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PUNCHLINE

Psychico College High School

2023 - 2024

Within the pages of our latest magazine edition, explore symbols embodying the contrast between light and dark, a distant green light symbolizing hope amidst shadows, a yearning hand reaching in the darkness, and watchful eyes piercing through the night.

Cover inspired by F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*.

Alkmini Panagopoulou
HS2ELA1

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear reader,

My name is Melissa Ballow, and I am a Fulbright Fellow from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This academic year, I have served as the Psychico College High School English Teaching Assistant.

I cannot overstate what an absolute privilege it has been to teach the students of Psychico College. Our students are inquisitive, passionate, empathetic, and principled. I have time and again been struck by their willingness to ask difficult questions, to make daring creative decisions, to uplift others as they work towards their own goals, and to hold each other accountable. Through their interactions with the course content, each other, fellow staff, and me, know profoundly that this cohort of students has not only the technical know-how to approach problems and the stamina to endure them, but the sense of purpose that will sustain a joy of learning for many years to come. In a world that does not easily show optimism, I see in our students that they will seek camaraderie and opportunity in equal measure, and I cannot wait to see how they continue to change and grow.

Within this collection, you will find academic and creative works that epitomize the themes and values our students care about most: civic responsibility, justice, freedom, compassion, ingenuity, sincerity, earnestness, gratitude, and love. This work is the best of them — their hopes, their dreams, their intellect, their inventiveness, and their thoughtfulness. Each piece handles the big questions with maturity and tact, and I hope that as you read, you will be inspired to ask questions of your own.

From the writing to the art, I hope the spirit of our students resonates with you as much as it has with me. It was a pleasure to have been entrusted with their work, and I am nothing short of honored to present it to you.

Sincerely,



Melissa Ballow

Fulbright Fellow 2023-2024

Punchline Editor-in-Chief



Santima.studio. Group of fists raised in air. Freepik, https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/group-fists-raised-air_12731488.htm. Accessed 20 June 2024.

DECLARATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE

As part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP) program, HS1 students learn about equality and human rights. In studying real revolutions and civil rights activism, students uncovered the ways communities have advocated for the rights of themselves and others and how they voiced concerns with their governance. Using the United States Declaration of Independence as a guide, students reimagined calls for autonomy and change in society — both during historical moments and in their present day scenario as students living and learning today.

Greek Women's Declaration of Independence of 1950

Lydia-Maria Paschal

HS1 Phase 5

In the pursuit of equality with men and exemption from their will, we the women of Greece declare our independence with the power we have been given by the Supreme Judge from all the laws established by men in order to oppress us and deprive us of a free, independent life in the year 1950.

According to the Laws of Nature and to this country's historical identity, it should have already been clear that all people are created equal and, as a result, must be treated as equal without prejudice or discrimination. Considering the unalienable rights we are born with, we believe that we deserve to be offered free and proper education from a young age. In addition, we support the idea of working wherever we want in the job market and we have the right to vote as self abiding citizens.

Human history shows that women have always been compelled to live according to a man's will and beliefs and acquiesce to them in situations such as arranged or forced marriages. For many years, women have not only been oppressed and held in contempt, but have also been forced to live with the expectation that a woman's sole purpose in life was to become a mother, a wife and live in confinement within her household. These social expectations have deprived women of their right to lead an independent life while also inflicting pain on the ones that could not escape from violent husbands or toxic families.

We have openly stated our intentions and actively shown our frustration due to the unfair

biased system ruled by men. We tried to resist throughout insurrectionary acts such as protesting in Athens' town square. Even though many of our own fathers and brothers assent to our requests and support our actions, it seems that the Greek government is uncomfortable with the European Union's developments and insists on maintaining all these unfounded and outdated laws, claiming that they are the will of God.

From this point, we absolve ourselves of the laws which reinforce reductive ideas about the traditional roles of women and we declare independence both from these laws and from men. May this declaration be the vindication for previous generations, as well as an encouragement for the women of the future to develop and be recognized as equal to men, as they deserve.



By Yani Papadimos - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=18508698>

Declaration of Academic Independence

Yiannos Georgantzis and Panos Vagias

HS1 Phase 5

When in the course of academic events, it becomes necessary for students to dissolve from undue burdens put on them that limit their ability to functionally learn, like being assigned homework. Teenagers are compelled to comply with whatever action their teachers tell them to execute, such as completing rigorous, laborious, and demanding homework tasks on a daily basis.

We hold these truths to be evident, that students are endowed with specific and undisputable rights from the moment they are born, and that all students without a single exception should be liberated from homework tasks and projects in order to enjoy their rights to the fullest potential. To ensure that students freely exercise these rights, the practice of endless homework assignments should be immediately halted. Homework should not be an obstacle to the well-being and development of a student, whether it concerns physical, mental, or spiritual disciplines. Even a slight amount of homework can inevitably lead to increased stress, burnout, and a diminished love and passion for learning, as evidenced by research. Therefore, it is the right of students to abolish homework and search for another way of learning to promote genuine understanding, creativity, and more importantly, a more pleasant academic experience.

In the course of the students' academic career, schools have committed the following injustices:

They have overwhelmed students with homework.

They have limited students' interactions with their family.

They have made them unable to relax.

They have diminished their interest in learning.

They've been compelled to reduce their involvement in extracurricular activities.

They have deprived them of necessary rest.

They have rendered them unable to explore their personal interests.

They have pressured them to be academically perfect.

They have severely limited their social interactions.

Nor have schools been supportive in addressing these injustices with our teachers. We have requested from time to time for them to stop their unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have made various attempts to negotiate terms with them on multiple occasions, but to no avail. We have appealed to their academic justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our similar interests. They have been deaf and ignorant to our pleas. We must, therefore, do whatever we believe is necessary to be relieved of the troubles homework is causing us.

We, therefore, the students, advocate for education free of any homework tasks, appealing to every school principal on our planet for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name of every school, and by consent of every student, solemnly publish and declare, that homework should be abolished;

that all it does is affect the life of students negatively, and that all connection between students and teachers is worsened because of it. For the support of this declaration, with the firm reliance on the protection of the mental and physical health of every student, and the full consent and support of the students' parents, we mutually pledge to each other our academic performance, our mental health, and our wellbeing.

“... we mutually pledge to each other our academic performance, our mental health, and our wellbeing.”

Students' Declaration of Independence

Philip Kritikos, Kira Panagiotou, and Avgi Stavropoulou

HS1 Phase 5

When in the course of human events, it is absolutely necessary for students to have the freedom to express their opinions concerning some of their school's community issues. In addition, it is important for the students to have equal say as teachers when it comes to making decisions affecting the school system. Hence, this leads us students to write our own Declaration of Independence for the rest of the world to acknowledge why we should and will be independent and equal to the rest of the members of our school's community.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all students must be equal to one another, that we have the right to speak freely about our thoughts and feelings on a particular matter, and that we have the right to indulge in leisure time. To secure these rights, all students must work together and not let teachers take control of these goals, since the decisions made regarding the school system do not only affect teachers, but also students. Furthermore, it is crucial for students' mental stability to receive equal opportunities as a peer group, avenues to speak up about their beliefs, and have enough time to do their homework and enjoy extra curricular

activities.

Up until now, pupils have silently accepted the following discriminatory behavior from teachers. However, it is high time that we take action and abolish unfair conditions, among them the excessive quantity of homework, strict and inflexible system in terms of tests and quizzes, and a failure to accommodate our alternative interests.

Although we were not looking forward to constructing this document, it was our last resort, we have made various attempts to achieve our common goals, such as petitions for reconsideration of our schedule. Nevertheless, we went unheard and there was no response from the principal.

We, as representatives of Psychico College High School Student Association, therefore declare that we are equal to and independent from the rest of our school's community members and have the right to make any essential changes which will benefit us. In conclusion, we are willing to devote our time and attention to improving our academic experience.

Declaration of Independence from Oppressive School Systems

George Lazarakos

HS1 Phase 5

When in the course of student life, it becomes necessary for students to dissolve the school system which has fatigued and troubled them through various methods over the years and to assume the separate and equal station to which the laws of education and the rules of the school entitle us: a decent respect for our opinions and demands should be made public.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all students are endowed with certain unalienable rights, such as the freedom of expression, the pursuit of a peaceful and pleasant state in class, and the right to a safe learning environment. In order to secure such rights, school systems are introduced, deriving their just powers from the consent of the learners and whenever any form of school becomes destructive of these systems, it is the right of the students to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new system, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such a way as they deem to positively affect their learning and happiness.

Below, see our list of complaints and grievances:

- The absence of student representation in decision-making processes makes students less productive and less interested in the lesson.
- Our classrooms lack sufficient resources, obstructing our ability to effectively learn.
- Too many hours of school attendance each day are needed, leaving pupils exhausted and disinterested.

- There are certain students in class who are quite annoying and disrupt the flow of our lesson.
- Canteens are crowded during the break, resulting in a lack of products for sale at the end of the break.

Security is inadequate, and the campus is not well-guarded, making pupils feel frightened and hesitant to learn in such an environment. We have requested change through respectful communications, both as individuals and through student organizations, but have failed to be heard. We have engaged in dialogue with members of the school management, yet our concerns remain unaddressed. And we have exhausted every available solution within the current system, yet systemic problems still exist.

We, therefore, Psychico College student representatives, appeal to the school and its administration for the rectitude of our intentions, represent students needs, and solemnly publish and declare, that we are, and of right ought to be, free and independent. We should be absolved of all allegiance to the current school system, and all academic connections between us and the school are and ought to be totally dissolved, and that as free and independent students, we should have full power to establish new policies and procedures that will benefit our academic and personal growth. For the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the support of each other and our collective determination, we mutually pledge to each other our support, our voices and our actions.

Canada's Declaration of Independence from Britain (1838)

Alexander Andrews and Stavros Damalitis

HS1 Phase 5

When in the course of human events, citizens of a region deem necessary the abolishment of political bonds in order to reassure their freedom from a foreign power that has implemented laws different from the ones commanded either by God or by Nature, it is in the hands of the people to challenge that foreign dominion.

As representatives of the citizens of Canada, we acknowledge the ideals and social values that represent the Canadian society as a whole. We believe that every citizen has the right to elect and to be elected to serve in public offices. Additionally, we are entitled to the rights of freedom of speech, property, education, employment, and religion. However, when the integrity of these rights is threatened or taken away from us, we have the right to protest in order to reform and re-elect a government that will serve our interests and beliefs. We hold these rights to be self-evident and we believe in the necessity of the reigning authority to maintain them.

Until this moment, we have remained silent against the provocations of the British authority, staying on the sidelines of the ruling of our territory and obeying without any question the orders of the colonizers. However, we deem it is the right time for the world to know the mistreatment we have collected from their side:

- Heavy taxes implemented on us by the British Authority

- No representation by Canadians in the British Parliament
- No representation by Canadians in public offices that obtained power in the colony
- Mistreatment of the native aboriginal population of Canada, leading to their destruction

However, this phenomenon of oppression by the British monarchy with King George III as its head, is not something new. We have tried multiple times to address not only the governor (appointed by the British), but also the Parliament. Further, after having eradicated all diplomatic paths, in the past with the support of our allies, the French, we have sought through war to find solutions to terminate Britain's oppression, with no eminent results. All this accumulated pressure has left us no other path but of that to seek independence.

We, the citizens of Canada, have thus decided to stop acknowledging the British sovereignty over us, and become free and independent from the British colonizers. We endorse this movement to grant the citizens of the Republic of Canada their freedom from British colonial rule!

“All this accumulated pressure has left us no other way but to seek the path of independence.”



Unknown photographer. *Young man speaking at a podium.* 2024. UC San Diego, https://roosevelt.ucsd.edu/_images/giving/student-presentation.png. Accessed 17 June 2024.

SPEECHES ON VOTING RIGHTS

The IB MYP program requires participation in an interdisciplinary unit, or IDU, every academic year. Students combine their knowledge of two distinct areas of study to generate a fresh perspective and experience a new level of engagement with subject matter during the course. For MYP Year 5 students, the Subject of Inquiry centers around responsibility through voicing one's opinion. Following research in the Civics and English departments, students wrote speeches on the right to vote and how participating in elections honors the ongoing fight to preserve civil rights for all.

Voting: A Right and a Responsibility

Myrto Babatsikou

HS1 Phase 5

Respected teachers, esteemed guests, and beloved classmates: we have gathered here today to discuss a vital topic. It is of the utmost urgency that we both recognize and understand your voting rights and take advantage of them fully. Before we analyze the reasons, I would like to thank the student council for granting me the chance to be on this podium in front of you today, as well as to thank you for your presence and attention.

Suppose you were living in a society in which you were robbed of your right to vote, and you were marginalized by a controlling, non-democratic government. Wouldn't you acknowledge the importance of your right to vote? A vote determines your representation in a society, which in turn affects your way of living. Your vote is important, and in this society, it is equal to all others.

Your most basic right in the Democratic society which we live in is your right to vote. It is your only chance of finding a way to have your voice be represented. Not only do you practically acquire a say in the people that represent you, and therefore in the process of your society's development, but you have the power of change far into your country's future, and in the lives of many generations to come. In the country you shaped through voting, remember, by not voting you basically leave matters in this country in the hands of someone else?

Friends and classmates, haven't you ever considered that in a few years, your vote will be determine crucial decisions of public matter and will thus shape your country and change your life? We are the future of this country, and all countries for

that matter. Of course, we shall not forget all other age groups, as they all play a vital role in the formation of our society. It is high time that we all got educated on our right to vote and the ways we can all contribute to a peaceful and successful democratic election. We are responsible for our vote, we are responsible for the impact that our ballot holds. We are obliged to vote. We are the stepping stone for our country's development. We must educate ourselves on our country's needs based on its socioeconomic background and historical and political contexts, in order to cast a meaningful vote that will change our country, our future and our lives for the better.

I believe we should be grateful to be granted the right to vote. We should all acknowledge that the circumstances weren't always like this. Situations such as voter suppression, disenfranchisement, and other methods of taking away one's rights, usually from minority groups, were widely spread and applied throughout the world. Whether those situations concerned African Americans, women, or any other minority group, these policies were unfair, unjustified, and wrong. The civil rights movement and all other types of protests to ensure civic justice did not take place for us to take this right of votig so lightly.

I leave you with this: our voting rights are important and we carry a heavy responsibility on our backs. We will all exercise our rights to the utmost and educate ourselves in order to express our beliefs in society. Our ancestors

did not fight for their voting rights in ongoing protests just for us to ignore their efforts and diminish the value of the ballot.

Thank you for providing me with your undivided attention. I hope to have added some perspective and hope this alters your understanding for the better.

Right:

Chinn, Paul. *Students stroll past an Election Day rally to vote at UC Berkeley in 2018*. 4 Nov. 2022. *The Nation*, Getty Images, UC Berkeley, <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/voter-suppression-barriers-college-students/>. Accessed 18 June 2024.



Don't Turn Your Back

Philip Diamantis

HS1 Phase 5

Ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to join with you today to discuss the reasons for which it is crucial that every single citizen of this country should participate in political matters to the extent the law permits them to do so. This can only turn to reality if we use a valuable weapon, a weapon that is also known as the most basic right of a citizen in democracy: the right to vote.

As I look at this room, it makes me sad that half of you, according to surveys, did not vote in past elections. It is known around the world that once, there used to be people who participated in battle in order to be provided with the right to vote. Here we are – we have been given the right, so we can use it to represent our voice, our opinions, to make this country better. Yet, some of us still refuse to use it. What you take for granted, that others had to fight for, is a great example of ignorance that will lead to disastrous consequences regarding the leadership of this country.

I ask you: do you want to take action so that we can prepare our country for the future? As far as I'm concerned, if we don't start caring, if we refuse to take initiative, our country's government will begin to give up on its citizens, just as we have given up on the government.

Many people believe that their opinions cannot bring about important change, and their vote won't significantly make a difference. I advise you not to adopt this mindset. One person's voice is more than enough to change a society, and one vote is strong enough to turn the government around.

You have been given a privilege. Don't turn your back on it. It's time we took action collectively.

Thank you.

The Adolescent Vote

Jason Voustas

HS1 Phase 5

Dear fellow students,
As most of you are well aware, the right to vote is a citizen's most fundamental right. Still, in a democracy, teenagers are not permitted to vote owing to their age, undermining our rights as citizens. The fact that teenagers do not have the chance to vote can be considered as ageism and a deprivation of our fundamental rights. I believe that as a community with a voice, we must demand that this situation be reversed and that teenagers be engaged in the electoral process.

More specifically, being involved in the voting process, teenagers will become more familiar with the system and will develop sufficient experience to make informed decisions about candidates by the time they reach adulthood. Of course, many people will follow their parents' political views at first, but

after a while, they will be able to distinguish the mindset represented by each political party and choose the one with which they can best connect.

Teenagers should not be denied the ability to vote so that they can voice their interests and demands. This can only be accomplished by including them in the voting process to elect those in positions of authority. Teenagers should vote in order to help elect the candidate who will best suit their wants and needs.

Overall, teenagers should not be denied the opportunity to vote, as voting is the most crucial fundamental right of an engaged citizen in democracy. As a result, we adolescents must protest in order to exercise our rights and have our voices heard.

Thank you all for your time and attention.



Faubion, Matt. "Are you even listening?" reads one student's sign. 1 Nov. 2023. Alaska Public Media, Alaska Public Media, Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, <https://alaskapublic.org/2023/11/01/hundreds-of-mat-su-students-stage-walkout-to-protest-school-board-decisions/>. Accessed 17 June 2024.

Voting For the Future

Anna Caradia

HS1 Phase 5

Dear fellow students: we have gathered here today at this conference to discuss the right to vote. I would like us to focus on why we should vote, “Why is this, fundamental right important you may ask me?” but if you really think about it, our voice counts in the coming elections. It is of grave importance that we do not abstain.

The most basic right of an active citizen is the right to vote. It has always been the most hard-won right. Shall we first take a trip to the past? Not so long ago, the only people who could vote were white landowners. Then, after years and years of struggle and protest, black people and women finally won the right to vote. However, it seems that now we have all collectively forgotten what our ancestors have gone through, and the fights they had to give to give for all of us to have the right to vote. We take it for granted, and therefore, we choose deliberately not to vote when the time comes. I am here to remind you why it is important to vote and why we shouldn't, under any circumstances, shy away from doing so.

Voting enables us to change our world and our society. Every single vote counts, so we should never think that it is pointless, nor that one vote will not make any difference, because it will. Our country is run by people we have chosen. We also need to be reminded that we have the power in our hands to rescind that power. I speak for my own observations, but I have seen that there have been many instances when our government didn't act according to the public's desires and needs and we were all rather displeased. Don't you think that it is finally time to

make a difference? All we do in this country is complain about our rulers, and yet when the time comes to vote, we choose to abstain. We continue not to vote. And this is wrong. I understand that some of us might take it lightly but we shouldn't. We, my dear audience, are the future of this country our ballot will bring about the change, so do not take it lightly! While I stand here and talk to you, I want you to think of reasons why we shouldn't vote. I can guarantee you, you will not find any because there are none!

I am one of you, and all I ask is that when the time comes you will not fear and hide. This country needs you, and the future generations need you and your votes. We shall never forget all we have been through and that we should honor this long and tiring fight, and all the blood, sweat, and tears that have been sacrificed for us to be able to vote. The very least we can do is exercise our right to vote. We cannot turn back to how things were. We cannot turn back to a time where only white men could vote, only when the privileged could do so. So I urge you to go vote, to go make the difference that our country so desperately needs. Even though we face difficulties, I still hope that one day there will not be even one of us whose voice will not be heard.

My fellow classmates, with this I come to an end. The time for change is now. Let us create an equal world where our opinions are validated and where we do not sit back and relax while our country is ruled by unqualified people. I urge you to go vote: if not for you, then for your future children and grandchildren.

Voting for the Past, Present, and Future

Lenia Olympiou

HS1 Phase 5

Respected teachers and students, I would like to start off by thanking you for inviting me to take part in this student conference. It is truly an honor to be here today since the topic that will be discussed is vital for our community: none other than our civic rights, and specifically, our right to vote.

We live in a democratic society where “all men are created equal” and everyone has the right to voice their opinions through voting. All of you have the right to vote secretly for whomever you desire. However, there is something that I feel remains unanswered. Why does voting mean nothing to you? Or, put another way, why don’t you vote?

Many leaders have ruled this country. In order to choose those leaders, people have fought for the right to vote. Some were consumed by that fight in order to win it. Voices were put on mute because they were African American, Native American, or women. Just by looking at all of us, I see how far we have come. I see how our ancestors fought when they were marginalized and alienated from society. I see how all of us have finally achieved equal voting rights. But most importantly, I see how we are human.

Travelling back in time to ancient Greece and ancient Rome, we see how choices were made by the many, because these were democracies. If we move forward in time again, though, we understand that the crowd is too large to fit in the assembly of the citizens, so they had to come up with a representative voting system. As I suppose you all

know, this system was quite effective – as long as the people excluded from directly voting accepted their representation. Throughout the years, those socially excluded demanded change. Now looking at the more recent history of the United States, we see how white men would invent quite literally any obstacle to disqualify African Americans from voting, such as literacy tests and grandfather clauses. But it didn’t matter. African Americans were ready to face anything that came their way and in the end, they won this battle in 1965, nearly four decades after white women won that same right.

To me, what seems more terrifying is that the years that separate us from this period are very few. Just imagine that any of you could have been one of the people who kept swimming in the ocean of injustice and drowned because they couldn’t reach the surface. I am sure that all of us are living in the comfort of our homes with food and clean water because we are no longer oppressed by society and because our parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts vote for the future, for democracy, for human rights. We must take it upon ourselves to continue this legacy – if not for them and for our descendants, at least for the lost souls that are watching us from the sky and are waiting to see that their sacrifices weren’t for nothing.

So I say to you, my fellow students: go vote! It will take up only fifteen minutes of your time. Show that you care for your future. Show that you are honoring the past. The time is now. Thank you for your respectful listening and I truly hope to see you thrive as active citizens of this country.

Stronger Together by Voting Together

Melina Papageorgiou

HS1 Phase 5

Esteemed teachers and beloved fellow students: I stand before you not just as a voice, but as a reminder of the power that lies within each and every one of us: the power to shape our future, the power to make our voices heard, the power to vote. I am certain that not many of you have considered that in less than a year, we, 11th grade students, will have the opportunity to contribute to the decisions made for our country. The pathway of life seems to be so long, that we do not realize how fast time runs. It does run, like water. And yet, at the same time we must not waste time and fail to participate in our first encounters with the voting system.

In a world where decisions are made by those who show up, voting is, in fact, our ticket to influence. So why not grab the opportunity to have a say in the most fundamental process in a democratic system? Voting is the cornerstone of democracy and the mechanism through which we express our desires and our hopes for a better tomorrow. By casting our ballots, we participate in the collective decision-making process that governs our society.

As a student myself, I have also had my concerns, as far as the challenging task of voting is concerned. Still, here I am, helping you comprehend the importance of exercising your constitutional right as a citizen to vote. By voting, we become architects of change. As students, we are the forefront of innovation, creativity, and progress. Our novel ideas at a fresh perspective to the political views expressed. Yet, our potential remains untapped if we fail to engage in the political process. Through voting, we have the power to elect

representatives who align with our values, who are committed to creating a brighter future for all, and who defend arguments close to our hearts. Every single vote constitutes a separate step forward Towards building the world we envision – a world of equality, justice, and peace.

May I remind you that voting is a privilege that countless individuals have fought or even died to secure? For example, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. sacrificed his life in order to stand up and speak on behalf of African Americans. Through his remarkable speeches and protesting, He managed to provide African Americans with a “beacon light of hope” and passionately fight for their rights. Therefore, voting is a privilege that should never be taken for granted. Across history, marginalized communities have fought tirelessly for the right to have their voices heard at the ballot box. Women suffragettes, civil rights activists, and others have paved the way for us to exercise this fundamental right. By abstaining from voting, we dishonor their legacy and undermine the sacrifices made by our ancestors. We owe it to them! We have to honor their struggle!

I urge you, my fellow students: let us recognize the unimaginable power we hold in our hands, the power to shape the course of history, the power to create an ideal world for generations to come. Let us embrace this responsibility with passion and determination. Let us stand together and unite! Remember: we do not only shape our own destiny, but the destiny of our nation and our world.

Thank you.

Voting for History, Voting for Humanity

Theodora Papageorgiou

HS1 Phase 5

Dear fellow students and respected teachers: we stand here today to share the importance of one of the principle virtues we have been endowed with: human rights.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “Voting is the foundational stone for political action.” It is an undeniable fact that everyone in this room is yearning for political or social change. It is an undeniable fact that everyone in this room is desperate to see our society evolve into something much greater. Therefore, if we want to call ourselves “active citizens”, we ought to voice our opinion in order to raise awareness, and protect our civil rights. If we want to call ourselves “active citizens”, it is undeniable that we lend a helping hand to those in need, to those who are struggling to find a place in the world. If for one second you think that the sole purpose for political action is personal benefit, you are mistaken. Political action and voting address the wellbeing and representation of each and every member of our society, and therefore, the wellbeing and worth of the society itself. When we vote for leaders who prioritize equality, diversity, and inclusion, we can work towards creating a more just, fair and inclusive society for everyone. For instance, by electing officials who support anti-discrimination policies and fight for racial equality, we can all make progress in overcoming racism. It is important to choose leaders who value and advocate for a society where everyone is treated with the respect they deserve.

Thousands of years ago, our ancestors fought to establish democracy, a political doctrine which would not just uphold the wellbeing of citizens, but

cement core democratic principles that we should all abide by. Thousands of years ago, our ancestors fought so that we, today, may live in a democratic society which allows us to speak and voice our opinions freely. Thousands of years ago, our ancestors fought so that today we can have the right to vote, to choose the chartered path of a democratic society. Our ancestors taught us that we shouldn't sit in the luxury of a passenger's seat but rather fight for what is inherently ours. We should snatch the steering wheel and decide for ourselves what we think is rightfully ours. Imagine if we all gave up on our rights, on democracy. How would our ancestors feel then? Imagine if we took the rights they so passionately fought to gain for granted. How would they feel then? Disappointed? Most certainly.

To all of us that are here today, I urge you to vote. I urge you to vote, not because it's a chore nor a necessity but your right to do so. I urge you to vote because this way you stand up for the issues you care about, you vote to elect the people who have your best interest at heart and will represent you in the best possible way. By voting, you ensure that all communities and individuals feel safe and are well represented. However, if you do not vote, you are giving your own voice and power to someone else. You are giving your ideas, beliefs, and thoughts to someone else. Which is wrong. What is the point of being a citizen if we don't stand for our rights and vote for people that represent our voice in our community? Is this what democracy is all about? I urge you: stand up for your humanity. Vote for your voice!

Thank you for your attention!

Respecting Those Before Us by Voting

Lydia-Maria Paschal

HS1 Phase 5

Dear student community: It is a reality that nowadays, many people do not participate in elections and do not exercise their right to vote. This situation has caused a variety of reactions and confusion among people, especially among us young people, who will be given the right to vote soon. We have gathered here today in order to discuss human rights and, more specifically, the importance of voting rights.

For years, our ancestors have tried to break free from tyrants. For years, our ancestors have tried to create a world of equality. For years, African Americans, women, children, and other groups faced with the “chains of” discrimination have tried to show that their social exclusion is unfair and biased. And I am asking you: why did they even bother to do that? Why did they fight for their voting rights, sacrificing their lives? The answer is because that was the only way to ensure equal rights.

Society has many characteristics. One of them, intensely visible in our time, differentiation. This differentiation usually leads to hierarchy, which creates social exclusion, marginalization of minorities, and segregation. This also causes violence, lack of solidarity, and an absence of social cohesion. However, through voting rights, minorities can stand up for themselves. Minorities have the chance to improve their living conditions and break the manacles of discrimination.

As students, I am sure that you have participated in student elections and completed team projects. And I am sure you feel safer and

more active by exchanging ideas, thoughts, and beliefs. Now imagine if there was no student council body and decisions were solely made by the headmaster. Would you like that? Not! School is mirrors society, so, the exact same thing could happen in our world without voting rights. There would be oppression, violence, hate, discrimination, suffering, pain, and war. I know that these, dear audience, may seem illogical or a mere hyperbole, but history has shown that it repeats itself so voicing your voice is imperative!

You know, an interesting observation regarding our society is that we have free will to do as we please yet we chose not act, not to voice our concerns. We can write our opinion in a newspaper and chose not to. We choose war instead of peace. We abstain from voting while we can actually vote. We prefer to live in our smartphone and Tic Tok reality rather than take matters into our hands. I know that there are few charismatic leaders. I know politicians are keen on money and fame instead of the greater good. But it is exactly because of all of these reasons that we, the future generation, should take it personally and voice our concerns through our ballot, we cannot repeat past mistakes.

Our voting rights are valuable and vital for our lives. Our voting rights are the magic key that always opens the doors of equality and freedom. Let us use that key. Let us drink that healing water of equality. Let us remember all the dead bodies, all the blood, all the souls that built the castle of freedom in which we are able to live in today. We are the future. We are the present. Let’s act, because the clock is ticking.

Each Citizen, All Citizens: Voting for Us

Maria Rigaki

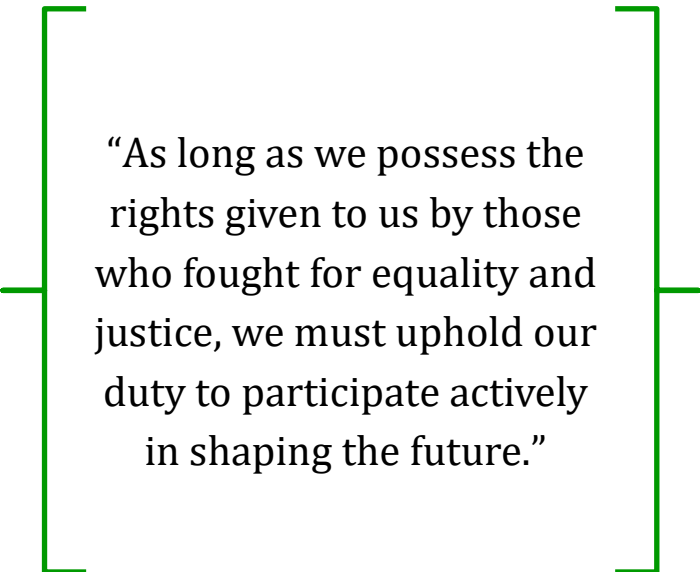
HS1 Phase 5

Esteemed principal, respected teachers, fellow classmates, ladies and gentlemen: I stand before you today to advocate for a fundamental aspect of our democracy: civic responsibility. As we all know, voting is not merely a duty but a profound privilege which we were endowed with as members of a free society. The essence of civic responsibility lies in the power of our voices as active citizens so that our government may uphold our civic rights and make it a priority to foster the wellbeing of our nation. At its core, civic responsibility involves evaluating our opinions, engaging in political discussions, taking concrete actions to affect positive change, and actively participating in the affairs of our communities.

Today, we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, honoring their hard-won battles for equality and justice. In Greece, the right to vote was once restricted to a privileged few, echoing the early days of the discriminatory American republic. Only a select group of white male citizens, often landowners, were granted the right to vote, while women, minorities, and the marginalized were sidelined from political participation. Yet, over time, brave individuals and communities fought tirelessly to challenge the status quo and demand equal access to the ballot box. They paved the way for legislative victories, including the passage of the 15th and 19th amendments to the Constitution, which prohibited the denial of voting rights based on race and gender.

Our ballots serve as powerful tools through which we express our aspirations for the society we envision. Alongside the privilege of voting, we bear the weighty responsibility of educating ourselves on significant issues and making decisions on how best to address them. In taking on this responsibility, we promote the welfare of our communities. As active citizens, we must take advantage of the impact of our individual votes in shaping the course of our society. By exercising our voting rights, we contribute to the creation of a brighter future that represents not just the masses, but each singular person.

As long as we possess the rights given to us by those who fought for equality and justice, we must uphold our duty to participate actively in shaping the future. We must recognize that democracy functions properly when each citizen takes ownership of their role in the political process, ensuring that our voices are heard and our problems are addressed.



“As long as we possess the rights given to us by those who fought for equality and justice, we must uphold our duty to participate actively in shaping the future.”

Our right to vote is not just a privilege; it is a sacred obligation to protect the rights of all. Through voting, citizens ensure that their community is progressing and becoming more pleasant, safe, and free for all.

In a world full of challenges and uncertainties, voting remains our most significant tool for affecting change. It is the antidote to apathy, the remedy of injustice, and the catalyst for

progress. As you cast the ballot, remember the sacrifices of thousands who came before you and the struggles they endured so as to secure our rights. Through the act of voting with conviction and wisdom, we show not only our devotion to democracy, but our belief in the power of ordinary citizens to shape the course of their city, their country, and their history.

Thank you for your attention.



Blake, Mike. A poll worker deposits a mail in a ballot at a drive through polling location at the Registerer of Voters during the California gubernatorial recall election in San Diego. 28 Sept. 2021. Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/california-becomes-8th-us-state-make-universal-mail-in-ballots-permanent-2021-09-28/>. Accessed 21 June 2024.



DELTA SPEECHES

The Delta Speech Competition is a time-honored tradition at Athens College. Seniors from all across the school, KA, KΨ, and IB, take one day to write a speech connecting five selected words to the mission of the school. In this section, you will read the works of two of this year's finalists.

THIS YEAR'S SELECTED WORDS:
VICTORY, DREAMS, WINGS, GRATITUDE, ESCAPE

Delta Speech Winner:

Philippa Papachristopoulou, IB DP Y2

Finalists:

Manos Alevras, IB DP Y2

Irene Gkritzali, Γ5

David Jacob, IB DP Y2

Philippa Papachristopoulou, IB DP Y2

Maximos Anastasios Papaioannidis, IB DP Y2

Semi-Finalists:

Stamatina Iliá, Γ6

Theodora Kotrotsou, Γ3

Ioanna Kostika, IB DP Y2

Aggelos Papaliolios, IB DP Y2

Anxiety: Can we emerge victorious from the city of no escape?

Philippa Papachristopoulou

IB DP Y2

Honourable President, esteemed Principal, respected teachers, and dear classmates,

It was the renowned and beloved Greek poet, Constantine Cavafy, who, in his poem *The City*, wrote: “You won’t find a new country, won’t find another shore. This city will always pursue you.” Standing before you today, I will delve into and confront another city. A city constructed within the recesses of our minds. The city of anxiety. An intricate metropolis, with its twisting alleyways and ominous corners, anxiety, just like the city presented by Cavafy, restlessly pursues us. In fact, according to the World Health Organisation, one in thirteen people suffers from anxiety or an anxiety disorder globally. While there exists a plethora of anxiety-inflicting factors, education, and more specifically, educational systems, stand among the foremost architects of the city of anxiety. As a student who has been subjected to the demanding experiences of the Greek educational system, I feel the profound need to share my journey in this city, as well as my thoughts on how one might emerge victorious from a cityscape in which escape seems... elusive.

Experiencing a vital part of my academic life within the bounds and frameworks of the Greek educational system, I have seen my anxiety levels rise exponentially. Naturally, when an educational system consists of the interplay of societal expectations, rigorous academic demands, and a pervasive culture that imparts the fear of failure in students’ minds, anxiety can only be exacerbated. In

other words, one will simply start getting lost in the complex city of anxiety, trying to navigate boulevards lined with worry, where skyscrapers of insecurity cast long shadows, obscuring the sun and its rays of hope along the way. A seventeen-year-old, let alone a thirteen-year-old middle school student, cannot fathom such pressure.

“Your grade will depend on the score of your semester test!”, “You cannot succeed without memorising this exact passage!”, “Your future relies on your performance in the Panhellenics!”, “If you do not abide by the system’s guidelines, you can consider yourself a failed man walking!” These are merely examples of what my schoolmates describe to me every week. Like towering edifices, the Greek educational system casts shadows upon the mental landscape of the students it scars. I implore you, ladies and gentlemen, to try to imagine how these students might feel. Feel how their hands tremble, and how their mind disassociates from their body. How they lose control of their heart, and of their self.

Maya Angelou, speaking of anxiety, once said: “You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to feel reduced by them.” Reflecting on her words, I cannot help but wonder whether they can apply to the context I described. How can a student not feel reduced if considered unsuccessful by our society’s societal norms? They cannot, or so it seems. During my personal academic experience, I noticed that the only thing that could ease the intrusive thoughts and heal the wounds created by my anxiety, was the support of my teachers at Athens College. Ever since I became a part of the College’s IB Programme, I

started believing in myself. I started minimising the frequency of my preoccupations and restlessness. And, why? Because I felt my teachers' undying support. Because I joined a programme which, quoting C.S Lewis, "does not aim at cutting down jungles, but at irrigating deserts." I find the encouragement I receive valuable; a beacon of light which facilitates my navigation through the vast and hostile city of anxiety.

Therefore, seeking and receiving understanding, empathy, and encouragement from

one's teachers is what I consider as nothing less than a powerful means of tackling the series of hardships imposed by anxiety. It is of paramount importance for us to feel like we are not crossing these cold, empty roads alone. Only with support can one chart a cross through this dark and pursuing city, and emerge victorious from it.

Thank you!



Striving for an escape from the digital world, caring for our welfare

Irene Gritzali

Γ5

Honourable judges and teachers, dear fellow students,

I cannot express the sense of relief I felt last night, after turning off my phone and taking a long walk. I finally found some of the peace I was searching, a much needed break from my addiction to a small-sized device, a tiny object that daily captures my attention, more than a beautiful sunset and consumes more of my time, than conversing with the people close to me. It cannot be denied, ladies and gentlemen, that our mental dependence on technology has had severe repercussions on our well-being. The impersonal relationships promoted by social media, the digital world of superficiality created, this masked alienation of individuals harms us in ways we do not yet realise. However, as we cannot exclude technology from our lives, as it is a vital tool in modern societies, it is important to mark the words of Maya Angelou: “I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it.” It is crucial, ladies and gentlemen, to invest in our welfare, by finding ways to escape the suffocating binds of the digital world. In order to achieve this, it is vital to strive for our own personal growth and the cultivation of substantial relationships.

As we aim to combat the detrimental impact of the digital world on our mental health, it is essential to build resilience through mental growth and cultivation. As students and members of the new generation, we need to sculpt our personal identity, explore our interests and passions, ergo, become well-rounded individuals. We are fortunate enough

to be students of school with the means and fundamentals to promote the self discovery of inquisitive young minds. As experiential learning and the cultivation of critical thinking are the foundations of the academic program of our school, we are being educated to grow intellectually and, thus, increase our mental strength and resilience. We can overpower the toxicity of digital environments, as we are able to reach the psychological strength needed, so as to healthily respond to our overstimulation by technology. Moreover, having the opportunity to participate in the countless academic, athletic and artistic associations and clubs, hosted by your school, undeniably contributes to our self discovery, and forming of our own unique identity. We are in fortunate position, dear classmates, to be able to cultivate self-awareness and personal certainty, traits that further protect us from falling into a main trap of the digital world: seeking closeness validation in the most impersonal environment.

Aside from our own psychological and intellectual growth, in order to overpower the impersonality of social media, it is necessary to cultivate substantial relationships. It is vital to learn the value of the bonds we form with the people close to us, rather than depend on the superficial communication, supported by modern technologies. As we aim to escape the masked alienation of the digital world, the need to invest in forming and preserving healthy, genuine, truthful relationships with our family and peers, is greater than ever. As students of a school that promotes solidarity and collegiality, we are taught to value substantial and honest communication. From learning to cooperate



and respect our peers in discussions and academic activities, to the cultivation of friendships through our school's athletic and artistic associations, Athens College sets the foundations for us, students, to learn to create substantial bonds with the people close to us. We deserve to cherish this opportunity, ladies and gentlemen, and invest in the relationships that contribute to our well-being. To quote Marcel Proust, "Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardens who make our souls blossom".

Ladies and gentlemen, I feel great honour, to have been able to discuss an issue so vital to the

welfare of mankind in modern societies. It is crucial for us all to realise, that even in a society that depends on technology, escaping the suffocating binds of the digital world is not only possible, but utterly beneficial to our welfare. I wholeheartedly hope, dear classmates, that each of us grows as a well-rounded individual, proud of their personal identity, able to cultivate bonds that allow them to live joyfully, free from the malices of mentally depending on a digital world.

Thank you for your attention!



Unknown. Untitled. 21 Jan. 2023. The Asian School, <https://www.theasianschool.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Here-Know-Why-Books-Are-Important-in-Students-Life-1.jpg>. Accessed 20AD.

LITERARY ANALYSIS & MEDIA CRITICISM

High school students interact with complex texts day in and day out — but this means little if our students do not deeply understand and analyze those texts. In this section, you will find student responses to both film and literature which demonstrate deep content knowledge, curiosity, and creativity.

Is *The Great Gatsby* a Love Story?

Ellie Karaviti

HS2 ELA1

With its themes of riches, materialism, and dishonesty, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is widely considered a great American novel that embodies the spirit of the Lost Generation. Although at its core lie complex relationships, whether it can be classified simply as a love story is a matter of interpretation.

On the surface, the novel seems to depict a love story between Gatsby and Daisy. Gatsby's relentless pursuit of Daisy, his extravagant parties thrown in the hopes of attracting her attention, and his unyielding belief in the possibility of their reunion all suggest a deep love. However, a closer observation suggests that what Gatsby loves is not Daisy herself, but rather the idea of her – the symbol of wealth, status, and the American Dream that she represents.

Daisy is more infatuated with the concept of love than she is with Gatsby. She is drawn to Gatsby's wealth and charm, but ultimately chooses to remain with her husband, Tom, who represents the stability and security that Gatsby cannot offer. Tom and Daisy's relationship is superficial rather than genuine, and their reunion ends in tragedy.

Moreover, the book explores the draining power of obsession and the consequences of living in pursuit of an unattainable goal. Gatsby's fixation with Daisy blinds him to the truth about who she is, prevents him from finding true happiness, and eventually leads to his death.

In addition to the central relationship between Gatsby and Daisy, the novel also explores other forms of love. Nick's admiration for Gatsby and his disappointment with the lavishness of the elite

class provide a deeper commentary on love and desire in a highly materialistic society. Likewise, Tom and Myrtle's doomed relationship highlights the emptiness of pursuing love solely for personal gain.

In conclusion, *The Great Gatsby* can be seen as a tale warning about the dangers of emphasizing wealth, status, and the pursuit of an idealized version of love. Readers should consider it to be a love story which also explores other themes. The novel clearly contains elements of a love story; still, the broader featured themes and the complex characters could place the novel under many additional categories, like a social commentary. We may conclude that the story invites each individual to interpret and categorize the book themselves while inspiring them to contemplate the nature of love, desire, and human nature in a changing environment.



Warner Bros. *The Great Gatsby* Leonardo DiCaprio Carey Mulligan. 22 May 2012. *The Hollywood Reporter*, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/great-gatsby-trailer-presents-leonardo-dicaprio-baz-luhrmann-327950/>. Accessed 19 June 2024.

Why I Believe *The Great Gatsby* is a Love Story

Alkmini Panagopoulou

HS2 ELA1

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is often perceived as a quintessential American novel, a tragic tale of love, ambition, and social criticism. At its core, it presents a love story that transcends the bounds of traditional fairy tales, delving into the complexities of love amidst the societal constraints of the Roaring Twenties. While it may not adhere to the conventions of a perfect romance, it offers a heartbreaking portrayal of love's endurance and its collision with the reality of class, gender roles, and the tumultuous era before the Great Depression.

From the beginning, Jay Gatsby's infatuation with Daisy Buchanan serves as the focal point of the narrative. His love for her is not just a fleeting emotion, but a consuming obsession that drives him to build an empire and reinvent himself. Gatsby's lavish parties and extravagant displays of wealth are all orchestrated with the hope of capturing Daisy's attention, illustrating the lengths he is willing to go to for love. However, their love story is far from idyllic. Their romance is marred by societal parameters that render their love forbidden and ultimately unattainable. Daisy, belonging to the upper echelons of society, is bound by the expectations and obligations imposed upon her as a woman of her class. Her marriage to Tom Buchanan, a symbol of old money and social standing, further complicates her relationship with Gatsby, highlighting the divide between old money and the nouveau riche. Throughout the novel, the narrator, Nick Carraway, talks about the sense of disillusionment and moral decay. Gatsby's mansion, with its extravagant parties and ostentatious displays of wealth, serves as a

facade for the emptiness and longing that consume his life. His pursuit of Daisy symbolizes a quest for love, but also a desperate attempt to recapture the realness and the vitality of the past in a world consumed by materialism and superficiality. From Gatsby's relentless pursuit of Daisy to their secret meetings and moments of fleeting happiness, their love story unfolds with a sense of urgency and longing. However, their love is ultimately hindered by the insurmountable barriers of class, societal expectations, and the inexorable passage of time. In a world plagued by economic hardship, love becomes a rare and precious commodity, a beacon light of hope amidst the despair. Gatsby's unwavering devotion to Daisy is proof of the enduring power of love, regardless of the circumstance.

In conclusion, *The Great Gatsby* is not merely a love story, but a touching exploration of love's complexities and contradictions. Through the lens of Gatsby's unrequited love for Daisy, Fitzgerald exposes the vulnerability of romantic ideals in a world defined by greed, corruption, and moral decay. While their love may not conform to the conventions of a perfect fairy tale, it nevertheless resonates with us in an authentic, real way, reminding readers that love, in all its forms, is ultimately what keeps us going despite life's inevitable trials and tribulations.

Tainted Love: Corruption Overpowers Love in *The Great Gatsby*

Karathanasi Eleni

Is *The Great Gatsby* a love story? What if I told you that Fitzgerald uses love as a disguise to make a social commentary on that generation? Even though *The Great Gatsby* explores the theme of love by analyzing Gatsby's American Dream and his love for Daisy, it also explores themes of wealth, social class, disillusionment and most importantly, the corruption of the American Dream. It delves into the hollowness and carelessness of the upper class and their longing for meaning in life. Therefore, in my opinion it is a novel that focuses on the corruption of individuals during the Roaring Twenties.

Firstly, a prime example of social corruption is how wealth and materialism lead to moral decay. Characters like Tom and Daisy Buchanan are wealthy but lack any morality, as they use their money and high social status to manipulate others, without considering the consequences of their actions as Fitzgerald puts it "“They were careless people, Tom and Daisy – they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made.” Gatsby also becomes a victim of corruption as he is consumed by the pursuit of wealth and the illusion of love, which ultimately leads to his own downfall. Ergo, Fitzgerald explores how the pursuit of the American Dream can be easily corrupted by greed, dishonesty and materialism.

Another challenge to the theory that *The Great Gatsby* is a love story is the relationships in the novel, which are characterized by obsession,

manipulation, and in some cases, irony, rather than love and affection. Tom's relationship with Myrtle, for instance, is fueled by passion rather than love, with Tom on the one hand wanting to pass his time, and Myrtle on the other hand, looking for a ticket to a wealthier lifestyle. The pursuit of wealth overpowers the pursuit of love, which reflects on the emptiness and superciliousness of the characters. In addition, the tragic end of the story confirms the destructive force of these relationships.

Furthermore, Fitzgerald questions the emptiness caused by material wealth and destruction which is a result of obsession, by highlighting how wealthier people act carelessly and show indifference towards the less fortunate. For example, Daisy kills Myrtle without considering the consequences of her brutal actions, as she once again, runs away with Tom. This apathy and emptiness are also reflected in the grandiose parties and expensive lifestyles of the wealthy, highlighting their moral degradation, as they held massive parties where everyone turned up unexpectedly and were so intoxicated that they couldn't drive home.

In conclusion, I believe that *The Great Gatsby* is a novel that explores many themes including love. However, it doesn't focus on genuine love so much as society's obsession with the American Dream, thus highlighting the corruption of the population as they become careless, hollow and immoral.

Is *The Great Gatsby* a Love Story?

Aristea Labraki

HS2 ELA1

Many people believe that F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is one of the greatest American love stories. A man who changed his whole life and patiently waited for five whole years, in the hope of rekindling their connection, surely would seem romantic to most readers. But the questions remain: Did he really do it all for her, or was it for himself? Did he have pure intentions after all? In my opinion, the story of Jay Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan is not that simple and it is certainly easy to argue that it is in fact not a love story.

First and foremost, Gatsby and Daisy's relationship does not fulfill some of the most basic requirements for it to be considered true love, as it is not based on pure motivations. Take Daisy, for example. When Fitzgerald describes her voice as "full of money," it emphasizes a shallowness shaped by her privileged life. This obsession with wealth seems to infect everyone around her. Even Gatsby, chasing an idealized version of her fueled by status, becomes another victim of this superficiality. In the end, their pursuit of money and the power it represents

creates a gulf that ultimately tears them apart.

Furthermore, Gatsby's main goal is to be accepted into Daisy's world. The symbolism of "a single green light," which is shining on Buchanan's dock, is extremely important. Green is usually used as a reference to money and the American dream. Gatsby is reaching out to it, since he wants to have the same status and wealth as the Buchanan family. It is explained, that as a teenager, he socialized with many wealthy people, which eventually led him to disguise himself as one of them. As a result, we can see that conquering Daisy and becoming part of her family is simply another achievement to him.

Even if the whole book revolves around Gatsby's relationship with Daisy, it is important to acknowledge that it is not the main theme. By looking into the distinction between Daisy's and Gatsby's status, we are presented with the circumstances of a new era, the battle between "new" and "old" money and the working class's position in this competitive situation. Individuals are constantly being corrupted by greed and lust for money, caught in a vicious circle of trying to pursue the American dream.

In a nutshell, it becomes evident that F. Scott Fitzgerald did not have a great love story in mind while writing *The Great Gatsby*. Gatsby was only another observer of society. He wanted to explore the boundaries of power and class and show us how people were affected by them. Jay Gatsby's love is not genuine and the same applies to Daisy.

“Did he really do it all for her, or was it for himself?”

The Great Gatsby: A Love Story

Panagis Nikolopoulos

HS2 ELA1

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* – arguably his supreme career achievement – is a lot of things: a sharp look into the divide between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'; the difference between 'old' and 'new' money in American Society; and indeed, a love story.

On the surface, *The Great Gatsby* is a story of the thwarted love between a man and a woman. The central character, Jay Gatsby, is deeply in love with Daisy Buchanan and spends years amassing wealth in hopes of winning her back. One could quite justifiably interpret the story as a glamorous tale of two star-crossed lovers destined to be together; a typical "Romeo and Juliet" plot where two young lovers from completely different worlds keep their forbidden love at secrecy. However, *The Great Gatsby* offers more than meets the eye.

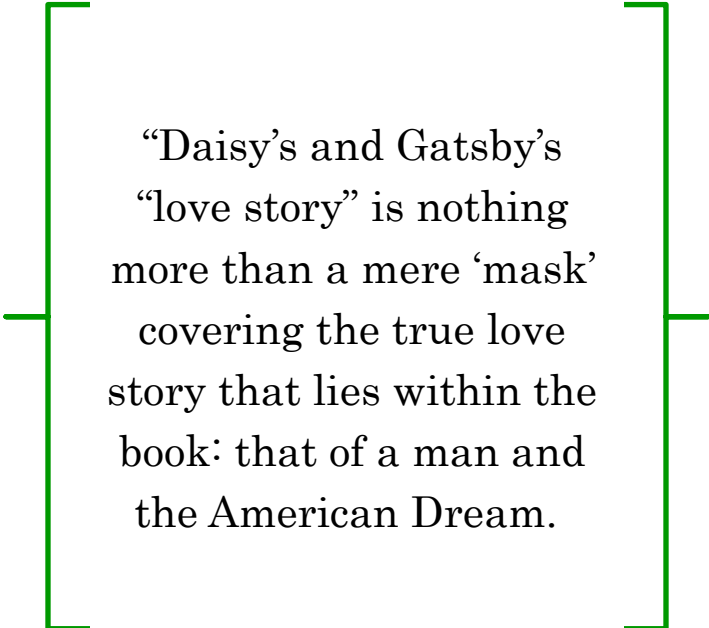
As the plot gradually unfolds, it is seen that Gatsby's love for Daisy is not of a true reciprocal nature, but rather an obsession, or idealization. Daisy's and Gatsby's "love story" is nothing more than a mere 'mask' covering the true love story that lies within the book: that of a man and the American Dream.

The story itself centers around a remarkable rags-to-riches tale of a boy from a poor farming background who has built himself up to enormous wealth, only to find himself trapped and stripped off any moral values.

Daisy herself encapsulates the allure and the decadence of the American Dream. She symbolizes the entrapment, the moral decay, and the social upbringing led by the obsession to reach the Dream's full potential. Gatsby's love for daisy is merely a

representation of his love for the American Dream, and everything that lies beneath it – social status, wealth, material happiness –. From the green light seen through Daisy's back porch to his illusion that one day she will be his, his avarice is undeniable; something that ultimately led to his inevitable death.

Therefore, *The Great Gatsby* is truly a love story describing one's ever-lasting obsession of maximizing one's social, economic, and political well-being – either in the form of the American spirit in the early 20th century America, or any other similar manner. Hence, the true question that lies behind the book is this: Has (the Great) Gatsby truly captured the essence of the American Dream, or is it ultimately an unattainable fantasy?



“Daisy’s and Gatsby’s
“love story” is nothing
more than a mere ‘mask’
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The Great Gatsby: More Than a Love Story

Jason Kournavos

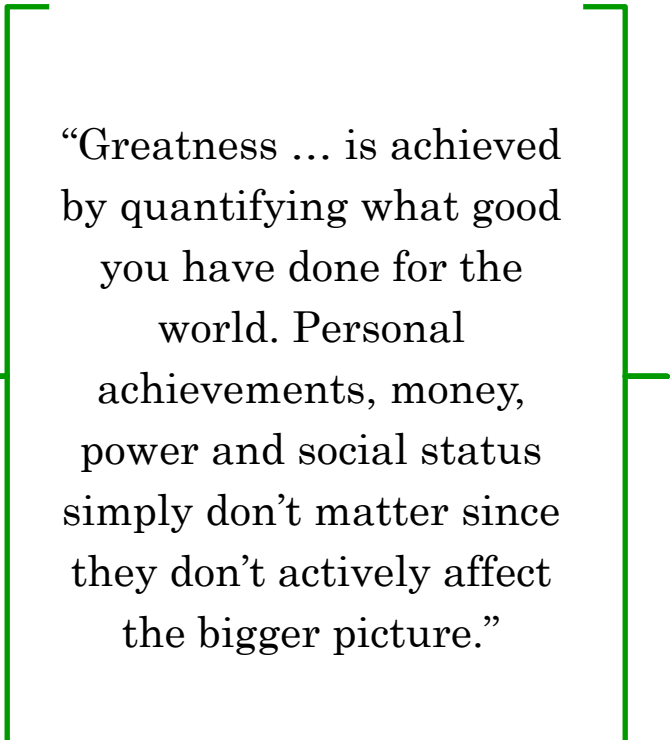
HS2 ELA1

“Great” has always been a mysterious, broad and almost eccentric term. Some can argue that the word has lost its meaning since people throw it around so much. Some believe that it’s still a valid adjective to rate people or things. The problem with the term itself is that there is no such thing as a “subjective great” thing or person. Each and every single one of us perceive something being great differently. Some people hold the word to high standards while others believe it has the same connotation as an alternative “very good”. While all of the above seem like useless information, I personally believe that before attempting to describe someone as great, I should highlight the problems with the word itself.

In the case of a person, greatness – in my humble opinion – is achieved by quantifying what good you have done for the world. Personal achievements, money, power and social status simply don’t matter since they don’t actively affect the bigger picture. Having said this, I will try to give an answer to the complex question of whether Gatsby is truly great.

It’s of major importance to analyze the background information we have for Gatsby since, the information proves to be troublesome when trying to give him the status of being great. Gatsby’s past is surrounded by mysteries and vagueness. Rumors of him killing people, taking part in war, lying about being an Oxford man and having ties with shady business are widely spread throughout the novel. The act of him potentially having murdered someone would instantly strip him from any right to be called great. However, since a murder was never

clearly stated as something he has done, we take it as misinformation. Lying about his past, shouldn’t really affect the way we view Gatsby since lying is a pretty common occurrence in the real world and the lies he told weren’t even that deep. Lying by claiming to be an Oxford man is likely just something he did to sell his image better. Moving on, taking part in a war can’t really be judged since it’s something that is sometimes obligatory and even then, he served the army for a good cause. The main thing that stands as a problem to him being called great is his “shady business”. It is clearly stated that he has established connections with some type of mafia or outlaws and that he has accumulated wealth through unconventional means. Unlawful behavior in an extent where it is purely done for self-benefit and in this case in the cost of others is difficult to be tolerated when trying to give someone the title of great.



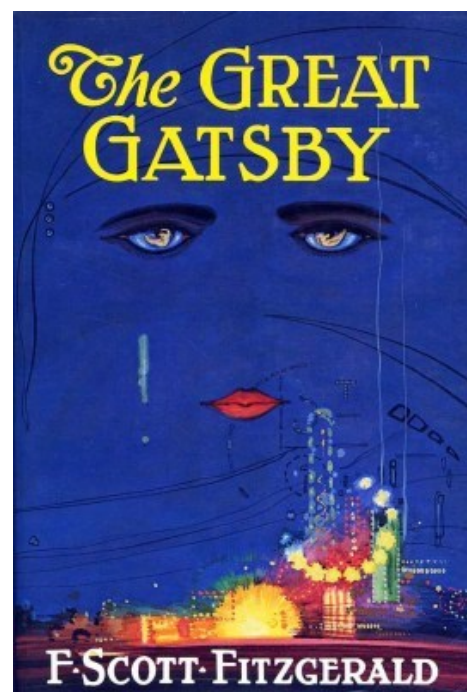
“Greatness ... is achieved by quantifying what good you have done for the world. Personal achievements, money, power and social status simply don’t matter since they don’t actively affect the bigger picture.”

made excellent use of what was available to him to attain the level of stardom that would allow him to approach Daisy. He meticulously assessed the conditions of the United States in the 1920s and came to understand that it was not lowlife James Gatz that the desperate people needed, but mythical Jay Gatsby: a war veteran, an “Oggsford” man, a man that could help the Lost Generation find solace from their past traumas in forbidden alcohol and ephemeral glamour. And so, Gatsby resorted to bootlegging and threw legendary parties to give the people what they wanted, winning new money and widespread recognition in return. It takes an enormous amount of talent to be able to transform oneself and manipulate the masses like Gatsby did. Thus, his title “great” can be thought of as one similar to the names of magicians and circus artists who dazzle their audiences with optical illusions and beguiling tricks.

On the other hand, Gatsby’s greatness derives from the fact that he remained unwaveringly faithful to his love for Daisy until his own tragic end. Not once did he forget his motive and ultimate goal, even though the means he utilized to achieve it would have tempted many others. His unimaginable success and the reputation that preceded him never blinded him, because his affection for Daisy was much stronger than his hunger for power. Were it not for Daisy, and the expectations that she had for an eligible bachelor, social status, wealth, and material possessions would hold minuscule value in the eyes of Gatsby. Scarcely do people do things exclusively in the name of love, even more so when crimes and identity erasure are part of the lengthy list of sacrifices one must make to win a person over. Especially taking into consideration the moral corruption and the materialistic spirit of the Roaring Twenties, it is truly admirable that Gatsby went through such trials and tribulations for something as pure as love. Lest it be forgotten, for a brief time

Gatsby managed to achieve his goal running solely on the fuel of love, but unfortunately he was in the wrong place at the wrong time and was fatally shot by George Wilson.

Some may say that Gatsby was not great because he resorted to illegal means to impress Daisy. However, Gatsby knew there was no alternative method to gain wealth in the capitalistic system of the 1920s. Had he chosen a career of honest work, he would still be the small James Gatz far away from his love or, even worse, he would be eternally bound to the Valley of Ashes along with thousands of workers whose life force was drained by their greedy employers. Moreover, it takes greatness and courage to commit crimes for love or a greater ideal. For example, Alexander the Great and Constantine the Great both initiated wars and took countless lives to build their respective empires with love for their countries. If their flaws were not enough to deprive them of their titles, there is no reason not to call Gatsby “great” as well. With that being said, Gatsby is genuinely great and ought to be thought of as such by the readers of the novel.



Fitzgerald, F. Scott (Francis Scott), 1896-1940. *The Great Gatsby*. New York :C. Scribner's sons, 1925.

Was Gatsby Really Great?

Evgenia Antonopoulou HS2ELA1

Amidst the glamour, the magnificence, and the lavishness of the Roaring Twenties, Jay Gatsby assumes his form through Scott Fitzgerald's writing, as he comes to encapsulate greatness. Part of the Lost Generation, a man who strives to find something in his world to hold onto, a person who acquires everything and yet ends up with nothing, Jay Gatsby is, as stated by the very title of the novel, great. Yet how is it that a man so torn and so incredibly lost can still be called "The Great Gatsby"? By delving into the complexity of not only his character, but also of the society he lived in, one can realize that perhaps, Gatsby really was great.

Greatness can be defined as the quality of being distinguished, eminent, or impactful, and Gatsby was all the above. He was blessed with an unparalleled ambition that drove him to climb the social ladder and leave his mark on the glamorous stage of the Roaring Twenties. Starting from a background that neither supported nor benefited him, he relentlessly pursued wealth and status, having realized that those two were the only trademarks for greatness in the world he lived in. Gatsby saw the green light, recognized the American Dream, sought out what called out to him, and pursued it. He made himself known to all of New York. However improper the means of acquiring his wealth were, he managed to become a literal legend, a man whose name can be correlated to myths and similar historical stories as Fitzgerald puts it "The truth was that Jay Gatsby, of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God ". Surely, it takes a certain amount of greatness to achieve all that, having started from nothing.

However, it is not just Gatsby's ambition that renders him great, for it is also his charismatic

essence and magnetism that places him in the pantheon of characters searching for the American Dream. Specifically, Gatsby is undeniably a charming man, who successfully enchants the people around him. The narrator of the story, Nick Carraway, introduces Gatsby to the reader by stating, "There was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away." It is thus made evident from the very beginning of the novel that Gatsby is not just a rich man, but also a captivating spirit. Nick is obviously fascinated and intrigued by this wonder of a man. Even though Nick, being the drifter that he is, has met many people, it is no coincidence that Gatsby is the person who in the end proves to have irrevocably changed the narrator's life. Certainly, Gatsby possesses a unique ability to draw others to him, to distinguish himself from the rest, and to impact those around him to an extent which alludes to greatness.

On the contrary, some might argue that the aspects of Gatsby's personality that make him so great are a façade, an illusion fabricated by him. Not even his name is real, as he changed "Gatz" into Gatsby. Nonetheless, one should evaluate Gatsby's true essence while considering the state of society during the Twenties. Amidst such a cynical and superficial time period, where people drifted like feathers from one place to another, from one person to another, Gatsby remained a romantic idealist. Even though he bases his life on a fictional ideal, he never fails to embody one, non-fictional truth: that a man, however unprivileged, however broken, however corrupt, can always reinvent himself and pursue his dreams. Some may call him superficial, but the unyielding devotion he has

for Daisy, flawed though it may be, differentiates him from the mere materialists of his time, and symbolizes his unwavering dedication to the very few people he cares about.

Ultimately, Jay Gatsby may be a flawed and highly imperfect character, but that is what makes him human and that is what makes him great. We ought to recognize the distinction between excellence and greatness. Granted, he is certainly not excellent; once the curtain of those lavish parties closes, once the sun rises and the music stops, Gatsby stands as a tragic and distorted man. Yet, he still manages to leave an indelible mark on the people he meets as he assumes his well-earned title as “The Great Gatsby.”

“... once the curtain of those lavish parties close, once the sun rises and the music stops, Gatsby stands as a tragic and distorted man. Yet, he still manages to leave an indelible mark on the people he meets ...”

Is the Great Gatsby Actually Great?

Michael Kofinakos

HS2 ELA1

Alexander the Great, Constantine the Great, Katherine the Great. All these are people we associate with the word “great.” But what exactly are the factors that make them, or anyone, great? Whether or not the titular character of Scott Fitzgerald’s novel, *The Great Gatsby*, is, in fact, great has often been an area of dissent and discussion. Personally, I believe that Gatsby is equally deserving of the title “great” as any of the aforementioned figures.

The first reason for this is the fact that Gatsby is perceived as “great” by most people around him. To most characters in the book, be it his work acquaintances, his guests, or Nick Carraway, Gatsby constitutes as a symbol of affluence, opulence, and wealth, all idolized during the 1920s. More importantly though, Gatsby has managed to wrap himself and his past in an air of mystery and obscurity. On the one hand, this enigmatic nature of his is the cause of speculation and accusations of him

as a murderer, a crime boss, or as Tom Buchanan would say, a bootlegger. On the other hand, this speculation has, in a way, turned Gatsby into a living legend, a figure that is both feared and revered. Finally, even to characters that eventually do get to know him better, such as Nick, Gatsby “was alright,” which, though underwhelming in its phrasing, is one of the most favorable opinions that Nick expresses for any character.

Gatsby becomes even greater in the eyes of the audience when they learn Gatsby’s backstory and can judge him within the context of the time in which the story takes place. More specifically, the setting is the 1920s. This post-war era within the US was a period of debauchery, uncertainty, and purposelessness. Everyone living in it felt lost, left drifting like a feather in a wind of recklessness. This is also exemplified by the book’s other characters. Tom Buchanan reached his peak during college, and has since turned into an arrogant, aggressive,

unfaithful brute; Daisy Buchanan is a submissive housewife, stuck in a loveless marriage and doomed to keep up appearances; Jordan Baker is a lying golfer who knows nothing of love; and finally, Nick Carraway is a delusional and indecisive individual who is also incapable of love. In this group norm, Gatsby is the only one who stands out, having a consistent, clear purpose: pursuing a romantic relationship with Daisy. Is it a noble goal or one that is procured through moral means? Perhaps not. But in this time period, that purpose alone is a factor of greatness.

However, some people remain incredulous about Gatsby's greatness, mainly due to his criminal actions and involvement with the underworld. Admittedly, while the author never directly states this, it is heavily insinuated that Gatsby is entangled

with the criminal world, and this is at least a partial source of wealth for him. While this cannot be denied, that is insignificant. After all, Alexander the Great was not particularly moral, having massacred hundreds of thousands of people in the name of a selfish imperialistic goal. Similar things can be said about most people we consider "great." The current discussion is not based on the virtue of Gatsby's character but on his greatness.

To conclude, Gatsby is in fact "great," since he becomes a living legend in the world of the novel, as well as admirable as a stand-out within his time period. Any arguments on his dubious morality are irrelevant to this discourse. If Gatsby has managed to convince both reader and audience that he is great, isn't that a great feat on its own?

Was Gatsby Great?

Faidra Valleta

HS2 ELA1

“Fraudulent.
Unlawful.
Obsessive.”

Fraudulent. Unlawful. Obsessive. All of these words can be used to describe the main character of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*. At first glance, one would wonder how anyone with those traits could be characterized as "great." However, Jay Gatsby is not just anyone: he is a skillful master of disguise, who rose from obscurity and built an empire for himself, driven merely by the motive force of love. Thus, his greatness is undeniable. On one hand, the title "great" alludes to the masterful disguise of the protagonist's former identity of James Gatz and his fierce reinvention as Jay Gatsby. From the very beginning, the titular character had a dream of reclaiming Daisy Buchanan and her love for him. To achieve that, country boy James Gatz took advantage of the circumstances of the Roaring Twenties and

Having discussed the things that prevent him from receiving the aforementioned title, we should move on to why he could possibly deserve it. To start off, after establishing his wealth, Gatsby seems to have good intentions. An argument may be made for the morality of having an affair with another man's wife, but since Tom was undoubtedly mistreating Daisy, giving her minimal care and having an affair of his own, I claim that Gatsby is not immoral in having an affair with her. Relationships aside, Gatsby seems to have no problem sharing his wealth in order to satisfy others. Is he showing such kindness in order to receive likeability from his peers? Very probable, but that doesn't change the reality that he is essentially spreading delight and amusement. What should also be noted is that to classify someone as great, we ought to examine closer the people of the specific time period. Gatsby, compared to basically every single other person in the novel other than Nick is less naive, more concentrated, more

knowledgeable, more pleasant and generous. He is a man that stands out, a man that doesn't really get affected by society so he chooses to do his "own thing".

In summary, Gatsby was a man that was striving to become great in spite of previous "wrongdoing". He was trying to have a positive impact on society by sharing his wealth, showing kindness and generosity, and overall being a caring person, a trait that showcases itself particularly with how much he loved Daisy. I personally believe that if he lived longer, he could have truly become great, despite his previous shortcomings. Unfortunately, it didn't happen; instead, he was brutally killed, mourned by Nick and his father, and then forgotten along with his well-established fortune.

"In our storyboard, men are enjoying their drinks when one notices a vibrant pink neon beam emerging from women dancing the cancan, while wearing striking pink Crocs. This creates a visual antithesis, highlighting the product's unique blend of modern comfort and bold style against the backdrop of traditional black heels. Our catchphrase, "Fall Head Over 'Heels' for Crocs – Where Comfort Meets Love!"

Eugenia Antonopoulou & Alkmini Panagopoulou HS2ELA1



The Responsibilities of The Filmmakers and Film Watchers of *Selma*

Marina Catsamba

HS1 Phase 6

The creation of a historical film is decidedly a sensitive matter, especially when it touches upon issues that address a darker side of humanity. The movie *Selma* is a flawless example of such a film, depicting the unfathomable extent of cruel racism the Black communities of The United States endured during the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-20th century. Professionals who believe such films should exist usually take it upon themselves to create them with the objective to educate the public about events that have a significant impact on people. Whether on a global level or within a smaller scope, these events have come to fundamentally shape a place's cultural and ethnical identity. The makers of historical films recognize the necessity of preserving these identities and perceive it as their responsibility to utilize the medium of filmmaking and cinema to do so.

Filmmakers might also aim to broaden the understanding others have of the current state of a country by asking what circumstances led them to be this way and by showing occurrences that have altered the course of history. Since history is what the present chooses to remember about the past, it follows that the past has formed the present in one way or another. For the proper fulfillment of the purposes mentioned, accuracy is the foundation. However, there is so much historical material and such a variety of documentation to draw guidance from that the portrayal and adaptation of any singular event on screen may invariably spark controversy and never feel completely adequate in terms of accuracy. The pressure of faithfully reconstructing and representing these events and

the characters present falls on the shoulders of filmmakers, which is what makes the process of creating a historical movie delicate in the first place.

Not to mention: there is also the possibility of the creators simply considering something that happened as a mere opportunity to tell an interesting story because there are invaluable messages to be conveyed from it. Filmmakers may end up warping the story to the themes they want their narrative to highlight and be filled with, adding or erasing elements from the truth for it to suit to what they have envisioned. One should bear in mind that these artists are entitled to certain creative freedom, and therefore accuracy may not be their primary concern.

In the case of *Selma*, if one were to conduct research and observe live footage of the events of 1965, the movie's adherence to the doctrine of objectivity and sticking to the facts would be evident. The vividness of even the most painful scenes, such as the ones that include police brutality; the natural pace of the story; and the complexity and depth of characters who were true historical figures, including the portrayal of Martin Luther King Jr. as a deeply caring and determined activist but a morally flawed husband and with moments of weakness, will undoubtedly contribute to one's improved comprehension of the marches that took place in the city of Selma. This movie serves as proof that accuracy can result in a historical film attaining its educational goal. Even so, due to accuracy being difficult to achieve, as previously stated, there is an abundance of critics that have not been content with

facets of the movie. One such example is Lyndon B. Johnson's role, viewed by some as "villainous" and "antagonizing" to King's initiative, more so than the president actually was, according to a few claims. Ergo, it would be wise to reach the conclusion that though historical movies may function as a tool to

deepen one's whole perspective of history, people cannot and should not rely on them to consider themselves taught and aware of history. Rather, audience members ought to inform themselves and acquire education from other reputable sources.

Selma's History Succeeds, But Its Characters Struggle Under the Narrative

Marilia Petroleka

HS1 Phase 6

"History is what the present chooses to remember about the past." These are simple words, yet also words of great importance. In the film *Selma*, historical events such as Bloody Sunday, MLK's Nobel Prize acceptance speech, the death of Jimmy Lee Jackson, and others are portrayed. How many of them are historically accurate?

Accusations have been made implying that Johnson's character is portrayed as the core villain and an obstruction to justice in the story of Selma, yet the truth is far from that. It seems that he and MLK were friendly acquaintances, and both equally respected each other. Ergo, the film gives Johnson a notoriety which does not precede him. Films must include an intriguing conflict and to me, that is the only acceptable reason why Johnson is presented as rude at best and evil at worst. The audience will leave the theater believing he was a bad person responsible for the mistreatment of Black Americans for quite some time, and that seems a bit unjust.

However, we must not turn a blind eye to how the audience's knowledge is enriched, and they know they have a clear image of the atrocious events

that occurred in the past. Audience members have the opportunity to learn about Bloody Sunday and about how awful the times were when it was being ruled by the notorious George Wallace. With study, they can learn the full story, the reasons behind each action MLK made, and how unfair the world used to be back then.

By and large, *Selma* enriches the audience's understanding of the historical events portrayed; however, the same cannot be said in terms of the figures. Johnson was a respected man – he was not said to be vile and vicious like the film makes him out to be. George Wallace was that man: a man eager to completely erase Black people from the face of the earth because he believed in separateness. What he is shown to have done in the movie is not even half of what he did in real life, and that racist part of him is not shown enough. Hence, the responsibility of being the villain of the story should not rely on Johnson, but on Wallace.

The Risk of Exaggeration in *Selma*

Andriana Polymenakou

HS1 Phase 6

It has often been said that those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Those who do not form a complete picture of the historical events during a certain time period, or who do not consider all perspectives, often fall victim to repeating the past or creating a wrongful or erroneous opinion about certain historical figures. History is integral, as it is an amalgamation of different narratives formulated by people who have lived through what we in the present haven't.

“Those who do not form a complete picture of the historical events during a certain time period, or who do not consider all perspectives, often fall victim to repeating the past or creating a wrongful or erroneous opinion about certain historical figures.”

Don't get me wrong: not all sources are to be believed. Still, all sources should be respected and considered as a part of the story, a part of the past, and a glimpse of what the future shouldn't be. Everything is subjective. History shouldn't be

selected and influenced by the perspectives and priorities of the present. Unfortunately, such scenarios unfold quite often, and we can see this in how the present's depiction of the past evolves over time. Consider, for example, how people changed their opinion about the pivotal role of colonialism during the 19th and 20th century and how the historical narrative began to shift away from believing that colonialism is vital for the development and advancement of nations to highlighting its negative consequences, like cultural oppression and violence.

Films like *Selma*, where historical events like the Civil Rights Movement are explained, can hardly ever be considered completely accurate. Although the film strives to create an objective portrayal of the historical events, it continues to be influenced by the creative liberties of the film makers. A suitable example of the above is how the relationship between Dr. King and President Johnson is portrayed. The fact that the rivalry between those two is exaggerated results in the formation of a negative predisposal of the audience towards Johnson. By and large, although the movie *Selma* is historically accurate to a great extent and achieves to display the historical events, it still is affected by the creative liberties of the filmmakers and their drive to create a more entertaining film. And just like that, history can be altered – either to suit a movie's goal and need for fame, or in a worse scenario, to skew the audience's perception of history.

Selma: Where History and Memory Meet

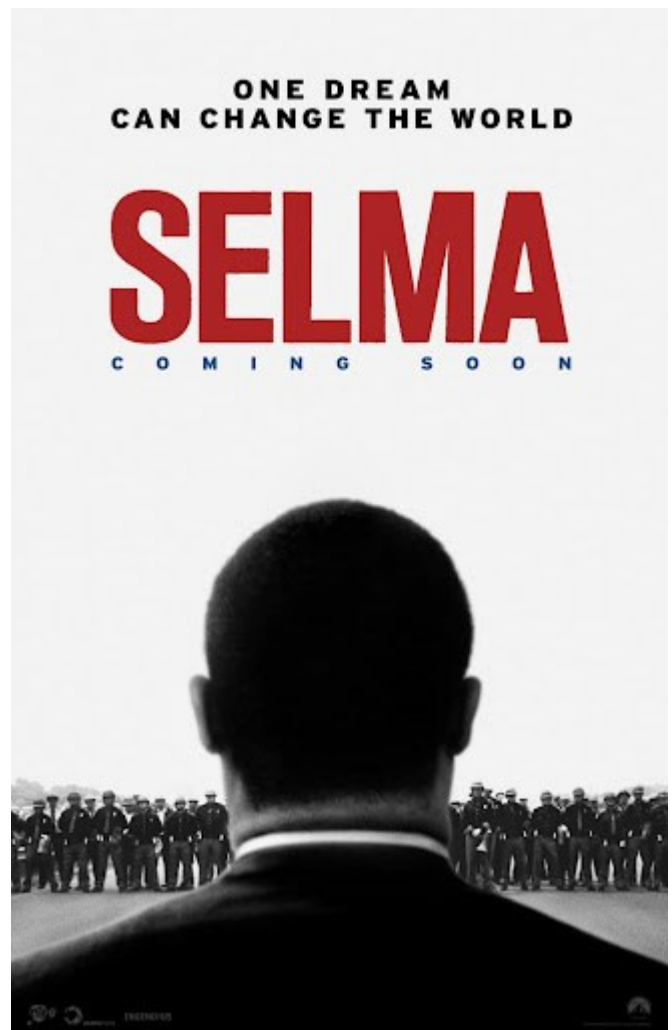
Anastasia Papanastasopoulou

HS1 Phase 6

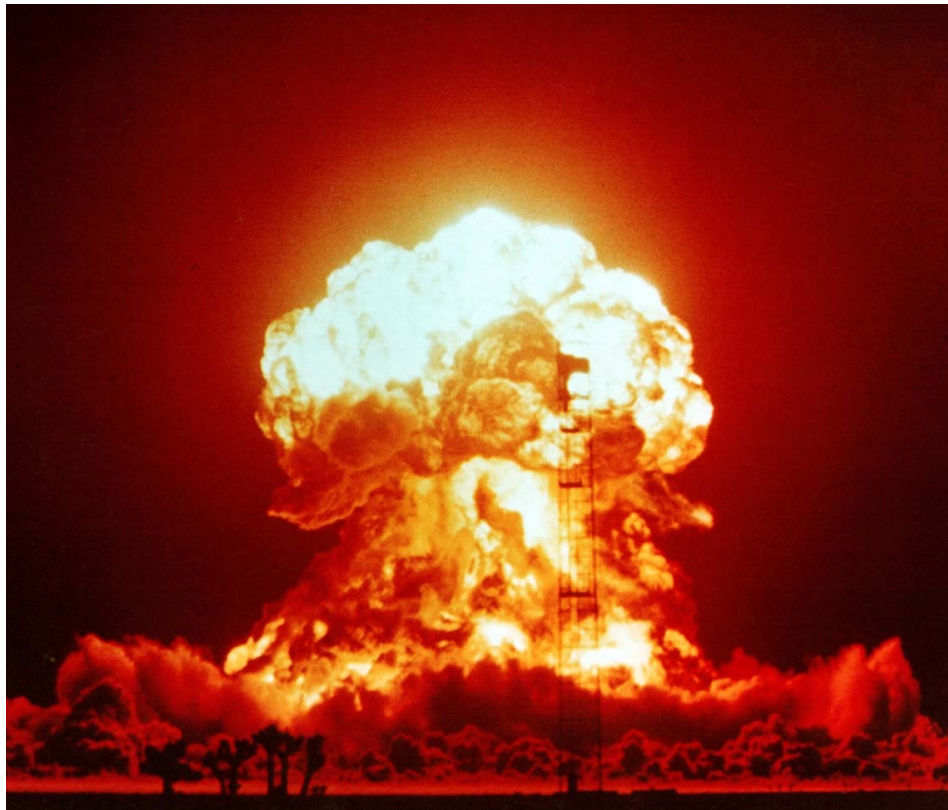
When reflecting on the relationship between history and memory, the captivating storytelling in the film *Selma* becomes a focal point. The idea that "history is what the present chooses to remember about the past" holds significant weight, especially when considering how this cinematic gem molds our perception of historical occurrences. *Selma* stands as an enlightening force, offering a lens through which the audience peers into the annals of the Civil Rights Movement. The film is not just mere historical documentation – it's a conduit through which the present engages with the past, enriching our collective understanding.

Selma's creative team paid extreme attention to detail during its production. From nuanced character portrayals to the atmospheric recreation of historical events, they ensured that the viewers do not just witness history, but become active participants in its unfolding. The emotional resonance of the film allows the viewers to empathize with the struggles of those who fought for American justice, fostering a connection that textbooks often fail to achieve. Moreover, the film does not shy away from the harsh realities of the era as documented at the time, presenting the challenges faced by activists and the oppressive forces they combated. In this way, *Selma* not only imparts historical knowledge but also sparks critical reflection. With the film's astonishing direction, lighting, camerawork, color palettes, and other creative considerations, the viewers are led to comprehend the significance of the events taking place.

Selma transcends the boundaries of a cinematic narrative, becoming a vessel through which history is not just remembered but profoundly felt and comprehended by the present generation. In this merging of past and present, *Selma* becomes a beacon of enlightenment, illuminating the path toward a more empathetic and informed future where the values of equality and justice prevail.



Selma movie poster. 2014. IMP Awards, <http://www.impawards.com/intl/uk/2014/selma.html>. Accessed 21 June 2024.



A 23 kiloton tower shot called BADGER, fired on April 18, 1953, at the Nevada Test Site, as part of the Operation Upshot-Knothole nuclear test series. 2006. Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_explosion#/media/File:Operation_Upshot-Knothole_-_Badger_001.jpg. Accessed 21 June 2024.

OPINION ESSAY: DROPPING THE BOMB

High school 1 Language and Literature students study Pearl Harbor, The Manhattan Project, The Frank Report and Truman's options to drop the bomb or not. They were then asked to pretend to be a member of the Interim Committee, and to reflect on President Truman's decision to finally drop the bomb.

-Ms. Elizabeth Laskari

Why Americans Should Drop the Bomb On Japan

Eftychia Athanasiadi

HS1 LL

It is widely believed that war is the cruelest form of torture, devastation, and humiliation of humankind. Most people can't help but wonder why great powers and highly intelligent people in governments allow this suffering we inflict upon one another. However, it was inevitable and a necessity for America to drop the atomic bomb against Japan as a last resort to end the war once and for all, and the arguments in favor of that decision are indisputably valid and interesting for anyone to take into account.

In light of their moral obligation to protect American citizens, the military was forced to drop the bomb in order to save further losses should the US troops engage the Japanese in direct combat. Furthermore, the American administration was expected to send a strong message to Japan that this was the only way to terminate the war and compel them to submit unconditionally without prolonging the battle. By using the atomic bomb and ending the war swiftly, they hoped to save more Japanese lives than a lengthy invasion and conventional bombardment of hospitals, schools, and marketplaces, which would have disastrous results overall.

Furthermore, Americans needed to display their power with their new weapon. This deadly but essential weapon would discourage potential attacks against the United States while also allowing the country to establish its worldwide influence. It is noteworthy to mention that the American government had invested large sums of money in the construction of such an enormous weapon and that

not using it would not only mean that American funds were wasted but also make the government appear as inept and weak, especially when looking for an ideal end to this war.

Many would argue that unleashing the bomb on vulnerable and unprepared civilians is immoral and a display of cowardice by the Americans. Using a destructive weapon with unknown consequences for future generations is a choice that America, the great country of free and responsible men, should not have opted for, regardless of the political benefits. However, using the atomic bomb on Japan would have a devastating dual effect. Not only would it crush the fighting spirit of civilians, but it would also likely cripple their ability to wage war further by destroying factories, railways, and other military infrastructure crucial for weapons production and troop movement. Therefore, dropping it was the only viable option to end the war swiftly and efficiently.

It's evident that the case for dropping the atomic bomb on Japan heavily weighs in favor of the claim that America made the correct choice. Human fatalities, while at war, are unavoidable yet this tactic for ending the conflict saved a huge deal of suffering and loss of human lives.

The Truman Dilemma: Dropping the Bomb

Stavros Yannidis

HS1 LL

One of the most controversial moments in human history, a turning point in our development as a species is without a doubt the deployment of atomic armaments against the empire of Japan, in the waning days of World War II. The president of the United States, Harry S. Truman had in his possession the most potent munition the world had ever seen and against him stood a formidable foe, who he had not yet defeated. He was faced with this conundrum and concluded that the bomb should be dropped. Given that this is such an important aspect of our past it would be useful to understand why this was indeed the only solution. The case will hence be examined with regards to the minimization of loss of life, long-term economic benefit of the countries involved and expediting the dissolution of the War.

It is self-evident that death is to be avoided at all costs and that it is every human's solemn duty to care for his fellow beings. Truman's predicament never deviated from the norm. Truman had inherited the war and the Manhattan Project from his powerful predecessor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and his options were limited. It is important to note that the Manhattan Project represented the cumulative effort of thousands of scientists and billions in government funding and had been developed in secrecy under Roosevelt. Thus, the investment was too large for Truman to pull out of this tremendous undertaking. Regardless, he was President of a nation at war and had specific responsibilities towards the American people. He was their protector and was to put their interest first. America was in danger due to the war and had no other viable option but to win. The US had already suffered casualties in excess of 300,000 in the Pacific theatre and the death toll was growing

larger by the day. The US was locked in combat, with no alternatives. It is estimated that operation Downfall, which was the full-scale invasion of the Japanese home islands, would cost 500,000 to 1 million US combat deaths and up to 4 million casualties. Japan would also suffer 10 million casualties at maximum. Therefore, an invasion was not feasible. Furthermore, the Japanese were disinclined to negotiate, primarily because of their adherence to ancient principles of honor. This was proven true by the fact that the Japanese were unwilling to surrender even after the first bomb was detonated and did not respond to the US communique requesting surrender. It is now evident that the dropping of the bomb would save as many lives as possible and would have Truman living up to his voters' expectations, previous Presidents and defending the nation, which he governed. In reality, from a military and political standpoint he had only one option to drop.

Contrary to popular belief, the bombing benefited both the United States and Japan. The US would go on to develop into an industrial, economic, and military superpower impervious to any attacks and having gained significant overseas territory. The dropping of the bombs gave the US an advantage over the Soviet Union in the armaments race of the Cold War and the newfound influence and wealth allowed it to stabilize the geopolitical situation in Europe and project, with limited success, its economic system (capitalism) in the East. Japan also had its citizens freed from the tyrannical rule of the emperor, although they did not see it that way, and experienced modernization. The oppressive Japanese militaristic ideology, formed by years of

Isolation gave way to a more modern model, which incorporated tradition. The Japanese escaped the clutches of the Soviet life which would have quickly devolved into misery and chaos , as can be seen through the example of Ukraine, Poland, and East Germany. Westernization allowed the war-stricken economy to flourish.

Opponents of the motion mostly present questionable ethics and violations of the rules of war, as evidence of their stance. These points are not only invalid, but also historically inaccurate. According to a 1945 Gallup poll, 85% of Americans favored the bombing, with only 10% directly opposing it and 5% having no opinion. Nowadays, public opinion has shifted with up to 34% (2015) claiming it is unjustified. It is clear that time and the emergence of peace have skewed reality. As proved above the A-bomb constituted the option which correlated to less loss of life. Moreover, the Japanese had not only started the war, but also had repeatedly tortured, murdered, and cannibalized American Prisoners of War. They committed barbarous crimes throughout Asia: in Manchuria, in Singapore and the Philippines. The Bataan Death March and the experiments of Unit 732 in Harbin act as prime examples, rendering the empire of Japan equivalent to the Nazi regime. The concept of war is inherently unfair. Hence, actions can be considered justified or legal as long as they do not violate agreements and conventions. Looking back, the ban on indiscriminate weapons, the general protection of civilian objects and the Geneva Convention IV, all agreements which the US is accused of breaking occurred after the event in question (1977, 1963, 1949). On the other hand, the conventions violated by Japan were signed in 1929, well before World War 2. The bombing of these cities had an estimated 80.000 immediate deaths and ended the war, simultaneously conventional assaults, such as the Tokyo firebombing, which yielded at least 120.000 casualties. Although deadlier, conventional raids couldn't shock the Japanese into surrender . It was

for this reason that the allies and the Japanese were never directly informed about the existence of the project and the nuclear capabilities of the US. Any leak of information could lead the project to failure since Japan could easily defend the home islands from land sea and air. Even if the planes managed to successfully complete the mission, Japan would not be sufficiently shocked to bring the war to an end if she had prior knowledge. Lastly, Dwight Eisenhower claimed that Japan was ready to surrender, yet they had never mentioned anything of the sort prior to the bombing and did indeed have official military doctrine outlining that surrender was never an option. In fact, they had 5,500 kamikaze aircraft and 1,500 suicide submarines reserved for defense against a US invasion.

It was neither murderous tendency nor hate for the Japanese that prompted Truman to utilize his atomic arsenal, but practicality and necessity. It has been proved to you that in doing so suffering was minimized and prosperity was ensured for both Japan and the United States. In hindsight, this was the strategically correct decision and has saved numerous lives, ending perhaps the most brutal war in modern history.

“It was neither
murderous tendency or
hate for the Japanese
that prompted Truman to
utilize his atomic arsenal,
but practicality and
necessity.”

One Way Out: Why Dropping the Bomb Was The Only Option

Lydia Saranti

HS1 LL

By the summer of 1945, President Truman was faced with a seemingly impossible dilemma: Despite the fact that the war in Europe had ended since May of that same year and all Axis powers had surrendered, fighting in the Pacific continued, with Japan still refusing to surrender or at least negotiate and Russia still not joining the war, despite their promise to do so by June, Truman was left to deal with this emerging threat all on his own. So, having already won the armaments race, by beating Russia to the creation of the nuclear weapons, after considering all the possible alternatives, Truman made the fatal decision to drop the A-bomb on Japan, thus ending the war. Considered by many to be one of the most pivotal moments in human history, very few decisions have sparked as much debate and controversy as this one. Even today, almost eighty years later, the question remains: Was Truman justified?

By the end of June, Japan's refusal to negotiate despite the Americans' threats, meant that the war could only reach its conclusion through the use of force. A full-scale invasion, however, named by the allied forces as "Operation downfall", was out of the picture for the U.S.A., as it was estimated that in the process, which could drag on for years, more than 1 million American and over 4 million Japanese lives would be lost. So, looking to avoid a bloodshed comparable to that of the Battle of Okinawa (March 1945 – September 1945), Truman viewed the use of the atomic bomb as a way to end the war quickly and showcase his new weapon of mass destruction, but

also serve as a cathartic retribution for the events of Pearl Harbor, which was, amongst other things, a "hit" on American pride.

Furthermore, taking into consideration that Japanese forces did not order an evacuation of Hiroshima despite receiving a relevant ultimatum from the U.S.A. shortly before the dropping of the first bomb and even after the event still refusing to surrender, it is highly unlikely that a simple demonstration of the bomb, like the one proposed by the Franck report would be effective. It wasn't until after the second bomb was dropped after all, with more than 200,000 casualties, and two cities completely obliterated that Japan finally, reluctantly still, agreed to an unconditional surrender, ending the war in the Pacific, further underlining Japan's unwavering stance and willingness to suffer enormous losses to win the war.

Taking into consideration the ethical implications of such an act, many have pointed out the hypocrisy of the "bombing for peace" approach the U.S.A. adopted, highlighting that this level of massacre remains nothing more than a heinous war crime and could never be justified despite the dire circumstances. On the more pragmatic side of things, opposers of Truman's decision, like Eisenhower, have also argued that due to external pressures and internal conflicts, the Japanese were already on the verge of surrendering on their own. Thus, while the dropping of the A-bomb certainly precipitated the process of their unconditional surrender, which could have otherwise taken years, it was highly

unnecessary and could not excuse the immense loss of human lives and the tremendous aftermath faced by Japan.

When discussing topics of wartime, however, it is also important to note that such decisions are made under immense pressure, and politicians are called to act quickly and operate on their instincts, to protect -first and foremost- the interest of their country. So, taking that into consideration, it is difficult to say what else Truman could have done to swiftly end the war, with as few American casualties as possible, which was after all his main priority.

In conclusion, while the discussion surrounding the dropping of the atomic bomb and its necessity is, and will remain the subject of dispute, given the circumstances and looking at it retrospectively, I think that ultimately it was the right decision. So, while the bombings themselves were a horrific act of cruelty, from Truman's perspective, they were the only viable option to finally put an end to history's bloodiest chapter, help the U.S.A. emerge as a global power and shape post-war negotiations.

President Truman's Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb

Nelly Grigoriadi

HS1 LL

December 7, 1941. The Japanese military attacked the United States Naval Base, Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii. A tragic, unexpected raid that compelled the U.S. to formally announce their entrance into the Second World War.

During that period, Harry S. Truman was in office. As the President of the leading power that had just been attacked, he was in a daunting position. He had to ensure that the U.S. maintains its superiority, is safe and subsequently confront the Japanese's offense effectively.

As a leader of a great nation in a conundrum, and with access to extremely powerful weapons, Truman had to make a critical decision, of whether he should deploy the newly developed atomic bomb against Japan. The decision was made on August 6, 1945, when President Truman announced that an American B-29 bomber dropped the world's first deployed atomic bomb over the Japanese city of

Hiroshima, killing an estimated 80.000 people instantly. Three days later, a second B-29 dropped another atomic bomb on Nagasaki, killing an estimated 40,000 people. The United States forced Japan's emperor Hirohito to surrender because of the "new and most cruel bomb". President Truman wanted to bring an end to this war as soon as possible with a minimum loss of American lives. An invasion of Japan with the use of conventional weapons instead of dropping the bomb would have brought a multitude of casualties on both sides. This alternative attack plan, known as Operation Downfall, would have imposed a devastating human cost, potentially costing millions of lives.

The use of the atomic bomb not only ended the war expeditiously, but also showcased America's untouchable military power. By demonstrating the effect and power of atomic weapons, the United States sent a clear message to its opponents, and specifically the Soviet Union. Truman solidified

America's supremacy, ended the Second World War victoriously and positioned the US as a dominant force.

Many argue that Truman's decision set a dangerous example of power and paved the way for a nuclear weapons arms race on a global scale. This is false, as we know by now that the Soviets were very close to producing their atomic bomb too. The world in the Cold War state would have gone in its nuclear arms race in any case even if the bomb had not been dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To strengthen my opposition to this counter-argument one could go as far as to say that the well-known effects of the 1945 bombs have only worked as a deterrent. No President, or Prime Minister, who has had access to nuclear weapons has ever pushed that button. The dropping of the atomic bomb now serves as a

warning of the devastating consequences. Nations today are all well aware witnesses of its side effects. Truman in no way encouraged further use of these weapons; rather, his actions on Nagasaki and Hiroshima prevented their further usage.

Given the circumstances of World War II, President Truman's decision to drop the bomb was a difficult but necessary one. By bringing an end to the war and saving millions of lives while making the United States the leading world power, Truman made the best decision as the President of the US, despite the criticism surrounding his decision. The Japanese bombings in 1945 have worked as deterrents in the past 80 years. We must ensure that no one ever forgets.

The Efficiency of the Bomb

Penny Dourida

HS1 LL

President Truman was faced with an impossible decision which was bound to determine both the outcome of the war with Japan and the future of the United States. With both his choices bearing fatal consequences, he is called to choose between asserting dominance by dropping the bomb and sparing the lives of the Japanese but risking those of his citizens. His decision to use the nuclear weaponry in his possession was the only practically efficient way to put an end to the war and to protect his country and people.

Taking into consideration the fact that President Truman had to take immediate action to preserve the safety of America and its citizens, his choice to drop the bomb on Japan was undoubtedly the fastest way to force the Japanese to surrender.

In that way, the war would end within a short amount of time with no American casualties. That, combined with the fact that he, as every president should, prioritized American lives, led him to the decision to use the nuclear weapon. This choice, however, was influenced by other factors as well. The attack on Pearl Harbor, an emblematic symbol of American pride and culture, could not be ignored. The Japanese had not only caused damage to American soil but had also insulted one of the world's greatest powers pride. Therefore, Truman, as the representative of the US was expected to retaliate, not only to avenge the lives that were lost, but also to remind all countries, including Japan, of what they as a nation were capable of. Truman knew they had to assert themselves to prevent anyone from thinking they could attack the US without consequences.

Thus, dropping that bomb served both as an efficient way of ending the war and as a great deterrent to cause fear in all other countries.

Some may argue that Truman's approach was cruel and unethical as he failed to consider the deaths that would inevitably occur when using such a weapon. To some extent, his choice can be considered morally wrong but not to the point where it can be deemed a "wrong decision" because of that. It would be inaccurate to claim that Truman disregarded the fact that lives would be lost or that he intended for these casualties to occur. Given the circumstances surrounding this choice, his determination that these lives lost are not as significant as a factor demonstrates how profoundly

he cared about the well-being of his own people. He made the decision to further safeguard US people rather than allow them to continue suffering from this conflict since lives would be lost in any case. Thus, in this lose-lose scenario, his decision to spare American lives was definitely the one that any elected official would have to make.

Consequently, President Truman's decision was not only an efficient way to end the suffering of his own people but also to establish the power of his nation. Even though he is accused of having no moral scruples regarding the lives that were lost, he made the decision that was right for the country as far as its integrity and its power are concerned.

A Bombshell Decision

Penelope Varvitsioti

HS1 LL

The use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by President Truman during World War II is still one of the most contentious and divisive decisions in history. On August 6, 1945, the United States launched an atomic bomb on Hiroshima followed three days later by another on Nagasaki. The bombings caused tremendous chaos and loss of lives, but they also played an important part in ending the war. The decision to use these terrible weapons had far-reaching effects that are still being considered and examined today. Some claim that using atomic bombs was unnecessary and ethically questionable while others maintain that Truman made the proper choice to end the war faster and preserve American lives. In this essay I will analyze Truman's choice and contend that, considering the situation at the time, it was the right one .

As mentioned above it is believed by some that the use of such powerful weapons was

unavoidable as it had many benefits. First, it was the right decision because dropping the bomb ended the war much more quickly than it would have ended if the bomb had not been dropped. The Allies would have required to launch an expensive invasion of Japan, which would have cost many human lives in addition to money. Thus, to save lives and reduce costs they decided to drop the bomb. In addition, Japan's surrender was hastened by the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is believed that Japan would not have surrendered otherwise, and the bloodshed would have continued in this part of the world, as Japan did not seem willing to stop invading and expanding into neighboring countries to acquire areas that could provide them with natural resources to continue building their industries. Finally, one of the side advantages of dropping the bomb was that the USA demonstrated its power to the Soviet Union. Establishing their military superiority was very

important because it helped define the power dynamics among countries in the post-World War II era.

On the other hand, several people argue that Truman's act in itself was immoral. Tens of thousands of civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki perished because of the bombings, many of whom were defenseless men, women, and children. The public infrastructure, private homes, and people of the cities were extensively destroyed, leaving the cities in ruins. Moreover, radiation illness, cancer, and genetic changes were among the long-term health repercussions that bombing survivors experienced, underscoring the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons on human health. Lastly, the usage of atomic bombs sparked discussions about the

propriety of using such weapons in combat, since they raised moral concerns about targeting civilian populations and the proportionality of the destruction caused.

In my opinion, taking into consideration the consequences but also the circumstances, Truman acted in a smart way to save America in the long term. Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb is still the focus of heated discussion and moral analysis. To sum up, Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb was a historic and contentious move that permanently altered the course of human history. Our perceptions of morality, war, and the duties of international leaders during times of crisis are still shaped by his decision.

Ending the War, Not Ending the World

Marina Dambassina

HS1 LL

The use of atomic weapons in World War II, particularly the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, has sparked heated controversy, serving as a reminder of the ethical and moral issues that President Harry S. Truman faced. Truman had a few options to consider before making his final decision. However, he justifiably decided to drop the bomb to force Japan to surrender.

Using the atomic bomb to end the war was the right decision because it provided an earlier end to the conflict, and saved millions of lives. More specifically, the general consensus is that fewer lives were lost in the end than would have been the case had the war prolonged or had the Americans attacked the mainland of Japan. Furthermore, invading Japan would have resulted in even more civilian casualties than those caused by the two bombs, potentially leading to another intense

conflict. The use of the bomb marked the end of the Second World War in the Pacific region. It was considered a "quick resolution" that prevented the death of even more people on each side.

Furthermore, taking into account the Soviet Union's plans to intervene on the Asian front, Truman made the proper choice. The atomic bomb was a powerful means of preventing another major power, the Soviet Union, from entering the war. Because Japan immediately surrendered and the war ended, there was no time left for the Soviet Union to get involved. Additionally, the use of the bomb demonstrated to other nations who were attempting to trespass on American territory that the United States was a powerful military force with nuclear weapons. Thus, the bombs made the Russians understand that there was no reason for them to join the war.

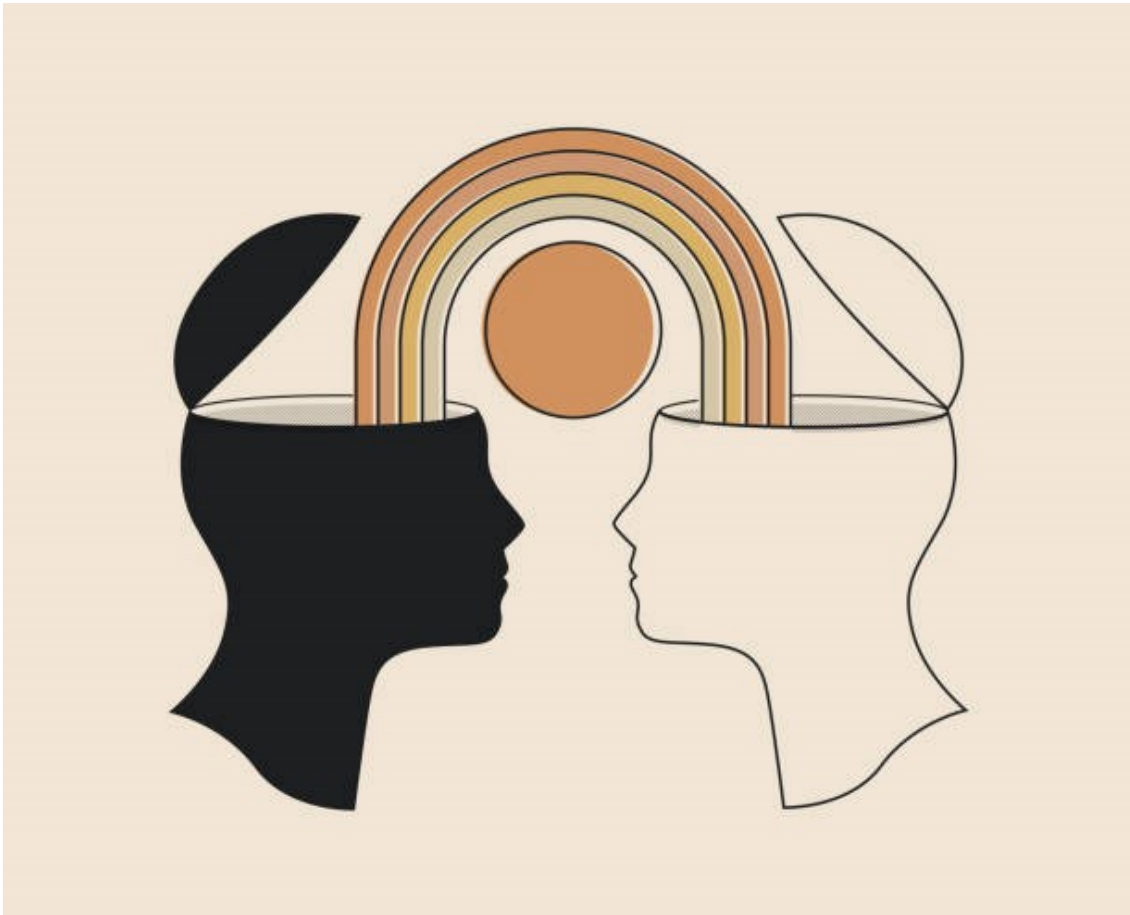
Some people may argue that dropping the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was ethically and morally unjustifiable. It is true that the bombs caused countless deaths, involving more civilians than soldiers. Still, in the final analysis, President Truman ultimately made the right decision, since the two targeted cities would have been bombed anyway. Furthermore, Japan had been warned about the impending destruction, but the military was still unwilling to surrender and cooperate. Therefore, while those opposed consider the moral and ethical repercussions following the bombings, it cannot be argued that Truman made the incorrect decision for the future of both countries. Ultimately, the war stopped, and more people were saved than killed,

something that would not have happened without the use of the bombs.

Taking all of the above into account, Truman's decision to use the bombs against Japan was completely justified. While there may have been some ethical issues to consider and moral matters to sort out before the action, it cannot be denied that it had a long-term positive impact on the future of countless countries .



The Most Fearsome Sight: The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima. 6 Aug. 2020. The National WWII Museum, Hiroshima, Japan, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/atomic-bomb-hiroshima>. Accessed 21 June 2024.



Dickcraft. Conceptual illustration of relationships or empathy or positive emotional sharing with two heads and a rainbow between them isolated on light background. Vector illustration stock illustration. 27 June 2022. iStock by Getty Images, <https://www.istockphoto.com/vector/conceptual-illustration-of-relationships-or-empathy-or-positive-emotional-sharing-gm1405024633-457064451>. Accessed 21 June 2024.

ADAPTATIONAL WORKS

Traditional analysis can do much to enrich one's understanding of a text. Still, from time to time, it can be immensely rewarding to imagine oneself inside of the narrative and to transport yourself into another's shoes. In these adaptational works, students have reimagined themselves as characters or bystanders, and use their empathetic skills to deduce what they may have felt in those circumstances.

Enigmatic Revelry Shattered: The Great Gatsby's Extravagant Soiree Marred by Tragedy

A News Report by Mika Mpoviatsi on Jay Gatsby's murder.

HS2 ELA 1

In the ethereal realm of Long Island's opulent West Egg, where wealth flows like a mighty river and decadence knows no bounds, an enigmatic figure known only as Jay Gatsby held court in his legendary mansion. The air buzzed with anticipation as guests, adorned in the finest attire, converged upon his estate to partake in the revelry that had become synonymous with the Gatsby name.

However, amidst the shimmering lights and the lilting melodies of jazz, tragedy struck with the force of a thunderbolt, shattering the veneer of glamour and leaving a pall of somber reflection in its wake. The event, which promised to be a beacon of extravagance, descended into chaos when a dispute erupted between two guests, each vying for the affections of the captivating Daisy Buchanan, herself a symbol of unattainable allure. The tension, palpable in the air like a charged electrical current, reached a crescendo as harsh words turned into violent actions, culminating in a tragic altercation that left one man grievously injured.

Eyewitness accounts paint a vivid tableau of the unfolding drama, with whispers of clandestine affairs and unrequited love lending an air of intrigue to the proceedings. As the dust settled and the echoes of shattered glass faded into the night, the once-celebrated soiree took on a darker hue, serving as a sobering reminder of the fragility of human emotions and the perils of unchecked desire.

In the aftermath of the incident, speculation ran rampant as to the identity of the mysterious assailants and the motives that drove them to such drastic measures. Rumors swirled like autumn leaves

in the wind, casting a shadow over the glittering facade of Gatsby's world and forcing those in attendance to confront the uncomfortable truths that lurked beneath the surface.

For Gatsby himself, the events of that fateful evening served as a harsh reminder of the ephemeral nature of happiness and the futility of trying to recapture the past. Despite his lavish displays of wealth and his seemingly boundless charm, he found himself ensnared in a web of lies and deceit, longing for a love that remained forever out of reach.

As dawn broke over the horizon, casting its golden rays upon the tranquil waters of the bay, the residents of West Egg were left to grapple with the aftermath of the night's events, their illusions shattered and their hearts heavy with the weight of unfulfilled dreams. In the end, the Great Gatsby's grand spectacle had ended not with a triumphant flourish, but with a mournful sigh, leaving behind only whispers of what could have been and the bitter taste of regret.

“Students were asked to write a news report narrating the events that led to Jay Gatsby’s tragic end. They were told that the best report would be published in their school magazine”

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Artwork by Phaedra Panagiotaki and Melina Papazacharia HS2 ELA1

Death of a Fool (*Cask of Amontillado*)

Marina Catsamba

HS1 Phase 6

“Proceed,” Montresor said. “Herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi-”

“He is an ignoramus,” I interrupted, walking unsteadily, as I was already a little bit drunk. The moment my excitement to try the famous Amontillado had reached its peak, I saw the bricks and I was taken by surprise. My friend threw chains around my waist and secured them, and I was too astounded to even resist. I did not have the time nor the sobriety to react.

“Pass your hand,” my beloved friend said, “over the wall; you cannot help feeling the niter. Indeed, it is very damp. Once more let me implore you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power.”

“The Amontillado,” I cried out, still thinking I was about to try this exquisite wine, too drunk to think clearly and understand what was going on and prove my worth to Montresor. Little did I know it would be my pride that determined my fate.

Montresor started building a wall. All I could do at that moment was scream. Montresor tried to overshadow my voice with his. Then I started laughing from underneath the niche.

“Ha! ha! ha! – he! he! he! – a very good joke, indeed – an excellent jest. We will have a rich laugh about it at the palazzo – he! he! he! - over our wine- he! he! he!”

“The Amontillado!” Montresor said, and my laughter was then uncontrollable.

“He! he! he! – he! he! he! – yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at

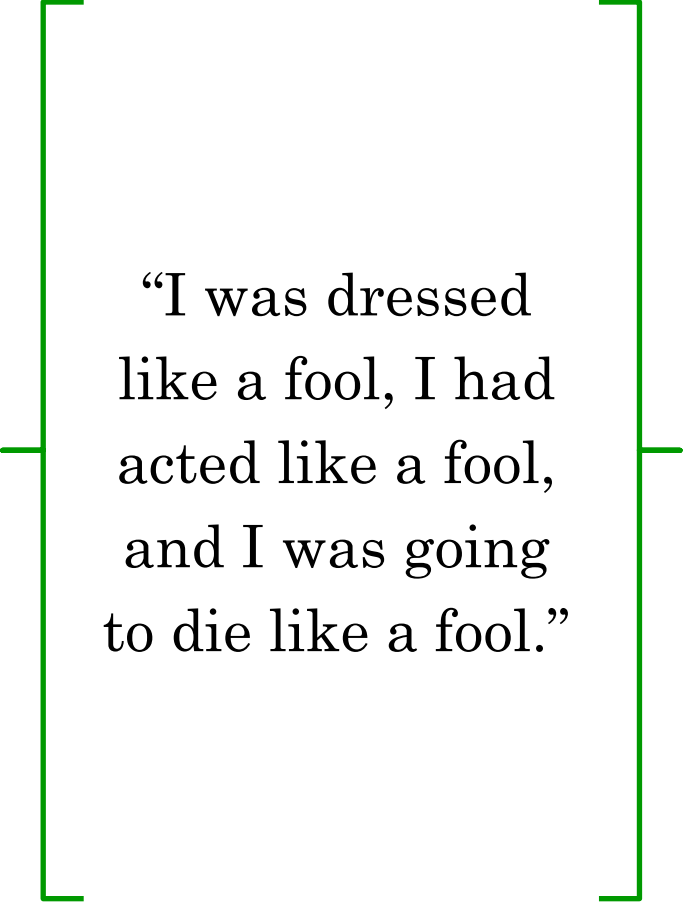
the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone.”

“Yes,” he said, “let us be gone.”

And that was when all hope was lost.

“For the love of God, Montresor!” I cried out.

I blacked out, and when I regained consciousness, I put the pieces of the puzzle together. I was dressed like a fool, I had acted like a fool, and I was going to die like a fool.



“I was dressed like a fool, I had acted like a fool, and I was going to die like a fool.”

Dear John: Reflecting on *I Have a Dream*

Fivos Kalyvas

HS1 Phase 5

Dear John,
I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you with an overflowing heart and a mind buzzing with the echoes of history. I have just returned from the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, and I cannot wait to share with you the profound experience I had.

The atmosphere in Washington, D.C., was electric, charged with anticipation and hope. As I joined the throngs of people making their way to the National Mall, I couldn't help but feel a sense of unity and purpose radiating from the crowd. People from all walks of life had come together, driven by a shared vision of equality and justice.

When Martin Luther King Jr. took to the podium and began his speech, the air seemed to crackle with energy. His words, delivered with passion and conviction, echoed across the Mall, stirring something deep within me. As he spoke of his dream for a nation where all are judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character, I felt a lump form in my throat. It was a moment of profound clarity, a glimpse of the world as it could be.

The sound of Dr. King's voice was like music, carrying hope and inspiration to every corner of the crowd. Cheers and applause erupted as he reached the crescendo of his speech, proclaiming his dream of freedom ringing from every mountainside. In that moment, it felt as though anything was possible, that together we could overcome the injustices that had plagued our society for far too long.

But amidst the jubilation, there was also a sense of seriousness, a recognition of the challenges

that lay ahead. Dr. King spoke of the fierce urgency of now, reminding us that the struggle for equality was far from over. And yet, his words filled me with a renewed sense of determination, a resolve to stand up and be counted in the fight for justice.

As the day drew to a close and the crowd began to disperse, I found myself filled with a profound sense of gratitude: gratitude for the opportunity to bear witness to history, gratitude to stand shoulder to shoulder with so many brave souls who dared to dream of a better world, and gratitude for the reminder that change begins with each and every one of us, that it is up to us to carry the torch of justice forward into the future.

In the days and weeks to come, I know that the memory of this march will continue to inspire me in my own efforts to make a difference. I am more committed than ever to fighting for equality and justice, knowing that I stand on the shoulders of giants like Dr. King and the thousands who marched alongside him.

I wish you could have been there with me to share in this historic moment. Know that you were in my thoughts as I stood on the Mall, surrounded by a sea of humanity united in a common cause.

With hope and determination,

Fivos

Dear John: Reflecting on *I Have a Dream*

Fivos Kalyvas

HS1 Phase 5

Dear Jack,
I'm not sure how to begin describing the incredible experience I had during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. It was profoundly touching, motivating, and transformational. I'm still reeling from the day's events and my thoughts are racing through my head as I write this letter.

Perhaps it's best to set the scene. The atmosphere was buzzing. Countless individuals from all backgrounds came together with a common goal in mind and a shared sense of hope. Unquestionably, there was a spirit of cooperation, resolve, and unity in the air. Our shared conviction that our cause was righteous kept us optimistic, despite the intense August heat. I felt a great sense of pride rise within me as I stood among the crowd and heard the stirring speeches and passionate calls for justice and equality. This pride bloomed from being a part of this historic occasion, as well as from seeing the bravery and tenacity of the thousands of people who stood up to speak truth to power.

Then came the time for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to speak. Everyone in attendance felt his words resonate like thunder in their hearts and minds. The weight of centuries of suffering was evident in his voice, but it also exuded invincible hope and a belief in the prospect of a brighter tomorrow. Time seemed to stand still when he said, then repeated, the timeless words, "I have a dream." His vision of a society in which people are assessed on the content of their character rather than the color of their skin struck an emotional connection with me so strongly that it brought me to tears. I was

inspired to fight for justice and equality at that very moment, and I felt an unexpected sense of purpose.

After his address, there was loud clapping and cheering, but in the middle of the commotion was a profound silence that held the weight of history, the scale of the task ahead, and the hope for a better future.

I am so grateful for the chance to witness history, the bravery of my marching partners, and the ongoing legacy of Dr. King's dream when I think back on the day's events.

Determined and full of optimism,

Marios



Sochurek, Howard, and Getty Images. Sitting for a portrait at Atlanta University, circa 1963. 16 Jan. 2017. BuzzFeed, Atlanta University, https://img.buzzfeed.com/buzzfeed-static/static/2017-01/14/16/asset/buzzfeed-prod-web-08/sub-buzz-27390-1484429973-1.jpg?downsize=600:*&output-format=auto&output-quality=auto. Accessed 21 June 2024.



CREATIVE WRITING

Our community has been honored to inspire creativity, self-expression, and introspection in our students. This section contains poetry, short stories, a screenplay, and student art that highlights these qualities. Works included were either completed in class or as independent passion projects.

Where I Am From

Maritina Chronopoulou

HS1 Phase 4

I am from the land and the ocean
and the spaces in-between.

I am from the music that guitar is playing.

I am from singing and dancing in a room.

I am from the books in a lonely library.

I am from playing in a park
and racing with my friends.

I am from talks for hours.

I am from Sunday steak lunches with my family
and the smell of the smoke through the whole
house.

I am from the basketball and volleyball court.

I am from a world full of fictional characters
and movies full of romance.

I am from movie nights with my dad till 3 am.

I am from bugging my brother once a day.

I am from a world in my head that is not perfect for
others, but only for me.

I am from long rides on a summer day.

Where I Am From

Despina Fragkaki

HS1 Phase 4

I am from a blessed country surrounded by boundless sea, bathed with sunshine all year round and amazing history that people from all over the world admire.

I am from The Easter traditions painting red eggs, and the traditional weddings with lots of rice and endless hours of partying until dawn.

I am from the cookies and cakes I baked with my grandma when I was little, to the soft cookies I share with my best friends every big break, at the school cafeteria.

I am from the memories in the Greek islands every summer, which bring back smells of the salty sea and the freshness of Greek salads and grilled fish from the nearby taverns.

I am from the calming tips of my dance teacher, when in a room full of young dancers, they announce my name to get up in stage and perform.

I am from the cheering of the crowd which always lightens up my mood, when the stress kicks in before hearing the start of my choreography's song.

I am from the hurtful punch of my brothers fist I felt, when fighting for that last piece of cake, to the soft brushing senses of his face and cheeks when we calming played around.

Where I Am From

Olga Liveriou

HS1 Phase 4

I am from the land where olive groves cradle the Earth.

Where myths dance,

And heavens unfold in a tapestry of deep blue,

The pure smell of wildflowers

Bathed in golden sunlight.

My heart, an Aegean Breeze, is born anew.

I'm from the tales of warriors,

A symbol of serenity and peace unfolding.

As sea caresses the shores of my soul,

I hear the whispers of captivating sirens.

I'm from the taste of the clean fresh air,

The birthplace of philosophy,

Me, a child of arts,

From the crystal sea to the heights of Olympus,

Where dreams rise from the soft soil we stand on.

My laughter late at night,

My smile appearing when I touch the cold waters,

My scream when summer and traveling my land have come,

And my cry when I must go back.

All emotions come together, and they crumble up.

So, I laugh, I smile, I cry, I shout.

There's only one more thing to say,

I am from Greece, and I am proud.

Where I Am From

George Roulias

HS1 Phase 4

I am from green trees and grass
And brown basketballs that I pass
Bright green is my favorite team
All those things make my eyes gleam.

Ice cream that tastes very cool
And chocolate bars, as a rule.
Cookies of any kind
The taste helps me unwind.

I am from basketballs that are new
And roasted meat on the skew.
The smell of new books is just fine.
Those smells for me are divine.

The ball that bounces, bong-bong.
The school bell that sounds like a song.
The tick of lights off and on,
I feel sad when the sounds are gone.

I am from silky washed hair
And the fluffy dog left in my care.
The smooth touch of my basketball
Nothing can beat that at all.

Keep Nothing Back (excerpt)

Theodora Papageorgiou

HS1 Phase 5

THE DAY OF THE PARTY

IN THE HOUSE

We see many people entering a big modern-looking house. The music is loud and there is a guard waiting outside the house, checking who enters. We first see Emma getting dropped off in a limousine as Winston arrives on his scooter.

EMMA

Come on, SERIOUSLY? Winston Miller? Since when are you invited to parties?

WINSTON

(sarcastically) Everybody wants to invite future MIT students.

GUARD

Emma Myers, Winston Miller. Welcome. I hope you found your way here easily.

The TWO TEENAGERS follow THE GUARD, wondering how he knows their names. We see the interior of the house, tables full of food, drinks, teenagers chatting and laughing. The two of them examine the room carefully.

THE GUARD starts to make his way across the room to a set of stairs and beckons them to follow him.

WINSTON

(nervously laughing) Um, excuse me sir, may I ask why we are going in a basement... Not that it's any of my business, but I—

The man turns around to look at him. He smiles politely.

GUARD

Consider this a VIP invitation. We are going somewhere private.
Someone needs to talk to you.

EMMA

Am I in the right place? Cause my envelope said that I am going to a party, not a group therapy session.

IN THE BASEMENT OF HOUSE

Soon they find themselves in a creepy and dusty basement, where music faintly plays. After a while, Steve and Jordyn are also escorted to the basement. As they enter, Emma runs towards Steve and hugs him. Everybody ignores Jordyn.

EMMA

Steve Harris! To what do we owe the pleasure of your presence tonight?

STEVE

Cut it Myers, there is no party without Steve.

WINSTON

(whispering, to JORDYN) FYI ... since you're new here. These two used to be a couple. An annoying one, to say the least. (BOTH laugh.)

A man wearing a weird mask appears through the door, clearing his throat. Jordyn gasps. He approaches each and every one of them and places tags around their wrists.

MASKED MAN

These tags have poison in them. You four have 48 hours to solve a murder. I am the only one who has the antidote. And don't even think about going to the police ... I am watching you.

EMMA

Excuse me, WHAT?

STEVE

Holy—

WINSTON

No. No no no. Absolutely NOT.

JORDYN

Wait. The murder of who?

MASKED MAN

The murder of Nate Skyles.

Silence.

MASKED MAN

Now, if you'll excuse me. I have a party to attend.

He walks away.

And then there were four.

Alanze

Christianna Petropoulou and Maria Rigaki

HS1 Phase 5

The Birth

Once upon a time, in a land far away, there existed a marvelous kingdom of extravagant beauty named Fierra Tore. Its history dated back to ancient times and now it was ruled by Oberon, a caring king, and his wife, Paloma, a beautiful queen. The king and queen were warm-hearted and friendly people who showed kindness to everyone. Our story begins when Paloma gave birth to her first daughter.

When the queen announced to the kingdom that she was giving birth to her first baby, celebrations and feasts that lasted nine days and nine nights occurred throughout Fierra Tore. Time passed quickly and on the tenth day, the queen gave birth to her daughter.

When she saw the little girl, she could not believe her own eyes. She started screaming and crying. When the king saw the baby, he said, "Goodness gracious me! The baby has one leg! What are we going to tell our people now? We can't show them our baby." Everyone was frightened and scared, so they decided to arrange an urgent meeting with the royal family.

The Moon, the Sun and the Truth

Twelve days passed since Paloma's announcement and the meeting occurred. The royal family decided to put the baby in a magical wooden box and place it on the banks of the river. As decided, the queen, with tears in her eyes, put the baby in the wooden box and let it float down the river. Meanwhile, the king

announced to his people that the baby died during her birth.

The kingdom fell into deep sorrow and melancholy. Within the days that followed, a ceremony in memory of the little girl took place in the center of Fierra Tore. The royal family and the fairies of the castle decided to bury the truth, although they knew from their kingdom's tradition that there are three things you cannot hide forever: the moon, the sun and the truth.

The Miracle

The baby's mystical box was carried away by the river's spurting water and eventually, after three days and three nights, the little girl arrived in a gloomy, vast forest. When she was on the verge of death because of her vulnerability, an old-looking man found her and decided to take her to his village.

The journey was strenuous and threatening, making their arrival at the village a true miracle. The little girl was named Alanze, which meant "miracle" in the villager's language. The name was given to the baby because of her inexplicable arrival and distinctiveness. When the villagers saw the innocent face of Alanze they were enchanted by her beauty. The people didn't care that Alanze had one leg because according to their tradition, they believed that every baby was a blessing.

The Village

Alanze became a member of the village very quickly. She grew up with Christopher, the logger who found her when she was little, and his children Charles and Tim. Amidala was the youngest and the purest member of the family, Charles was the middle child and the most caring one, and Tim was the oldest brother who supported everyone in the family after their mother's death.

Throughout the years, Alanze cultivated a strong bond with her new family and learned how to grow crops, cook traditional food, dance, and paint. She also discovered that she had a God-given talent as a designer and maker of clothes and dresses that she later gave to the people of the village. Her artfulness was so outstanding that everyone admired her work.

Time passed like the flow of the river and Christopher decided that it was time for his soul to rest in eternal peace. Although he was drained of strength and energy, he decided to tell Alanze about her past and give her a gift that would help her in the future. Christopher spent his last days making a wooden leg for Alanze and gathering all his life savings.

The Wooden Box

When the right time came, Christopher told Alanze the story of how they found her and the miracle that saved her life. With tears of joy in his green eyes, he advised Alanze to travel to Fierra Tore, a kingdom far away from their land, so she can take part in a sewing contest that occurred in the aristocratic palace. Before he took his last breath, he told Alanze to look inside the wooden box in the corner of the room. Christopher

closed his eyes peacefully and his soul left his body serenely.

His children mourned his death for countless days. Tim and Charles, filled with sorrow and pain, organized a traditional ceremony to honor their fathers' achievements, benevolence, and devotion to the village. During this period of grief, Alanze remained concerned and curious about the box and what it contained.

A few days passed and Alanze finally found the courage to open the box. She hesitantly approached her father's bedroom and tentatively opened the wooden box. When she saw what it contained, she started crying tears of joy and gratefulness. She picked up the wooden leg and the small pot of golden coins placed in the box's corner. When she tried the leg, she was amazed by how perfectly it fit her! Now, knowing that she had everything that she needed, Alanze was determined to travel to Fierra Tore and become the greatest tailor in the kingdom.



Goble, Warwick. "Unknown." Mynd and Mist, 24 June 2012, <https://myndandmist.wordpress.com/2012/06/24/changelings-and-fairy-babies/>. Accessed 21 June 2024.

BANG! (An Excerpt of the Novel *Immune*)

Dimitris Papadakis

HS2 ELA 1

A Forward From the Author

Back in the day, I had the chance to read “The Hound of Baskervilles” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. To be frank, even though this name is considered to be heavy, equally light I found the author’s touch of the characters’ emotions and his emphasis on what makes them truly unique and significant. Good and evil are fuzzy, and action is rather limited. My main goal in writing this book, *Immune*, was to produce a successful social critique that would test the limits of good, evil, just, unjust, and ultimately the limits of human intuition and determination. The book consists of ten chapters; below, you will find an excerpt from Chapter 9. Enjoy!

Wednesday: 5:03

Epsom Derby

“Ladies and gentlemen, please stand back! It is of paramount importance that we stay calm under these circumstances! Exit in order please!”

A pleading voice was heard from the megaphones. Almost breaking, it begged half a million people to stay in their spots. But to no avail. People ran towards the exits. The bomb had just exploded. Panic was spreading across the Downs. More shots were fired, causing even more terror. It started to rain. The track turned muddy. The horses neighed and whinnied in a fearful tone. No one paid attention to who came first. Of course.

Kent glanced around. All he saw was panic. Anguish. Mothers coming by were pulling their children away.

Kent was kneeling. His hands were painted with blood. His coat too. He was holding his left side with his handkerchief, also oozing blood. His heart

was racing. His mind was spinning. His face was illustrated with the paintbrush of thousands of emotions. He could not hold himself together much longer from the pain, but there he stood. He could not comprehend what was happening. It was like a mirror smashing in a thousand pieces. Above all, he was confused, bewildered. He didn’t know where to look. Everyone but him, P.D., and Sanders had fled. A woman’s palm, full of blood, caressed his face. She was still alive. Right then, he broke. He laughed, quietly but almost hysterically. The doctors raced to the spot with a stretcher. They placed her on it, and she screamed in agonizing pain. She had been shot in the shoulder, Kent noticed. She was going to be ok. He crawled to the other bodies, trying to calm himself down and not collapse from the pain.

Dead. He recognized a corpse, took but a second to mourn. A doctor glanced around with agony, harried. Alive, injured, yes – this one will be ok. “Stretcher!” Two nurses, carrying another stretcher, rushed to the scene.

"God rest the bastard's soul in hell. I'll question the other one once we are both awake."

"Hostages?"

"Safe, in good health."

"You can take me now." he says under his breath, before falling to the ground.

But how did we get here? Well, for that, we need to turn back the sands of time ...

Monday: 15:50

Schreider's Office

Schreider was in his office. The smoke of the cigars blurred the scene. Alone, in there. All the managers had left for lunch. He seemed almost bewildered. Angry, even. He stood, turned on his Red Seal. It started playing classical music. He poured some whiskey for himself. He looked around through the haze. He inhaled his cigar, trying to hold the smoke in his lungs as long as possible. He closed his eyes, and exhaled. Suddenly, a knock on the door. He jumped, wiped the ash from his hands, straightened, and tried to shake off his fatigue.

"Come in," he said with his usual strong voice after some effort. The door opened. It was Baker. He looked at him with indifference rather than astonishment. "I thought you left," he mumbled, while searching for his lighter.

"I came running. It was urgent." Schreider's expression changed to one of concern.

"What happened?" he asked while lighting his cigar, much slower now, looking up.

"There has been an explosion."

"An explosion? Where?"

"Thomas Brown's carriage."

"But I didn't order an explosion anywhere!

Someone is trying to get him before me!" He frowned and his brow furrowed in anger. He curled his hands into fists, squeezed them so hard that his fingernails dug into his palms and they started to bleed. He paced, his breath heavy, and with an excruciating howl, threw a pot of ink against the wall where it blasted apart. Baker fixed his tie, looking away, surprisingly though maintaining his calm.

"What should I do, sir?" he asked simply.

"There is a traitor among us," Schreider growled and put both his hands on the table. "When I get him, his tongue will go first, then his hand, and then his brain!" He was almost out of breath trying to hold his anger. "Baker, could you pour some whiskey?"

"Yes, sir," he obliged and turned to face the bar. Big mistake. He felt the cold, metal body of Schreider's revolver on the back of his head. He raised his hands.

"You know what we do to traitors in this enterprise, Baker?"

"I do, sir." He stayed very calm. "I would never betray you."

"Keep this nonsense for other idiots!" Schreider cocked the gun, the hammer clicking backwards as the safety was removed.

"You know where my family lives and half my bookies want my spot. They would be more than happy to carry out the torture before you killed me. I know that if I betrayed you, my family's name would be wiped off the map, and my death would be a long and painful one."

After a moment, Schreider put his gun down and sunk in his chair.

"I am sorry. You know that out of all people, you are the only one I can trust."

"I know. Thank you, sir. Now, if you want, I can search for some names."

"No need, Baker. I will go to Derby myself and I am going to sit right next to Lord Balfour. Then we are going to see who is the smartest." Hearing that, Baker stumbled.

"But sir, you can't do that! The plan ..."

"I am no coward! We need to take all the precautionary measures, and we need to gather all of our own. I want Brown rounded up, and to pull the trigger myself."

"So, should I notify everyone?"

"No, I will. If you have anything new, contact me immediately. I have business. I need a carriage and two men," he said, looking at his watch.

"Very good, then." Baker stepped out quickly before his boss could change his mind. While Schreider was not watching, he breathed a huge sigh of relief.

The evil genius Schreider rose again, put on his coat and hat, and entered onto the street. He scanned the scene before him, relishing the moment to reflect. He was making a lot of money from this. He saw the poor all around him: children selling papers and polishing shoes, workers finishing their morning shift, decaying figures. However, people of his kind were also middling in the streets. Many were there to enjoy the cheaper goods, but just as many there for new experiences and adventure. Towering over everything, its smoke blackening the sky, was his factory. He waved at a man in a top hat, standing like a candle in a dark room. He grinned. That man was meeting Schreider for business.

"Mr. Romano!" The man was about forty-five years old, had a filing presence. He wore the same kind of suit as Brown, one could say even more expensive, and walked with a cane. He had a crimson scar running through his right cheek, but he still

managed to appear remarkably posh.

"Mr. Schreider!" They approached each other and shook hands.

"Glad to see you!"

"I believe we have many things to talk about."

"We do. But if you don't mind, we have to pay a visit somewhere first."

"To where?" Romano asked, undeterred. He was used to being extremely patient when dealing with Schreider. After all, he only spoke money, and Schreider was pretty fluent in it.

"The local prison. I believe that the inmate we are going to see will recognise both of us..."

Monday: 16:30

A Secret Location

A man sat tied to a chair in an otherwise barren room. The room was dimly lit, like the man's hopes; one would only see the upper part of his body if they happened upon it. No older than twenty, he was sweating uncontrollably, bleeding from his face and his ribs. He breathed heavily, the only detectable sound haunting the scene.

"Damn you!" he whispered, looking directly upward. He spit harshly against the floor.

A policeman stared at him, holding a belt. In the corner, another one, his hands crossed, waited for his colleague to get tired.

"I am going to ask you one more time, scum! The name!"

"What name?" he asked, out of breath and hoarse. The belt cracked the air like a whip and struck the man's face. Once, twice, thrice, five times. Yet, there the man sat. Waiting.



Sharma, Yamini. Minute A Day About Movies » Blog Archive » The Man Who Wasn't There. 2024. Pinterest, <https://i.pinimg.com/550x/b3/4b/86/b34b865b5e6656c8fd14ad9874987a80.jpg>. Accessed 20 June 2024.

A knock on the door. The darkness subsided for a fraction of a second. Another man appeared.

“He wants to come in, sir.”

“Why? Everything is under control.” The policeman was almost irritated.

Footsteps. Footsteps and a cane. The man heard them and breaks into laughter. He laughs and laughs, not noticing that the men were right in front of him. Their towering presences haunted the room. Like crows into a cemetery, they stood there, waiting for their victim to break, to quit, so they could use him for their own dubious enterprises, or possibly to devour him.

“Sir, everything okay?”

“Yes ... yes ... you have done a terrific job. But not enough.” The man scratched his beard. He inched closer. The man’s eyes had turned red from

all the suffering. As he came closer, the young man stared at him almost maniacally. His eyes were round and insistent, looking at him directly.

“Now, tell me ... what have you done?”

“I have done nothing. If you plan to kill me, then kill me. But I am innocent.”

Schreider stopped for a second to contemplate and rethink his strategy. He sighed. Fractions of a second later, the end of his gun was pressing into the man’s forehead. However, he didn’t flinch. He closed his eyes. Darkness again. The only thing heard was his heavy breathing. Breath, after breath, after breath.

BANG. And again – BANG.

“You bastard! You have a plan, don’t you?”

Both policemen lay dead.

WE'RE LOST!

Dimitris Papadakis

HS2 ELA 1

In front of all the other cars, the old red Mazda seemed outmoded. The two comrades, however, adored their car with a child-like affection. When they bought it, it had a shining yellow complexion, which earned it the nickname “the canary”. Second-hand, it barely moved and was one of the smallest cars you had ever seen. Large as they were, the both of them, they had to fold their legs and incline their chairs all the way back. They both seemed in deep preoccupation.

“I told you we shouldn’t have come here! I’d rather sit home, watch my show, and eat my snacks.”

“Well, even at work, that is all you do, comrade.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“What I mean is that you’re lazy.”

“You of all people shouldn’t judge, your stomach has reached Mars!”

Just about they were ready to implode in another one of their pointless arguments, the tollbooths made their blurry appearance in the distance. Behind them lay the majestic Forest of Doom, which the Challenge would take place in. The comrade who was driving opened the window with great struggle. On their left, they could see the Germans, laughing, playing loud, cheerful music, in their gigantic state-of-the-art Mercedes, shouting “*Auf Wiedersehen!*” merrily as they left. On their right, the French, similarly jolly in a sizable Renault SUV, made their way to the forest.

“How many?”

“Two”, the comrade answered dully.

“Have a nice trip.”

“Don’t tell me what to do, you capitalist pig!”, he shouted as he drove recklessly towards the opening ramp. The only thing the worker could do was look at him in deep inquiry.

They drove towards the forest. The sun had just woken up from his sleep – the time was around five. Orange and purple showered the sky, changing the background from the dejection of the night into the hope of the day. The two comrades, however, felt more and more uneasy seeing the other cars. Besides the German and the French, there were the Italians with a Ferrari, the Spaniards with a Seat, the Swiss with a monster of a car, imported, without a logo, probably a modified Mercedes. The two comrades were the first ones to arrive, but the last ones to walk to the initial point, as they struggled to get out of the car. They constantly hit one another in their effort to cram inside the criminally limited space they had, the whole thing resembling a debauched clown act at the circus.

After a lot of effort, they finally managed to get to the initial point. Their opponents waited for them frustrated, aligned, while in the center stood an old man in a green vest and cargo shorts. The others were quick to nod to him respectfully; the two comrades, however, were quick to laugh quietly and judgmentally about his beard. After a deadening look from the man, they sheepishly smiled at him, embarrassed.

“Welcome all! You, the most capable, are here to take part in the Challenge! What Challenge? But of course, to be the first ones to reach the end of the Forest of Doom!” A deafening round of applause erupted from the competitors.

“Now, I know that you are excited, but let’s go through the rules,” the man continued after the teams quieted down. “Each team will go down a different path, as marked by the flags, all measuring the same distance, and of the same difficulty. The first one to win is showered with cash!” A second round of applause once again disturbed the otherwise calm forest.

They walked to their flag, as did the others.

“On your marks ...” Their hearts were beating.

“Set ...” The others seemed happy ... why?

“Go!”

Their adversaries ran inside; they walked. The trees towered over them, separating the teams from each other. They could only hear the exhilarated voices of the Spaniards.

“Mark that tree. It will be useful for later if we’re lost.”

They walked. The Spaniards’ irritating voices became more and more distant until they became one with the wind, a buzz, which was then drowned out by the howls of a sizable owl, which gazed at them judgmentally. The trees grew taller and taller, until the vegetation covered every ounce of their line of sight. Still, they moved, gradually. Despite the time getting warmer and warmer toward the daylight, the sky kept getting darker and darker, a cold, haunting grey that rankled the two comrades’ souls. Trees ... trees ... trees ... bushes ... bushes ... rocks ... trees ... the owl ... wait, the owl?! No, it couldn’t be, they had already passed that spot.

“You idiot! There are like a million owls in this forest! It must have been another owl!”, his comrade rushes to reassure him.

“Yes ... yes, you’re right”.

They kept walking. More trees ... trees ... trees ... more bushes ... bushes ... more rocks ... more trees ... the owl ... oh no.

The comrade who first spotted the owl lost his breath. He turned no less than three different colours, ranging from a cursed sulphur complexion to the passionate crimson of fury towards his comrade, finally landing on a ghoulish, frightening, pale white, making him seem like they had him powdered.

“Comrade, are ... are we lost?”, he stuttered under his breath; his eyes having grown three sizes.

Quietly understanding, the other comrade’s palette followed a similar course, ending in the same harrowing, pale complexion. The man’s realization quickly burst into the flames of mindless panic.

“We’re lost!” he shouted.

“We’re lost!” the other one echoed.

They kept repeating that phrase like a gospel. They started to walk up and down, crying for help when no one could hear them. Nothing worked. The sky turned into a deep, vengeful red. The trees had now at least doubled in height, and they felt like they kept getting taller and taller. The first comrade, seeing all of that, started to think.

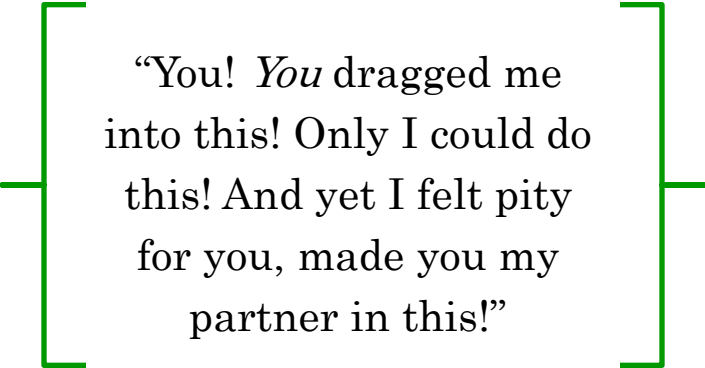
“I have to win. If I don’t win, I am going to die. Nothing else matters. Only that I win. Nothing else matters ... Nothing else matters ...”

Like a wild animal, he rushed to the corner to continue his thoughts, sat on a rock, shrinking and curling in on himself like a fetus, looking suspiciously at his partner. The other one ran from one point to the other, howling for help, moving pointlessly, like a

trout out of a lake. Suddenly, though, he stopped. One of the trees looked like it had something to offer him. A little circular hollow. Maybe it had an emergency communication device in it. However, at that very moment, thunder fractured the sky, and the tree grew arms and a demonic face, almost grabbing him. He screamed in agony. His comrade saw it too. They both shouted in fear as they hung on for their lives. All the trees gradually started inching toward them, their doom awaiting.

“You! *You* dragged me into this! Only I could do this! And yet I felt pity for you, made you my partner in this! I wish the trees kill you first!”

“You bastard! On the contrary, it’s me who’s the best! Only I can do this. YOU have dragged me into this! I wish the trees kill YOU first!”



“You! *You* dragged me into this! Only I could do this! And yet I felt pity for you, made you my partner in this!”

Their spite grew. Companionship gave way to hate, which exploded into violence. They attacked each other simultaneously, with no one seeming to have the upper hand. Both seemed to be getting some good punches, utterly forgetting about the trees. The brawl continued for some time, turning to a long time, turning to hours on end. Eventually, they just ended up facing each other, too tired to continue, but too angry to let it go. One of them, his mouth leaking a river of blood, his eye turned a shiny black, fished out a dagger. Taking his comrade completely by surprise, he grabbed him with his right hand and pointed the blade at his throat. As soon as he was about to end his life though, his victim said one thing:

“Comrade, are you sure we aren’t thinking about this too much? All this anxiety for nothing?”

With that thought, he dropped the dagger, in deep dejection after thinking about the carnage he was about to commit. The violence faded and he took his partner in a sentimental embrace.

“I think it’s time to look at things more calmly.”

“I think so.” The comrade grinned to hide his disappointment.

And with that remark, suddenly it all changed. They spotted the tree, a white X a sign of their idiocy. The sky turned blue, the trees thinned, and the owl turned into an innocent sparrow. And there, right in front of them, the finish line: a long red, horizontal line marked by a cedar tree. And there lay all of them, the French, the English, the Spaniards, the Poles, the Turks, the Italians, and worst of all, the Germans, receiving a vertigo-creating check that they so desperately needed.

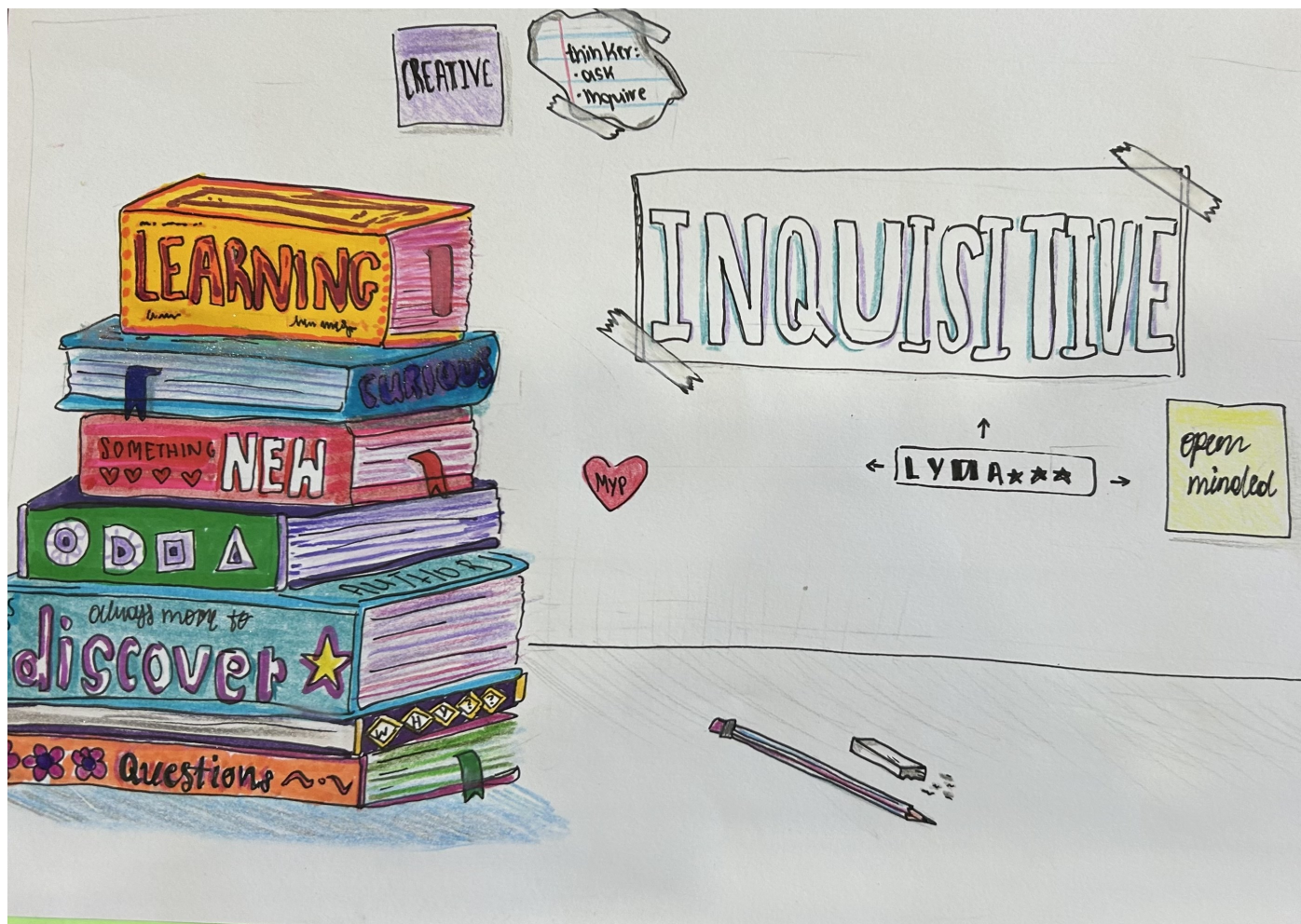
All the colours that the bewildered comrades had showcased had exploded spectacularly, creating a painting beautifully grotesque, which now, with all the others waiving at them seemed so pointless, redundant. Redundant like all of their possessions and ways, like everything that kept them back because they were lost in life. There was no compass, only mindless panic whenever something went wrong and a devastating false reassurance that everything was going to be alright. Seeing what they could have done to themselves, they both fell to their knees, overwhelmed. They looked up, and then down. They were so far away from the sky, only little ants in a world where ants are stepped on. One of them stood and gave a helping hand to the other. All the colours from the painting of their miserable life cycled over their faces again. Ashamed, dishonoured, they stuffed themselves back into their Mazda. Their hearts heavy, once

more they started the engine with a coat hanger, the key long broken. It sputtered for a while, struggling, eventually only just functioning, like it was the last time it was doing this, like it had to. Having done that, the overdriven car inched toward a scenery utilising the colours of the Painting of

Shame. An unforgiving, unfinished orange, dancing harmoniously with the crimson of hope, towered above the purple of chagrin and the pale grey of despair, a magnificent canvas to the blurry tolls, who lay in perfect symmetry with the Forest of Doom. Into that painting they drove, into the Sunset of Life.



Burhan. Two boys are walking on the forest. One of them showing far away to others. Friendship and brotherhood concept photo. Hiking, sport and active lifestyle concept photo. Fresh air at outdoor. 2024. Adobe Stock, https://stock.adobe.com/gr_en/images/two-boys-are-walking-on-the-forest-one-of-them-showing-far-away-to-others-friendship-and-brotherhood-concept-photo-hiking-sport-and-active-lifestyle-concept-photo-fresh-air-at-outdoor/476751380. Accessed 20 June 2024.



Lydia Saranti LL1

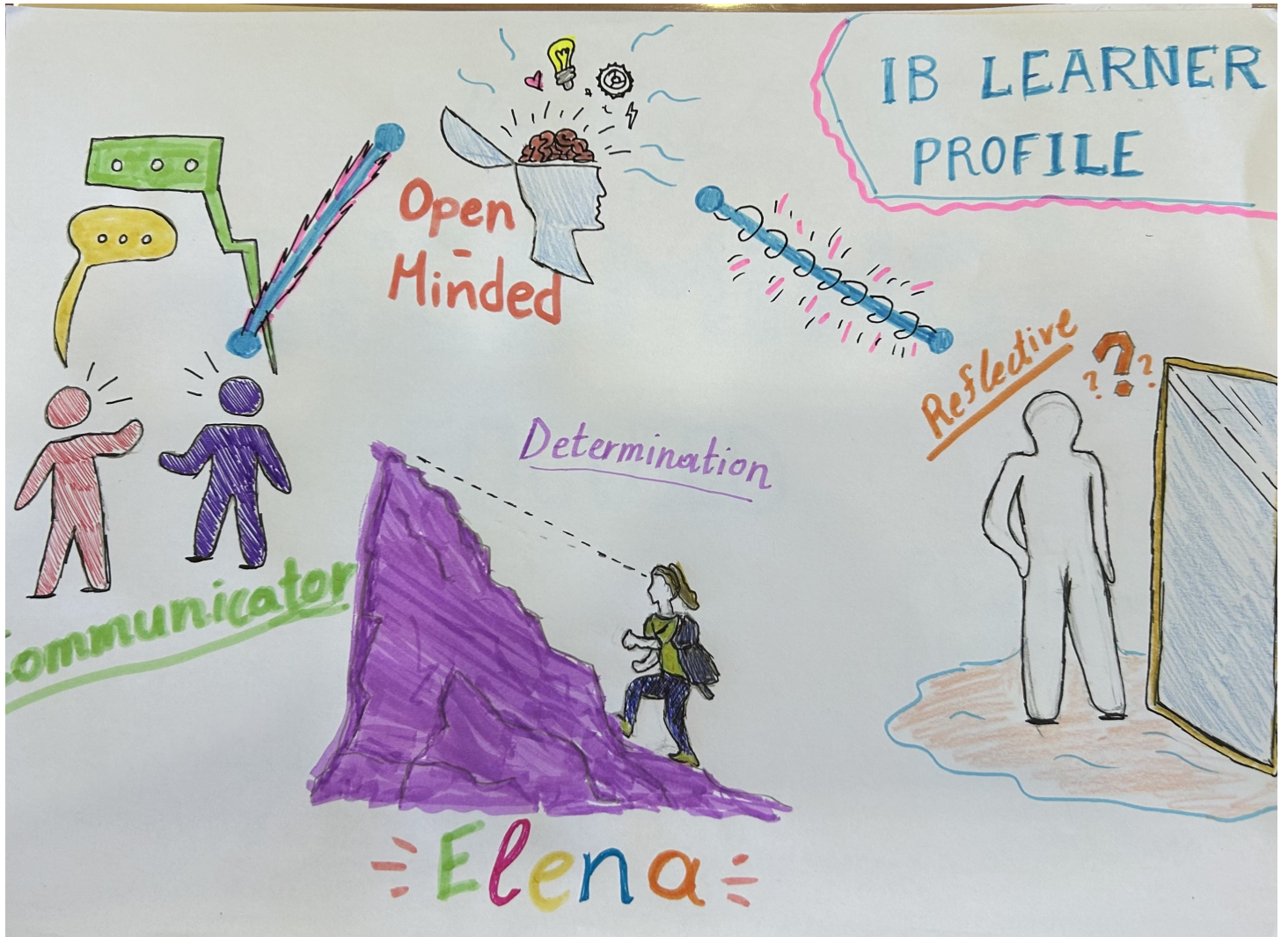
MYP PROFILE PORTFOLIOS

In the beginning of the school year, students were asked to create their own MYP portfolios following this prompt: “On a piece of paper , put the aspects of the IB learner profile that you think describe you best.”

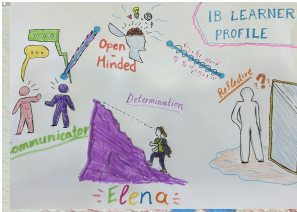
-Ms. Laskari



Marina Dampasina HS1 LL1



Elena Dimtsa HS1 LL1



Nelly

"BECOMING" * FOCUSED

* A book by Michelle Obama
symbol of a focused achiever

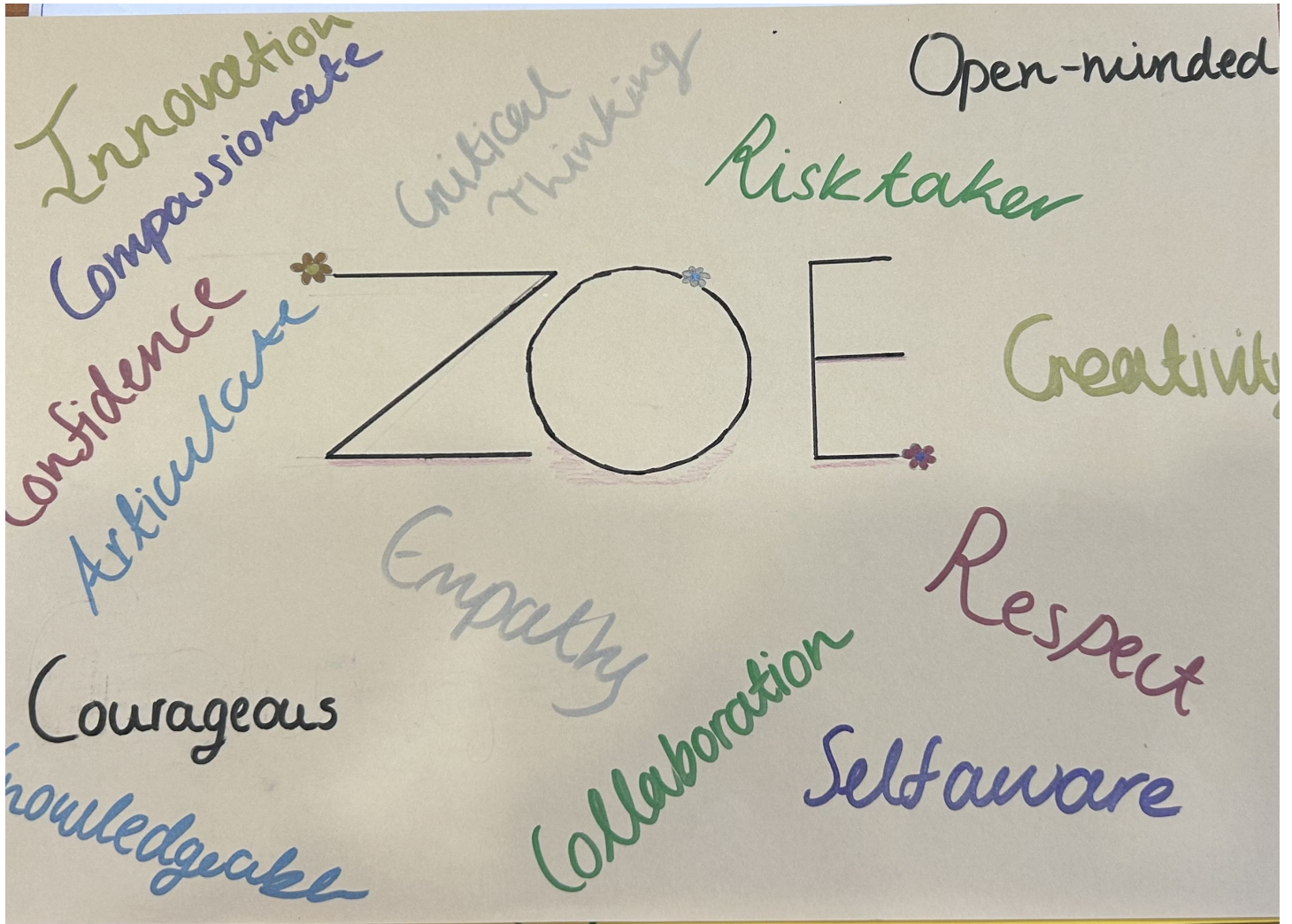
Need to develop
Being:

Caring

Balanced

Risk Taker

Nelly Grigoriadi LL1



Zoe Myzali ELA10



Eleni Marinaki LL1



HS2ELA1 MUSEUM VISIT

In March, the HS2 ELA1 students visited the Basil and Elise Goulandris Foundation. The private collection hosts key modernist works, both Greek and international.

Basil and Elise Goulandris Foundation Visit

Evgenia Antonopoulou

HS2 ELA 1

On Friday, March 1st, the HS2 ELA1 English classes had the opportunity to immerse themselves into the world of art and expression at the Basil and Elise Goulandris Foundation in Pangrati. Having studied modernism in class, both through literature and through visual arts, our teacher Ms. Laskari decided to expand our learning experience by arranging a visit to the permanent collection housed at the Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation. The collection focuses on modern and contemporary art by world-renowned artists such as Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Francis Bacon, Wassily Kandinsky, Joan Miró, Jackson Pollock, and Roy Lichtenstein, as well as acclaimed modern and contemporary Greek artists including Konstantinos Parthenis, Yannis Tsarouchis, and Yiannis Moralis. This truly breathtaking and vivid collection served as a trigger for deep discussions delving into the nuances of color, form, texture, and symbolism.

Prior to our visit, each student had been assigned an artwork and an artist to research, ranging from bold and vibrant Van Gogh paintings to the compositional revolution initiated by Picasso. As we presented our chosen artworks and explained the way each one of them resonated with us, the museum halls transformed into a spirited gallery sheltering a profound exchange of perspectives. Through our presentations, we not only gained an appreciative understanding of the power of visual storytelling, but we also saw our own creative and interpretative prospects assume form. An unparalleled experience, this museum visit showcased exactly how combining effort and hard work with enriching moments shared through art

can render school life fascinating and beautiful. We would all like to thank both Ms. Aidonopoulou for accompanying us on our trip, and Ms. Laskari for always seeking to foster a sense of camaraderie and shared learning within our class.







PANHELLENIC FORENSICS TOURNAMENT

The Athens College Forensics Club is a competitive speech and debate team. Students of all levels of English proficiency participate in both scripted and spontaneous speech events, including duet acting, group discussions, original oratory, impromptu speaking and oral interpretation of literature.



Our school's Forensics team competed with great success at the Panhellenic Forensics Association Tournament 2024, which took place at Mandoulides School in Thessaloniki, on April 4-7, 2024. 42 students from Athens College and Psychico College represented our School, competing with 450 students from 20 schools from Athens, Thessaloniki, Larissa and Patras, and participating in Debate, Duet Acting, Group Discussion, Impromptu Speaking, Oral Interpretation of Literature and Original Oratory. Our team won the 1st Place Sweepstakes Cup, with 10 Finals and 4 Honorable Mentions,; the Debate Best Speaker Award, and the First Among Equals Award in Group Discussion.

PFAT 2024:

Duet Acting - Dramatic Finalists: Alex Kollarou (PCHS2) and Artemis Papastavrou (IB1)

Debate Finalists: Michael Kofinakos (PCHS2) and George Parthenis (PCHS2)



Meanwhile, throughout the year, students from Psychico College High School participated in various Debate and Impromptu Speaking competitions with great success, including reaching the debate semi-finals of the Deree Invitational, the St Catherine's Cup, and the Moraitis Cup, and reaching the Finals in Impromptu Speaking at the Moraitis Cup.

Fall Deree Invitational LXV:

Semifinalist: Michael Kofinakos (PCHS2)

St. Catherine's Debate Cup 2023

Semifinalist: Panagiota Dourida (PCHS1)

Moraitis Debate & Impromptu Cup 2024

Debate Semifinalist: Michael Kofinakos (PCHS2)

Impromptu Speaking Finalist: George Parthenis (PCHS2)

Spring Deree Invitational LXVI

Semifinalists: George Parthenis (PCHS2), and Stavros Yiannidis (PC HS1)





MODEL UN REFLECTIONS

Model UN is among the most prestigious extracurricular programs at Athens College. The program encourages students to research deeply about global issues and the countries that address them. Further, MUN connects students from around the world to discuss these issues together and consider novel solutions.



As someone who had never attended a private school previously, I was fascinated by the stories I heard from friends who had. They would explain how after-school activities were the best part of their day and how they filled them with such great joy. Specifically, the MUN club was something that seemed intriguing and fun, and therefore, the moment I came to this school, I enrolled in it. At first, it seemed like it would be something overwhelming and that it would take up all my spare time, but as I later came to understand, MUN is not a chore. The entire procedure of conducting research and writing resolutions as well as attending conferences was very pleasant, and the experience provided me with a lot of information about global issues and current affairs. Additionally, this club is a means of making friends from other schools, other countries and even other continents! Personally, I have kept contact with fellow delegates from my committee and student officers, and I hope that we will remain in contact for a long, long time!

Cleo Giatzoglou
HS1



In the beginning of the school year, while skimming through the long list of clubs that my school offered, I came across MUN. Right from the beginning, it was an amazing experience. We started with mock conferences, which really helped me understand how much I would enjoy the actual conferences. Working with my classmates was so much fun; I never wanted to leave the library. Finally, around February I attended my first conference, PS MUN. I made friends with people from all around the world and I had so much fun that I started looking forward to participating in the next one and the one following that. I would advise everyone to join this amazing club since it has helped me develop invaluable skills.

Pavlos Filios
HS1

Having participated in MUN this year, I can say that this club has impacted my life in ways I would have never expected. I joined a community of people united by three needs: the need to change the world, the need to debate, and the need to bring justice to society. When I first started participating in MUN conferences, I was clueless and helpless, trying to navigate myself through the maze of communication more commonly known as lobbying. But as time passed, I started to uncover the wondrous aspects of MUN. I got a chance to meet people from all over the country, as well as other teenagers that reside in every corner of the world. I enhanced my debating skills and enriched my knowledge about current affairs. MUN has truly been an experience like no other, and I have not only added another skill on my CV, but also valuable friendships, knowledge about our world and great opportunities to showcase my debate abilities.

Spiros Glykos
HS1

As a member of the MUN club, I can say that my overall experience has been very positive. Through the research that I conducted prior to the resolutions I wrote and the conferences I attended, I gained knowledge regarding issues of global significance, such as human trafficking, the main topic that my committee addressed. During the conferences I was able to communicate with teenagers from different countries, which exposed me to different cultures and ways of thinking. Not only did I acquire useful information about the way that different countries operate and deal with problems, but I also had the opportunity to meet people whom I am still friends with.

Eleni Theochari
HS1

“MUN has truly been an experience like no other, and I have gained not only just another addition to my CV, but also valuable friendships, knowledge about our world and great opportunities to showcase my debate abilities.”

Throughout this year, I have been part of five MUN conferences. On a personal level, the MUN experience has been greatly beneficial. The topics I encountered and handled were meaningful and gave me an insight of what is truly important on an international scale. Through MUN, I have had the chance to meet incredible people and form friendships with people from the United Kingdom all the way to Zimbabwe, building relationships which I truly consider to be lifelong. I’m a student that dreams of delving into the world of law and international relations and dedicating my life to diplomacy. I’m proud to say that MUN has been the main reason I was able to discover what truly interests me. My life would honestly have taken a completely different path without MUN, one that I am sure would not be half as interesting or enjoyable as the one that this club has led me to. Based on my experience of MUN, I would wholeheartedly recommend the club to everyone!

Klelia Zahila
HS2



This was my first year participating in the MUN club and I really enjoyed the experience. I learned many important facts about various topics that concern the environment and our society in general. I also took part in an MUN conference at Platon School, where I represented Belarus. Even though during the first day I was a bit lost and confused, by the end of the conference, I was able to participate and speak up, voicing my opinion. I have to say that the experience was amazing. What I liked the most were the various people that I met from all over the world. Lastly, through this MUN club I developed public speaking skills, which will help me enormously in the future. I will definitely continue to take part in this club next year and I encourage you to join too!

Mili Stella
HS1

“... MUN is much more than a mere extracurricular activity. It is a transformative experience that has instilled in me a profound sense of purpose and has made me realize the power that we students hold.”

This year, as members of the MUN club, we participated in conferences and presented well-prepared resolutions that we developed and perfected with the guidance of student mentors. We broadened our knowledge on a great variety of topics that are currently debated upon on an international scale. Personally, I was able to understand that MUN is much more than a mere extracurricular activity. It is a transformative experience that has instilled in me a profound sense of purpose and has made me realize the power that we students hold. The friendships made, the lessons learned, and the moments of both defeat and triumph have all contributed to my growth as a student, a leader, and a global citizen. In essence, MUN is not just about lobbying or debating policies. It's about us, the next generation, having a platform where we can a voice important issues.

Peny Dourida
HS1

My experience with MUN this year has been a highlight of my life. I made a million new friends and learned so many things that made me smarter. It was very interesting to research and learn information about the country I represented during my first conference, China. I also developed skills like public speaking, teamwork and collaboration. Of course, my general knowledge also became richer and I learned a lot of fun facts. I met so many new people from all over the world, from the USA to Kuwait, and of course new friends who live in Athens and with whom I am still in contact with today.

Fenareti Hasapi
HS1

During this year, I participated in seven MUN Conferences: four of them as a chair, one as a judge and two as a delegate. Model UN hasn't been just an extracurricular activity for me, but a place where I could learn and develop, as I came to understand during my first conference. With MUN, I have improved numerous skills, such as English fluency, debating, communication, research, and analysis. Attending these conferences comes with various benefits, as it gave me the chance to research on different subjects, get acquainted with new people or meet them again, prepare draft resolutions, and debate with others about all the resolutions put before us. As an experienced member of the MUN club, I also guide and prepare new MUNers through simulation of committees and acting as a chair, correcting their resolutions, and so on. On that note, I definitely recommend the club as anyone can make new friends and acquire useful skills!

Konstantina Plesti
IB 1

Last September, I had the idea to join the MUN club. Since then, I have been enjoying it more and more with every passing day. It is an amazing experience that has helped me gain significant skills that will help me with my future studies. I have already attended two conferences, where not only did I learn about crucial global matters but I also met people from all over the world and created valuable friendships. Even though I was a bit skeptical at first and I thought of MUN as a really difficult after-school club, it turned out to be something that I am eager to do every week. The topics we discuss and the ideas we touch upon are interesting matters that concern the whole world. Representing all types of countries has helped me attain a well-rounded image of events that occur around the world. I can't wait to participate again next year and relive this amazing experience all over again.

Andreas Boliotis
HS1

“ With MUN, I have improved numerous skills, such as English fluency, debating, communication, research, and analysis ... As an experienced member of the MUN club, I also guide and prepare new MUNers through simulation of committees and acting as a chair, correcting their resolutions, and so on. ”



“Daisy sat on the balcony, shunning against the green shimmering light at the end of the dock. Her eyes, which until yesterday “fluttered” emerald light, now waned mirroring the emptiness that clung to her like a shroud. The carefree laughter that once echoed from her lips and the promises that etched her thoughts, have now been replaced by a hollow echo, a fading humming, lost in a world that she no longer was part of. The “orgastic green light”, once a promise of glittering possibility, now flickered across the bay, a stark reminder of the fleeting nature of dreams and the emptiness that remained in their wake, now that Jay was gone. Her gaze, once filled with promise, now held a weary acceptance, a resignation to a life forever marred by the ghosts of what could have been.”

A Daisy in love ... What Jay deserved.— Ms. Laskari

Artwork by Melina Mitreli HS1 LA100



“I hope she’ll be a fool—that’s the best thing a girl
can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.”

-Daisy Buchanan, *The Great Gatsby*

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