gives urgency, meaning, and ethical weight to our choices. Without limits, life becomes preservation rather than purpose.



This is where the novel unexpectedly intersects with Astrophysics. In Astrophysics, time is not absolute. Time bends, stretches, and behaves differently depending on mass, velocity, and gravity. Similarly, in “*The Declaration*,” time is manipulated socially rather than physically. A small group hoards the future, while others are denied even a present. Just as massive celestial bodies distort space-time, immense political power distorts moral reality. What appears stable from one frame of reference becomes deeply unjust from another.

Moreover, Astrophysics teaches us that the universe is defined by change. Stars are born, evolve, and die. Galaxies collide. Entropy increases. Attempts to freeze the universe would violate its very nature. “*The Declaration*” presents a society that tries to defy this cosmic principle. To halt death, growth and renewal. In doing so, it creates a moral black hole, a system so dense with fear and control that empathy cannot escape. Yet, as Astrophysics also shows us, even black holes emit radiation. No system, however oppressive, is completely closed. Rebellion, like Hawking radiation, emerges from the edges of impossibility.

In the end, “*The Declaration*” left me with a remarkable realization. That injustice is not always loud, and resistance is not always heroic, but both obey laws as fundamental as those of the Universe. When societies deny change, they collapse under their own weight. When individuals choose silence, they alter the moral trajectory of their world. And just as the stars remind us that nothing lasts forever, Malley’s novel reminds us that the future is not something we inherit but something we choose to protect.



By Myrto Mpampouni

The World from Peter's Point of View

You are going to go into Grange Hall as a Surplus, you will find Anna, you will follow our plan, and the two of you will escape together... If everything goes according to plan in a fortnight, you will be both home and well...

Cold water slams into my face as I jolt away, gasping.

"Wake up, freak." Charlie's voice comes from somewhere far away, "I always knew you were trouble, but I never considered you deaf. The House Matron wants to see you..."

At that, my heart began to pound.

Pincet must have heard the chaos that I caused last on the babies' floor- or what this place prefers to call them. *Smalls*. I'd gone there shortly after dinner to help the other punished surplus clean up, and somehow managed to make everything worse. It pains me to see other surpluses being punished for my actions, but it's part of a greater goal. A goal I have been meticulously planning for weeks. Long before I ever set foot in this place. Before I told mom and dad anything. Everything was perfect and measured as such by the time I came to this godforsaken prison they call home, all that was left was patience.

So, I waited,

And waited,

And waited,

But I am done waiting.

Anna has changed; I can see it in her eyes- the hesitation, the cracks in the certainty. Anna. The reason I came here. The most obedient and brainwashed child in the entire Grange Hall. Or at least that's what I thought she was.

At first sight, I knew this would be a challenge - bringing her back to London, to her parents- but I didn't care. Her parents took me in when I had nowhere to go, when I was passed through illegal foster homes like something unwanted. Helping them see their daughter again is the least I owe them.

Everything was planned. Everything except this.

Falling for Anna.



No — that can't be right. I can't fall for her. She's just another oppressed girl trapped in a broken system.

But then there are her eyes, heavy with sadness that no child should carry. And her hands. Hands that have known punishment instead of comfort.

Where others see someone broken, I see a survivor. Someone who endured what no child should ever have to and still stands. I used to think her story was one of tragedy. Now I see it as a strength. Growth.

This isn't the end for Anna. It's the beginning of something new.

And I want to be part of it.

As I make my way towards that beasts' office, a memory crashes into me; the day I met my parents, not my biological but my real parents. I remember the speech that I gave them after they agreed to let me stay with them.

They can lock me away. They can call me illegal. But for one night, I chose my own life. And that's something they can't recycle.

When I reach the door, Anna is standing outside.

She doesn't speak. Instead, she brushes her fingers against my hand — so lightly that if I weren't already obsessed with her, I might have missed it entirely. The moment vanishes before I can react.

But Anna knows exactly what she's doing. She turns her head slowly, like a machine following instructions. Her eyes met mine — clear. Certain.

Teasing.

Let's leave this place, they say.

I feel my mouth twitch into a smile.

Oh. Game on, madam.



By Emmanuel Nikolaidis

Diary entry number 1870,

I keep writing in here so I do not forget. I barely remember my father's voice and my real name. I can't recall my mother's voice, or whether I ever had siblings. I fear that the longer I am in here, the more my memories will become shadows of the past. The dark walls around me are suffocating me, and my only consolation is the people I left behind the day they took me from my real home. I can still remember the garden we used to have where I would run outside for hours splashing in the puddles when it rained. Now, I am just a surplus... expendable. A surplus molded to cater to the needs of the Legals. Grange Hall treats us as if we are soulless, and I wonder if the others really believe in that lie. I wouldn't dare ask anyone about this, as I would definitely be reprimanded about it, just like last time I spoke up about it. Solitary indeed is a solitary place. Writing in this is the only thing keeping me sane. They almost found the diary yesterday. The guards came in for a routine check, but I had a hunch it would happen and hid it in the mattress.

Today is my turn to do laundry, for the Legals of course. We are probably going to have the same meal as always. I don't know

how much more I will be able to take. What is the point of this homogenous, freedom less society? I hope I am not the only one questioning the status quo. We all look and behave the same, but do we also think the same?

Surplus Emmanuel,

(The revolution lives within me...)

THE DECLARATION COLLAGE

By Nikolas Nikopoulos



The Story Behind The Collage

By Nikolas Nikopoulos

This digital collage shows a visual metaphor about control, hope, rebellion, and dehumanization. Each part of the collage uses symbols to represent these ideas: cameras and strings show control, two hands reaching toward each other and light represent hope, protest and fire show rebellion, and robotic, faceless figures show dehumanization. I was inspired by the book *Declaration*, which talks about power, resistance, and how people can lose their individuality, trying to incorporate its cover-page colours, as well as by strong images I found on the internet that show similar ideas. The cameras and strings perfectly represent the control that the system and the Authorities have over the people and the Surpluses, the two hands reaching toward each other show Anna and Peter trying to create a spark of hope, the protest and fire show the hate that Peter carries with him, trying everything he can to destroy the system, and lastly, the robotic, faceless figures show the dehumanizing process of the system, controlling the Surpluses and making them feel and act like “robots.” To create the collage, I used digital tools to combine different images, colours, and textures so that each section clearly shows its theme while still fitting together as one artwork. Through this collage, I want to make the audience think about how control affects

people, why hope and rebellion are important, and how society can sometimes make people feel less human.

The title “CHORD” represents the connection between the four themes in the collage. Each letter corresponds to a theme: C for Control, H for Hope, O for the center that joins everything together, R for Rebellion, and D for Dehumanization. Just like a musical chord combines separate notes to make a single sound, this title shows how these different ideas, control, hope, rebellion and dehumanization, interact and affect each other in society. The letters visually and conceptually unify the collage, highlighting the relationships between each theme.

By Any Other Name



By Santha Rama Rau

"At the Anglo-Indian day school in Zorinabad to which my sister and I were sent when she was eight and I was five and a half, they changed our names."

A recurring concern in literature is the question of how identity is formed and whether it can be altered by external forces such as society, language, or education. In Santha Rama Rau's "By Any Other Name", this issue is explored through the experiences of two Indian sisters who enter an English colonial school, where they are expected to adapt to a system that gradually reshapes how they see themselves.

In this section, students reflect on the two sisters' transformation into a different identity, and how their change of names signals a broader shift in identity under colonial influence. Their reflections consider the emotional impact of this adjustment, particularly the sense of distance it creates between the girls and their cultural roots.

Other entries examine how schooling can function as a tool of assimilation, encouraging conformity while quietly diminishing individuality and heritage.

Together, these responses point to a key idea in the story: the tension between who we are and who we are expected to become within dominant social systems. The act of renaming becomes a symbol of deeper questions about power, belonging, and self-definition.

Rather than arriving at fixed conclusions, these reflections encourage readers to think about how identity is shaped in subtle but lasting ways. They open up a space for considering the value of cultural memory, the pressure to conform, and the importance of holding onto one's sense of self in environments that demand change.

By Claire Georgantzi

In "*By Any Other Name*," Santha Rama Rau illustrates how personal and cultural identity shape the way we see ourselves and experience the world around us. When the British headmistress changes Santha's name to "Cynthia," the change may appear minor, but to Santha it represents the loss of an important part of her identity. The new name reflects someone who is not truly Indian, and although she feels uncomfortable with the change, she chooses to accept it in order to fit in. At school, the name "Cynthia" allows Santha to distance herself from painful experiences and adapt more easily to the unfair treatment she and her sister face because of their nationality.

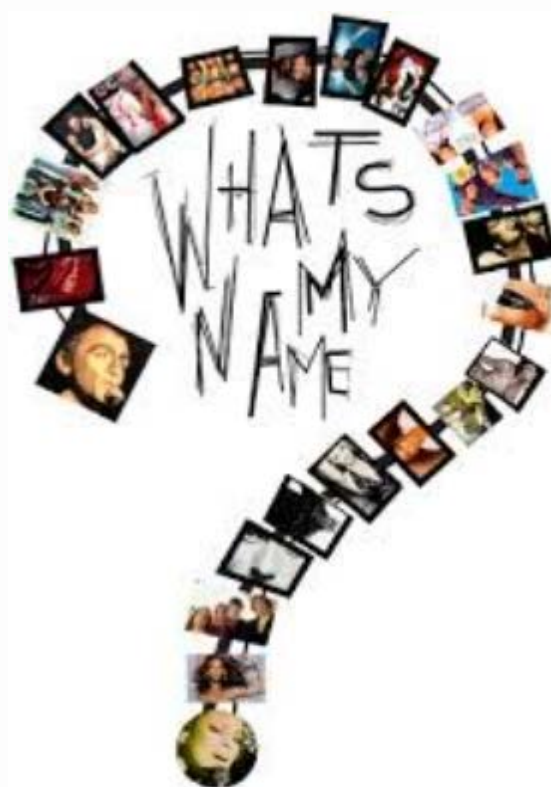
However, this adaptation comes at a cost, as it leaves her feeling disconnected from her true self. Through this experience, the story powerfully conveys the emotional impact of being forced to hide one's identity in order to be accepted. Ultimately, although the experience is largely painful, it also helps Santha gain clarity and resilience. By the end of the story, she is better able to cope with the discrimination her sister endured and with leaving the school behind, because she realizes she never truly felt like herself there. Rau's narrative delivers an inspiring message about the importance of embracing one's identity and the lasting strength that comes from self-awareness and cultural pride.



By Stergios Nezis

Through her story “By Any Other Name,” Santha Rama Rau highlights the deep connection between personal identity and cultural heritage. When Santha is given the English name “Cynthia” at her British-run school, the change is far more significant than a simple adjustment for convenience. It symbolizes an attempt to erase her Indian identity and replace it with one that conforms to colonial expectations. At first, the name “Cynthia” appears to offer certain advantages. It helps Santha avoid unwanted attention, fit in more easily, and navigate the discrimination present in her school environment. However, these temporary benefits come at the cost of her sense of self. Santha begins to feel detached from who she truly is, as though she is living behind a mask. The new name distances her from her cultural roots and creates the feeling that she has become someone less genuine and authentic.

Most importantly, the experience teaches Santha the value of embracing and protecting one’s identity. By ultimately rejecting the name “Cynthia,” she quietly resists the pressures of colonialism and reclaims pride in who she is. Rau’s story delivers a powerful and inspiring message: true dignity and self-respect come from remaining connected to one’s heritage, even in situations that encourage conformity and silence individuality.



By Ioannis Karassavidis

In “By Any Other Name,” Santha Rama Rau demonstrates how strongly personal and cultural identity influence an individual’s sense of self. When Santha and her sister are given the English names “Cynthia” and “Pamela” at their British-run school, the change may seem minor at first, but it reflects the broader colonial attempt to suppress Indian identity and encourage conformity to British culture.

For Santha, being called “Cynthia” offers certain temporary advantages. The new name allows her to blend in more easily at school, avoid conflict with authority figures, and adapt to the expectations placed upon her. Yet these benefits come with an emotional cost. The name feels unfamiliar and disconnected from who she truly is, creating a divide between her authentic identity and the version of herself she is expected to present in public.

Through this experience, Rau reveals how something as personal as a name carries deep emotional and cultural significance. Losing control over one’s name can feel like losing part of one’s identity, heritage, and individuality. Ultimately, the impact of being renamed is portrayed as negative, as it highlights how systems of discrimination and colonialism can pressure individuals to silence their culture in order to gain acceptance. At the same time, the story inspires readers to value and protect their identity, reminding us that cultural pride and self-acceptance are essential to preserving dignity and authenticity.



By Irene Alexopoulou

Santha Rama Rau, the author of “By Any Other Name,” portrays names as powerful symbols of personal and cultural identity. When the headmistress at the Anglo-Indian school renames Santha “Cynthia”, she is expected to adopt an identity that does not truly belong to her. This change reflects the influence of the British colonial system, which often treated Indian culture as inferior and encouraged assimilation into British society.

At first, the name “Cynthia” offers Santha a sense of protection. It allows her to blend in more easily with the teachers and students, helping her avoid some of the discrimination directed toward Indian children. In this way, the new name becomes a tool for acceptance and survival within an environment shaped by prejudice and inequality.

However, the emotional consequences of this change are far more significant. Being called “Cynthia” distances Santha from her authentic self, her family, and her cultural heritage. The name creates a separation between who she truly is and the identity imposed upon her by colonial authority. Through this experience, Rau illustrates how the pressure to conform can lead individuals to feel disconnected from their roots and individuality.

Ultimately, the story delivers an inspiring and meaningful message about the importance of preserving one's identity despite societal pressure to assimilate. Rau reminds readers that cultural heritage and self-acceptance are essential parts of human dignity, and that remaining true to oneself is an act of quiet strength and resilience.



By Emmanuel Nikolaidis

In her memoir “By Any Other Name,” Santha Rama Rau reveals how being forced to use the English name “Cynthia” at school caused far more harm than good. The British headmistress gives Santha and her sister English names under the excuse that their Indian names are too difficult to pronounce. However, this change is not simply about convenience; it reflects a colonial attitude that dismisses Indian culture and identity as less valuable.

The name “Cynthia” is not one Santha chooses for herself, but one imposed upon her by a system that pressures her to conform. Although the new name may make it easier for her to fit in at school and avoid some discrimination, it creates a painful separation between her public identity and her true self. At school, she feels as though she must become someone else to be accepted, leaving her disconnected from her culture, family, and personal identity.

The emotional impact of this experience becomes especially clear at the end of the memoir, when Santha reflects on the discrimination she endured. She realizes that she had mentally distanced herself from those painful memories by imagining that they happened not to her, but to “a girl called Cynthia.” This realization highlights the damaging effect of being forced to hide one's identity in order to survive within an unjust system.

Ultimately, Rau's memoir delivers a powerful and inspiring message about the importance of preserving one's identity and cultural heritage. By rejecting the name "Cynthia" and reclaiming her true self, Santha demonstrates that remaining connected to one's roots is essential for dignity, self-respect, and understanding who we truly are.



By Maro Kaparounaki

In “By Any Other Name,” Santha Rama Rau explores how names carry deep personal and cultural meaning, emphasizing that identity cannot simply be altered to fit social expectations.

When Santha is renamed “Cynthia” at a British-run school, the change is presented as a way to help her integrate more easily into school life. In theory, it is meant to reduce attention to her differences and prevent biased or discriminatory attitudes, making it easier for her to form friendships and adapt to her environment.

Although the name change may offer a short-term sense of acceptance, it cannot erase or conceal her cultural heritage, which remains an essential part of who she is.

Over time, the tension between her assigned identity and her true self becomes increasingly apparent, showing that such attempts at assimilation are ultimately limited and superficial.

All in all, Rau’s memoir encourages readers to reflect on a more meaningful solution: rather than asking individuals to hide or change their identities, societies should foster understanding and respect for diversity. By valuing authenticity instead of conformity, communities can create environments where children are accepted for who they truly are.



By Maro Fragaki

Names carry aspects of our culture and personality and are inextricably linked to our identity. In short, names reveal who we are. When the headmistress of the school, which Santha and Premila attend, changes their names to “Cynthia” and “Pamela,” it seems, at first, as an adjustment to facilitate pronunciation.

However, on a deeper level, it demonstrates the attempt of the headmistress to alter their identity. She tries to impose another identity on the girls so that they can more quickly adjust to their new school environment. It seems that her ultimate prospect is to change their habits and outlook on life, making them more British in their manners and attitudes.

In essence, the headmistress attempts to mask their difference within the school context. I believe that the change of their names had a negative impact, firstly on the psychology of the girls, causing confusion and bewilderment with regard to their sense of belonging. I feel that instead of embracing and celebrating their differences, the school aimed to deprive them of their individuality and cultural heritage.

It is my conviction that such practices alienate people, making them feel uncomfortable instead of integrating them smoothly into a new culture.

I assume that the benefits for the girls can be seen at the end of the story when they forcefully leave school because they experience discrimination.

During a test, they are characterized as “cheaters” not because they performed the act but because the administrators attached to them negative qualities related to their Indian descent. However, the girls were intact because it did not concern them, but their other selves, “Pamela” and “Cynthia.”

What is noteworthy is that Rama Rau emphasizes that names are related to people's identity, the way labels are not.



By Virgil Benakis

Santha Rama Rau, in her memoir “By Any Other Name,” depicts two young Indian girls entering an Anglo-Indian school for the first time, where they immediately encounter a defining conflict: their names are changed by the headmistress into English versions that are considered easier to pronounce.

This seemingly small act reflects a deeper imbalance of power within a colonial system, where authority figures impose their language and culture on those they govern.

The decision to rename Santha as “Cynthia” illustrates the influence and control exercised under colonial rule.

While the change may appear to offer practical benefits—such as helping the girls fit into the British school environment and experience a sense of acceptance—this belonging is ultimately superficial. It creates comfort on the surface, but not genuine inclusion or true belonging.

In the broader historical context of colonial tensions and inequality, this act becomes even more significant, highlighting how cultural identity can be diminished or reshaped by those in power. Over time, such pressures risk contributing to the erosion of heritage and cultural continuity.

By and large, Rau emphasizes that names and heritage are not trivial details but essential elements of identity that shape who we are. The memoir underscores the importance of preserving cultural roots and individuality, showing that true identity cannot be replaced without consequence.



By Artemis Pergamali

In “By Any Other Name,” Santha Rama Rau explores how the imposed English name “Cynthia” creates a psychological split between Santha’s true identity and the version of herself shaped by the expectations of her British-run school.

The name “Cynthia” becomes a constructed identity—one designed to meet the headmistress’s preferences—while her real self remains tied to her Indian heritage. This separation makes it easier for Santha to distance herself from experiences that do not reflect who she truly is, but it also highlights how forcing someone to adopt a different identity can lead to an internal loss of self.

Living with this divided sense of identity affects how Santha processes her experiences. At school, she endures moments of prejudice and racism, including remarks made by teachers that target her nationality.

While these experiences are painful, she later finds a way to mentally separate herself from them by associating them with “Cynthia” rather than her authentic self. In this sense, the imposed name creates a psychological coping mechanism, allowing her to detach from some of the emotional weight of those memories.

However, Rau also shows that this division is ultimately harmful, as it encourages disconnection from one’s true identity to survive in an unwelcoming environment.

Although there may be moments where this separation feels protective, it cannot replace the importance of wholeness and self-acceptance. The memoir ultimately suggests that while people may adapt to difficult circumstances, preserving one’s cultural identity remains essential to maintaining a complete and authentic sense of self.



By Eva Chatzieleftheriou

In “By Any Other Name,” Santha Rama Rau presents the renaming of Santha as “Cynthia” as a seemingly small but deeply meaningful act that reflects the pressures of a colonial school environment. The headmistress introduces “pretty English names” for Santha and her sister, claiming their Indian names are too difficult to pronounce. While this is framed as a practical solution to help the girls integrate more smoothly, it also reveals an underlying attitude that prioritizes British norms and subtly diminishes Indian identity.

The intention behind this change is to help Santha avoid confusion, reduce potential discrimination, and make her transition into the school easier. In this sense, the name “Cynthia” functions almost like a “social passport,” designed to smooth her entry into a new and unfamiliar environment. However, what appears helpful on the surface also carries the risk of reinforcing cultural stereotypes and distancing her from her own heritage.

As Santha adjusts to her new name, the emotional consequences become clearer. She struggles with moments of uncertainty about her identity, even responding “I don’t know” when asked to state her name in class.

This moment reflects not confusion about language, but confusion about self, showing how deeply the imposed identity disrupts her sense of belonging. The separation from her original name weakens her connection to her family, culture, and personal pride, leaving her feeling divided between two versions of herself.

Ultimately, Rau highlights that personal and cultural identity are inseparable from a person’s sense of self. The memoir shows that when individuals are denied the right to define themselves, even in something as fundamental as a name, it can weaken confidence and self-understanding. In this way, the renaming of Santha ultimately becomes a powerful example of how attempts at forced assimilation can undermine identity rather than support it.



By Marko Kontogouris

In her memoir “By Any Other Name,” Santha Rama Rau recalls a formative childhood experience in which she and her sister, Premila, are given new English names, “Cynthia” and “Pamela,” upon joining an Anglo-Indian school. This immediate renaming by the principal marks a sudden shift in how they are expected to see themselves, leaving Santha feeling as though a part of her identity has been dismissed.

On the one hand, this change appears to offer a degree of protection. By adopting an English name, Santha is able to shield herself emotionally from some of the discrimination and prejudice present in her environment. The distance created between her true self and her assigned identity allows her to momentarily detach from the harshness of her surroundings.

On the other hand, the deeper impact of this renaming is far more troubling. It reinforces the idea that her Indian identity is something to be set aside rather than valued, subtly encouraging shame rather than cultural pride. Instead of fostering inclusion, the practice highlights exclusion and inequality within the school system.

By and large, the memoir suggests that the long-term consequences of such an experience are negative. While the name “Cynthia” may offer temporary coping distance, it also creates confusion and emotional separation from both her culture and her sense of self. Rau’s reflection underscores how deeply identity is tied to one’s name, and how its loss can lead to lasting inner disconnection.



By Myrto Mparmpouni

“By Any Other Name” is an excellent example of how Santha Rama Rau highlights the profound connection between a person’s name and their sense of identity. When the headmistress renames her “Cynthia,” the change may initially appear minor, almost practical, as it is intended to make pronunciation easier for British teachers and to help Santha blend into her new environment. On the surface, it seems to offer a pathway to acceptance and belonging.

However, for Santha, the new name carries a very different emotional weight. “Cynthia” feels unfamiliar and detached, as though it belongs to someone else entirely. Rather than making her feel included, it creates the sense that she must step outside of herself and adopt a role that does not reflect who she truly is. In this way, the name becomes less an advantage and more a symbol of disconnection from her heritage, family, and cultural roots.

From this perspective, the renaming carries a stronger negative impact than a positive one. It suggests that identity must be altered in order to be accepted, raising important questions about what is lost when individuals are encouraged to suppress their authentic selves. Names are not merely labels - they are deeply tied to memory, belonging, and self-understanding.

It would be safe to say that Rau’s memoir invites readers to reflect on the pressure many people face to conform in order to fit in. Through her experience, she emphasizes that remaining true to one’s identity, even when it is difficult, is a powerful act of self-respect and resilience, and a reminder that authenticity should never be the price of acceptance.



By Alexandra Gavriilidi

Through her memoir “By Any Other Name,” Santha Rama Rau tells a deeply personal story about what it means to hold onto your identity when the world quietly tries to reshape it. When she and her sister begin attending a British school in India, the headmistress gives them English names to make things “easier.” Santha becomes “Cynthia.” On the surface, it seems like a small adjustment, just a name change meant for convenience, but for Santha, it carries a much heavier meaning.

The new name feels less like an improvement and more like a replacement. It suggests that who she already is somehow is not enough, and that belonging requires leaving part of herself behind. While “Cynthia” may help her blend in and move more smoothly through the school environment, it also creates an internal conflict: the sense that she must step away from her true identity in order to be accepted.

This raises a difficult question: does survival in an unjust environment sometimes require fragmentation of the self, and if so, what is the cost of that survival? Overall, Rau leaves the reader with an uneasy tension rather than a neat resolution. The renaming is both a tool of exclusion and, paradoxically, a coping mechanism. It prompts us to question whether adaptation in the face of discrimination can ever be neutral, and whether the self that adapts is also, in some quiet way, the self that is altered.



By Machie Loumidis

In “By Any Other Name,” Santha Rama Rau explores the profound impact that colonial schooling has on cultural identity and self-perception. In the Anglo-Indian school she describes, the English headmistress replaces the students’ Indian names with English ones, a decision justified as a matter of pronunciation but rooted in deeper cultural assumptions. For Santha, becoming “Cynthia” is not simply a change of name—it marks the beginning of a subtle but powerful shift in how she relates to her own heritage.

As the memoir unfolds, Santha experiences a growing sense of distance from her cultural background. The new name creates a symbolic separation between her and her origins, gradually encouraging her to suppress aspects of her identity in order to adapt to her surroundings. This imposed identity does not transform who she truly is, but it does influence how she behaves and how she perceives herself within the school environment.

While the name “Cynthia” may offer certain short-term advantages, such as easier social integration and reduced exposure to prejudice, it also comes at a high emotional cost. The pressure to conform leads to an internal conflict that is especially difficult at such a young age, as she navigates between acceptance and authenticity.

In conclusion, Rau suggests that the consequences of such forced assimilation extend beyond convenience or social adjustment. The experience raises important questions about the long-term effects of denying one’s cultural identity and whether belonging should ever require the erasure of the self.



By Vaggelis Kourtidis

In “By Any Other Name,” Santha Rama Rau explores how deeply personal and cultural identity shape an individual’s sense of self. More specifically, she portrays how the girls are pressured to abandon their Indian heritage and adopt Western norms when their headmistress changes their names without consent. This seemingly small act reflects a much larger idea - that a name is not just a label, but a core part of identity, and altering it can feel like altering who a person is.

This becomes especially significant when Santha is renamed “Cynthia.” While the new name may offer her superficial acceptance and easier integration into the school environment, it also exposes the prejudice and inequality underlying that acceptance. What appears to be inclusion is conditional based on the suppression of difference rather than the celebration of it.

However, this experience also becomes a turning point for Santha. It leads her to a deeper awareness of the importance of identity, heritage, and self-respect. She begins to understand that resilience does not come from erasing who you are, but from holding onto it despite external pressure.

Overall, the renaming is a negative experience in the moment, as it distances her from her cultural roots. Yet in the long term, it has a more complex effect: it strengthens her awareness of injustice and deepens her appreciation of her own identity, encouraging her to value and preserve it more consciously.



What, of this Goldfish, Would You Wish?



By Etgar Keret

A magic goldfish that grants wishes, but instead is used for personal company. What happens when the owner is faced with the choice of using his wish or losing his only company?

By Eva Chatzieleftheriou



The short story *“What, of This Goldfish, Would You Wish?”* explores how deep loneliness can drive individuals toward extreme and tragic decisions, even when their intentions are not inherently malicious. In the story, a young and ambitious boy named Yonatan sets out to create a documentary based on the question: “If you found a talking goldfish that granted you three wishes, what would you wish for?”

During his attempt to interview a Russian Zionist named Sergei, Yonatan comes across as overly persistent, unintentionally triggering Sergei’s defensive reaction. Misunderstanding Yonatan’s intentions and believing that he is there to take his “talking goldfish,” Sergei reacts violently and accidentally kills him. At the end of the story, a Russian man—who appears to be closely connected to Sergei—responds to the same question. He states that if he ever found a talking goldfish, he would not ask it for anything. Instead, he would “stick it on a shelf... and talk to it all day,” explaining that

he would give “anything... not to be alone.”

Through this conclusion, the story highlights how isolation and emotional deprivation can shape human behavior, leading individuals to act out of fear, misunderstanding, or desperation rather than rational thought or empathy. Loneliness is presented not merely as a personal feeling, but as a force capable of distorting perception and triggering irrational responses to others. What begins as a simple documentary question ultimately exposes how human connection—or the lack of it—can determine the boundary between ordinary interaction and tragic consequence. The story invites readers to reflect on how easily misunderstanding can arise when people are emotionally isolated, and how deeply the need for companionship can influence even the most unexpected actions.

By Claire Georgantzi

In the short story “*What, of This Goldfish, Would You Wish?*” by Etgar Keret, several meaningful life lessons are explored, but the central focus is the value of empathy and human connection—qualities that ultimately prove more significant than the power of wishes or material gain. Through its narrative, the story suggests that human relationships are more essential to happiness and survival than the fulfillment of desires.

Sergei, an elderly man who lives in isolation with a magical goldfish that grants wishes, distances himself from society out of fear of being hurt or misunderstood. His withdrawal from the outside world reflects a deeper emotional vulnerability, suggesting that isolation is often rooted in fear rather than true independence. When a young boy, Yonatan, arrives at his home seeking material for a documentary, Sergei misinterprets his intentions and responds with hostility. This tragic misunderstanding highlights how isolation can distort perception and lead individuals to react defensively, even when no real threat exists.

Had Sergei chosen not to live in self-imposed isolation, he might have developed a more trusting and open perspective toward others. Instead of reacting out of fear, he could have engaged in dialogue, which may have led to understanding rather than violence. His isolation

ultimately prevents him from forming meaningful human connections and from being truly seen or understood by others.

In the end, the author emphasizes that empathy, trust, and the willingness to understand others are what give life its true meaning. The story ultimately reminds readers that while wishes may represent power or desire, it is human connection that defines emotional fulfillment and prevents tragedy.



By Myrto Mparmpouni



In the short story *“What, of This Goldfish, Would You Wish?”* Etgar Keret communicates several meaningful life lessons. The richness of the narrative allows readers to interpret the text in different ways and arrive at various conclusions. Personally, I believe that the most significant lesson in the story is the importance of compassion over selfish desire.

Sergei is a lonely Russian immigrant who has only one companion: a magical goldfish capable of granting him three wishes. He chooses to live in isolation in order to protect his only friend from being discovered and potentially exploited or taken from him. However, everything changes when a young and ambitious filmmaker named Yonatan arrives at his doorstep seeking material for a documentary. Sergei’s fear and mistrust lead him to misinterpret the situation, resulting in him accidentally killing the boy: “Sergei hit the boy just once, but that was enough.”

At this moment, Sergei is confronted with a

profound moral dilemma. Should he use his final wish to undo the tragedy and save someone he views as intrusive and careless? Is it worth sacrificing his last chance at magic—and possibly his only remaining connection to the extraordinary—for a stranger? Overcome with guilt, he ultimately chooses to use his final wish, even though doing so means losing the magic forever.

Through this ending, Keret highlights that acts of kindness, empathy, and moral responsibility hold greater value than the fulfillment of personal desires. The story ultimately suggests that what gives life meaning is not power or wishes, but the ability to care for others and act with humanity, even in moments of fear and uncertainty.

By Maro Fragaki

The short story *"What, of This Goldfish, Would You Wish?"* revolves around the theme of the ethical weight surrounding the choices people make. Etgar Keret illustrates this through the character of Sergei, who keeps a magical goldfish in his home that grants him three wishes. Having already used two of them, he is left with a final wish and faces a difficult moral dilemma: whether to use it to bring back to life a boy he has accidentally killed or keep it for himself. Keret highlights Sergei's inner conflict, noting that he says, "I've been saving it. Saving it for something." The repetition and short phrasing reveal his tension and hesitation, emphasizing the emotional pressure of his decision. The author also explores the complexity of human nature: on one hand, Sergei considers a compassionate act, while on the other, he contemplates disposing of the boy's body, revealing his fear and moral confusion.

Keret further develops Sergei's character by showing his underlying benevolence. Earlier, Sergei had already used one of his wishes to help someone, stating, "The kid was still small then, barely three, but the doctors already knew something in her son's head wasn't right," demonstrating that his wishes were not entirely self-serving.

Ultimately, Sergei chooses to use his final wish to save Yonatan. However, this decision comes at a personal cost, as the

goldfish has been his only companion. In doing so, he sacrifices his last source of comfort and returns to loneliness. The story also emphasizes that Sergei's act of moral courage goes largely unrecognized within the narrative, particularly in the context of the documentary and the framing of the "three wishes."

To conclude, Keret suggests that acts of moral responsibility and compassion are often overlooked in society, despite their profound ethical significance.



By Jason Manos



Etgar Keret's "*What, of This Goldfish, Would You Wish?*" presents a deceptively simple premise, a magical goldfish capable of granting wishes, but unfolds into a disturbing and ironic meditation on loneliness, mistrust, and the ways in which human desires often conceal deeper emotional needs. Rather than offering characters who clearly understand what they want, Keret portrays individuals whose wishes are shaped less by hope and rather than by fear, insecurity, and emotional deprivation.

At the center of the story is Sergei, an elderly man living in profound isolation. His life is stripped of meaningful human contact, and the arrival of the magical goldfish becomes less a fantastical opportunity than a fragile anchor to companionship. What makes Sergei's character especially tragic is not merely that he is alone, but that he has grown accustomed to loneliness as a kind of emotional survival strategy. The goldfish, though ostensibly a source of limitless wish fulfillment, becomes in practice the only "presence" he feels he can rely on. This

dependency distorts his sense of judgment: instead of seeing the fish as a means to improve his life or reconnect with the world, he comes to view it as something to protect at all costs.

Even more revealing is Sergei's final decision regarding his last wish. Faced with the consequences of his actions and the possibility of reversing harm, he chooses instead to keep the goldfish. This choice is deeply telling. On the surface, it may appear irrational or selfish, but psychologically it reflects his core need: not healing, not justice, and not even redemption, but continued companionship. The goldfish has become a stand-in for human presence, however limited or artificial it may be. Sergei's refusal to relinquish it suggests that the fear of returning to absolute isolation outweighs any moral obligation or opportunity for repair. Keret uses this conclusion to complicate traditional ideas of desire. In many stories involving wishes or magical objects, characters learn what they truly want through experience and ultimately choose something meaningful—love, family, freedom, or self-understanding. In contrast, Sergei's final act suggests that desire is not always aspirational. It can be defensive. It can be shaped by scarcity rather than abundance. When emotional deprivation persists long enough, even the possibility of change can feel threatening.

"What, of This Goldfish, Would You Wish?"

By Jason Manos

thus leaves the reader with an unsettling truth: isolation does not merely describe a condition of being alone—it can actively shape how people perceive others, distort their choices, and undermine their capacity for empathy. In holding tightly to what feels safe, Sergei loses what might have offered real connection, revealing how fear, when left unchecked, can become its own form of imprisonment.



By Kirra Christakopoulou

Etgar Keret's short story "*What, of This Goldfish, Would You Wish?*" conveys several important life lessons, but in my view the most significant is the value of solidarity. Through Sergei's actions, the story suggests that looking beyond personal desire and instead prioritizing the needs of others is one of the most admirable human qualities.

Sergei, a Hebrew-Russian man living in isolation, is given three magical wishes by a goldfish. Rather than using them for personal gain, he ultimately uses his wishes to help others. This choice highlights the importance of mutual support and shows that acting for the benefit of those around us can be more meaningful than fulfilling individual desires. It suggests that society depends on people being willing to care for one another, even when there is no direct advantage for themselves.

This idea is further reinforced when the goldfish questions the value of a wish not used to save Yoni, the young filmmaker Sergei has unintentionally killed. The fish's words draw attention to the idea that, compared to the loss of a human life, personal wishes and material concerns become insignificant. It emphasizes the moral responsibility Sergei faces and the importance of using power to repair harm when possible.

Overall, the story highlights that empathy

and solidarity are essential human values. It encourages readers to recognize that what truly matters is not individual gain, but the help and compassion we offer to others, especially in moments of need.



By Stergios Nezis



In *“What, of This Goldfish, Would You Wish?”* by Etgar Keret, the narrative explores the importance of human relationships and the dangers of isolation. Through Sergei, an elderly Russian man living alone in Israel, the story highlights how loneliness can shape decisions and emotional priorities in unexpected ways.

Although Sergei is given a magical goldfish that grants three wishes, he does not use this power for personal gain. Instead, he uses his first two wishes selflessly to help others, showing a sense of empathy and moral responsibility. However, he becomes attached to the goldfish itself, treating it as his only meaningful connection. Out of fear of losing this rare sense of companionship, he hesitates to use his final wish.

When Yonatan, a young filmmaker documenting Sergei’s story, unexpectedly dies during their interaction, the situation reaches a moral turning point. The goldfish urges Sergei to use his last wish to save Yonatan, forcing him to confront the

consequences of his actions and the value of human life over attachment to the magical fish.

In the end, Sergei’s decision leads him to let go of the goldfish. This moment symbolizes his acceptance that real human connection matters more than holding onto an artificial substitute for companionship. Ultimately, the story suggests that while isolation may push people toward fear and withdrawal, true fulfillment comes from engaging with others and embracing relationships beyond one’s solitude.

By Philip Georgiou

Etgar Keret's story "*What, of This Goldfish, Would You Wish?*" explores the harmful effects of isolation and the human need for connection. Through Sergei, a Russian immigrant living alone in Israel, Keret presents a character whose loneliness shapes both his perception of others and his emotional decisions. The magical goldfish, which grants him three wishes, becomes his only companion, highlighting how deeply Sergei depends on even an artificial form of companionship.

Although Sergei is given extraordinary power, he struggles to use it freely. He fears losing the goldfish, especially with his final wish, because doing so would leave him completely alone again. His hesitation reflects not only emotional dependence but also his difficulty engaging with the outside world. This is reinforced by the language barrier he experiences, as his limited Hebrew makes communication with others uncomfortable and distant, further deepening his isolation.

The story takes a tragic turn when Sergei misinterprets Yonatan's actions and accidentally causes his death. Yonatan, a young filmmaker working on a project about revealing people's inner dreams and humanity, ironically never gets the chance to complete his work or show Sergei his intentions. This irony deepens the story's message, as a character dedicated to

understanding others is lost due to misunderstanding and fear.

Ultimately, Keret suggests that isolation and mistrust can distort human judgement and weaken empathy. When individuals shut themselves off from others, they risk losing their ability to understand, connect with, and care for those around them. The story serves as a reminder that compassion and openness are essential to preserving our shared humanity.



By Panagiota Chrysospathi



Etgar Keret's *"What, of This Goldfish, Would You Wish?"* explores the fear of loneliness and the destructive cost of human disconnection. Through Sergei, a man scarred by his past in Russia, the story presents an individual who isolates himself in Jaffa and places his trust only in his magical goldfish, which becomes his sole source of companionship.

When the young filmmaker Yonatan arrives at his door, Sergei's deep fear of intrusion and misunderstanding overwhelms him. His paranoia and anxiety cloud his judgment, leading to a tragic moment in which he impulsively kills the young man. This act is not presented as pure malice, but rather as the result of fear escalating into panic, showing how isolation can distort perception and lead to irreversible consequences.

Even after the tragedy, when the goldfish offers to restore Yonatan's life, Sergei refuses. He is unable to part with his final wish, as doing so would also mean losing the only companion he has left. In this

moment, Keret reveals how powerful loneliness can be: it can make individuals cling to comfort even when it conflicts with morality and responsibility.

By the end of the story, the silence that follows the events becomes symbolic of guilt and emotional emptiness. Keret uses this outcome to warn readers about the effects of fear and isolation, suggesting that they can gradually erode compassion and human connection. Sergei ultimately serves as an example of how solitude can develop into mistrust and paranoia, with devastating consequences not only for the individual but for others as well.

By Nikolas Nikopoulos

Etgar Keret's *"What, of This Goldfish, Would You Wish?"* uses the simple idea of a magical goldfish granting three wishes to explore deeper themes of greed, human connection, and the clash between dreams and reality. The goldfish symbolizes the fleeting nature of desire and the illusion that happiness can come from something outside ourselves. Sergei, a lonely man who lives in a little apartment with the goldfish, clings to the fish not for its magic, but for companionship. When Yoni, a young filmmaker, comes to his door to ask what he'd wish for, Sergei panics, afraid that Yoni will take the goldfish away. His fear of losing it drives him to "take(n) the burner off the stove and hit the boy in the head," (p.14) showing how isolation and mistrust can destroy human connection. Yet, when Sergei uses his final wish to "bring him back to life," (p.30) he chooses empathy over self-preservation. Through this moral dilemma, Keret reveals that our deepest wishes often reflect our need for understanding and love. The story's magical realism blurs the line between fantasy and truth, reminding readers that while desires fade, compassion endures.



Story of an Hour & The Yellow Wallpaper



By Kate Chopin & Charlotte Perkins Gilman

In a time when women were not granted the same rights as men, Victorian Female writers and artists were taking a stand against this unfair society. Two of these authors were Kate Chopin and Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

Our students read a short story from both of these authors and analyzed them in comparison to one another. In "A Story of an Hour," Chopin explores how even a happy marriage in this time period was oppressive to women.

On the other hand, "The Yellow Wallpaper," written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, explores a much darker relationship between a married couple. Students explored how the themes from these stories may or may not still be relevant in today's day and age.

The year is 2026, and even though society has tried to move past gender roles of the previous centuries, societal expectations are still persistent today. Many people believe that in today's world, men and women are equal, but this is far from reality. In my opinion, restrictive societal expectations deeply affect individuals and society not only in the 19th century, but also today.

To begin with, the role of women has long been restricted both socially and legally, contributing to their emotional and social confinement. Although today the legal part has significantly improved in the Western world, social equality has still not been achieved. More specifically, rigid gender expectations restrict women, creating harmful forms of emotional oppression. Society often dictates behavior based on gender. For instance, men are expected to be strong, successful, and emotionally reserved, whereas women are expected to be passive, emotional, and remain within the domestic sphere. This imbalance cultivated a sense of superiority in men and inferiority in women that became deeply ingrained over time.

Moreover, these expectations limit personal freedom and force individuals into roles that may not reflect their true identity. As a result, gender roles still maintain their harmful impact on women's identities.

In addition, it is my firm belief that gender roles cause harm in both men and women by limiting their potential and preventing them from developing their talents or interests. Seeing that society often labels certain careers or behaviors as appropriate for specific genders, individuals may feel discouraged from pursuing what they truly want. For example, social expectations may restrict a man from following a career in the arts or a woman from pursuing a degree in science. This not only restricts personal growth, but also societal growth. Thus, it is clear that gender roles continue to hold people back, proving that their impact is still harmful in today's world.

On the other hand, some may argue that in modern society, individuals are free to reject these roles as their impact is no longer as significant as it once was. However, while it is true that these expectations have been limited, this perspective overlooks the pressure these roles continue to impose and the consequences experienced by those who do not conform to them.

In conclusion, as it is established in both short stories "Story of an Hour" and "The Yellow Wallpaper," through the protagonists' experiences, gender roles continue to harm both individuals and society by reinforcing inequality, limiting personal freedom, and creating damaging expectations. Therefore, challenging and moving beyond traditional gender roles is essential in order to create an inclusive and balanced modern society.

The story "The Yellow Wallpaper" in its entirety is indicative of the patriarchal system found in the 19th century.

According to this system, women and men, due to their different genders, have different roles in society, a clear example of which can be observed in the story. In particular, the narrator is left confined in a big house by her husband, with no responsibilities to uphold whatsoever, forbidden to write, which is her passion, while the only thing she's allowed to do is rest. Her husband, on the other hand, is free to do whatever he wishes, with no boundaries whatsoever, while imposing rules on his mentally ill wife. From this, we can comprehend the domestication of women in the past, while the belief that men are superior is evident. The story comments on these unethical, uneven societal roles by showing how the narrator surpasses these obstacles, defying her husband's commands and expressing herself and her hardships through writing.

In addition, a recurrent theme in the story is the fact that society neglects its women's mental health. The narrator, while facing a mental illness, is constantly told to rest and abstain from any kind of activity, mental or physical. Therefore, it is clear that the patriarchal system, advising her to rest, doesn't care about the difficulties she encounters and treats her mental illness like something purely physical. The narrator, despite the advice she's been given, starts writing again, expressing herself in a way that helps her find herself. She doesn't fully overcome her illness, yet the story combats this neglect by showing that resting limited the narrator, while when she started writing, she helped the woman in the wallpaper, the part of herself that was imprisoned, to escape.

By Orestis Belokas

An important aspect explored in the two short stories “The Yellow Wallpaper” and “The Story of an Hour” is the effect of imposed gender roles on individuals. One might assume that, given the period in which stories were written, this issue has become obsolete; that humanity with all its progress, has managed to mitigate and overcome it. However, this couldn’t be further from the truth. In my opinion, at least, the detrimental ramifications of imposed gender roles are still harming a handful of people, especially women.

It is no secret that women in Arabic and other developing countries are suffering from discrimination and marginalization. The most troubling fact, though, is that this deterioration of society is strongly supported and defended by the state and official institutions. Women are treated as inferior, having no access to basic amenities and freedoms, like the freedom of speech and expression. Their lives are dictated by men, even in the little details, stripping them of their creativity and their right to think freely. This assertion of male dominance, backed by the law, has been deeply rooted in the minds of Arabs, who accept it as a norm and not as problematic behavior. This has led to many cases of women suffering mentally due to the suppression of their beliefs and choices.

Moreover, their mental problems are deliberately not discussed. There is no institutional or societal aid towards women, due to the role and standards that a prejudiced society led by an extremist or theocratic government has developed. They are treated as meager assets and nothing more; their only purpose is serving their husband and the men around them.

However, we would be mistaken to believe that this is a problem existing only in the developing countries of this world. A lot of Western societies, despite their progress in both technologies and humanities, are still suffering from discriminatory gender roles. Thus, it can be pinpointed in various aspects of our everyday lives, including the job sector: women are significantly treated as inferior to their male counterparts when it comes to positions of authority and power, both in the corporation and the government. Moreover, prejudiced beliefs, pointed toward both genders, remain prevalent to this day. This expectation of women being mothers, taking care of their children, while men are the breadwinners, occupations like working in construction, “dedicated only to men,” and others like babysitting, “dedicated to women,” stereotypical opinions about both genders, and many more are still creating discriminatory beliefs, deeply embedded into society.

By Orestis Belokas

The effects of these beliefs continue to be detrimental among both genders, especially when it comes to their psychological health. Leading to fear of diverging from the masses and choosing freely, they are killing creativity and freedom, while also causing devastation to people who aim to thrive in a field dominated by the opposite gender.

Furthermore, trapped in predetermined roles, both male and female members within a society are deemed unable to pursue their passions. For example, women are still expected to care for their newborn children, often missing out on career development opportunities, and, vice versa, men often drift apart from their children due to society expecting them to be continuously occupied. This leads to oppression, and many times, unfulfilled dreams, killed by obsolete societal norms.

In conclusion, as evident in both stories, oppressive and limiting social norms are detrimental to the health and lives of people. "The Yellow Wallpaper" depicts the mental deterioration of an oppressed woman in the 19th century, the same way that statistics shed light on the psychological issues of both women and men trapped within societal norms. The message is clear: throughout history, expectations dedicated to genders pose a threat to the freedom of expression and choice. Expecting people with vastly different personalities to remain uniform in specific roles is devastating to society as a whole and its members individually.

By Iro Stamoulis

If women today can vote, work, and lead, why do echoes of the restrictive expectations placed on women in the 19th century still shape their lives today? It is a well-known fact that female oppression and rigid gender roles affected 19th-century societies in deep and lasting ways, influencing family life, the economy, politics, and culture in general. The dominant messages conveyed in the short stories “Story of an Hour” and “The Yellow Wallpaper” reinforce these negative ramifications of gender roles on individuals.

On the one hand, Kate Chopin in “The Story of an Hour” presents the story of Louise Mallard, who briefly experiences a profound sense of freedom after believing her husband has died, in order to reveal how marriage functions as a structure of control for women that limits their autonomy. On the other hand, Charlotte Perkins Gilman in “The Yellow Wallpaper” describes a character who succumbs to complete paranoia because of the yellow wallpaper which decorates her new room and eventually suffers from a complete mental breakdown after imagining that she sees in the pattern other women who are trying to escape.

These two stories provide a perfect example of the confining gender roles imposed on women during the 19th century. It is my firm belief that these gender roles were extremely harmful to both individuals and society in terms of education, economic dependence, and political roles in the 19th century. Unfortunately, as far as I am concerned, similar pressures play a prominent role in today’s society, which leads men and women to be affected by societal expectations.

To begin with, it has been proven throughout history that the existence of gender norms during the 19th century had catastrophic effects on women. Generally, there was a prominent ideology that categorized men and women in “separate spheres”. Society divided life into public for men and private and domestic for women. This separation restricted women to their homes, limited their self-esteem, and excluded them from politics and decision-making. This becomes evident through “The Yellow Wallpaper,” in which the narrator stayed isolated in her new home, while her husband, John, was supposed to provide for her. Another reason that gender roles were harmful is that girls’ education was either nonexistent or very limited. Women’s education focused on domestic skills, like cooking and cleaning, instead of academic subjects, thus reducing possible opportunities for career paths as well as their intellectual development.

By Iro Stamoulis

As far as economic independence is concerned, women could solely rely on their fathers and later their husbands, something which reinforced the power dynamics in families and societies. In addition, in view of women's political role during the 19th century, women did not have the right to vote, hold office, express their opinion on political matters, or have an influence on laws that affected their personal lives.

This resulted in the underrepresentation of women in politics as well as the complete disregard for women's fundamental rights, such as freedom of speech. Finally, the prevalence of strict social expectations in the 19th century once again proves how harmful gender roles were to individuals and society. Women were expected to be obedient, modest, focused on their family life, and provide for their husbands. Anyone who overcame these social norms was faced with social criticism or exclusion from society. For example, Louise Mallard's optimistic reaction to the death of her husband was faced with criticism by her sister since the evident display of her profound sense of freedom was unexpected for that time period.

Unfortunately, from my point of view, the restrictive gender roles of the 19th century have not been left behind – they have simply evolved. Although today's society presents itself as more equal, many of the same assumptions about role, behavior, and identity are still prominent. Firstly, there is a distinct difference in the workplace between men and women today. Women, even though they have the same education levels as men, on average earn less than men and are underrepresented in top leadership roles. Generally, women have secondary roles in the workplace while the top spots are occupied and meant for men. It is true that these workplace inequalities stem from career stereotypes that influence children from a young age, categorizing certain careers, like engineering and technology, as “male jobs” and others, like nursing and teaching, as “female jobs.”

These gender stereotypes limit both men's and women's career choices and reinforce an unnecessary division between them. As far as political representation is concerned, though in Greece women gained the right to vote in 1952, they continue to be underrepresented in government leadership, creating a clear parallel to the 19th-century gender roles.

By Iro Stamoulis

Furthermore, not only women but men are affected by the prominence of restrictive gender roles. More specifically, men often experience emotional restriction, since they have to suppress their vulnerability in order to appear more masculine. They can also exhibit risk-taking, life-threatening behavior, since modern culture has associated masculinity with toughness and fearlessness. Therefore, it becomes evident that both men's and women's lives are shaped by gender roles in powerful and restrictive ways.

By and large, restrictive gender expectations have had negative ramifications on both men and women for decades. Overall, modern societies are far more equal than those in the 19th century, but many gender inequalities are rooted in older gender norms. We must recognize this continuity in the existence of gender stereotypes in order to take a step towards changing it. We must all work collectively so as to live in a united and peaceful environment!

By Riana Metallinou

The woman in the story “The Yellow Wallpaper” is struggling with a serious mental illness, which her husband treats with the “resting cure”. In other words, he doesn’t allow her to leave the house, see other people, or express herself through her writing.

Today, this treatment doesn’t seem effective, even to people who haven’t studied medicine, but in the 19th century, it was what they deemed best. The narrator’s husband, a physician, imposes these constraints on his wife because he is under the impression that she is improving, when in fact, her condition seems to be deteriorating. This sheds light on the neglect of women’s mental health during that time.

It is evident that women’s physical as well as mental health were two fields of medicine yet to be explored. This is possibly due to women’s place in the 19th century, as they were not regarded as equals, let alone as independent beings who were capable of taking care of themselves and making informed decisions.

Moreover, it is well known that some time ago, mental health patients were treated as dangerous, contagious beasts, suffering “treatments” that today would be seen as a form of mental and physical torture. All this highlights the neglect of women’s mental health during the 19th century.

Throughout the woman’s narration, we can recognize several instances of her opinion on her treatment being disregarded and her judgment being undermined by her husband, on the grounds that her thoughts were clouded by her condition. The woman has no choice but to accept her husband’s constraints and trust that he knows what is best for her.

If she loses the faith she has in him, she will lose all hope. The evils of the “resting cure” become evident as the narrator’s condition becomes increasingly severe. The woman of the story stands for all women of the 19th century who might resonate with her.

By Vassiliki Karakiza-Michou

The story “The Yellow Wallpaper” acts as a commentary on the patriarchal treatment of women’s mental health. Specifically, we see a woman, the unnamed protagonist, facing a severe mental illness that has been provoked by post-partum depression. That illness, however, becomes even more critical and dangerous as the narrative unfolds, mainly because of the husband’s neglect and belittlement of the woman’s mental state.

The husband’s behavior acts as a reflection of the beliefs towards women in general. Women’s health, let alone their mental health, was considered completely unimportant and not worthy of studying by male doctors. The husband, thus, objectifies his wife. He sees her as a “submissive creature” that only exists to “serve” her husband, fulfill his needs, and requests. She is not seen as a person with feelings, issues, mental or physical, and therefore she is and feels neglected.

Her deteriorated mental status is dismissed, not so much because the husband, John, does not care, but mainly because he reproduces the patriarchal systems of the time, which put mental health and women at the bottom of their priorities. The narrator of this story, unfortunately, combines both of those, as she is a female who is severely struggling with a mental condition. She cannot escape the life of ongoing neglect and disregard, a life of being trapped inside her brain, where no one can help her, not others and not herself.

She is forced to live as the victim of the harsh and unfair stereotypes of the 19th century that encourage husbands and all men to impose mental constraints on the wife and completely dismiss and disregard mental problems, no matter how severe they get. That, I believe, does not come from lack of caring but from complete ignorance.

In the “Story of an Hour”, Kate Chopin explores the forbidden joy of independence through the main character’s emotional shifts, and society’s role and reaction to her behavior. The story, although published in the 19th century, challenges the stereotype and belief that marriage is a source of joy and security for the women of the time, as Louise experiences emotional suppression by her husband, and feels relieved when the news of his death arrives.

At first, Louise’s reaction to the news of her husband’s death conforms with the stereotypes that are engraved in people’s minds. She responds with grief and deep sadness, which is the only reaction that society can accept. However, as the story unfolds, these emotions start to pass and are replaced by an emotional state of acceptance and relief. Her opening the window and feeling the fresh air is an image that Chopin uses to reflect Louise’s inner world, which feels renewed as she realizes that her life belongs to no other but her. This state is also highlighted by her whispering, “free, free, free,” showing that the authenticity of her joy is mainly caused by her realization that she is now independent and not because of her husband’s death.

This kind of happiness is to be considered forbidden, as it does not align with the stereotypes of the time that marriage is necessary for women, as it is a source of satisfaction and security. People of the time were unable to understand or even consider that marriage for a woman can deprive them of their autonomy and independence. And it is for that reason that she keeps her joy hidden, as she knows that it would be morally misunderstood and would be viewed as unacceptable, selfish, and unnatural.

The tragic ending highlights the unforbidden joy and how that is reflected not only on women, but on society as well. The gravity of independence is such that the sudden loss of it is unbearable and can even result in physical paralysis and death. Ironically, doctors believe that she dies of joy, as they are unable (and unwilling) to recognize women’s natural desire for independence. In reality, her death shows how important autonomy is for women, and how harsh and unfair the way that people treat them is.

Therefore, the “Story of an Hour” treats the joy of independence as important and necessary for a woman, but at the same time, dangerous, as the restrictive society of the time was not ready to accept it. In this case, women are the victims of the situation, as they are forced to live through society’s constraints even at the cost of their life.

By Emmeleia Oikonomopoulou and Aphrodite Panagiotopoulou

... When at last I had escaped to my room, closing the door against their anxious whispers, I felt the truth unfold within me like the first breath of spring. The news of my husband's death, delivered with such grave solemnity, had struck me with grief, but here, alone, that grief gave way to something I scarcely dared to name. I sank into the armchair by the open window, and the air that drifted in seemed laden with promise. It was not that I rejoiced in his passing, for I had known kindness in him; rather, I rejoiced in myself.

A sudden clarity possessed me: there would be no will but my own to govern my days. The years ahead, which once appeared as a long procession of dutiful hours, now shimmered with possibility. I felt my heart quicken, not with sorrow, but with a fierce and trembling exultation. In that quiet chamber, I whispered the word "free" as though it were a sacred prayer, and in doing so, I felt a happiness so pure and intoxicating that it frightened me even as I embraced it ...

By Elisabeth Aza, Ellie Stratigou, Maira Kossida

Louise Mallard, still shaking from the initial wave of grief, sat by herself in her room and gazed out the open window. The scent of rain and fresh starts permeated the air outside, making it feel alive with the breath of spring. She had initially pressed her hands together as if she could stop the weird sensation from rising inside of her. However, it reappeared, softly but persistently, like a murmur she was powerless to stop. Before she even realised she believed them, the words "free, free, free," began to form in her head. She had the impression that the world was opening up in front of her as she observed the blue patches of sky emerging between the floating clouds. She had lived kindly and obediently next to her husband for years, but she was always silently burdened by someone else's will.

As the sparrows chirped outside her window, she thought of the long years that would be hers alone. Her heart began to race, but not out of fear but rather out of a growing sense of potential. The window in front of her appeared more like a doorway to a life she had never let herself imagine than a frame. She could not deny the intense relief coursing through her soul, even though she knew that others would label her feelings as selfish. For the first time, Louise Mallard gave herself permission to think that her life—her days, her decisions, even her breath—might at last be her own...

Dear Brently,

I know that you will never read this, so I am not sure why I am writing to you. But I feel the pressing need to express my feelings. About an hour ago, I was informed by your dear friend, Richard, of your tragic death in the railroad disaster. At first, I was completely shocked. I couldn't fathom the idea that the person with whom I have spent the majority of my life was gone.

At a complete loss for words, I left behind Josephine and Richards and went to our room alone in order to process what had happened. As you know, our room window has a lovely view, but it was only today that I realized the magic that it hides. For the first time, I saw the scenic blue skies, heard the birds singing, and smelled the fresh air. For the first time, I appreciated the beauty of nature so close to our home. I saw myself in those birds. I felt like a bird released from a long-locked cage. For the first time, I felt free.

The truth is that I am not sure I have ever loved you. Not in the passionate, all-consuming way that is described in books where love isn't rushed by fear or interrupted by silence. Our love was mechanical, predefined by a society where feelings are a burden. Maybe that's why now that you're gone, I feel like a weight that I didn't know I was carrying has disappeared. Even though what we had wasn't real, even though it brought me down in every possible way, I can't bring myself to hate you.

In my mind, we were both trapped, even if my cage was tighter. Maybe another life, in another society where I would be just Louise, and you would be just Brently, things would have been different. But they weren't, and I had to live with that, but now I can finally leave all this behind and start focusing on finding my true self hiding under all these layers.

For that brief, fragile hour, I understood something that both frightened and exhilarated me: that my life could belong wholly to me. I imagined mornings where I would rise without measuring my thoughts against another's will, evenings where silence would be a comfort instead of a restraint. I saw years unfolding, not as duties to be fulfilled, but as days waiting to be shaped by my own desires. It was not your absence alone that stirred me, but the sudden presence of myself—my wants, my voice, my breath. In that revelation, I felt both the sorrow of what was and the daring hope of what might have been.

And so, whether this letter remains folded away or fades with the passing of this day, I needed to confess this truth at least once in my life. I grieve for what we were told to be, and I honor the quiet awakening I felt when I believed I stood alone in the world. If there is any forgiveness to be asked, it is not for my fleeting joy, but for never having had the courage to seek it sooner. Farewell, Brently—may we both finally rest free of the lives that confined us.

Yours truly, Louise

"Free." The word trembles on my lips like leaves trembling on an autumn tree, reluctantly falling to the ground. The air feels lighter, sweeter, like a wave washing away all the nightmares of the past. Is it wicked to feel happy? Happy in a time when I'm supposed to be distraught? Happy when everyone grieves for a wife who has just lost her husband?

As I place my hand on my chest, I feel my heart beating faster and faster. The beat of life! But who mourns Louise? Who grieves for the woman who locked her dreams in an eternal drawer for a husband who never knew they existed?

Who weeps for the quiet screams and wishes hidden behind polite smiles and lady-like composure? They mourn a wife- faithful, gentle, and devoted.

But did anyone mourn the self I buried year after year? In loving him, I vanished. My feelings were oppressed, hidden in the depths of my existence. Now, in this terribly beautiful hour, I feel myself returning. Now, like a phoenix, I shall rise again. For the first time, I belong, only to myself, I belong only to Louise.



By Nafsika Tsarpalis-Pseiridis

Dear Diary,

It is unusual for me to write, but what I am about to tell you is something that changed my life completely in just one hour.

When we are young, we learn by adapting to our environment and copying adult behaviours. Most times, we take certain things (such as social norms) for granted and accept them as they are. After all, we are only children; we haven't learned to think critically yet. When we grow a bit older and become teenagers, some of those things we reject, as we have experienced life for a longer time and are mentally mature enough to think critically. Still, some things we take for granted and accept them as they are. After all, we are still growing and experiencing life. When we become adults, we reject again some of our previous knowledge or beliefs about life and society, this time all that are false or don't help us live a better life, the ones we might deem ludicrous. That is what I believed until an hour ago.

About an hour ago, I was faced with the news of my husband's death. I was sad, grief-stricken, just like any woman would be. I went to my room and sat in my armchair facing my grief. Before I had a chance to think about the person I'd lost, my mind had presented me with the life I'd gained.

I know that for any woman, her husband is the most precious person in her life, the one who brings food on the table, the one who works so that she can live comfortably - the person whom she is thankful for. That is also what I thought, before I had the chance to think about the alternative. All the things women sacrifice when getting married, all the things they gain when they no longer have a husband.

Independence, autonomy, and sovereignty. The very ideas this country was built on. I never once thought how women's lives aren't built upon these, but upon dependence and inferiority. I stared out the open window into the vast abyss of possibilities. I am free. I can do whatever I want, without having to conform to another person's opinions or society's opinions, because my opinion is the only one that matters now. I don't know what I will do yet, but a change was much needed in my life. In fact, change is a necessity in everyone's life. The only thing worse than your life changing is your life not changing, and being static and predictable. Life is unpredictable and has so much potential. I wish more women would understand. Maybe I was wrong. We reject many beliefs and views when we become adults. I guess it is part of maturing. However, we don't reject the fact that society does not define what we do with our lives. After all, we are just humans; of course, we trust the social norm; it is normalized for a reason, or maybe not.

By Melina Kontaxi and Alexandra Kordelidou

Suddenly, she began to picture the years ahead of her, the years that would belong to her and only her. No oppression, no guidance, no dominance. She would lead a life of her own, free to follow her own volition, her own desires. Tomorrow, the sun would rise just as the endless possibilities for her new life would open before her. She would wake up not as “Brently Mallard’s wife” but as “Louise”, an independent woman with control over her life and dreams ready to be pursued.

For the first time in her life, she was not burdened by expectations but driven by the need to discover life and what it could mean for her. Her heart, once weighed down by silent acceptance and empty of real meaning, now beat with an exhilarating sense of freedom. And as this realization settled upon her, she felt as though the world outside her window had grown larger, brighter, and filled with opportunities she had never even imagined. And in that quiet moment, she began to feel that the future held endless possibilities waiting just for her.

By Emmelia Fine

"How beautiful is the sky! I see such wonder in it! All these years, my eyes have been closed. This window has been shut. Now I am gazing through this window, and I realize the meaning of freedom in life. There are so many things that I could have done if I were given the chance... Now I must seize the moment, the day! My life belongs to me! I am standing here listening to a song someone is singing. I feel like I want to sing too! Now that the window is open for the first time, I breathe and feel the smell of rain, I see nature in its colors, and I'm sure it's my turn to "live"! "



By Athan Gougoulidis

When the doctors came, they said she had died of heart disease—the joy that kills.

Mr. Brently Mallard was still in a state of shock that evening as he climbed the stairs and opened the door of his wife's bedroom. He saw her armchair in front of the open window as darkness began to settle outside. A chilly breeze came into the room, and he shivered as he shut the window. He sat down like a weight on the armchair in the same spot his wife had always sat. It was strange, but he felt like she was hugging him in that big armchair with its flowery pattern. Just then, he began to cry for the first time since his wife died right in front of him.

The shock had lasted a few hours, and now it had finally hit him. His wife was gone. And how sad it was that she died because she was so happy to see him. So happy to know that he was not dead but alive. Mr. Brently Mallard sobbed. His whole body shook from the devastation. He realized there would be no one to greet him anymore. No warm plate of food and slippers at the door. Mr. Brently Mallard realized he would be completely alone in the world. As the wind picked up, the tree buds began to fall one by one onto the grass.

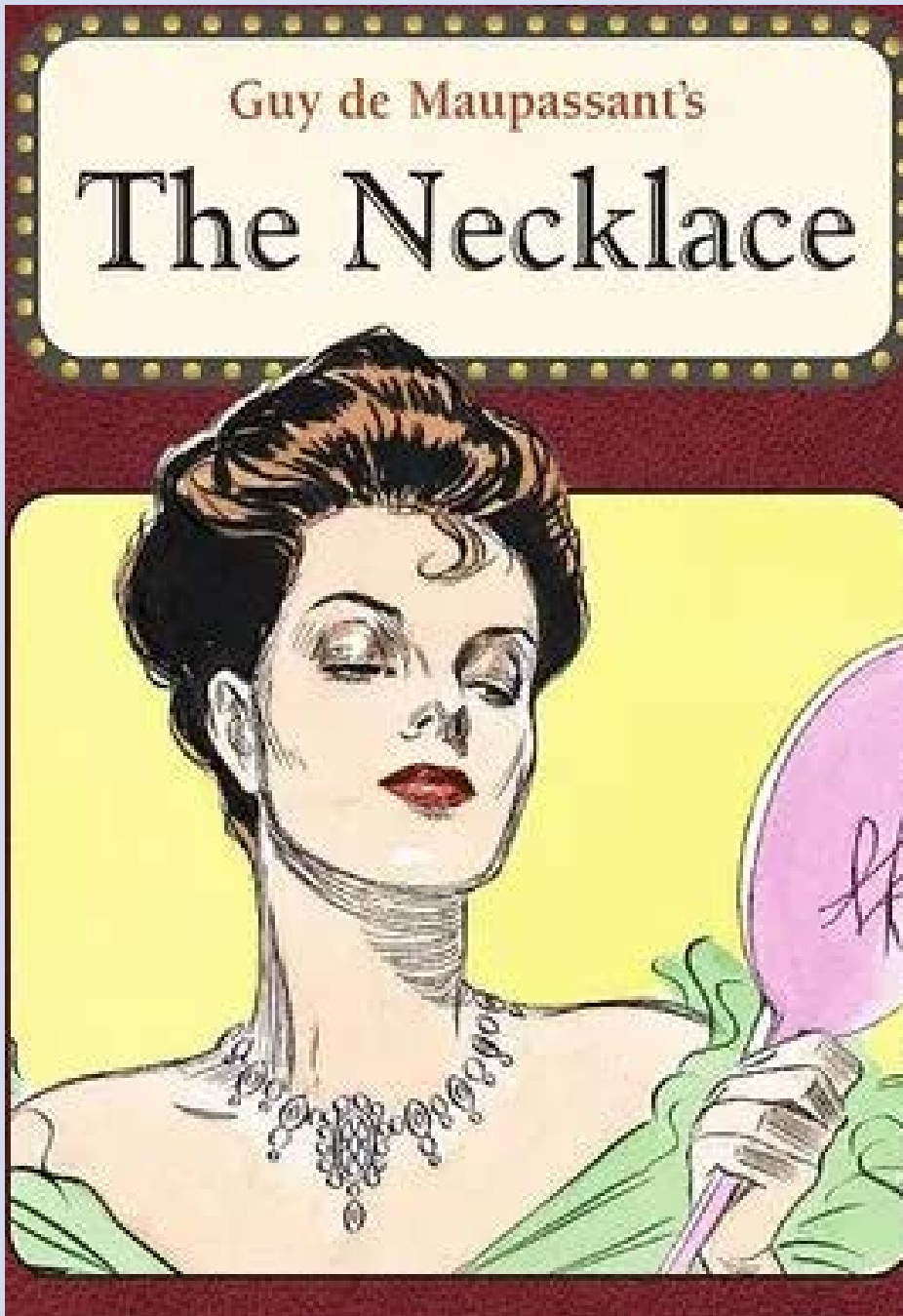
By Marina Souniadi

Dear Brently,

As of writing this letter, you are forever gone and never will be able to read it, but alas, there are some things that can't be left unsaid. In all our many years of marriage, I know you have been kind to me, which is more than most women hope to have in a marriage. I also know that you have only ever felt love for me. I loved you, too, sometimes. For those reasons, I will weep and cry with true sincerity when I have to see your body in a coffin...If only you knew how relieved I feel right this moment. Do you know, Brently, that I no longer have anyone to live for? While that may look like a sorrowful statement, to me it is quite the opposite.

For there is no greater reassurance than knowing I will not again be required to limit myself just for the chance to live in your world. I will not have to be thought of as someone in need of isolating protection, acting out a wife's never-ending charade, wearing a mask of perfection. These are such bitter thoughts, but I can no longer ignore the truth every woman knows, that to be married is to be owned, and there is nothing respectable or autonomous in that, no matter how lenient or loving the owner may be. So now, it is time I started living for myself.

The Bet & The Necklace



**By Anton Chekhov
& Guy De
Maupassant**

In both short stories, accessing and attaining wealth take center stage as characters try to find purpose and meaning in material possessions.

A luxurious house, extravagant material possessions, travelling the world, and surrounding yourself with people of similar social status to you: this is a life most people dream of nowadays. But this is not only a reality of today's society. As it is evident in both short stories, "The Bet" by Anton Chekhov and "The Necklace" by Guy De Maupassant, affluence has always been a big motivator that dictated many people's lives and often led them to face detrimental repercussions. Society, both today and at the time the stories take place, deems being financially comfortable of utmost importance, hence pushing everyone to their limits in order to achieve exactly this.

In "The Bet", the young lawyer accepts the bet placed by the banker, as a way he believes will have him acquire enormous wealth easily. He is willing to give up his freedom and youth, with the promise that years later he will have enough money that will make his sacrifice seem worth it. What are 15 years of total imprisonment in front of the luxurious life that awaits him, along with his freedom? Giving up his self-respect for money is the obvious choice for him, one probably caused by the high pressure that was put on him by the high society he was acquainted with. This exact choice was the one that also almost led him to his murder, since the banker no longer had the money to pay him off. The choice he thought would be the one to take him out of his misery was the

exact one that almost led to his own complete downfall and tragic ending.

In "The Necklace", Mathilde Loisel was pressured to believe that the desired standard, the one that society has imposed as such, is wealth. She believes that she should have that due to her beauty and is immensely disappointed by her state of life. This exact obsession is the one that leads to her own self-destruction, ending up poorer than she was in the beginning, due to her choices dictated by her material lust. This pressure was imposed on her not only by society but also by her friend, who was quite rich, and it was obvious Mathilde was jealous of her.

In both short stories, the characters learn their lesson due to the ramifications they face in the pursuit of wealth and artificial happiness, giving a didactic tone to the stories. The themes emerging are especially relevant today, with social media and influencers. Celebrity culture is influencing the general public to believe that their own lives are ideal and ones to strive for, completely overlooking how they might affect the people they are influencing. An important thing to remember is that those people only show the luxurious parts of their lives, leaving out purposefully the "ugly" parts that don't benefit the image they are desperately trying to promote.

DIAMONDS

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Creative Work

Ranging from hand-drawn to computer-created, the displayed pieces are brilliant pieces of art.



Art work by Konstantina Bazaïou



Reinvention



Reinvention is not a sudden burst of change, but a quiet whisper calling us to look deeply within. It is the moment we stand before the fragments of our old identity and realize that the past can no longer hold us. This process requires a gentle, almost sacred bravery: the courage to say goodbye to what was familiar and embrace the empty space of uncertainty. In the silence of this transition, we rediscover who we are; not by changing our essence, but by unearthing the truth we always carried inside.

This following series of essays serves as an internal mirror and a meditation on the journey of human transformation. Through these words, we explore the invisible thresholds, the quiet losses, and the slow, steady rebirths that shape our existence.

By Andreas Kossyvakis

The reinvention of oneself is a pursuit many dream about, yet few accomplish. Reinventing ourselves is indeed possible, and so is escaping the past that hangs above our shoulders. However, this requires major changes in our moral compass and the values we hold dear. Everyone's past involves difficulties, hardships of different kinds, possibly traumatic events altering the way we think or act. It is the way we responded to the difficulties and resolved them that helped us escape the challenges we faced. The way to respond to an unsolvable problem is to change the way you think and approach it in different ways. This is a process that requires searching for our inner world and the values we follow and embrace in order to find the ones that make the best version of ourselves. To cure a life-threatening illness or injury for example, one needs medicine and therapy, but to get rid of it and surpass it, one needs to redefine the way they look at life and the extent to which they cherish it. We can also use a criminal as an example. It is easy to stop being one, yet to come to peace with it is a process that requires much thought. In order to stop hurting others, this person must learn how to help them and find the kindness and grace that allows them to do so. Again, this requires redefining their moral compass, redefining what they consider right and wrong, and getting rid of the elements of themselves that drove them towards committing crimes. To conclude, the reinvention of oneself is a lengthy yet feasible pursuit, on the condition that the person is willing to change their values, becoming not a different individual but an improved version of themselves.

Peace



Peace is the fragile soil upon which every human hope, dream, and future is built. It is not a distant, utopian luxury, but the very heartbeat of our survival. In a world deeply wounded by conflict, division, and fear, the cry for peace is a collective plea for dignity and safety. Every child deserves to grow up looking at the sky for stars, not for missiles. When we lose peace, we do not just lose stability; we lose our shared humanity.

The following series of essays constitute a journey into the heart of what connects us all. By exploring the profound necessity of harmony, these texts serve as an urgent reminder that our survival depends on empathy, love, and the courage to choose dialogue over destruction.

By Marios Kokkotsis

In this modern day, “certain” is a word that has vanished and cannot accurately describe any situation. We live in times where the definition of peace and prosperity have been altered and twisted to assure people that the actions of politicians are lawful. The great Albert Einstein once said, “Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be achieved by understanding.” Therefore, it is our job to build a culture of peace in modern society, because the failure to break the cycle of violence and establish lasting peace inevitably brings back the same oppressive systems.

Peace is born in a period of democracy where people feel free to express their opinion, challenge opposing views, and question their values. True peace requires people to question authority, not blindly working for a corrupt leadership that thrives on conflict. In order to seek peace, one must wholeheartedly believe in it and work at it, because peace is built through courage, empathy, and conscious action rather than force.

Justice is another word closely affiliated with peace. Justice demands objectivity and truthfulness, which are cornerstones of a peaceful society. However, when they are replaced by manipulation and violent rhetoric, chaos erupts and war begins. Peace can never be taken for granted, not even for a single moment, and we should fight to live in a world where democracy and peace overpower totalitarian governments and corruption in the war of power.

The pursuit of absolute power over personal peace destroys the collective well-being. Every person should be encouraged to dive deep into their conscience to see if they truly live in a world of peace. If the answer is yes, people should fight to maintain and even enhance it. Yet, if the answer is no, people will need to take over the fight and work for their peaceful fate.

By Evgenia Terzaki

Peace is a state of harmony, safety, and freedom from violence, conflict, or disturbance. It exists when individuals or communities or nations live together with justice, mutual respect, and cooperation which allows people to feel safe and develop daily. Without peace and mutual respect, the revolution's goal of equality in a peaceful, fair society is replaced by the tyranny of the elite. There are several ways in which people can build a culture of peace in order to preserve human dignity and foster human development. Creating a culture of peace starts with recognizing that every person has value and deserves respect. Treating others equally, regardless of their background, identity, and beliefs strengthens peace and reduces conflict. It creates a society where people feel safe and valued. Education for peace also plays a significant role in building a culture of peace. Education shapes students' attitudes and contributes to the nurture kids have from their parents. Schools and communities teach important values such as tolerance, cooperation, critical thinking, and non-violent resolution. An educated society is better prepared to address social problems constructively.

Another important factor contributing to peace is promoting dialogue and understanding. Misunderstandings and prejudice often lead to disagreements. Open conversations, listening to different perspectives, and practicing empathy can help people understand one another and resolve disagreements peacefully. Moreover, in modern societies social media and generally the internet strongly influence the behavior people adapt to and the beliefs they have. For instance, avoiding hate speech, misinformation, and hostility can help develop a culture where people are well-informed and not filled with hatred.

Peace cannot be achieved by only one person. All of us have to contribute and work on it daily. Lasting peace is built through courage, empathy, and conscious action, rather than force. Start today by promoting human dignity and respect along with understanding and dialogue. Try to educate yourself and raise awareness about it. Use the media carefully and use your critical thinking before posting a picture or article. Keep in mind that what you post might influence people's opinions strongly and shape their perspective. Don't forget that. The necessity of peace is paramount for human survival, economic stability, and social progress which act as the foundation for prosperity rather than merely the absence of war.

By Marina Dambassina

Recently, escalating tensions involving Iran, Israel, and several other nations have once again revealed how quickly international stability can unravel. While these conflicts belong to the present moment, the lesson they convey is timeless, and universal peace is not merely the absence of war, but the essential condition for cooperation, development, and the preservation of human life. Consequently, the new generation is expected to build a culture of peace in modern society in order to preserve human dignity and foster human advancement.

To begin with, true peace requires questioning authority, not blindly working for a corrupt leadership that thrives on conflict. This is a theme further discussed in the novel *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, which offers a compelling, albeit bleak reflection on the necessity of peace by showcasing the catastrophic consequences of its absence. The most effective way to establish peace all over the globe is education. More specifically, younger generations ought to be taught not only the detrimental consequences that war has at a personal and collective level, but also the importance of peace for human advancement and development.

As Spinoza once said, "Peace is not an absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, and justice." Therefore, this virtue can be achieved by taking immediate action at schools, encouraging the establishment of a new way of living, and enforcing actions that support the making of a "peaceful" society.

To this point, education is a way to prevent the absence of peace. In order for a "peaceful" society to exist and prevail, manipulated and violent rhetoric should be replaced with objective truth. The lack of a secure system leads to misinformation and allows oppressors to become the new "masters," creating a segregated class system that reflects the total loss of a peaceful, egalitarian community. Lasting peace is built through courage, empathy, and conscious action rather than force. Consequently, people in modern societies should encourage volunteer work and incorporate it into their everyday lives in order to establish a safe culture of dialogue, empathy, and democratic conscience.

Taking all the above into account, peace is essential for sustainable development, addressing climate crises, and fostering global equity beyond just resolving conflict. Therefore, people ought to take immediate action, actively working on it and believing in it. As Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work for it."

By Olympia Tziampiri

In the modern era, peace is often defined simply as the absence of war. However, true peace is a proactive culture, a set of values, attitudes, and behaviors that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes. To preserve human dignity and foster advancement, we must shift our focus from merely managing conflict to actively cultivating a peaceful society through education, empathy, and systemic justice.

To build a culture of peace, we first need to focus on how we learn and interact with each other. This starts with education that goes beyond textbooks. We must teach young people how to handle disagreements using dialogue and empathy rather than anger. In our digital world, it is easy to only hear people who agree with the ideas a person holds rather than opposing views, which often leads to more division. By making a real effort to understand different perspectives and seeing others as fellow human beings, we create a sense of mutual respect. When we value dialogue over conflict, we protect everyone's dignity and free up our minds to focus on new, creative ideas, instead of fighting.

Moreover, true peace is impossible without fairness and equality in our daily lives. Spinoza once said that "Peace is not an absence of war, it is a state of mind, a disposition for justice." If society ignores the needs of its most vulnerable people, it creates a foundation for future conflict. To move forward as a human race, our legal and economic systems must provide equal opportunities for everyone. When people feel secure in their rights and have a fair chance at a good life, they are much more likely to work toward a stable and peaceful community. Ultimately, a culture of peace is built on the simple idea that everyone deserves to be treated with fairness and respect.

Building a culture of peace is not an unreachable dream but a practical necessity. By prioritizing empathetic education and systemic fairness, we create an environment where human dignity is non-negotiable. Only when we lay down the tools of conflict can we pick up the tools of true advancement, building a future that benefits everyone.

By Zoe Hatzigianni

In today's interconnected world, conflicts, inequality, and political conflict threaten peace. Building a culture of world peace has therefore become one of the most important challenges in modern societies. World peace does not only entail the absence of war. Peace preserves the prosperity and dignity of humans and fosters human advancement. I strongly believe that education and the cultivation of international cooperation are the best ways to promote world peace. After all, as Benjamin Franklin once said, "There never was a good war or a bad peace."

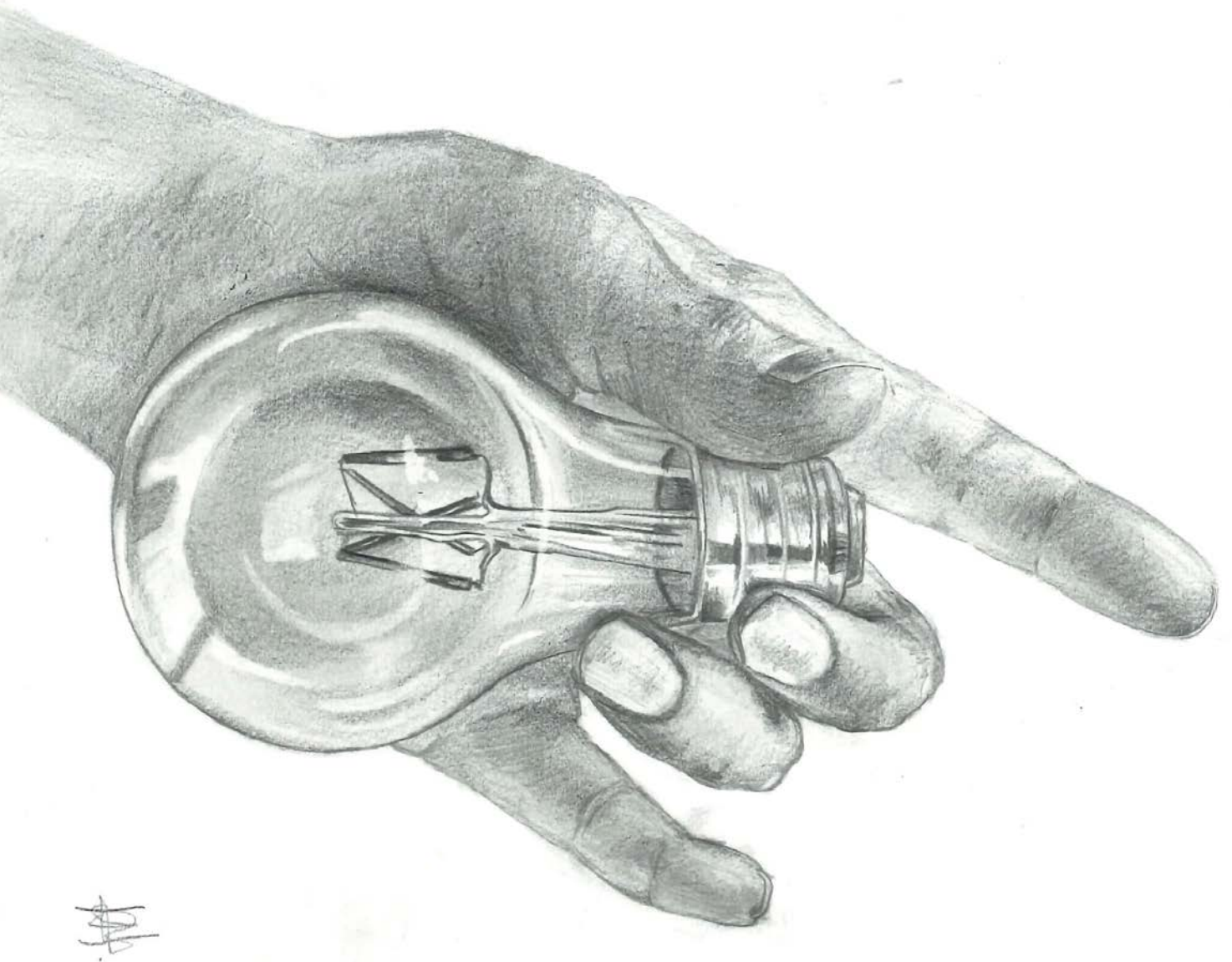
One of the most powerful tools for building world peace is education. Schools and universities should teach values such as tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity. When individuals learn about different cultures, religions, and perspectives, they become less likely to develop prejudice or hatred towards others. Education also encourages critical thinking, allowing people to second-guess propaganda, question authority, and not blindly trust work for a corrupt leadership that thrives on conflict, as well as question discrimination and extremist policies. As a result, societies that prioritize peace education help create citizens who resolve conflict through dialogue rather than violence.

World peace also requires cooperation between governments, organizations, and communities across the globe. International institutions and agreements can help countries have sustainable economic development and address global challenges such as climate change, poverty, and migration, which often contribute to conflict.

Additionally, diplomatic dialogue and peaceful negotiation should always be prioritized over military confrontation. When nations work together to solve problems, they promote stability and create conditions that allow human societies to progress and innovate.

In conclusion, building a culture of world peace is essential for protecting human dignity and supporting the advancement of humanity. Education that advocates for peace and international cooperation plays a crucial role in achieving this goal. Although creating lasting peace is a complex and ongoing process, individuals and societies must commit to these values in order to build a more harmonious and prosperous world for future generations. After all, as Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal."

Poetry



Some voices are meant to be heard more clearly when the name behind them is left unspoken. In this issue, we are honored to feature a collection of poems by a student who chooses to remain anonymous, signing their work simply as M.S.

In a world that often places emphasis on recognition and identity, M.S. reminds us that expression does not always need a face attached to it to be powerful. Their writing speaks with honesty, vulnerability, and depth, qualities that stand firmly on their own, without the need for further introduction.

By choosing anonymity, M.S. shifts the focus away from the writer and fully toward the words themselves. It is an invitation to the reader: to listen more carefully, to feel more deeply, and to connect with the emotions in the poems without the influence of name, reputation, or assumption.

We respect and appreciate this choice, and we are proud to share their work in this edition of the magazine. In doing so, we celebrate not only the talent of M.S., but also the idea that sometimes the most powerful stories are those that ask to be seen, not the storyteller.

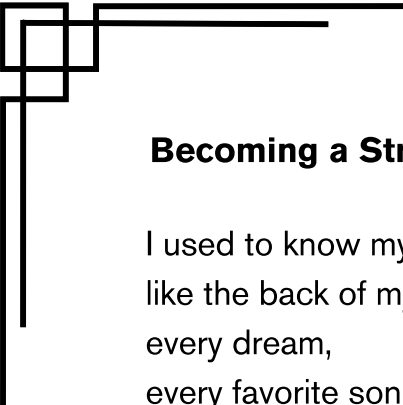
Art work by Konstantina Bazaïou

Who Am I Becoming?

I am made of unfinished sentences,
of names people gave me
before I learned to speak for myself.
A child of questions,
of mirrors that changed their answers
depending on the light.
Some days
I wear confidence like armor,
walking loudly through crowded halls,
laughing as if I have never doubted my worth.
Other days
I fold into silence,
wondering if becoming yourself
is supposed to hurt this much.
But maybe identity
is not a destination.
Maybe it is a thousand small revolutions:
the music we defend,
the dreams we hide,
the scars we stop apologizing for.
And maybe growing up
is simply this—
learning that we are allowed
to become someone new
without betraying who we once were.

Orbit

You entered softly, like the break of dawn,
No thunderstorm, no fireworks above,
Yet somehow every fear I carried on
Began dissolving underneath your love.
You learned the language hidden in my eyes,
The careful pauses stitched between my
speech,
And built a home from all my quiet sighs,
A kind of peace I never thought I'd reach.
The world still spins with chaos every day,
With crowded streets and clocks that move
too fast,
But somehow when you smile, the noise
gives way,
And fleeting moments suddenly can last.
If gravity is what keeps stars aligned,
Then love must be the force that moves the
mind.



Becoming a Stranger

I used to know myself
like the back of my hand—
every dream,
every favorite song,
every little certainty
stitched carefully into who I was.
Now I look in the mirror
and hesitate.
Somewhere between expectations,
deadlines,
and trying to become
what everyone needed me to be,
I misplaced pieces of myself.
Not all at once.
Slowly. Quietly.
Like leaving lights on
in empty rooms
until the whole house
goes dark.
I stopped writing.
Stopped laughing so loudly.
Stopped saying what I really meant
because it was easier
to nod along
than explain who I was becoming.
And the strange thing is—
people still recognized me.
They still called my name
in crowded hallways,
still spoke to me

as if nothing had changed.
But inside,
I felt invisible to myself.
Maybe losing your identity
does not feel like breaking.
Maybe it feels like fading—
until one day
you realize you have become
a version of yourself
built entirely for survival.
Still,
somewhere beneath the noise,
beneath the pressure
and borrowed expectations,
I think the real me remains.
Waiting patiently
to be found again.

Mind on Fire

There are days
when my mind becomes a crowded train
station
at midnight—
thoughts arriving too fast,
too loud,
too impossible to stop.
Everyone says,
“Just relax.”
As if anxiety were a switch.
As if sadness were laziness wearing darker
clothes.
But they do not see
the wars people fight silently
while smiling in school photos.
They do not hear
the exhausting conversation
between a person and their own reflection.
And still—
we wake up.
We show up.
We survive another day
inside our own heads.
That is strength too.
Healing is not always dramatic.
Sometimes it looks like
getting out of bed,
answering a text,
asking for help
instead of pretending you’re invincible.
And maybe hope
is not a bright shining light.
Maybe hope
is just the decision
to stay
one more day
until the darkness finally loosens its grip.

Crownless Kings

Power does not always sit on golden thrones.
Sometimes it hides
inside classrooms,
inside speeches,
inside the hands of those
who decide who is heard
and who is forgotten.
History remembers conquerors,
but rarely the people
who rebuilt the ruins afterward.
A king may command armies,
yet tremble before truth.
A leader may wear medals,
yet fear the voices of the young.
Because real power
is not control.
It is the courage
to remain kind
when cruelty would be easier.
It is using your voice
not to silence others,
but to make space for them.
Empires collapse.
Titles fade.
Statues crack with time.
But the people who change the world
are often the ones
who choose compassion
when no one is watching.

Gatsby presents the
GREAT GATSBY
PARTY

Friday Evening
The Sixteenth of January, Nineteen Twenty
At Six O'Clock

Gatsby's Mansion
West Egg, Long Island
New York

Formal Attire Requested

Kindly Reply
0987 456 74 23



You are Cordially Invited to
GATSBY'S PARTY

Dear Nick,

*It would be my great pleasure
to have you join us*

255 Stret. Street Address

Saturday Evening, June 12th

Nine o'clock

Dress code: Formal



The Flag Burning Debate

Is it treasonous behavior or a respectful political protest?

By Irene Alexopoulou

The national flag of any country is a powerful symbol of its history, struggles, and the resilience of its people. For many citizens, the American flag represents unity, sacrifice, and national pride. As a result, when someone burns the flag, many people consider the act deeply offensive and believe it should be punished.

However, flag burning should remain legal because it is a form of political protest and freedom of expression. In democratic societies, citizens must have the right to criticize their government and express dissatisfaction with its actions. Patriotism cannot be forced upon people; respect for a country should be earned through justice, equality, and responsible leadership.



Furthermore, the act of burning the American flag is protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech. Unless the act directly harms others or incites violence, individuals should not face punishment simply for expressing controversial or unpopular opinions. Restricting this form of protest could silence people who are speaking out against government wrongdoing and discourage open political debate.

Making flag burning illegal could also create a negative image of the government itself. A country that claims to value freedom of speech should not punish symbolic acts of protest simply because they are unpopular or offensive. Defending free expression is especially important when the opinions expressed challenge those in power. In this way, protecting the right to protest, even through acts such as flag burning, demonstrates a true commitment to democratic principles and constitutional rights.

By Anna-Maria Nikolaidi

After reading two court opinions about flag burning, participating in our class debate, and learning more about the issue in general, I believe I can now approach the topic from a more rational and balanced perspective.

First of all, a flag represents a country's history, culture, and identity. It is a symbol that unites people and distinguishes one nation from another. For many citizens, the flag carries deep emotional value and stands for patriotism, sacrifice, and national pride. Therefore, it is understandable why some people consider the burning of a flag offensive or disrespectful.

At the same time, however, I believe that a flag is ultimately a physical object: a piece of fabric carrying symbolic meaning.

Burning it as a form of protest is not necessarily an attack on the people of a country, but rather an expression of disagreement with political decisions, government actions, or social injustices.

Although some argue that a flag should remain separate from politics because it belongs to the nation as a whole, governments are inevitably connected to the image and values of their countries. As a result, burning a flag can symbolically communicate the belief that a nation has failed to uphold its principles.

Because the flag itself is symbolic, the act of burning it is symbolic as well. It functions as a metaphor intended to draw attention to dissatisfaction, injustice, or political wrongdoing.

Symbols cannot truly be destroyed; while the material object may burn, the ideas and values associated with it remain. A flag can always be replaced without losing its meaning or importance.

Overall, I do not believe people should be punished for burning a flag as an act of protest. Instead, society should encourage dialogue and education about why such actions are considered offensive by many and explore more constructive ways of expressing disagreement. In a democratic society, freedom of expression should be protected, even when that expression is controversial or uncomfortable.

By Antony Salmas

The debate over whether people should be allowed to burn the American flag as a form of protest directly challenges one of the most fundamental values of American democracy: freedom of speech. To some people, this issue may appear exaggerated or unimportant, especially if they believe that individual voices cannot truly make a difference. However, without freedom of speech, the very concept of freedom itself begins to disappear.

As we learned through the Supreme Court cases *Texas v. Johnson* (1989) and *United States v. Eichman* (1990), flag burning was ultimately recognized as a form of protected speech under the First Amendment. I personally agree with these decisions. In today's world, many people surrender their rights without considering the long-term consequences that such limitations may create. Freedom of speech must apply to everyone, even when certain opinions anger or offend the majority. If freedom only protects popular ideas, then it is not truly freedom.

Burning a flag is not simply an act of disrespect; it is often intended as a political statement. Through this action, individuals express dissatisfaction, frustration, or opposition to government policies and social issues.

Although many people may find the act offensive, no direct physical harm is caused by it. The First Amendment exists precisely to protect controversial and unpopular forms of expression, ensuring that citizens can voice disagreement without fear of punishment.

I strongly support the Supreme Court's decision to protect flag burning as free speech. Banning such acts could create a dangerous precedent, opening the door to restrictions on many other forms of protest and public expression. Rights and freedoms are rarely lost all at once; they disappear gradually when societies begin limiting uncomfortable or unpopular opinions.

Ironically, the American flag itself symbolizes liberty and freedom. Therefore, protecting the right to protest—even in controversial ways—is ultimately a way of defending the very principles the flag represents. A truly free society must be willing to tolerate forms of expression it does not always agree with.



By Virgil Benakis

After participating in the class debate, listening to both the proposition and the opposition teams on the issue of whether flag burning should be allowed as a form of political protest, and researching the arguments in greater depth, my opinion on the topic has partially changed. Although some of my original views remain the same, I now better understand the complexity of the issue and the validity of both sides of the debate.

To begin with, my main argument still remains that flag burning should be allowed because it does not directly endanger people or place public or private property at serious risk when carried out peacefully. In most cases, it is used as a symbolic form of protest and a way for individuals to express their opinions and dissatisfaction with the government.

For this reason, many people consider it an act protected under the First Amendment and the principle of freedom of speech. Furthermore, protecting symbolic forms of protest also helps safeguard minority voices, since protests often originate from groups whose opinions are not widely accepted by the majority.

However, after exploring the opposing arguments and presenting them during the debate, I began to recognize several valid concerns about allowing flag burning.

Firstly, such acts can sometimes provoke strong emotional reactions that may lead to violence, disorder, or other illegal activities, potentially putting civilians at risk.

In addition, many people believe that burning a national flag is deeply disrespectful because the flag represents the country's history, values, government, and constitution. From this perspective, destroying it may be seen as an attack on national unity and identity. Finally, there are many alternative ways for people to express disagreement and political frustration that may be more constructive and less offensive.

In conclusion, my overall perspective on this controversial issue has evolved through research, debate, and critical evaluation of both sides. While I still support the right to freedom of expression, I now better understand why many people strongly oppose flag burning and view it as harmful or disrespectful. The debate showed me the importance of examining different perspectives before forming a final opinion on complex political and social issues.

By Kirra Christakopoulou

After considering the arguments presented in the two court opinions, as well as the ideas discussed during our class debate regarding flag burning as a form of protest, I have come to the conclusion that such an action should be prohibited.

Firstly, burning a national flag undermines national unity and disrespects the people the flag represents. A flag is far more than a simple object; it symbolizes a nation's identity, history, values, and the sacrifices made by generations of citizens. For many people, it represents collective pride and shared belonging.

As a result, burning a flag does not simply express political disagreement but also deeply offends those who view it as a sacred national symbol. Rather than encouraging constructive political change, such acts often create anger, division, and hostility among citizens.



Furthermore, the value of a national flag is timeless and enduring. It does not represent only a temporary government or a specific group of politicians, but the nation and its people as a whole. Governments change over time, while the flag continues to stand for the country's culture, traditions, and principles.

Therefore, associating the flag solely with the actions of a current administration ignores its broader and more permanent significance. In addition, history has shown that there are many peaceful, respectful, and effective ways to express political dissatisfaction. Influential figures and social movements throughout history have relied on methods such as marches, vigils, boycotts, leafletting, and public campaigns to promote change and raise awareness.

These forms of protest allow people to communicate their opinions strongly without deliberately offending the majority of citizens or attacking national symbols.

Ultimately, the flag remains one of the most sacred symbols of a nation, representing its history, culture, people, and values. For this reason, I believe that burning a flag should not simply be viewed as offensive behavior, but as an act that crosses the boundaries of acceptable protest and should therefore be considered illegal.

By Evelina Michailidi

A country's national flag is not merely a piece of fabric; it is a powerful symbol of unity, sacrifice, and shared identity. For many citizens, it represents the collective struggles and achievements of the nation. While freedom of expression is a cornerstone of democracy, this freedom should not necessarily extend to actions that involve the destruction of national symbols. For this reason, flag burning should not be permitted as a form of political protest.

First of all, flag burning undermines national cohesion. Every society relies on shared symbols that foster a sense of belonging and mutual respect among its citizens. When individuals burn a flag, they do not only express dissent but also risk offending those who view the flag as sacred. Such actions can deepen divisions within society rather than encourage meaningful and constructive dialogue.

Moreover, there are many alternate and more appropriate ways to express political discontent, such as public speeches, peaceful demonstrations, and civic engagement, which do not involve disrespecting national symbols.

In addition, allowing flag burning may erode respect for the sacrifices made by those who have defended the nation's values. The flag often represents liberty, justice, and the individuals who fought, and in many cases died, to preserve them. From this perspective, destroying the flag in protest can be seen as a form of dishonoring that legacy and diminishing its significance.

To conclude, while the right to free speech must always be protected, it should be exercised responsibly and with consideration for its broader social impact. Prohibiting flag burning does not suppress political expression; rather, it upholds respect for a symbol that embodies national unity, history, and collective pride.

By Vaggelis Kourtidis

In my opinion, flag burning should not be permitted, as it disrespects national values, undermines unity, and can negatively affect public order. Almost every nation adopts a flag after gaining independence, which means that national flags are widely viewed as symbols of freedom, sovereignty, and democracy. Burning a flag can therefore be seen as an attack on these shared values, as well as on the moral and cultural beliefs associated with them. For many citizens, the flag represents not only the state itself but also the ideals upon which the nation was founded.

In addition, a country's national flag reflects its values, traditions, history, and collective struggles. Burning it may be interpreted as a sign of disrespect toward those who sacrificed their lives in defense of the country. This can weaken the sense of national pride and shared identity that helps hold societies together.

Finally, flag burning has the potential to provoke strong emotional reactions, including anger and even violence from nationalist groups. This can lead to social unrest, conflict, and further division within communities, rather than constructive political dialogue. In conclusion, a national flag is not simply a piece of fabric; it represents something far greater. For this reason, I believe that burning a country's flag is not merely an act of expression, but one that can be seen as openly disrespecting and undermining the nation itself.

By Maro Kaparounaki

This past August, the American President D. Trump signed an executive order that criminalizes flag burning, stating that “you burn a flag, you get one year in jail.” This decision raises an important constitutional question: should flag burning be protected under the First Amendment, as argued in the Supreme Court case of *Texas v. Johnson*?

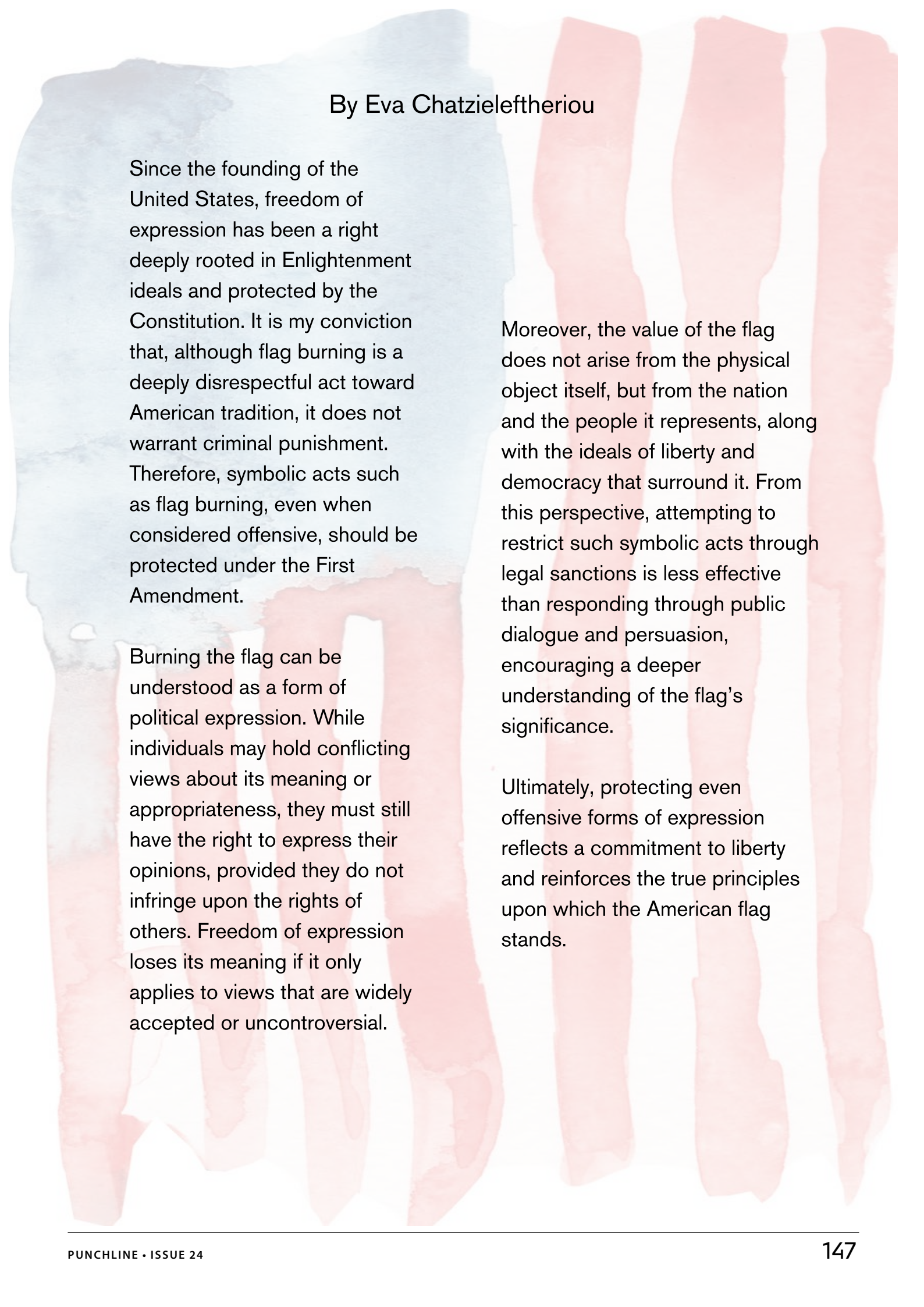
In my opinion, flag burning should remain legal and be protected as a constitutional right. The United States is a democratic country, and freedom of speech and expression are fundamental, inseparable values of its political system. In this context, the ability to engage in political protest is essential to maintaining a healthy and functioning democracy. Allowing dissenting voices to participate in public discourse is crucial, even when their methods or messages are widely unpopular or controversial.

As Justice Brennan argued, a strong nation does not need to punish individuals for expressing opposing viewpoints; instead, it should rely on the power of persuasion to uphold the symbolic meaning of the flag.



Furthermore, protecting controversial forms of expression—such as flag burning—prevents the government from determining which opinions are acceptable and which are not. In doing so, it safeguards citizens against censorship and potential abuse of power.

After all, restricting the expression of political beliefs is more characteristic of authoritarian regimes than democratic societies. A true democracy must be willing to protect even the most unpopular forms of speech in order to preserve freedom for all.



By Eva Chatzieleftheriou

Since the founding of the United States, freedom of expression has been a right deeply rooted in Enlightenment ideals and protected by the Constitution. It is my conviction that, although flag burning is a deeply disrespectful act toward American tradition, it does not warrant criminal punishment. Therefore, symbolic acts such as flag burning, even when considered offensive, should be protected under the First Amendment.

Burning the flag can be understood as a form of political expression. While individuals may hold conflicting views about its meaning or appropriateness, they must still have the right to express their opinions, provided they do not infringe upon the rights of others. Freedom of expression loses its meaning if it only applies to views that are widely accepted or uncontroversial.

Moreover, the value of the flag does not arise from the physical object itself, but from the nation and the people it represents, along with the ideals of liberty and democracy that surround it. From this perspective, attempting to restrict such symbolic acts through legal sanctions is less effective than responding through public dialogue and persuasion, encouraging a deeper understanding of the flag's significance.

Ultimately, protecting even offensive forms of expression reflects a commitment to liberty and reinforces the true principles upon which the American flag stands.

By Maro Fragaki

In our society, flag burning is a controversial issue that generates heated debate. Some argue in favor of incarcerating individuals who burn flags, while others strongly oppose such punishment. It is my firm conviction that flag burning does not constitute a legitimate reason for the incarceration of an individual.

Firstly, incarcerating people for flag burning violates one of the fundamental human rights: the right to freedom of expression, which is protected in most democratic societies, including under the First Amendment in the United States. Punishing individuals for expressing political disagreement through symbolic acts could be viewed as a form of censorship, ultimately weakening democratic processes and discouraging citizens from openly expressing their views.

For example, in 1984, Gregory Lee Johnson burned a U.S. flag in a public protest outside the Republican National Convention in Dallas. Although he was initially convicted, the decision was later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in *Texas v. Johnson* (1989) that flag burning is protected speech under the First Amendment.

Secondly, flag burning is typically a form of protest intended to draw attention to political or social injustices. As such, it does not physically harm or directly endanger another individual. Using incarceration as a response shifts the focus away from the issue being protested and instead places it on the punishment of the individual. The result is often the silencing of legitimate dissent rather than meaningful engagement with the underlying concerns.

Therefore, incarcerating individuals for burning flags undermines the democratic principles of a society by restricting freedom of expression and preventing citizens from engaging in acts of protest through which they can critique government policies and social injustices. Both of these points demonstrate that criminalizing flag burning ultimately weakens, rather than strengthens, democratic values.

AI's Role in Modern Society

It's a topic that seems to be a part of every conversation and new story. How does one use AI to their advantage rather than rely on AI as a crutch? Read on to see one student's persuasive speech on the topic.



Art work by Konnstantina Bazaïou

AI IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

By Victor Tsibre

Dear classmates,

We aren't just watching the future happen. We are living in it.

Every day, we wake up, study, and scroll alongside AI. I stand here as one of you. Someone who acknowledges the magic of AI but is still wary of it.

You must ask, is AI being used to empower us or exploit us?

We've all felt the pull. We've all felt the addictive scrolling.

We've all felt the stolen focus, and even the fading of curiosity, which comes when an algorithm decides what we see. We risk our privacy for short-term convenience, our originality for a shortcut.

When we let AI do all of our thinking, we stop growing.

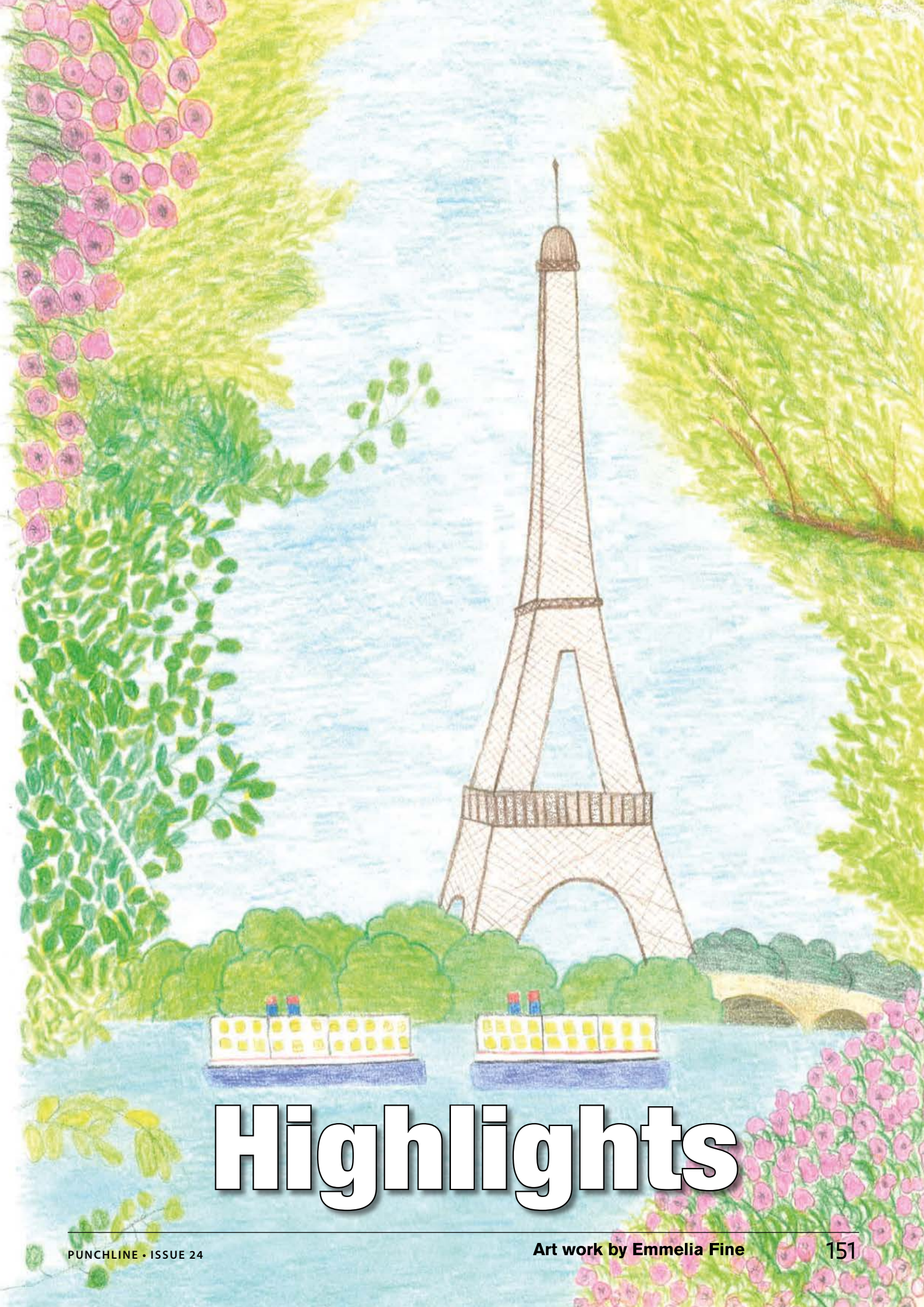
Once we let it harvest our data, we begin to lose ourselves.

This is exactly the reason why we must change. We deserve algorithms that inspire us, not addict us. We deserve privacy that protects us, not tracks us. We deserve an education that teaches us to lead AI, not AI leading us. Regulations should not limit or bring progress to a halt. It is about guiding it towards the right direction.

AI is a tool, and just like any tool, its value depends on the hand that holds it. That very hand belongs to us. The future of AI is not just in the hands of the developers in Silicon Valley. It is also ours. It is in our mind its shapes, as in our

data it uses. There's our word that is solely made unrecognizable. Let's be the generation that did not just use AI. But the one that mastered it, the one that conquered it.

Thank you for your attention.



Highlights



The American Corner





This year's Christmas Bazaar at Athens College was nothing less than a smashing success, and the American Corner in particular was a highlight for many of the Bazaar's visitors. It truly took a team effort from every single enthusiastic student, dedicated teacher, and friendly volunteer to create such a phenomenal effort to support an important cause. Even the youngest students from the elementary school were side by side with high school students, only a few months away from graduation.

The American Corner, a shining beacon of festivity, offered guests a delicious taste of American sweets and delicacies. Visitors were transported to a little corner of the United States, where they had the opportunity to try American classics, such as M&M's and Sour Patch Kids. However, it was more than just a chance to taste delicious sweets or savoury hamburgers. It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the unique nature of our beloved College while supporting an amazing mission. Every treat purchased, every gift wrapped, contributed to a greater cause: raising funds for the school's scholarship program.

The event's thrilling success could not have been possible without the endless support from our community. It was a sight to behold: a joyful atmosphere in service of a higher purpose. The American Corner will be long remembered for its wide smiles, delicious offerings, and its atmosphere of community and inclusion.



Invitation to volunteer at the **US corner** of our Christmas Bazaar



Dear Student,

The Athens College Christmas Bazaar is fast approaching, and we would like to invite you to be part of **the US Corner!** This stand is an essential feature of the Bazaar, showcasing the festive spirit of the Hellenic American Foundation and bringing a touch of authentic American holiday atmosphere.

Student Contributions: You are encouraged to offer festive American food items to support the US Corner. *A list of suggested items is provided on the last page of this letter. While all of you can contribute by bringing food, some will also have the opportunity to offer these items during designated time slots, helping to bring the holiday spirit to life.

This is a wonderful opportunity to contribute to the Bazaar's success and support the Athens College Scholarship Program. The US Corner wouldn't be the same without your help.

Let's come together to make this year's Christmas Bazaar a memorable celebration!

Thank you in advance for your time and support of this initiative.

Your dedication and enthusiasm are truly appreciated.

With Warm Wishes,

Vicky Mavrika,
Interschool Head of English,

On behalf of:

Kastalia Samoilis
 Associate Director
 of Development

Lena Papagelaki-Beracha
 President
 Parents Fund Drive

Epi Douma
 President
 Alumni Parents Fund Drive



 How You Can Help

Volunteer at the US Corner. We encourage all of you to participate. You set the example for others to follow!

List of indicative Items to be offered in support of the Athens College Scholarship Program

-  **Candy canes – peppermint**
-  **Hershey's kisses & chocolates**
-  **M&Ms (various color packages)**
-  **Smarties, Skittles, Twix, Mars, Snickers, Maltesers**
-  **Jelly-beans**
-  **Marshmallows (small & large)**
-  **Reese's Peanut Butter Cups**
-  **Pop rocks**
-  **Twizzlers**
-  **Sour Patch**
-  **Milk Duds**
-  **Nerds**

Please state your availability by **Monday, November 24th**. Have your parents complete your registration. They will receive an email with the details. Also, don't forget to inform your English teachers!

In single packages
 (ideally transparent bags so as to be offered separately)

-  Cookies: sugar, toffee, chocolate chip, oatmeal, peanut butter, and more
-  Cupcakes: plain, chocolate, Blueberry, apple cinnamon, cranberry, gingerbread
-  Muffins: Blueberry, apple cinnamon, cranberry
-  Cake Pops
-  Brownies και Blondies
-  Small pies: apple, pumpkin, pecan
-  Carrot cake
-  Banana bread
-  Rice Krispies treats

Event Dates
Saturday,
December 6
& Sunday,
December 7

Available Time Slots
(on both days)
09:30 - 12:00
12:00 - 15:00
15:00 - 18:00



100 years



1925 - 2025

ATHENS COLLEGE

Thanksgiving Celebration

Psychico College Junior High & High School

“100 Years of Gratitude”

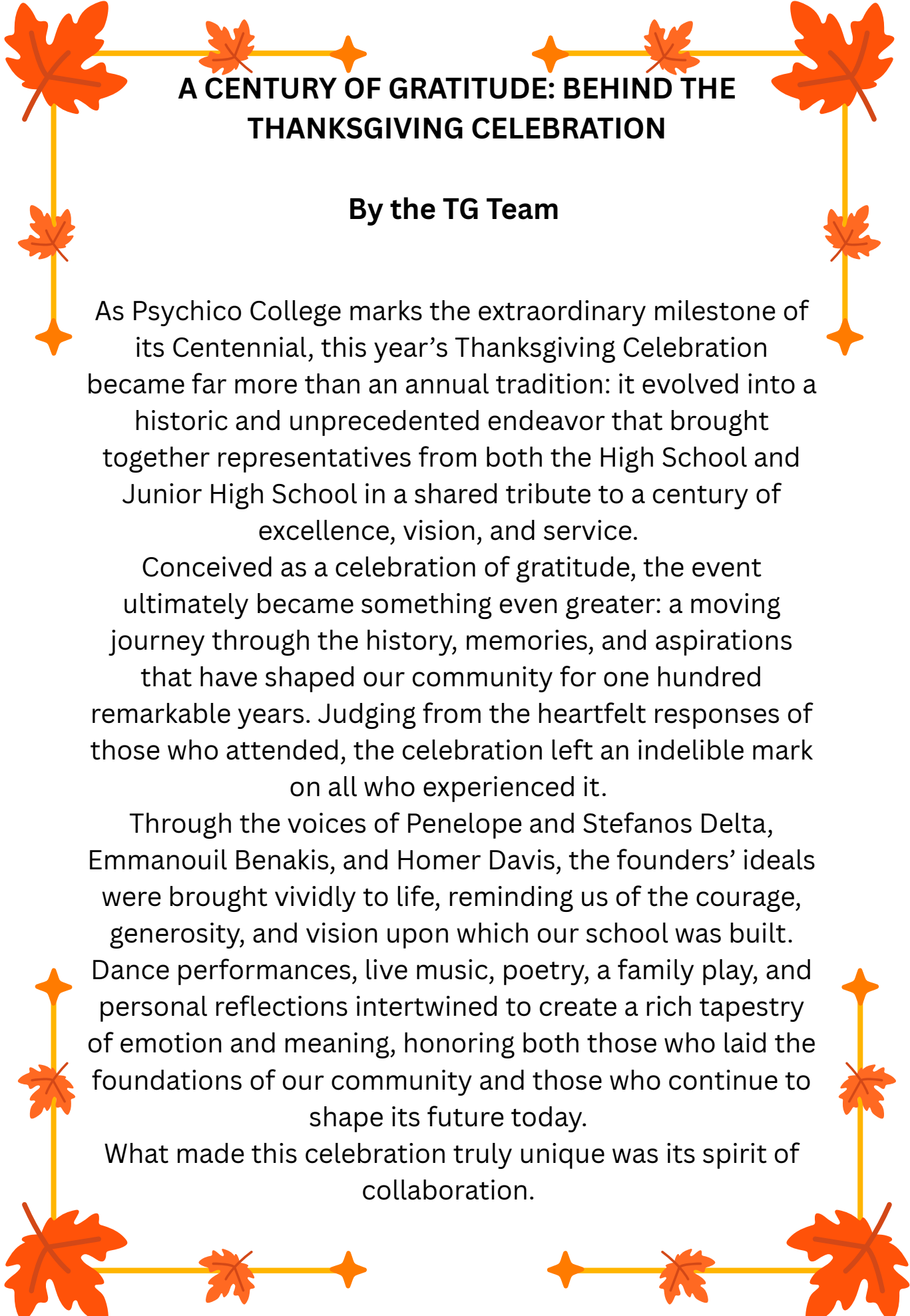




Our ROOTS are not ANCHORS...

...they are FOUNDATIONS





A CENTURY OF GRATITUDE: BEHIND THE THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION

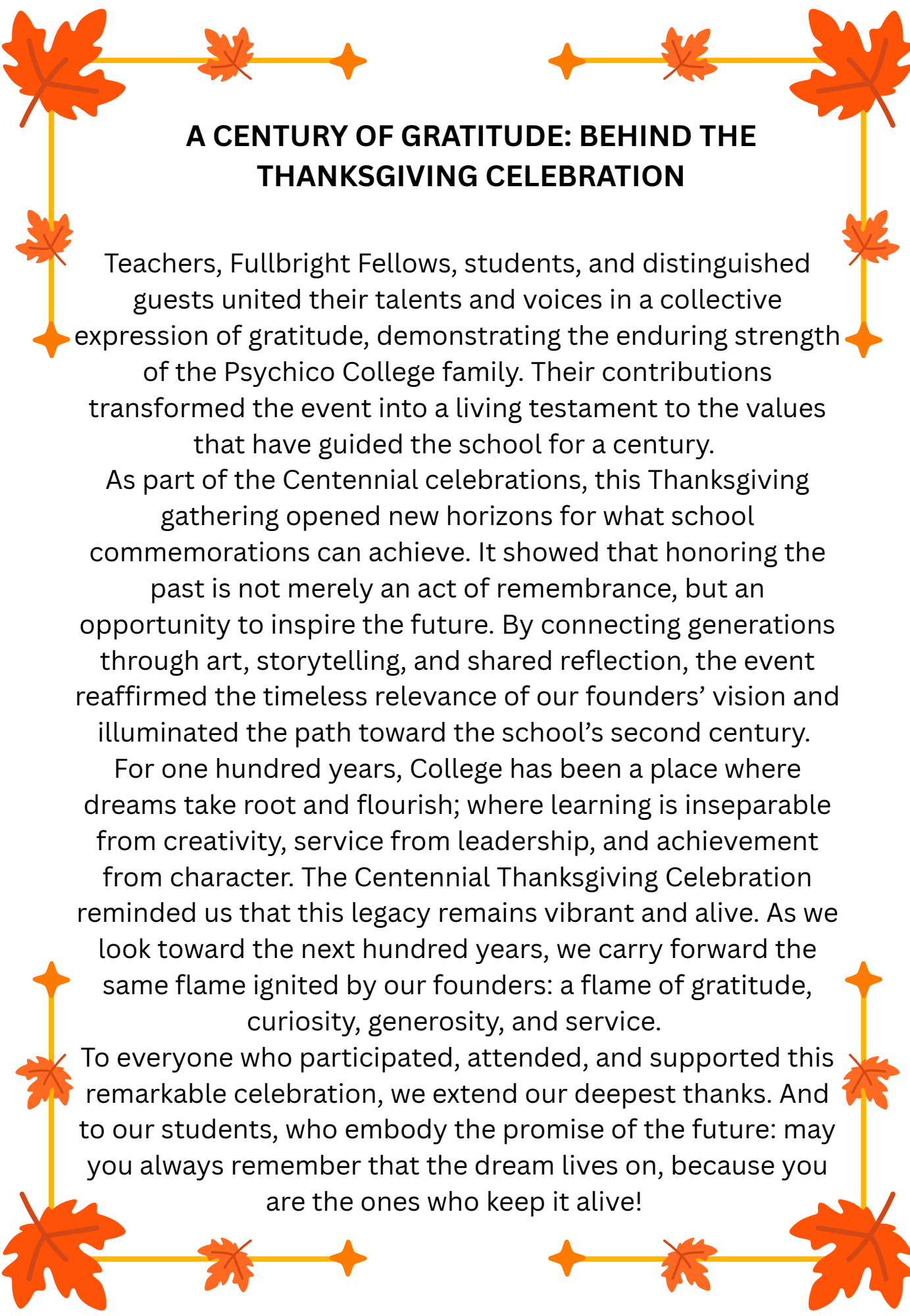
By the TG Team

As Psychico College marks the extraordinary milestone of its Centennial, this year's Thanksgiving Celebration became far more than an annual tradition: it evolved into a historic and unprecedented endeavor that brought together representatives from both the High School and Junior High School in a shared tribute to a century of excellence, vision, and service.

Conceived as a celebration of gratitude, the event ultimately became something even greater: a moving journey through the history, memories, and aspirations that have shaped our community for one hundred remarkable years. Judging from the heartfelt responses of those who attended, the celebration left an indelible mark on all who experienced it.

Through the voices of Penelope and Stefanos Delta, Emmanouil Benakis, and Homer Davis, the founders' ideals were brought vividly to life, reminding us of the courage, generosity, and vision upon which our school was built. Dance performances, live music, poetry, a family play, and personal reflections intertwined to create a rich tapestry of emotion and meaning, honoring both those who laid the foundations of our community and those who continue to shape its future today.

What made this celebration truly unique was its spirit of collaboration.



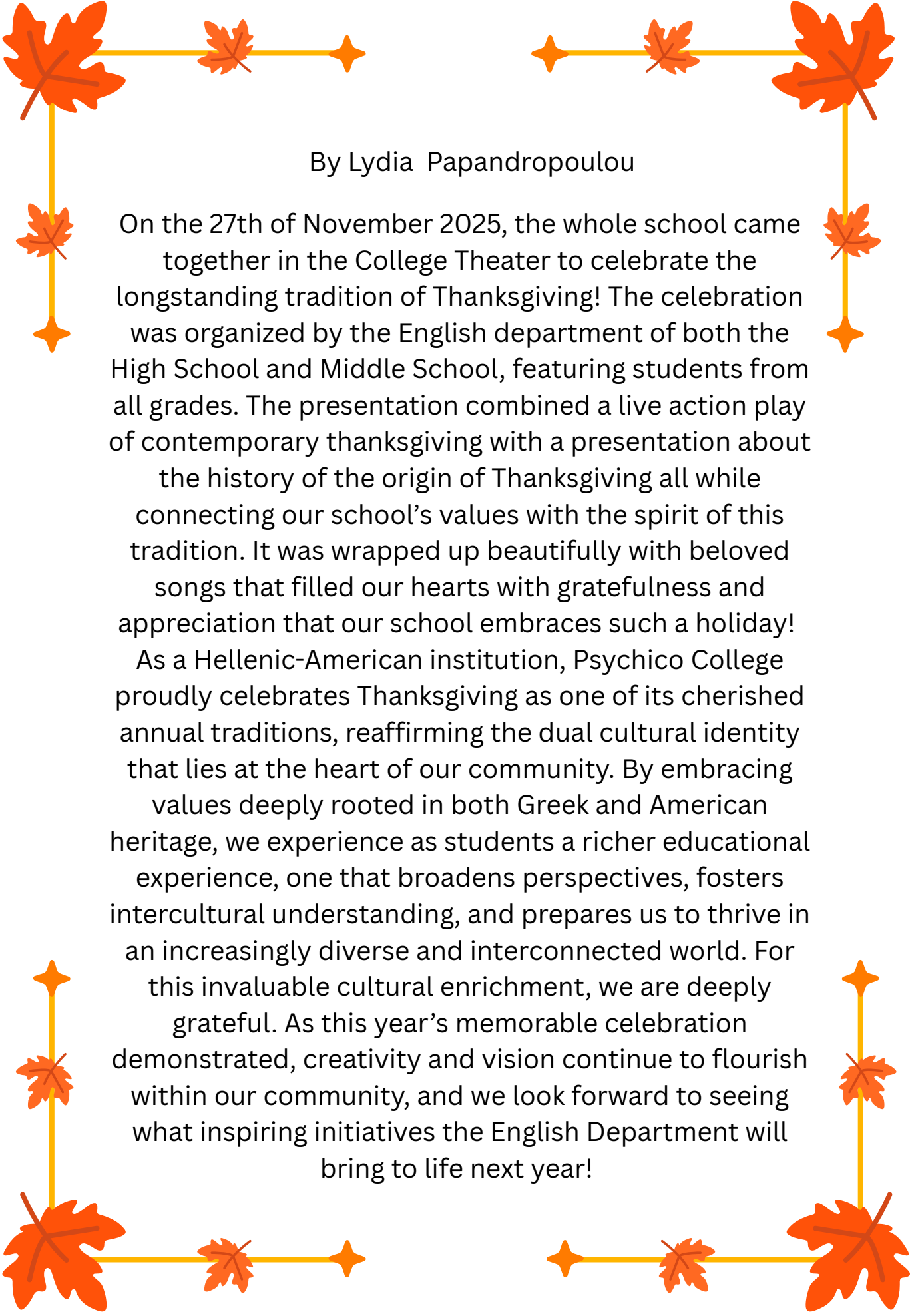
A CENTURY OF GRATITUDE: BEHIND THE THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION

Teachers, Fullbright Fellows, students, and distinguished guests united their talents and voices in a collective expression of gratitude, demonstrating the enduring strength of the Psychico College family. Their contributions transformed the event into a living testament to the values that have guided the school for a century.

As part of the Centennial celebrations, this Thanksgiving gathering opened new horizons for what school commemorations can achieve. It showed that honoring the past is not merely an act of remembrance, but an opportunity to inspire the future. By connecting generations through art, storytelling, and shared reflection, the event reaffirmed the timeless relevance of our founders' vision and illuminated the path toward the school's second century.

For one hundred years, College has been a place where dreams take root and flourish; where learning is inseparable from creativity, service from leadership, and achievement from character. The Centennial Thanksgiving Celebration reminded us that this legacy remains vibrant and alive. As we look toward the next hundred years, we carry forward the same flame ignited by our founders: a flame of gratitude, curiosity, generosity, and service.

To everyone who participated, attended, and supported this remarkable celebration, we extend our deepest thanks. And to our students, who embody the promise of the future: may you always remember that the dream lives on, because you are the ones who keep it alive!



By Lydia Papandropoulou

On the 27th of November 2025, the whole school came together in the College Theater to celebrate the longstanding tradition of Thanksgiving! The celebration was organized by the English department of both the High School and Middle School, featuring students from all grades. The presentation combined a live action play of contemporary thanksgiving with a presentation about the history of the origin of Thanksgiving all while connecting our school's values with the spirit of this tradition. It was wrapped up beautifully with beloved songs that filled our hearts with gratefulness and appreciation that our school embraces such a holiday! As a Hellenic-American institution, Psychico College proudly celebrates Thanksgiving as one of its cherished annual traditions, reaffirming the dual cultural identity that lies at the heart of our community. By embracing values deeply rooted in both Greek and American heritage, we experience as students a richer educational experience, one that broadens perspectives, fosters intercultural understanding, and prepares us to thrive in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. For this invaluable cultural enrichment, we are deeply grateful. As this year's memorable celebration demonstrated, creativity and vision continue to flourish within our community, and we look forward to seeing what inspiring initiatives the English Department will bring to life next year!



Anestios Visit

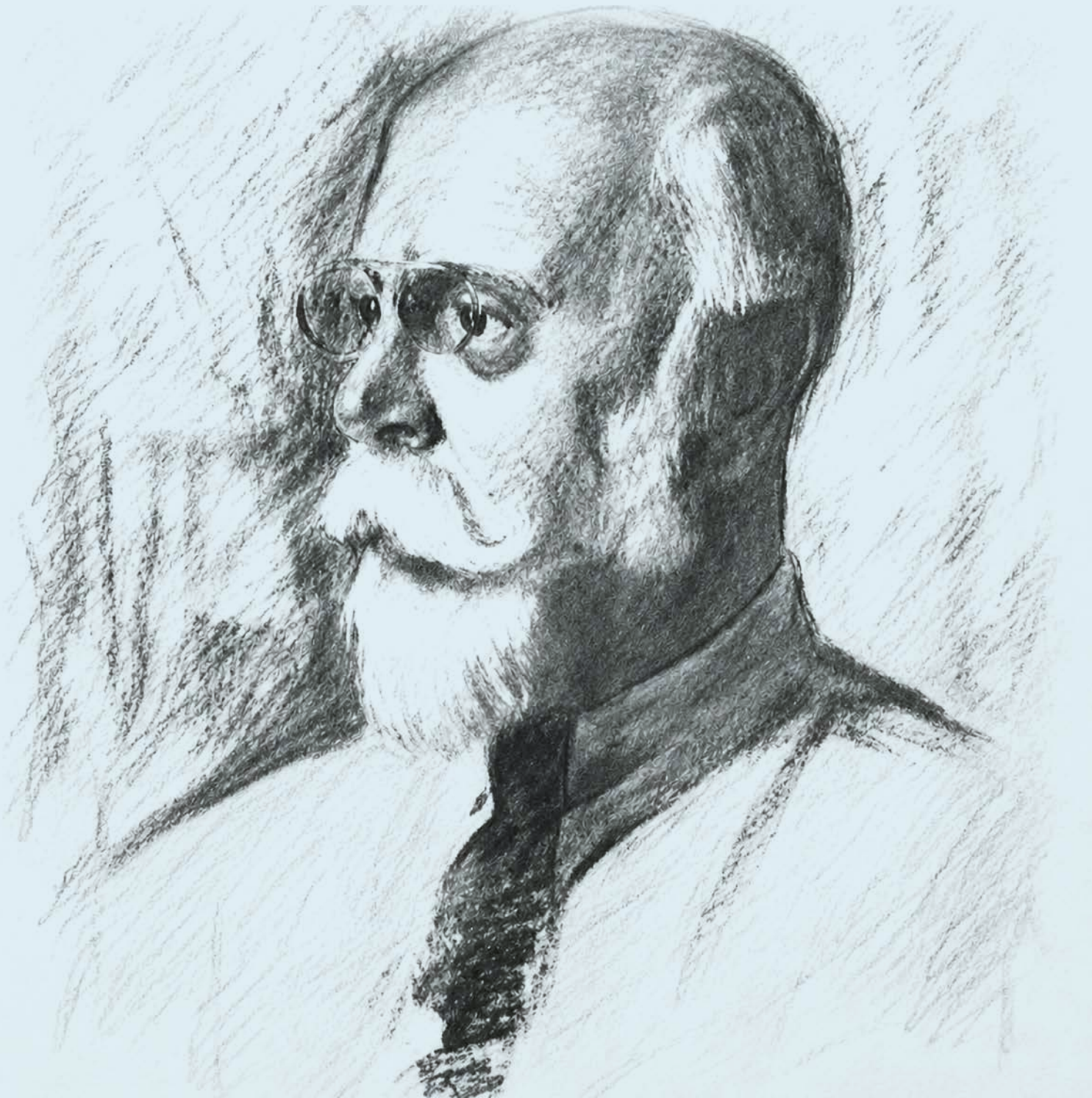




On Thursday, February 19, 2026, some of our Psychico College 10th graders (students of classes A7 & A8) successfully completed a voluntary book collection campaign in order to put into practice the value of REUSE. As part of this initiative, the five-member student councils of the two classes visited the bookstore “Ο Ανέστιος”, run by homeless people, where they delivered the books that had been collected by the school community and had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Leonidas Koursoumis about the history and operation of the project. The students acted as active citizens through their participation, turning the theory of the circular economy into practice. Instead of simply recycling paper, they chose to extend the life cycle of objects, significantly reducing resource waste and their environmental footprint. Organizing the initiative fostered skills of cooperation, responsibility, and communication, strengthening their environmental awareness in an experiential and meaningful way.

Teachers responsible for the coordination of this initiative: Mr. Dimopoulos V., Ms. Douladeli E. & Ms. Kanelli N.

The 87th Delta Speech Contest: An Ode to Rhetorical Excellence





HONORING THE ART OF PERSUASIVE SPEECH: A CELEBRATION OF ORATORY EXCELLENCE

This year, Psychico College proudly organized the 87th annual Delta Speech Contest, continuing a long-standing tradition established in tribute to one of the institution's most influential benefactors, **Stephanos Delta**. The competition remains a cornerstone event, fostering excellence in public speaking, critical inquiry, and active civic awareness among students.

The final round of the English-language "Delta" Oratory Competition was held at the school theater on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, with participation from senior high school students and candidates in the second year of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Contestants were challenged to incorporate the words **Conflict, Dreams, Empowerment, Joy, Narrative** into their speeches, demonstrating both creativity and rhetorical skill.

The Delta Prize for the 2025-2026 academic year was awarded to a senior student whose speech distinguished itself through originality, clarity, and persuasive delivery: **Danae Tatsopoulou**.

The Judging Committee consisted of Mr. Sung W. Choi, Law Enforcement Coordinator, U.S. Embassy Political Section; Dr. Anna Piata, Assistant Professor at the Department of English Language and Literature of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; and Ms. Katerina Potamianou '97, entrepreneur, volunteer of Special Olympics Hellas, and recipient of the "DELTA" Award.

The final round unfolded before a full auditorium, with students, teachers, and members of the broader school community gathered in anticipation. Following a demanding and highly competitive selection process, five exceptional finalists earned the opportunity to deliver their speeches live on stage. Each speaker engaged with a distinct and relevant issue, presenting carefully developed arguments supported by research, critical thought, and personal perspective. Their performances revealed not only polished rhetorical technique but also a genuine dedication to meaningful discourse and civic responsibility. The audience was deeply engaged, recognizing in each presentation the many hours of preparation, thoughtful guidance, and sincere commitment that brought these ideas to life. Beyond celebrating individual distinction, the competition reaffirmed the enduring power of language to shape perspectives and inspire progress. Occasions such as the Delta Speech Contest embody the school's broader educational vision: cultivating articulate, intellectually curious, and socially conscious young leaders.

We warmly congratulate all participants, whose confidence, clarity of thought, and expressive strength ensured that this year's event will be remembered as one of exceptional quality and impact.

FINALISTS:

George Dimopoulos, IBDP
Panagiota Dourida, HS3
Anastasia Papanastasopoulou, HS3
Philippos-Timotheos Stafylas, IBDP
Danae Tatsopoulou, IBDP

SEMI-FINALISTS:

Maria-Panagiota Michelaki, HS3
Charalampos Paschalis, HS3
Evgenia Terzaki, HS3
Sofia Theodosiou, IBDP
Panagiotis Vagias, HS3

“The Meritocratic Narrative: A Perception that Fuels Societal Division”

By Danae Tatsopoulou

DELTA SPEECH WINNER 2025-2026

Honorable President,
Esteemed judges,
Respected teachers,
Dear classmates,

Meritocracy is often thought of as an inherently just framework. A system where individuals are judged solely based on their abilities. This is a reasonable conclusion. When I am on a plane, I hope that my pilot is able; when I am in the hospital, I hope my doctor is qualified. However, notice that equating success to hard work can become problematic. If we were to have a race, and I were to ask you whether the winner deserves their winnings, many of you would be doubtful. You would question whether the winner had more appropriate shoes or access to better training. Say we were to eliminate those concerns, that everyone was to be given access to the same resources. Most would then agree that there is a rightful winner, and yet some would still insist that certain innate characteristics, such as talent, will always undermine the race's capacity to be fair. This example illustrates a flaw in meritocracy's logic: it does not account for external factors which will always deteriorate the chances and the choices available to an individual.

The concept of individual exceptionalism is embedded within society: the American dream or the label of being 'self-made' are all byproducts of the meritocratic narrative. The very idea of meritocracy rationalizes structural inequalities; it divides society between 'winners' and 'losers', 'successes' and 'failures.' The burden of success is pushed upon the individual. The advantaged thus take unwarranted pride in their success whilst the disadvantaged suffer from self-blame. Hence, what many would consider 'neoliberal meritocracy' turns into (as Harvard professor Mr. Sandel would say) the "tyranny of merit." The myth that systems always reward hard work equally only lends comfort to the privileged.

Then, how do we solve this deadlock? Meritocracy is arguably the best available framework for judging one's achievement, as opposed to more deeply problematic systems such as nepotism. I propose that we adopt practices that recognize the value of work irrespective of outcome. Such practices would result in a society where effort outweighs success.



Athens College has already initiated such action. The school facilitates the recognition of merit (through scholarships, for instance) without undermining the value of work. One does not need to achieve perfect grades to feel the support of all the teachers. Effort is rewarded and we can all be certain that our work is valued.

Other institutions, and most importantly, other individuals should follow. We live in a deeply divided society, one where political beliefs have sectioned the population into blocks. And whilst we may not agree on many things, what we can agree on, and what can guide us moving forward is that each individual has inherent value by virtue of being human. People's professions do not determine their worth. Maybe it was merit that failed them but maybe it was circumstance. We ought not to be disillusioned by a narrative that illustrates a non-existent society purely guided by ability. We ought to face reality. Our success may be determined by our hard work, but our being here, in this school, is a privilege not many get to enjoy, a privilege which aids our ultimate success. Meritocratic narratives are not to be abandoned, but they are to be reformed to account for the multitude of factors shaping our abilities.

Meritocracy's original conception was not meant as an ideal utopia but rather as a beneficial yet flawed system. If we are to adopt this framework, we ought to share this understanding, to recognize the narrative's inconsistencies, and thus not weaponize it as a means to create a societal hierarchy. As with any other system, such as democracy or technocracy, meritocracy also suffers from limitations. It can only function within a broader notion of achieving genuine equity. A system that only manages to empower the privileged is a system that falls short. We are neither self-made nor self-sufficient, and we deserve to live in a society whose prevailing narrative reflects this.

Thank you

Creative Writing Contest

THE CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST WAS A PHENOMENAL OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS FROM BOTH THE JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL OF PSYCHIKO COLLEGE TO SHOW OFF THEIR STORYTELLING SKILLS. AFTER WORKING INCREDIBLY DILIGENTLY IN SEVERAL SEMINARS HOSTED BY THE FULBRIGHT TEACHING FELLOWS, MICHAEL TIFFIN AND JACQUELINE KELLEY, THESE STUDENTS WERE READY TO COMPETE FOR FIRST PLACE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CATEGORIES.

THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WERE GIVEN THE THÈME, “GROWING UP AND LEAVING HOME.” ALL OF THE STUDENTS ROSE TO THE CHALLENGE. THEY PRODUCED INCREDIBLY POIGNANT PIECES REFLECTING ON WHAT IT MEANS TO LEAVE HOME, WHETHER IT IS FOR UNIVERSITIES ABROAD OR SIMPLY ANOTHER CITY. THE PIECES DEMONSTRATED AN INCREDIBLE RETROSPECTION ON THE BITTERSWEET NATURE OF LIFE’S TRANSITIONAL PERIODS.

“FINDING FAMILY IN YOUR FRIENDS” WAS THE JUNIOR HIGH THEME OF THE CONTEST, AND THE STUDENTS ONCE AGAIN EXCELLED. THEY WROTE INCREDIBLY HEARTWARMING STORIES ABOUT FINDING LOVE AND SUPPORT IN THEIR FRIENDSHIPS. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE SEMINARS PAID OFF, BECAUSE ALL OF THE STUDENTS WROTE IMPRESSIVELY COMPLEX CHARACTERS AND DYNAMICS. THEIR FRESH PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEPTH OF FRIENDSHIP WERE REFRESHING AND ILLUMINATING.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE IN OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY FOR SUPPORTING THE CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST.

CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

Do you like writing? Telling stories?
Then this is the contest for you!

- What: A chance to show off your storytelling and English skills by writing an original piece of Creative Writing based on the theme "**Growing up and leaving home.**"
- When: **12-2 PM in the Library, Panigiri Saturday, 28th of March**
- Who: High School students
- Where: **AV Room 1 in the Library**
- **Good luck!**



CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

Do you like writing? Telling stories?

Then this is the contest for you!

- What: A chance to show off your storytelling and English skills by writing an original piece of Creative Writing based on the theme **"Finding family in your friends."**
- Who: Junior High Students
- When: **12-2 pm, Panigiri Saturday, 28th of March.**
- Where: **AV 1 in the Library.**
- **Good luck!**



THE NIGHT BEFORE

By Nikolas Nikopoulos/First place winner

I always thought leaving would feel exciting. That's what everyone said, anyway. "You're going to have the best time of your life."

"You'll meet new people."

"You'll finally be independent."

But as I sat on the floor of my bedroom, surrounded by half-packed suitcases and things I suddenly didn't know whether to take or leave, none of that felt... real.

This room felt real.

I folded another shirt, and I unfolded it. The small scratch on my desk from when I rushed to drop my backpack one day. The posters that had been hung up for God knows how long, I didn't even notice them anymore. The haphazardly placed papers were all across my room.

Was I really ready to leave all that behind? I sighed, dreading what was about to come.

What if nobody likes me?

What if I mess everything up?

What if I am not... enough?

While all of these thoughts were roaming around my mind, I leaned back against my bed, staring at the ceiling.

"I thought you'd be packing by now."

I froze. A voice echoed in my room. Not a loud voice, but a calm, controlled one. It sounded... familiar.

I stood up slowly. Someone was sitting on my chair.

Not just anyone: Me. Same face, same eyes. But just a little older. Not by a lot, but just enough that it showed. It was like time had pressed gently but firmly against him.

"Okay," I said, having convinced myself that this was normal. "I am either dreaming or losing it."

"Probably both," he said, shrugging.

I stared at him. "You're me."

"Yeah."

"From the future."

"Yeah."

"That's not possible," I said, puzzled by the situation.

He tilted his head. "And yet here I am. Talking to you, still bad at packing."

I let out a small, nervous laugh. A moment of silence passed between us. My hands started to sweat. The silence was louder than any words could ever be. He looked at my open suitcase.

"You're scared," he said.

"I am not scared... I am just..."

"You are," he said, interrupting me.

I swallowed hard. There was no point in lying to him.

"...Yeah."

He nodded like he already knew.

"Does it go away?"

He didn't answer immediately. And somehow that was worse.

"No," he said.

"Oh."

"But it changes."

"What does that mean?" I asked him, confused.

My chest tightened.

"You think that being ready means not being scared. That you will wake up one day and be brave enough to leave without any sort of nervousness, and face the world."

He paused, leaving me some time to think about what he just said. The words hit me deep in my heart like an arrow. But I had to know:

"Does that day ever come?"

He chuckled. "No, of course it doesn't."

"Well," I said, disappointed. "That's reassuring."

He looked at me, his face straight. "You still go."

"Even if I'm scared?"

"Especially because you're scared. Listen, some days are going to feel like you don't belong, like you've left a piece of you here. Some days are going to scream at you to come back; they are going to feel like such a burden and a pain in the ass. However, other days are going to feel like you're exactly where you're supposed to be, like this is your home. There are always going to be ups and downs, but you've come this far... are you really going to give up now?"

My hands started trembling. "But what about home?"

A beam of light penetrated the windows, blinding us.

"Home is always going to be home... it's not going anywhere, and it isn't going to feel like something you've left behind, but rather something you carry with you."

He then stood up, walking towards the hallway. I chased after him.

"Are you serious? Is that really all the advice you're going to give me?"

"The truth is... You never needed me at all," he said. "Oh, and take your blue sweater."

"Why?"

"You're going to need it."

Suddenly, the beam of light grew stronger, blinding me completely. I closed my eyes as tears started to drip. I opened them.

Nothing. He was gone.

I darted to my room, hoping that he was there. The chair was empty. Of course it was.

I sat back down, contemplating. I folded the shirt again and put it in my suitcase.

Then I grabbed my blue sweater.

— The End —

“IN FACT, TIME DOES FLY FASTER THAN THE WIND”

By Christina Tsiakatara

“Dang it. I was so close. But again, it seems like I lost again. I wish I had patience in this game.” I suddenly picked up the controller and started going crazy. “Yes, now time for the boss.”

I was about to fight the demogorgon and give him what he deserved. He does deserve a strong punch in the face. My mom came in.

“Eddie,” she said, with a strong, sharp tone. “It’s 7:14 in the morning. You’re going to be late for school. Just because it’s your birthday and it’s Friday, that doesn’t mean that you are going to skip it.”

“Ah, right. I promise, Mom, please, just let me have this one. It’s not gonna take long. Plus, I bet you are going to be really proud of me.”

But before I even got the chance to finish my sentence, she said, “I’m gonna be proud of you when you finally do well on an exam.”

“Fine, Mom,” I said with an annoyed and serious tone. “I am going to get ready.”

“Alright then, just be ready in five. Okay?” And she closed the door of my room and said, “Happy birthday, Eddie.”

And I was happy. “Ugh, well, it seems like I will have to deal with your ugly face once more when I get home. But we are not done. Remember that creep.” I stared at my laptop angrily. I looked at the time. Oh no, it was 7:45, which meant that I had 5 more minutes to get ready before my mom lost it. All right, time to get ready. Uh-huh. I know. I suddenly turned and picked up my favorite hoodie, which was specifically made for me because it had all of the games. I

pulled it on and sprayed my favorite perfume on it. I then rushed into the bathroom and quickly brushed my teeth before I hit it off.

“Hey, Mom, where’s my hairbrush?”

“It’s in the living room, honey.”

“Okay, perfect, thanks,” I replied, and rushed to the room to brush my hair. But as I was doing that, I lit out the window and saw my bus waiting for me. “No,” I thought without any hesitation. I barged out of my house, and I ran for what was going to be one of the most embarrassing moments of my life. When I stepped inside the bus, I saw my best friend, Andrew, and went to nest them.

“Happy birthday, my fellow fighter,” he said, while playing a game on his phone. typical.

“Thank you, bro. I really appreciate it.”

“Oh my god, guys, it’s Eddie’s birthday.”

“Yes, please, Eddie, take us to your world and amaze us with your unrivaled skills.” And then everyone laughed like I was some loser. I never would have expected that Billy was going to be on the same bus as me. He really pisses me off.

“Hey, leave him alone, Bill,” Andrew answered, and Billy replied, “Poor Andrew’s looking out for his booger friend.” And we heard laughter until the ride was over.

“Thank God we got here,” I said to Andrew, but he did not answer. Weird, I thought to myself. He never ignores me, even when he’s playing on his phone.

“I’m late for class, gotta go.” And with that, he left, leaving me alone. Well, I had classes anyway. It was gonna be a long day. It was one o’clock in the afternoon, and I had just finished a horrible 45 minutes of math.

I went into class to find Andrew, but now I know where Billy and his so-called gang appeared. "Well, this must be your fate, must be fate running into you again on the same day."

"What do you want, Billy?" I quickly answered, but what came next shocked me.

"You know, your friend Andrew is really stupid for thinking I was gonna be friends with him."

"What did you do to him?" I said furiously.

"Well, he tried talking to us, and let's just say that it didn't end well for him. Well, I shouldn't tell you the details. If you really care, go to the bathroom and find out."

I panicked. My eyes started to fill up with tears, even though we fought a lot. That didn't mean I didn't care for him. He's basically my brother. So without another thought, I went to the bathroom, and there he was. He had blood on his face and milk in his hair. "Andrew, what happened? Who did this to you?" Andrew sat and stared at me coldly. Then he spoke, "It's you who did this to me. If it wasn't for your company, those jerks wouldn't have done anything to me. You're a joke, Eddie. You don't care about anyone other than yourself."

I didn't know what to say. I just stood there and listened. My heart was racing faster than ever. With all the courage I had left, I spoke, "You really have changed, Andrew. I never would have guessed that you thought so low of me. Well, we are done. I'm not going to tolerate this nonsense of your toxic behavior anymore."

I was so angry that I felt my entire body was on fire.

"Fine, leave. Didn't need you anyway," said Andrew.

And despite all the pain I felt, I left. When I got out, I spotted Billy in the distance, laughing and pointing at me. He was such a jerk. However badly, I wanted to go there and give him a piece of my mind. I didn't because I was sad, confused, and had a very sharp pain in my chest. I just wanted the day to end. After the two classes ended, I stood up slowly and started packing my stuff. Today's lessons were shorter than expected, so I realized that because I live close to school, I could walk instead of taking the bus. Not only to relax, but also not to see Billy's face once more. I was super mad. It was the worst birthday ever. I was walking down the road when I saw a really big car, and everything went blank. And then I woke up. I was lying on a hospital bed and had some weird monitors and machines close to me. I looked to my left, and I saw my mom holding my... hand. It was weird, though, because my mom was 35 years old, but now she looked as if she were 10 years older. Mom? My mom suddenly looked at me and started to cry. However, I got no response from her. Instead, she stood up immediately and called the nurses and a doctor. She went outside the room with them, and they were talking for a long period of time, and I was left alone in the room. which I didn't know anything about, nor the reason why I was there. I looked at myself from across a mirror that happened to be a large one, while still being in the hospital.

What? Why am I like that? Why am I taller and why have? So many of my features on my face changed? I stared at the mirror for what seemed like an eternity. And then I spotted a diagnosis paper near a table. Out of curiosity, I read it.

"This patient has been in a coma for 9 years due to severe head and spinal injuries. The patient has lost all consciousness, and the probabilities of him staying alive are very low." Oh my goodness, how is it possible for 9 years to have passed? What was the reason that led to my being in a coma? I had so many questions, but my head started to feel heavy, and I laid on the bed again. Then, out of nowhere, my mom, as well as the doctors, came into the room.

"Glad to see you're finally awake, kid. We were afraid you wouldn't wake up. Don't you dare do this to me again, Eddie. You hear me?" said my mom while crying from happiness and relief.

"Well, Ms. Johnson, we are going to head out and let you guys talk for a bit."

Without any thought, I started asking my mom questions about how long I had been out for, what the reason was behind it, and how old I was.

"You were out for almost 10 years, Eddie. The reason you were out is that you got hit by an enormous truck. I don't know how you managed to do so," she replied with a serious and very suppressed tone.

I was super surprised when I heard all the details from her. And I was more shocked than surprised, if I'm being honest.

Then she said the thing that surprised me most.

"That means that you are now 21 years old, Eddie. You've grown a lot, son." 21 years old. Damn it.

"What about college and school, and most importantly, what about my life?" I asked with so much suspicion. "When are we going to go home?"

"Don't worry, the doctor said that due to the fact that you were asleep, they couldn't perform a surgery that was necessary to survive. Well, we are going to go home once they do the surgery on you. So basically in 2 weeks, we're gonna be out," she said, if I leave.

"Okay, Mom, I think I can handle 2 more weeks."

"Yes, I know, Eddie. I'm super proud that you've made it through." And then it hit me that this was the first time I'd seen my mom be so happy and proud of me. And I was super happy about it.

"Look at you. This whole time, I had been super anxious about you and your situation. It made me realize that time is precious," My mom said calmly.

I decided to tease her by saying yes. "Well, Mom, for me, it was the opposite. It was like time flew by like the wind. crazy, isn't it?"

"Yes, Eddie, it is. But don't be proud of that," she replied while laughing a bit. And we laughed and talked for a whole 2 hours afterwards.

MYP PERSONAL PROJECT EXHIBITION 2026: A CELEBRATION OF CREATIVITY & INQUIRY



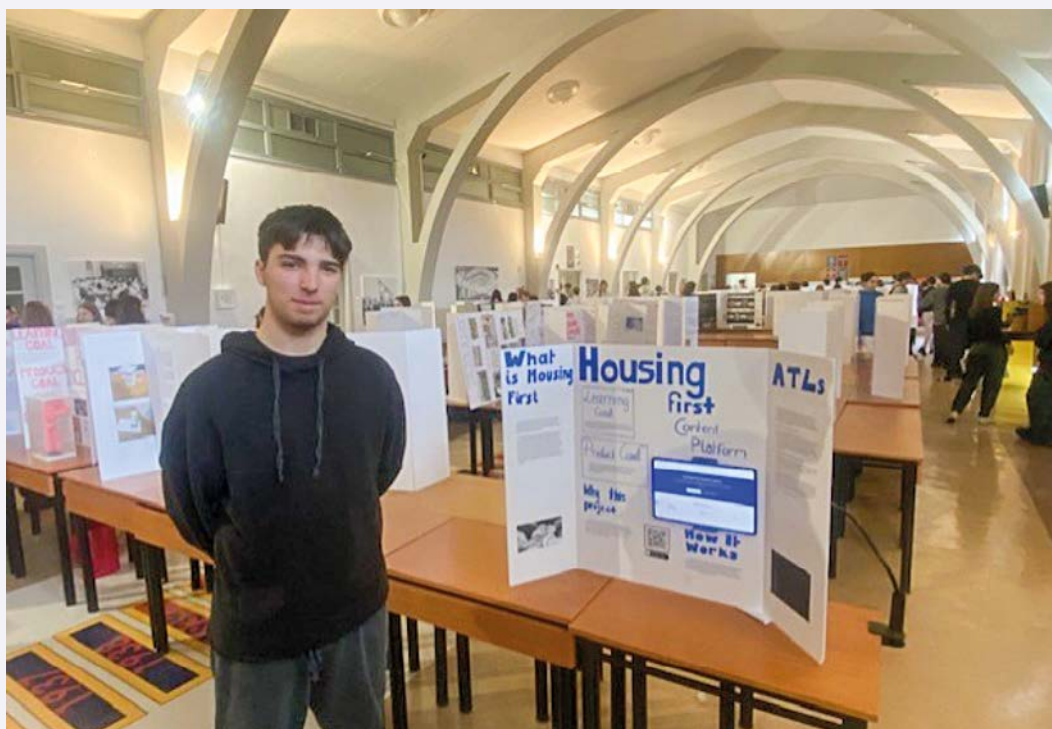
This year's Personal Project Exhibition marked a milestone of unprecedented success, showcasing the extraordinary dedication, creativity, and intellectual curiosity of our students. The event transformed our school into a vibrant hub of ideas, where innovation met reflection and individual passion took center stage. Across every display, visitors were able to witness the culmination of months of research, experimentation, and perseverance, expressed through projects that were as diverse as they were inspiring.

From scientific investigations and technological creations to artistic expressions and social awareness initiatives, each project reflected a unique journey of discovery. The exhibition was not only a presentation of final products but also a powerful testament to the process of learning; one that encourages independence, critical thinking, and resilience. Students confidently shared their work with teachers, peers, and guests, engaging in meaningful conversations that highlighted both the depth of their understanding and the originality of their ideas.

What made this year's exhibition truly remarkable was the atmosphere it created: one of pride, collaboration, and shared achievement. It was evident that each student had invested significant effort and heart into their work, resulting in a showcase that exceeded all expectations and set a new standard for excellence within our school community.

We extend our warmest congratulations to all participating students for their outstanding effort, commitment, and creativity. Their work not only reflected their individual talents but also the values of perseverance and inquiry that define our educational philosophy.

(Panos Marinopoulos, a Club member, posing in front of his final product)

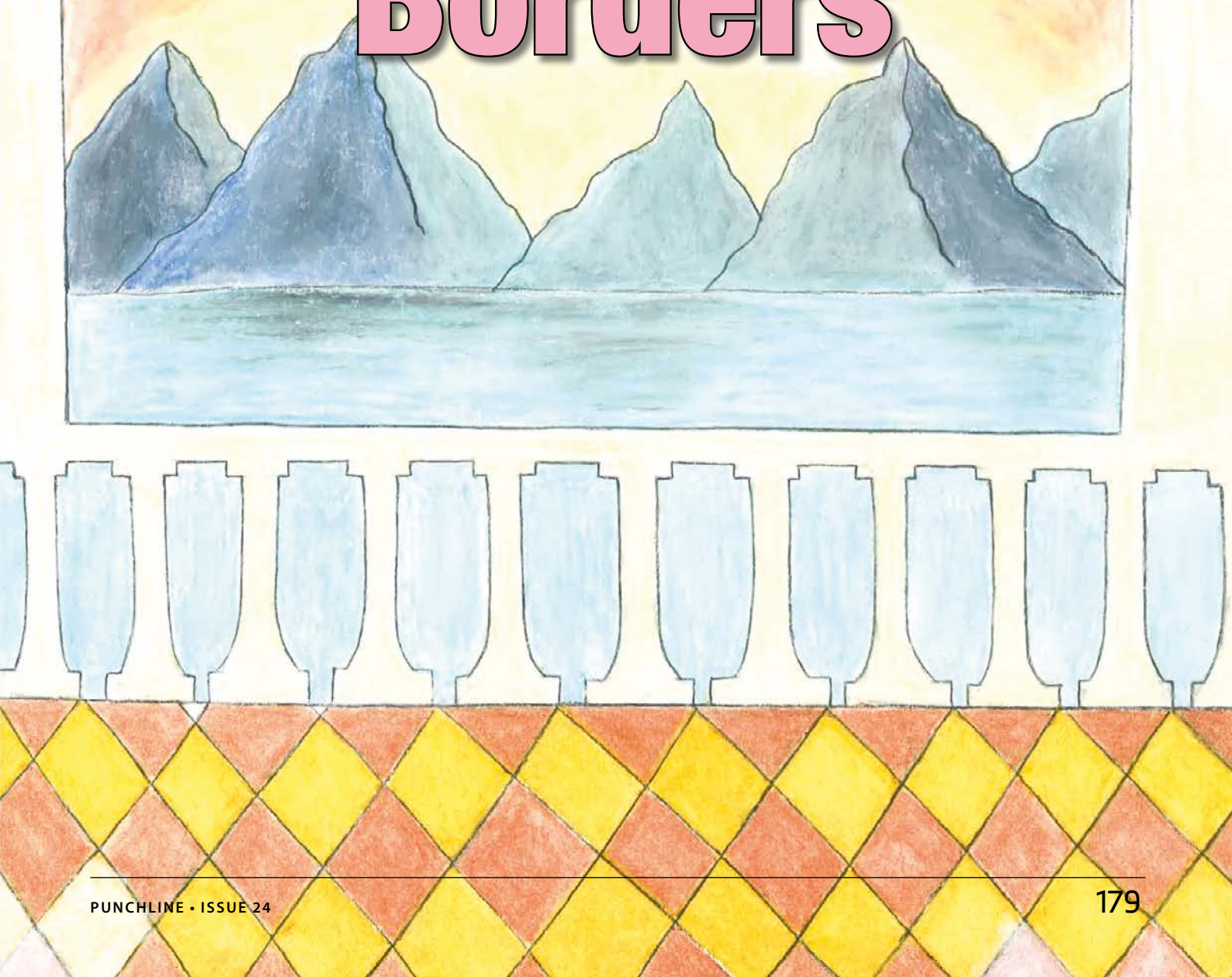


Beyond the impressive outcomes themselves, what truly distinguished this year's projects was the sense of ownership and personal growth evident in every student's journey. Each presentation reflected countless hours of planning, problem-solving, and reflection, revealing not only academic development but also the emergence of confidence, independence, and intellectual maturity. It is this transformation—from idea to realization, from challenge to achievement—that lies at the very heart of the Personal Project experience and makes it such a defining moment in our students' educational path.



As we look ahead, this year's exhibition stands as both an achievement and an invitation. To future students: let this serve as inspiration to dream boldly, explore deeply, and embrace the challenge of turning curiosity into creation. The Personal Project is more than an academic requirement; it is a journey that has the power to shape who you are and who you may become. We eagerly await the ideas that will emerge in the years to come, confident that they will continue to elevate this tradition to even greater heights!!

Culture Exchanges Across Borders





Bridging Cultures: A Memorable Visit from Gaston Thorn International School

As part of this year's Erasmus+ programme, our school had the pleasure of welcoming students from the Gaston Thorn International School of Luxembourg, an encounter that quickly grew into far more than a formal exchange. What began as an academic visit soon became a meaningful meeting of cultures, ideas, and perspectives, as students from both schools shared time, conversations, and experiences that transcended borders and language.

During their stay at our school, students engaged in collaborative activities designed to foster dialogue, understanding, and friendship. Laughter echoed through classrooms and hallways as new connections were formed, reminding us that learning is often at its richest when it is shared.

The exchange continued beyond the school walls with a memorable visit to the Acropolis Museum and the Parthenon, where history came vividly to life. Standing together beneath the presence of such enduring symbols of civilization, students reflected on heritage, identity, and the shared human story that connects us across nations and generations.

This experience offered far more than cultural discovery; it created a space for genuine exchange, where ideas were shared openly, and friendships began to take root. In the spirit of Erasmus+, it reminded us that education is not confined to classrooms or countries, but flourishes wherever people come together with curiosity and respect.

As the visit came to a close, what remained was not only knowledge gained, but connections formed, small bridges between Luxembourg and Greece, built through dialogue, exploration, and shared moments that will be remembered long after the journey home (make sure you listen to one of our podcasts for more entertaining info!!!).

How can people seem so different, yet feel oddly familiar?

By Maro Fragaki

As part of the Erasmus plus programme, a group of students from a progressive school in Luxembourg paid a visit to Athens College. As a tenth grader, I was naturally excited to meet them, but admittedly, even more excited to escort them to the Acropolis.

The day before our grand expedition, we engaged in icebreaker activities, expressing what we like, what we're used to, and how we spend our weekends. To my surprise, I discovered something unexpected: that although these kids lived in an entirely contrasting environment filled with bilingualism, stability, and diversity, we had far more in common than I had imagined. On the weekends, we all like going out, on weekdays we all like sleeping, and in our free time we enjoy playing sports and spending time with friends.

By the time the trip to the Acropolis took place, awkward introductions had transformed into actual friendships. Walking through the ancient ruins together, our conversations flowed naturally, drifting from everyday jokes to unexpectedly meaningful topics. Somehow, after only two days, speaking with them felt easier, and perhaps even deeper than some conversations we have with classmates we see every single day.

They were amazed by the Acropolis, and how it stands proudly after centuries of history. We, in the meantime, were completely amazed by something else: how quickly strangers can become familiar.

And so, after heartfelt goodbyes and more waving than anyone would care to admit, we promised that this was not a farewell, just a see you again soon.

What happens when students from different countries and cultures come together? Personally, the visit from the international school, based in Luxembourg, became an unforgettable experience full of conversations and new friendships, from which I gained new insights about different cultures, but also realized that, regardless of our different backgrounds, we, as teenagers, share the same interests, even if they might differ slightly from one person to another.

More specifically, on the first day we met in our school's library, where we sat in groups of five and tried to introduce ourselves. We then played a game where we talked about areas of our daily life (school life, free time, after school activities) and compared them, which helped us discover that, although we grew up in different environments, we had many things in common, such as our favorite hobbies, how we spend our free time, and everyday experiences as teenagers. At the same time, what was really interesting was that we learned about the differences regarding languages and school systems. However, these differences made our conversations more interesting and made us gain new insights into how life is outside of our country.

What made this experience even more unique was that the students from Luxembourg were also from various nationalities, therefore creating a truly multicultural atmosphere where everybody had something personal to share.

By being attentive and respectful listeners, we managed to bridge the gap between us and realize that, despite our different cultures, we could still connect easily and in a meaningful way. We even got the chance and recorded a podcast with them, sharing their experience in our school and in Greece in general, which really piqued my curiosity.

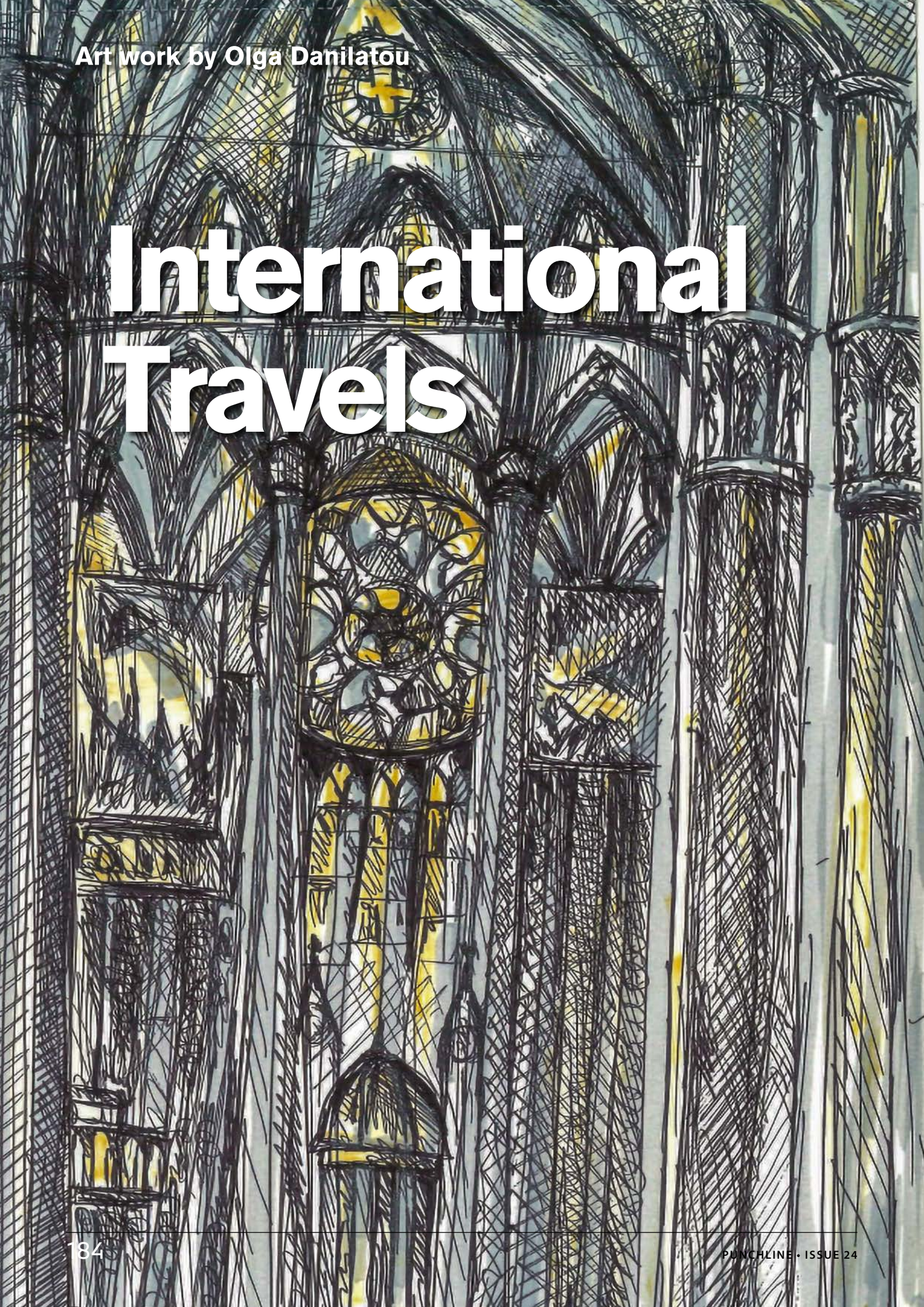
The next day, we visited the Acropolis, including the Parthenon and the Acropolis Museum. It was really exciting to share such an important part of Greek history and our heritage with students from all around the world. As we explored the monuments together, we exchanged opinions, asked questions, and shared our own perspectives about history and culture. That made the visit even more educational and enjoyable.

Overall, this experience taught me that cultural differences not only don't divide people but instead bring them closer together when there are values such as respect and curiosity present. I firmly believe that such experiences help us grow by making us more open-minded, while also allowing us to forge meaningful connections and foster mutual understanding towards different cultures.

This year, I had the opportunity to participate in a student exchange experience with students from Luxembourg, and it turned out to be one of the most memorable school experiences I have had so far. As a member of the student council, I helped give them a tour of our school, and later I took part in several activities with them, including an English project comparing life in Greece and Luxembourg, and a Model United Nations session. At first, I approached these activities as simple school responsibilities, but as I spent more time with the students, my perspective began to change.

What stood out to me most were the moments outside the structured activities, such as when we ate lunch together and played Frisbee, because that is when we felt truly connected. The visit to the Acropolis and the Parthenon the following day made the experience even more meaningful, as it gave me the chance to see my own culture from a different point of view while learning about theirs. I was genuinely surprised by how many similarities we shared, even in small things like our music preferences, which made me realize that we are not as different as I had initially thought. This experience helped me become more open-minded and reminded me of the importance of communication and connection. Overall, it was not just an educational activity, but a personal experience that I will remember for a long time.



The background of the entire page is a dense, expressive sketch of a cathedral's interior. It features tall, slender columns and pointed arches. Yellow washes are applied to the upper sections of the arches and the interior of some windows, creating a sense of light and depth. The sketching is done with dark, energetic lines.

Art work by Olga Danilafou

International Travels

Psychico College on the Road



Every year, Psychico College takes learning beyond the classroom through its distinguished university visits across Europe, offering students the opportunity to engage with some of the world's most prestigious academic institutions. This year, however, the programme reached unprecedented levels of success, marking a standout moment in its ongoing tradition.

Travelling across Italy, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, students were welcomed by highly esteemed universities that opened their doors to inspire, challenge, and guide future academic paths. These visits provided far more than a glimpse into university life; they offered meaningful encounters, thought-provoking discussions, and unique insights into diverse fields of study.

For many students, the experience broadened their horizons, strengthened their academic ambitions, and deepened their understanding of what it means to study in an international environment. From historic campuses to cutting-edge research institutions, each destination contributed to a journey of discovery and personal growth.

This year's programme not only continued a valued tradition but elevated it, leaving students with lasting inspiration and a clearer vision of their future possibilities.



VISIT TO BRITISH UNIVERSITIES

In February, the 10th-grade students had the opportunity to visit some of the world's leading universities in the United Kingdom: University College London (UCL), King's College London, Imperial College London, the University of Bath, and the University of Warwick. By participating in guided tours of the campuses, they became familiar with the institutions' academic offerings, student experience, and career prospects, acquiring important knowledge for their future career planning. The trip's program included significant cultural experiences. The students attended the world-famous musical *Les Misérables*, enjoying an unforgettable, high-quality theatrical performance. They also visited the impressive Windsor Castle, one of the official residences of the British royal family, and admired the mysterious prehistoric site of Stonehenge. Their tour of the historic city of Oxford made a strong impression, as the students walked through its picturesque streets, explored the architecture of the colleges, and connected with centuries-old academic tradition. This trip became a truly meaningful and enriching journey, beautifully blending knowledge, culture, and lived experience. The students returned inspired, carrying with them vivid memories. Their horizons were widened, sparking deeper curiosity, as well as a heartfelt appreciation for the world that lies beyond their own borders.





VISIT TO ITALIAN UNIVERSITIES

In February 2026, the first-ever visit of the 10th-grade students to Milan, Italy, took place, offering them a unique opportunity to experience up close some of the world's leading universities and important cultural landmarks.

During their stay, the students visited some renowned universities worldwide, such as Bocconi University, Humanitas University, and Domus Academy Milano. Through guided tours of the campuses, they learned about academic programs, student life, and the professional prospects these institutions offer, gaining valuable insights for their future career orientation.

At the same time, the trip's program included significant cultural experiences. The students had the chance to visit the world-famous Duomo in Milan, the city's Gothic cathedral, with rooftop terraces overlooking the city. Also, they had the opportunity to walk about the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Italy's most elegant 19th-century shopping arcade. Last but not least, they visited the Castello Sforzesco, Milan's Renaissance fortress.

At a visit to the beautiful city of Turin, the students visited the world-renowned Egyptian Museum, as well as the impressive Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile. Their tour of the historic city of Turin also made a strong impression, as the students walked through its picturesque streets and admired the architecture of the buildings. They also had the opportunity to marvel up close at the scenic view of lakes Como and Lugano, at the feet of the Italian Alps.

This trip was a multifaceted experience that combined knowledge, culture, and experiential learning. The students returned with new images, knowledge, and ambitions, having broadened their horizons and strengthened their interest in education and the world beyond borders.



VISIT TO UNIVERSITIES IN THE NETHERLANDS

The educational field trip of Psychico College HS1 students to the Netherlands took place on 24-27 February 2026. The objective of the visit was to introduce students to leading European academic institutions and familiarize them with the Dutch culture.

During the four-day trip, students had the opportunity to tour and receive briefings on the study programs of Leiden University in the Hague, Erasmus University Rotterdam, and TU Eindhoven University of Technology. They had the opportunity to attend an introduction to some of the world's leading universities and tour the institutions' facilities. Alongside the academic program, students enjoyed rich cultural experiences, including a tour of the historic city of Leiden and picturesque Delft, a guided tour of Rotterdam, where they saw the Old Harbor, the Erasmus Bridge (Erasmusbrug), and the iconic Cube Houses (Kubuswoningen). Also, they visited the famous Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and enjoyed a cruise along the canals of Amsterdam.

This unique experience provided our students with valuable insights for their future academic choices, perfectly combining knowledge with an immersive experience of the Dutch culture.





Forensics

Forensics 2025-2026

**1st CGS Invitational Debate Cup
Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 November, 2025**

Teams:

**Winning Team: Maria Petrolia (IB2) and Danae Tatsopoulou (IB2)
Open Finalists: Elena Dikaiou-Evangelatou (IB1) and Evridiki Ziouli (HS2, PC)
Novice Finalists: Ioanna Magklara (HS1, PC) and Ilia Manesi (HS1, PC)**

Individual:

**Best Speaker Award: Danae Tatsopoulou (IB2)
Top 10 Speakers: Maria Petrolia (2nd place), Elena Dikaiou-Evangelatou (5th place)
Top 5 Novice Speakers: Marianna Polemi (2nd place – HS1, PC)**

**Fall Deree Invitational LXX
Friday 14 and Saturday 15 November, 2025**

Teams:

**Open Finalist: Helena Dikaiou-Evangelatou (IB1)
Open Semi Finalists: Marianna Polemi (HS1, PC) with Marianna Georgakopoulou (HS1, AC)**

Individual:

**Top 10 Speakers: Maria Petrolia (IB2) and Danae Tatsopoulou (IB2) (5th place)
Top 10 Novice Speakers: Louiza Kosti (HS1, PC) (5th place), Natalia Stamelou (HS1, PC) (8th place)**

**Anagennisi Sweeps Cup 2025
Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 December 2025**

First Among Equals Award:

Elpida Triantafyllopoulou (IB1) - Oral Interpretation of Literature – Comic

**Eurasian Schools Debating Championship 2026
Saturday 17 – Monday 19 January, 2026**

Quarterfinalists: Danae Tatsopoulou (IB2) with Team Greece from the PFA
Octofinalist: Elena Dikaïou-Evangelatou (IB1) with Team Greece B from the PFA

Individual:

3rd Best Speaker: Danae Tatsopoulou (IB2)

Moraitis Debate & Impromptu Cup 2026

Friday 6 and Saturday 7 February, 2026

Teams:

Debate Open Finalists: Maria Petrolia (IB2) and Danae Tatsopoulou (IB2)

Debate Open Semi Finalists:

Helena Dikaïou-Evangelatou (IB1) and Spyros Roupas-Pantaleon (HS2, AC)

Marianna Polemi (HS1, PC) and Evridiki Ziouli (HS2, PC)

Individual:

Best Speaker Award: Danae Tatsopoulou (IB2)

Top 10 Debate Speakers:

3rd place: Maria Petrolia (IB2)

International Competition for Young Debaters 2026

Greece Round: Saturday 21 February 2026

International Finals Day: Saturday 2 May 2026

International Semifinalists: Ilia Manessi (HS1, PC) with Aristi Dalli (HS1, AC)

Spring Dereë Invitational LXXI

Friday 29 and Saturday 30 May, 2026

Teams:

Winning Team: Danae Tatsopoulou (IB2) (composite team with ACS Student)

Individual:

Best Speaker Award: Danae Tatsopoulou (IB2)

Panhellenic Forensics Association Tournament 2026

Thursday 12- Sunday 15 March, 2026

3rd Place Sweepstakes Cup with 6 Finalists and 2 Honorable Mentions

First Among Equals - Oral Interpretation of Literature - Dramatic: Erica Dritsa (HS3, AC)

Georgia Papachristodoulou (HS2, PC)

Runners-up / Grand Finalists - Debate: Aristi Dalli (HS1, AC), Elena Dikaiou-Evangelatou (IB1), Marianna Georgakopoulou (HS1, AC), Ioanna Magklara (HS1, PC), and Marianna Polemi (HS1, PC)

Finalist - Oral Interpretation of Literature - Comic: Louiza Kosti (HS1, PC)

Finalist - Impromptu Speaking: Spyros Roupas-Pantaleon (HS2, AC)

Finalists - Duet Acting - Comic: Alexandra Kontaratou (JH3, PC) and Loukia Mitzali (HS1, PC)

Finalist - Original Oratory: Alexandra Marinopoulou (IB1)

Honorable Mention - Original Oratory: Chrystanthi Roupa-Pantaleon (HS1, AC)

Honorable Mention - Group Discussion: Argyro Moutsidi (HS1, PC)

Runners-up / Grand Finalists - Debate: Aristi Dalli (HS1, AC), Elena Dikaiou-Evangelatou (IB1), Marianna Georgakopoulou (HS1, AC), Ioanna Magklara (HS1, PC), and Marianna Polemi (HS1, PC)

Semi-finalists - Debate: Mary Chatziandreou (IB1), Maria Petrolia (IB2), Spyros Roupas-Pantaleon (HS2, AC), Danae Tatsopoulou (IB2) and Evridiki Ziouli (HS2, PC)

Top-20 Speakers - Debate (125 speakers total):

8th place - Marianna Georgakopoulou (HS1, AC),

9th place - Maria Petrolia (IB2),

11th place- Danae Tatsopoulou (IB2),

12th place - Aristi Dalli (HS1, AC),

14th place - Spyros Roupas-Pantaleon (HS2, AC),

18th place - Elena Dikaiou-Evangelatou (IB1)



One in three students report being bullied

SOCIETY KILLED
the
TEENAGER

BE KIND!

STOP BULLYING!



Anatomy of a Collage

Group Discussion members gather every year to research and analyze a topic to its full extent, but never before has it been so close to their own lives and experiences. Juvenile delinquency is an increasingly common phenomenon and this year's team was called upon to find the causes, discover correlated behaviors, form prevention methods and even implement them into their own school environment. While seeking these answers through collaboration, they researched the effect of COVID-19, social media and the environment of the delinquents to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons that lead them to act the way they do.

Various sources attribute the exponential increase in unethical behavior to the quarantine, which was caused by the pandemic in 2019, limiting the social skills and self-expression of teens. Others blame the rapid growth of social media and negative idols/influencers, who push teens to act more impulsively and/or transgressively. By far, the greatest concern that attracted the team's attention was the perpetrators' environment, which consisted of family, friends and school. Since they couldn't pinpoint one specific cause, they concluded that all of these variables play a role in the upbringing of a child.

Furthermore, while comparing sources and case studies, they elicited a common pattern of behaviors between most delinquents in the resources they dug out. Firstly, they lack social skills, struggle with interactions and rarely fully express themselves. This leads to explosive attitudes or even physical violence. Some examples of actions stemming from this are vandalism (such as graffiti or destruction of property) and bullying (such as fights at school). Often, reduced performance in school or even truancy/dropping out are common amongst delinquents, since the school sets the first rules for the children outside of their home and any defiance could degenerate into worse misconduct.

Fortunately, there are an array of different ways to prevent or reform the delinquents. Primarily, as the team discovered, the parents have the greatest influence on their

children, since they are responsible for teaching them the basics of ethics, morality and behavior. From the base that the parents build, the school then aids them to understand empathy, sharing, their own emotions and many more. This illustrates the necessity for parents to fully understand their key role, to actively try to be close to their children, to support them and form proper behavioral patterns instead of allowing wrongdoings. At school, several infographics suggested that students should not be punished by a strict system but rather they should have the opportunity not only to make up for their behavior but reform entirely and bond with the individual(s) they hurt. This would be done through various techniques which would promote communication between students, where they would express their emotions freely and find solutions together. This deters any future misdemeanors from occurring and reinforces a positive school community.

Finally, after the team had concluded their research and the end of the year was approaching quickly, they were tasked to create a project which could ease the implementation of these techniques in the school. They spent quite the time forming different ideas and presenting multiple drafts but in the end, the final product of their hard work was a poster with the sole purpose to fight back against bullying, a global phenomenon which has been an issue for more than a third of students. The poster symbolizes how bullying can cause permanent trauma to individuals who experience it, but it also leaves behind a very important message for the viewer: they should always try to spread love, stand up to acts against other people and always provide support to those who need it most.

As Group Discussion comes to an end for another year, the team has gathered lots of important information, unforgettable memories, unique experiences and many more, which will follow them for a long time. In October, a refreshed team will come back and they will delve into new topics and research new concepts, making the world a better place, one discussion at a time.

- The GD Team



Model United Nations



MUN CONFERENCES 2025-2026

DSA MUN OCTOBER 2025 (GERMAN SCHOOL OF ATHENS)
CGS MUN DECEMBER 2025 (COSTEAS-GEITONAS)
THUMUN JANUARY 2026 (THE HAGUE)
ACMUN FEBRUARY 2026 (ANATOLIA COLLEGE- THESSALONIKI)
PSMUN MARCH 2026 (PLATON SCHOOL)

Model United Nations: Our Year in Review

This year has been a particularly meaningful one for our Model United Nations Club, as we brought together students from Junior High and High School into one collaborative community. Comprised of students from Grades Eight and Nine, alongside High School and IB students, the Club created a dynamic environment where younger and older delegates learned from one another and developed lasting connections. Throughout the year, members explored pressing global issues, represented countries in lively debates, and strengthened their skills in public speaking, diplomacy, critical thinking, and collaboration. Our students demonstrated remarkable dedication and maturity at conferences, confidently engaging in negotiations and resolutions while supporting one another every step of the way. More than anything, this year's MUN experience highlighted the value of cooperation, respectful dialogue, and global-mindedness, and we are incredibly proud of the enthusiasm and commitment shown by all of our delegates.

Evanthia Kavroulaki/ Dimitrios Rozakis/ Nicholas Colasanto
Advisors, MUN Club

Model United Nations - This year's experience

By Konstantinos Karras and Orestis Belokas

Konstantinos: This year has honestly been one of the best years I've had since I joined MUN, and I truly mean that. It pushed me way out of my comfort zone and led me to achievements of utmost value and importance. Remember all the good times we had?

Orestis: Yeah, this year really was unforgettable. It was sadly our last year as MUN delegates, bringing an end to a wholesome experience that taught us many things and brought us much closer. From running late for the train in the Hague to getting applause for our last speeches as delegates, this run was lustrous. Let's be honest, though; we've seen a lot. What is the one thing that you gained this year and will stay with you forever?

Konstantinos: There's a lot; almost too much. From an academic point of view, the writing of a 25-page study guide for the PS-MUN Legal Committee taught me so much. I've learned the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court inside-out, I finally figured out how to cite sources in MLA format, but most importantly, I understood international law. I went from having a faint idea of how legal doctrines work to understanding the mechanics of international legislation, its loopholes and flaws, that sadly result in impunity for perpetrators of unspeakable atrocities against humanity. However, the way my friends from the MUN club made me grow as a person is the most notable benefit of all. The bonds I cultivated during the conferences and our trip to the Netherlands have made me eternally grateful for this club. For others, participation may simply be another line of text in their CV, but for me, this was an inimitable, unforgettable experience. What about you?

Orestis: Looking back now, I can tell I've grown a lot not just as a delegate but as a person in general. Getting to attend such conferences in one year was something I didn't expect, and every single one of them was different in its own way. THIMUN was probably the most exciting but also the most nerve-wracking. Being in a room with students from all over the world was something I had never experienced before, and having to speak on behalf of my delegation in front of all those people really pushed me to be more confident. It was by far the most demanding conference I had ever attended, and pushed me out of my comfort zone, as there were many very experienced delegates, whose debate skills were extraordinary. DSA MUN was also intense.

Konstantinos: Intense in what way? What stood out in your opinion?

Orestis: The debates were serious, and I had to work really hard to build alliances. I was sad to discover they did not give out awards, but this led me to be even more relaxed, confident, and able to enjoy the debate wholeheartedly. The paradoxical relation between the inexistence of awards and the intensity of debates taught me a lot about my conversational skills, as my committee took a more meaningful approach to its topics, aiming not to impress the Presidency but to provide substantiated arguments for various positions and defend my delegation's views on touchy issues. Enough about us. I think it is only fair that we mention our advisors, Ms. Kavroulaki and Mr. Rozakis.

Konstantinos: They deserve credit. A lot of it. They put up with us and the whole club's silly mistakes...

Orestis: Which is admittedly hard and admirable...

Konstantinos: And answered all our questions, even though some were self-evident...

Orestis: Not to mention all the times we were late, and we delayed the whole group....

Model United Nations

By Spyros Glykos

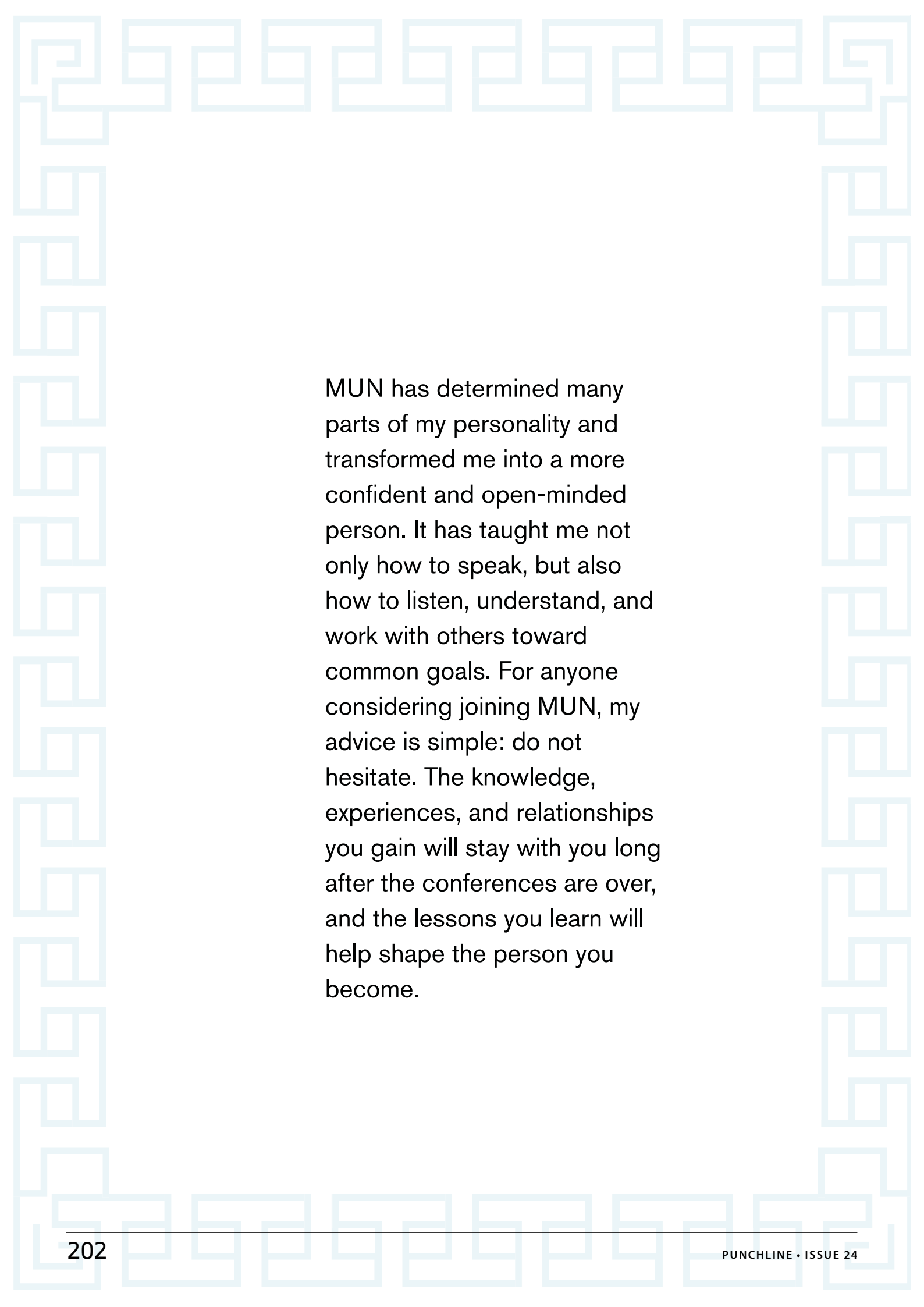
Model United Nations (MUN) has been far more than just a school club for me; it has been one of the most defining experiences of my school journey. Through MUN, I have learned how to debate effectively, defend my opinions with confidence, and better understand the complexities of global politics. I have educated myself on pressing international issues and collaborated with students from different backgrounds to develop innovative and thoughtful solutions. These experiences have not only strengthened my critical thinking and communication skills, but they have also shaped the way I view the world and my role within it.

One of the most remarkable aspects of MUN has been the opportunity to connect with students from across the globe. Engaging with people who hold different perspectives and ideas has taught me the value of open-mindedness, diplomacy, and respectful dialogue. MUN has also allowed me to travel to some of the world's most important centers of diplomacy, including the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva and the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Having the chance not only to visit these institutions, but also to debate and participate in conferences within them, was both inspiring and unforgettable.

These moments showed me how meaningful discussion and cooperation can truly influence the future. However, MUN is not only about politics and debate. It is also about community, friendship, and shared experiences.

Through countless conferences, late-night preparation sessions, and collaborative challenges, I have created lifelong memories and friendships that I will always cherish. The MUN community welcomes students with open arms, encouraging them to grow academically, socially, and personally. It creates an environment where all voices matter and where students are inspired to become active, informed, and compassionate global citizens.

As our school just celebrated its first centennial, MUN represents many of the values that have defined our institution for the past hundred years: curiosity, leadership, collaboration, and a commitment to making a positive impact on the world. At the same time, it reflects our vision for the future. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, programs like MUN prepare students to think critically, communicate across cultures, and approach global challenges with empathy and determination. Looking ahead to the next century, I believe these qualities will be more important than ever.



MUN has determined many parts of my personality and transformed me into a more confident and open-minded person. It has taught me not only how to speak, but also how to listen, understand, and work with others toward common goals. For anyone considering joining MUN, my advice is simple: do not hesitate. The knowledge, experiences, and relationships you gain will stay with you long after the conferences are over, and the lessons you learn will help shape the person you become.

INSIGHTS FROM OUR MUNners

What MUN-related qualities do you consider to be the most useful for your future studies and career?

By Anna Mili

I believe that through my participation in MUN conferences, I have gained many qualities that will be extremely useful for my future studies and career. First of all, during lobbying, I had to collaborate with people with diverse personalities, nationalities, and ages, and develop my communication skills. This will largely help me in the future, since it taught me how to cooperate with my peers effectively. Moving on, by making speeches, either prior to the conference or on the spot, I have obtained public speaking skills, and am confident in speaking in front of a crowd as well as answering questions. Lastly, I have developed my research skills by conducting thorough research before and during conferences, making sure to use a variety of sources to increase credibility and avoid fake information. In a world where fake news is everywhere, this skill is

necessary for the future and will largely benefit my studies and career.

By Areti Chaskopoulou

Participating in MUN has significantly changed the way I perceive and understand global issues, diplomacy, and my role as a global citizen. Before joining, I saw related matters, including climate change, poverty, etc., in a very simple way. But through research, lobbying, and debate, I started understanding the complexity of them, their limitations, and the countless different perspectives. Representing different countries taught me to put my personal opinions aside and understand how factors such as economics, politics, history, and culture influence decision-making. MUN also showed me how diplomacy works in practice, which helped me greatly to understand it. It

showed me how negotiation, cooperation, and even compromise are essential. Lastly, it helped me see my role as a global citizen. It inspired me and motivated me to stay informed about world issues and think critically, elements that will definitely help in my future endeavors.

By Ariadni Boumi

Many qualities will be useful to me in the future for both my studies and my career. Firstly, public speaking is a general skill that all people should have because it is vital when working with others, as in the future you might need to pitch a project or an idea to them. Furthermore, communication and collaboration are two qualities that will be necessary when having to work with a large group of people, and most importantly, when you are the coordinator. Through MUN, you will also learn to work with people from different countries, with whom

you may not speak the same language, so you need to find a way to communicate. Lastly, being able to support your ideas with reasons is one of the basic qualities taught in MUN, as you need to draft resolutions based on topics you probably have no knowledge of and find arguments to support your points.

By Evelina Michailidi

This year was the first year that I attended the MUN Club. I must admit my overall experience has been very positive. One comment that I would like to make in terms of preparation is that delegates should try to spend time with their advisors and mentors at school, apart from the work done at home. Personally, I attended only one MUN conference, where I was assigned the GA6 Committee, the legal committee. Having a clear view of the specific committee, I believe that it is quite a difficult one. Even though I did not have a really

hard time, I didn't perform as well as I could because it was my first time, and there is still much to learn. To be more specific, I only had the chance to speak twice. The thing I was happiest about was that I learnt quickly the terminology, which was quite a difficult thing to master. Also, I was proud of myself for writing an impromptu P.O.I. (Point of Information) and read it in front of the chairs and the rest of the delegates. Overcoming insecurities will definitely help in all spheres of life in the future!

By Marina Piperaki

During my time in MUN, I realized that some of the qualities we practice are actually really helpful for our future studies and career. Confidence in speaking is one of the biggest ones, because MUN pushed me to talk in front of others even when I was nervous. I also learned how to think quickly during debates and stay calm when

I had to respond on the spot, which is something I know I will use in my studies and career. And finally, teamwork has been a huge part of MUN. Getting to work with people who have different ideas taught me how important communication and compromise are, no matter what I end up doing later on.

By Manouela Bolioti

Throughout my MUN experience, I have gained a handful of qualities that can be useful for my future studies and my career. In further detail, one skill has been critical thinking. MUN has truly changed my way of thinking, as I had to brainstorm resolutions and arguments on my own with no help from either an adult or AI. Additionally, another skill has been public speaking. When I first joined the MUN club, I wasn't so confident speaking in front of a

big crowd, but through the conferences that I attended, I got over that fear and actually started to enjoy expressing my thoughts and arguments to others. Lastly, I developed the quality of collaboration and teamwork that is extremely important for my future pursuits since working with others is a prerequisite of success.

By Niki Chomenidi

I believe that one's participation in a number of MUN conferences can be extremely useful for their personal and professional development. To begin with, through MUN you learn how to form structured opinions based on factual evidence, and to support them effectively, a skill useful in all areas of one's life, whether it is fighting with their loved ones, or defending global justice. Then, you

constantly cultivate your public speaking skills, because by developing a sort of attachment to your topics and what you think the right approach to them is, you speak up for what you believe in, making every word you say filled with determination and passion. So, through MUN, one can acquire extremely useful skills applicable to all areas of life, no matter what their dreams or aspirations are.

If you were advising a new delegate joining next year, what three specific pieces of advice would you give them, based on what you wish you had known at the start of this year?

By Anna Mili

I believe that new delegates joining next year should receive the following advice. First of all, I would encourage delegates to prepare for their conferences. This way, they will be able to contribute during lobbying by including their own clauses in their resolutions, but it will also be much easier for them to participate during closed debate. Additionally, I would advise newcomers to socialize with the other delegates: firstly, this will ensure that their resolutions are of high quality and the product of many different people's work; secondly, they will become more open-minded developing their social skills. Lastly, I would recommend delegates to overcome their fear of public speaking and obtain the floor to make speeches and present information. They must leave their comfort zone and not be

afraid of judgment, expressing their opinion, and supporting their alliance, even by delivering short speeches.

By Areti Chaskopoulou

Through MUN, I was able to develop several qualities that are really valuable for my future studies and any future career I choose to follow. This includes being able to research topics efficiently.

Preparing for conferences requires analyzing complex topics while considering all aspects and factors through reliable sources. This is essential for both academic work and professional environments. Continuing, it also helped me familiarize myself with public speaking, as it is basically a big part of all conferences. It also encouraged me to present my ideas clearly and confidently, and all this is particularly useful, especially

in careers that involve leadership. position. Lastly, I would suggest
Lastly, negotiation is a big part. In a that they not be afraid to speak
lot of situations, you are forced to because maybe they did not have
negotiate with other delegates and time to read all of the study guide
work together to find a solution, butand are not sure about some
also collaborate with people with things. Everyone in an MUN should
different viewpoints. try to take part in the debate and
not be afraid of public speaking.

By Ariadni Boumi

I would advise any new delegates
to actually listen when the rules of I would offer three key pieces of
procedures are explained and pay advice to any new delegates
close attention to how you should coming in next year based on my
draft a proper and successful experience of this past year. First,
resolution. I would also note that be well prepared, but do not allow
perhaps trying to draft a sample your preparations to restrict you.
resolution for a random topic could Instead of putting all your energy
help you get used to writing your into memorizing what you want to
clauses. Then, I would advise them say, understand that MUN is about
to try not only to read the study being spontaneous and able to
guides before the conference, but respond to what other delegates
also conduct small research of theirsay in real time. Secondly, working
own based on the topic assigned, together with other delegates is a
so they can be fully aware of their very important part of MUN. An
country's excellent resolution comes from

By Chrysa Vekri

working together to create alliances and sharing ideas, not independently. Thirdly, don't be afraid of speaking. Your confidence in speaking publicly will build over time, and the best way to do that is to participate actively.

By Evelina Michailidi

What I would advise students who might want to join the club in the future is to be prepared that MUN is not just a fun club that you can skip several times, but a club that needs commitment and enthusiasm for what you are going to be doing there. Moreover, I would like to point out that even if you don't do well in your first MUN Conference, due to stress or other reasons, do not give up. Confidence is built through experience.

By Marina Piperaki

At the start of the year, I was also a new delegate, and I had no idea what I was supposed to do. So the first piece of advice I would give to a new delegate is not to be afraid to ask the other members of our MUN club for advice. All of the experienced delegates were more than happy to help me with my MUN journey, and we even became good friends. Secondly, do not be afraid to speak up during a conference. When I attended my first conference, I was really shy, and I didn't want to give a speech. But my chairs encouraged me to speak up and make a speech. After that, I gained the confidence to speak up even more. Lastly, do not be afraid to have fun with it. MUN might be serious, but there is no reason that you shouldn't have fun with it.

So, there is no need to feel anxious! Just relax and enjoy the moment to the fullest!!

How has participating in MUN changed the way you see global issues, diplomacy, or your own role as a global citizen?

By Manouela Bolioti

Participating in the Model United Nations Club this past year has transformed the way I view global issues and international cooperation. Before joining MUN, I had only a superficial understanding of world challenges and was largely unaware of the complexities that affect societies on a global scale. The conferences I attended provided me with the opportunity to research conflicts, climate change, and economic systems from different perspectives, which is what made my experience so interesting. MUN also gave me the opportunity to learn more about global history and politics that I never even knew existed. I started to understand each nation in depth and recognize how different cultures shape the world. Overall, I believe that MUN has, in fact, changed my role as a global citizen since I have become more aware of what is happening in the real world!

The background of the page is a full-page abstract artwork by Emmelia Fine. It features a rich palette of blues, ranging from deep, dark indigos and purples to lighter, almost white highlights. The texture is highly expressive, with visible brushstrokes and layered applications of paint. On the left side, there are vertical, wavy lines that suggest a sense of movement or perhaps a reflection on water. The right side is more densely textured, with intricate, almost floral or organic patterns that emerge from the darker tones. The overall effect is one of depth and emotional intensity.

Art Work by Emmelia Fine

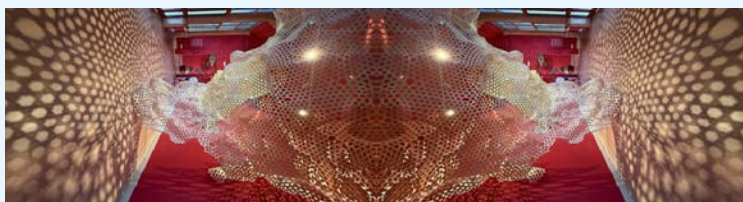
Recommendations

Our recommendation for a unique cultural experience:

Biennale in Venice

By Olga Danilatou

Venice in itself is an architectural miracle. Venice hosting the 19th Architectural Biennale, which closed on the 23rd of November 2025, cannot but make a wholly unique architectural experience, linking the wonders of the past to modern innovation. Curated by Carlo Ratti—the architect who proclaims that "architecture is survival"—the eagerly awaited show was titled *Intelligens. Natural. Artificial. Collective*, and was dedicated to circularity and sustainability in a fast-changing world (Dogan). In this respect Venice provided the ideal setting: just as architecture was about survival when the city's first inhabitants had to build on water to save themselves from invading peoples, so, today, architecture seeks to pave the way between growing human needs and dwindling resources.



With 298,000 total visitors (around 1,530 a day), 66 national pavilions, over 750 participants, approximately 300 exhibition installations spreading out in the Pavilions of the Giardini and the Arsenale, this year's Architectural Biennale provided a feast for the eyes as much as food for thought.

However—unless you know the way—getting to the venues can prove to be a challenge in itself! Roaming the city may be a delight, but its intertwining streets are difficult to navigate for one who is unfamiliar with them, so attempting to avoid the crowds at St Mark's Square meant I soon got lost in the sparsely built-area of boat-yards in the back of the Arsenale. It was only after putting my (very limited) Italian to the test and a fair bit of back and forth, that I was back on track past the biglietteria, and into Carlo Ratti's Biennale Introduction Room.

Described as “a physical and symbolic gateway to Carlo Ratti’s reflection on the planet’s future” it was certainly an immersive experience: a dark, humid room, filled with oppressive heat and the mechanic buzz of what seemed like dozens of old air-conditioning units whizzing ineffectively overhead, over a maze-like passage, interrupted by huge tanks of dark water one was forced to navigate around (Khan). But just as you were about to pass out, you crossed a sweep of black curtain, and the heat lifted. You were now admitted into the exhibition itself: room after room of hope, of solutions, of ideas.

There was everything here. A wealth of maquettes, miniature buildings, even entire cities and townscapes of the future, built in minute scale: odd-looking worlds built of moss and spaceship-like creations imagining worlds beyond our own, but also a treasure of new ideas and new materials. Colourful ceramics to serve as insect, bird and bat-nests in urban settings, promises of a sustainable future for architecture – modular clay-like forms, light structures built out of wood and paper, tapestry-like constructions of stretched fabric, a tea-kettle boiling thanks to the power of the sun, floating island-like gardens full of living crickets, experimental green patches dedicating to ‘greening’ urban settings, even a breath-taking construction by Norman Foster built to replace the utilitarian Venetian vaporetto stops.



All of a sudden, a Greek contribution: Vessel, a group of artists working in Aegina, presented a display featuring *Posidonia Oceanica* (seagrass), “the only flowering plant in the ocean” (Bridle). Once used as insulation for houses in the Greek islands and as packaging for Venetian glassmakers, it was presented as an artistic influence (decorating ceramic pieces) but also as an eco-friendly building material. Collected from beaches, seagrass is sustainable, free and sends a powerful message about reuse. Mixed with clay, mortar, and lime, it can create tiles or panels, showing how pioneering new materials make a difference. But seagrass also sends a message about the fragility of our ecosystem: it is a powerful carbon sink, removing carbon from the atmosphere, at risk today from climate change and illegal anchoring in the Aegean.

Another stunning project, from afar this time, was Nigerian architect Tosin Oshinowo’s *Alternative Urbanism: The Self-Organized Markets of Lagos*, which received a Special Mention. The concept was powerful yet effective: an architectural setup centered around a series of projecting screens. Temporary walls fashioned of what turns out to be denim fragments. Suddenly, the video projection enveloped and transported you to the vast, open-air second-hand markets of Lagos, where the ‘redundant’ wares of the West find new life. What was striking was the distinctive images, the noise of the stalls, but also the urban science. The way vendors stick together, creating a new organization - what Oshinowo describes as “a topography of retail” (Oshinowo Studio). A topography that tells the story of consumerism and waste transformed through reuse, of a circular economy made tangible.



I got a chance to talk to this award-winning Nigerian architect, who spoke to me from her studio in Lagos and explained more about this installation but also about how circularity really works, in practice, in the Nigerian capital. “Do we really need the new Iphone?” she asked, pointing out that what the Global North considers old, outdated or ‘obsolete’ acquires a new life in Africa, where second-hand goods (from electronics to textiles) live more than one lives. As she shared some of her initial research on the markets -through incredible videos and visuals- I felt privileged, to be speaking to one of the women changing the architectural field in Africa.

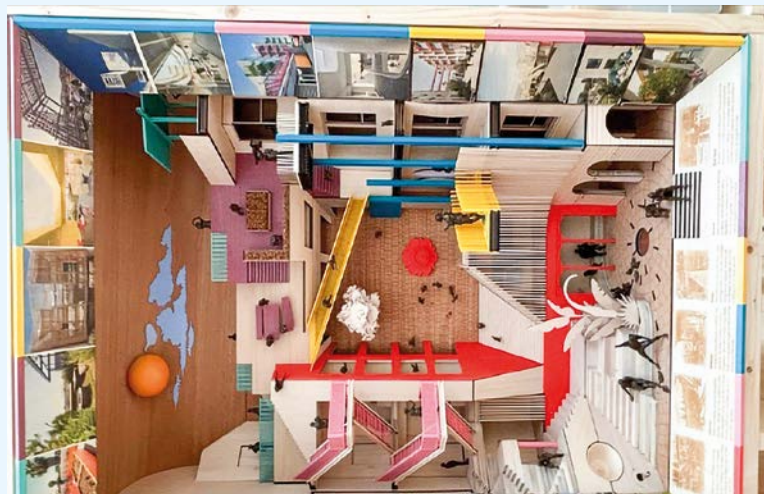
Moving on to the second venue, the historic Giardini where the National Pavilions are always housed, I made my approach more wisely, taking a water-taxi ride across the lagoon. A treat, which also grants a spectacular view of the Piazza San Marco from the sea on the way. Here, I spent the day, lost among the wealth of pavilions and ideas from around the world.

If I were to choose the highest scorers, for me, I would start with “most daunting”: the German Pavilion. Titled Stresstest, it used massive, immersive screens portraying thermal images of European cities under heat-stress, taking on global warming and truly sending the message across. Even as you prepared to enter the building, going up the entrance steps, designers used sound to send a message of foreboding: a church bell tolled mournfully as an ominous sign. In the interior, a heigh-ceilinged room was filled with vast screens, and you realised that you were looking at panoramic views of European capitals –Athens among them – but also cities across Italy, Spain and Northern Europe at the height of summer: suddenly normal ‘city views’ turned to the reds and oranges of thermal cameras, marking record temperatures of over 40 degrees, steaming masses of concrete and asphalt, pavements and tarmac. In the next room, the message became personal. Hidden thermal cameras now traced the body heat emanating from you: from the visitors’ own bodies. You could suddenly see yourself, contributing to the problem with your own body-heat. A problem that is urgent as much as it is personal.

The British Pavilion could be described as ‘most inclusive’. It received the Special Mention for a National Participation and focused on the role of architecture as a form of dialogue and as a reparation for the damages of a colonial past. The pavilion addressed the legacy of colonialism and explored the shared past between Britain and Kenya (which received its independence in the 1960s).

Aptly titled the GBR - Geology of Britannic Repair it focused on geology and culture. It included spectacular installations, such as a beautiful piece of rattan ‘lace’ which replicated the geological shape of the ‘slave caves’ (where people were held before being shipped to Britain). But the most stunning element was a veil of beads, covering the entire outer surface of the building. It was made of large beads – some black (made of powdered charcoal), some earth-coloured, made of clay and some of red glass. The inspiration was Massai dwellings – which are also made of clay/mud and ash. The red glass beads came from India (a reference to another famous British colony and a reference also to Murano glassmaking). The secret of the veil is that it can both hide and reveal: an allusion to all the people whose stories are resurfacing after being lost in the colonial narrative.

The ‘most fun’ pavilion, for me, would be the US contribution, which was named PORCH: An Architecture of Generosity and focused on the porch as a typical American space. An in-between space, neither wholly private nor entirely public, but both, a place of interaction, and according to the designers also “a space of welcome”. Lounge chairs set under the impressive wooden construction seemed to invite you in, but what was exciting was what lay within the building itself. 54 projects, made by artists, architects, and designers from across the U.S. each bursting with colour, rich detail, perfect dollhouses reflecting multiculturalism and diversity.



But if I had to pick an overall favourite, it would be the Spanish pavilion. Titled *Internatilities: Architectures for Territorial Equilibrium* it was all about balance. A whole room was filled with ‘balances,’ gigantic scales on which miniature models of houses showcased sustainability in their design and materials. Most impressive of all, a massive archway presented a spectacular solution to architectural waste: it highlighted how many elements of a pre-existing construction can be reused in a new building, promoting circularity and the reuse of materials.

Overall, for me, the Biennale Architettura 2025 was a unique, thrilling experience. One with a clear overall message, beautifully communicated through a display that combined all the senses—sight, touch, smell, and sound—and even taste (for those who were brave enough to have a coffee made from distilled canal water in Canal Cafe!). A message of warning for our world, but also one of hope: the problem is out there, as is a large part of the solution. It is up to us to make the choices for a sustainable future.



Our recommendation for an unforgettable summer: Zakynthos, the Jewel of the Ionian

By Amaryllis Papadimitriou

Zakynthos, the famous "Fiore di Levante" (Flower of the East) of the Venetians, is one of the most spectacular natural sites in the Mediterranean. The island's ecology is a vibrant mosaic of wild beaches, lush grasslands, and distinctive ecosystems that support some of the most endangered species in the world, in addition to its breathtaking setting.

The island's topography exhibits a clear duality. In the western and northern regions, where enormous limestone cliffs plunge sharply into blue waters to form famous sites like the Shipwreck and the Blue Caves, one can witness the wild side of nature. The sea is dominated by the white conical cliffs of Mizithres, while the sea's erosion of the rocks has created amazing arches and caverns.



The eastern and southern regions, on the other hand, are fruitful and mild. The lowlands are covered in vast olive groves with millions of trees and vineyards because of the plentiful winter rainfall that keeps the island green throughout the year. At this stage, the shores transform into golden sand beaches that are perfect for life's reproduction.

Zakynthos's nature conceals therapeutic secrets. The waters at Xigia Beach have a milky hue and therapeutic qualities due to undersea springs of sulfur and collagen that emerge from the earth's bowels. Trails through pine trees and fragrant herbs can be found inland on Mount Vrachionas, which leads to traditional settlements with expansive views of the Ionian Sea.



Zakynthos is much more than a beautiful holiday destination; it is a place where nature, history, and biodiversity coexist in remarkable harmony. From its dramatic cliffs and crystal-clear waters to its fertile landscapes and unique ecosystems, the island offers countless opportunities for discovery, relaxation, and inspiration. Whether exploring its hidden natural treasures or simply enjoying its sun-drenched beaches, every visitor can find something unforgettable on this Ionian gem. As summer begins, we wish everyone a season filled with adventure, laughter, rest, and memorable experiences. May your days be as bright as the Zakynthian sunshine and your holidays as refreshing as the island's azure waters.

Happy summer to all!

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Art work by Anna-Maria Nikolaidi