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# THE UNIVERSITY OBSERVER



AFSAI CONTEST UCD ENGLISH MODULE, **NEWS PG2** 

PROTECTIONS FOR STUDENT RENTERS DUE TO THE **CORONAVIRUS HAVE BEEN** EXTENDED, NEWS PG2

**UCDSU CALLS FOR INVESTIGATION INTO** PROFESSOR DOLORES CAHILL, NEWS PG3

### A DIFFERENT KIND OF COVID SPIKE: UCD STUDENTS NOTE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN ANTI-ASIAN RACISM SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

### **ANDREA ANDRES**

SINCE the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, there has been a marked increase in incidents of anti-Asian racism, in Ireland and around the world. Speaking to The University Observer, Asian students across UCD have relayed their experiences of and reaction to racism they have encountered since the outbreak of Covid-19.

"In February [2020], I experienced some hatred from some students on campus in Belfield. They called us 'Coronavirus'. They accused us of carrying the virus and called us 'stinky Asian'. That's the first time part of a bigger wave of worldwide even then we are highly localised I've experienced anti-Asian racism," anti-Asian racism. According to the into our own circles for our own recounted Student A, who asked to Irish Examiner, the Irish Network remain anonymous.

"The second time was when I went to Dicey's on Valentine's Day. We tried to get a cab back home at the gate of the club and there was a woman, I'm not sure where she was from but her accent [was] not an Irish accent. She started calling us the carrier of the virus. We almost got into a fight for the organization United with her. The security guard had to separate us".

Student B, who also wished to be anonymous, recalled walking along the River Liffey when someone "called [them] 'Coronavirus', but [they] just ignored him and didn't want to generate any conflict," they said. "I just felt that man was rude and ignorant".

Yuxi Wei, a MSc Digital Marketing student in the Michael Smurfit **Business** School Graduate remembers an incident with a woman men in their twenties, Arthur Ma

**EDWARD** 

who looked "seventy or eighty years old." This woman "muttered a very long sentence when I went by, with an unfriendly look. I knew she was complaining about me."

"I asked her what she said, she didn't admit she was talking to me. I asked her what she said again, I just wanted to know if it [was] about Covid 19 and [that] I'm from China, or just because I'm an Asian. She ran away and let me leave her alone. I wore a mask and didn't stand by her, but I knew it's probably because of Covid," Wei added.

Against Racism (INAR) reported sixty coronavirus-related racist incidents in the first four month of 2020. The director of INAR, Shane O'Curry, estimated that eighty percent of incidents were not reported, positing "huge under-reporting."

Memet Uludag, spokesperson Against Racism, said of the underreporting: "If you ask me 'What is the percentage? What is the ratio?', it's very difficult to even say because many of the people who are victims of racism are finding it very difficult to come out and bring it to the public arena because it is an attack. You're trying to figure out what the hell just happened to you just on the bus, in your workplace. You're considering your privacy, your homelife, your hometown, your own safety."

In August of last year two Chinese

LIAM

and Martin Hong, were verbally and physically assaulted in a racist incident in Cork. Later that month, Xuedan (Shirley) Xiong was pushed into the Royal Canal in Dublin by a group of youths. The Irish Sun reported at the time that 'they shouted phrases such as "Chinese noodles" and "fried noodles" at her'

Another student who asked to be anonymous, Student C, felt that: "The association of any Asian-looking person, regardless of ethnicity, with Covid as a monolith has made us an easy and acceptable target. We are a minority, but an even smaller minority The experiences recounted are than some other demographics and protection, so we're never a "real" problem."

> "White Irish allies also dominate spaces and organisations seeking and claiming justice (...) and while that's usually due to simple demographics, the fact that we aren't taken seriously until a white Irish voice repeats what we've been saying is infuriating," he added.

> When asked whether they reported the incidents that occurred to them and whether they were aware of any resources to aid them in these scenarios, Student A, Student B, and Wei all chose not to report the incidents they experienced and were not aware of any such resources. "I didn't report. I just told my friends what happened to me and told them to be careful. I didn't know that there was any place for us to report hate crime. Also, those people are just random students on campus or some people who hang out in the club, I

didn't know any detailed information about those people, " said Student A. Student B opted not to report because "[they] really don't mind. Just told some friends to be careful."

Student C did not recount any coronavirus-related racism, but has experienced prejudice. "Even before Covid, I've been called slurs and harassed on the streets, and have had bottles thrown at me from moving cars." They have chosen not to report any incidents because: "No matter the institution, be it Gardaí, university or ministry, bureaucracy in this country seems geared specifically to fatigue the people it serves into giving up. The police don't care about sexual abuse or racism against their own citizens. Why would they care if it affects us?"

"Racial discrimination usually occurs when a person is walking. I can't catch him [or] her when I encounter these things and say 'Come here and follow me, I will sue you for racial discrimination'," said

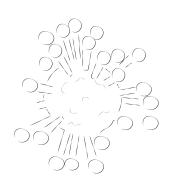
Student A felt "really upset" with their experiences of anti-Asian racism in Ireland. "We heard really good things about people here, we heard they're friendly, they're welcoming to international students that come here and study, but then we experienced this and that made us really upset." "After everything that happened, I just feel like we are not welcome by a lot of people in a lot of countries, especially in Western countries. I personally won't go to town or some sensitive area in Dublin

(CONTINUED, PAGE 2)

PERIOD POVERTY IN THE IRISH STATE **FEATURES** PAGE 6



STUDENTS WEIGH IN ON COMMON AGRICULTURAL **POLICY REFORM AGRICULTURE & RURAL** PAGE 9



THE EU'S BIO DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMME: THE HERA INCUBATOR **SCIENCE** PAGE 11



A NEARLY SERIOUS LEAGUE OF **IRELAND SEASON REVIEW SPORT** PAGE 16

### THE UCD STUDENTS' UNION ELECTION SPECIAL

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COVERAGE, INTERVIEWS AND ANALYSIS INSIDE



A HISTORY OF CORSETS **FASHION** OTWO

alone, I would always make sure I have some friends to people make sexual references to my three and a half about it in our schools, in colleges." But she also spoke we are also setting the mark and say 'we will not allow go with me to keep myself safe."

Wei echoes Student A's sentiment and describes "A friend of mine who does algorithms and data" hate speech and hate crimes". feeling "disappointed". "My friends who have lived in analysis did a model', Chu continues, "he realized from Ireland told me the anti-Asian situation before the virus that, just affecting our politicians' Twitter, Irish politicians was not as serious as now. But now I feel it's really a very on average get six percent of abuse, the high profile the affected party front and centre;" Student C said. serious phenomenon in Ireland," she said.

said she "definitely [had not] seen [coronavirus-related racism] before", adding: "There's only been sporadic racism across the board, but it's never specifically year old daughter," she added.

experienced a spate of racist attacks directed during normal. The only thing is to try and persevere otherwise white voices supporting us." her tenure. Speaking to the University Observer, she there will be no one in the office that will be different."

Wei felt that "the solutions should be the racial black, Mincéir and other minorities," they add.

The Lord Mayor described how, in the last month, education from childhood, and the related legislation of "hate speech legislation coming along the way" and racism of our communities'," Uludag said. "talking about how to reform the platform for reporting

"Any kind of social justice movement should have know this kind of action is not acceptable. ones get ten percent, and I get fifteen percent. You "However, for the Asian minority and diaspora, not only get really, really thick skin and have to move on with are we usually avoidant of local politics, for safety but Coronavirus-related racism isn't confined to ordinary it because the whole point is people don't want you also, largely, because it's tradition to be, we're not loud students. Hazel Chu, the current Lord Mayor of Dublin in the office if you don't look like them and don't have enough as is. There is simply no incentive to stick one's has openly shared her experiences of racism and has the same skin colour as them and they don't think it's head out because we aren't even listened to without

> "Outside of relatively few and comparatively loud leftleaning organisations and people, Ireland as a whole As for confronting the problem of anti-Asian racism, needs to come to terms with its racism against Asian,

"Organizations of ancillary nature, community groups, she has received handwritten notes with "'[You're] a should be improved." Chu concurs: "There needs to all sections of society need to build a campaign in their bitch' scrawled all over it", and received jokes online be a proactive approach as well in education-how do communities, in their workplaces, in their societies that describing how her "car is about to blow up." "I've had we talk about racism in our classrooms, how do we talk not only comes into the defense of the victim, but also

> Student A hopes that "we can see more support from white people to know that they are staying with us and

## PROTECTIONS FOR STUDENT RENTERS DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE BEEN EXTENDED.

MICHAEL BERGIN

pandemic have been extended until the 12th of July.

The protections had been due to expire on the 12th of April. However, due to the ongoing nature of the pandemic, and current 5km travel restrictions, Minister a result of the pandemic. In addition, rent increases for UCD." those receiving the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) or payments from the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme have been banned.

However, the tenant in this case will not have to leave next year. their accommodation until after the 12th of July, and must be given 90 days' notice. Those not included in the

PROTECTIONS put in place for student renters who protections include licensees or those who live in the have been disaffected financially by the Covid-19 same accommodation as their landlord. These renters will not have protection under the residential tenancies act, nor will they be protected by eviction moratoriums.

In response to the measures, UCDSU Welfare Officer Ruairí Power welcomed a three-month extension during for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh a global health crisis as "good news". However, Power O'Brien TD, has sought cabinet approval for an extension also outlined the SU's position that an emergency threeto these measures. Included in the protections are a year rent freeze for rent pressure zones was required moratorium on evictions and rent increases for tenants in the context of the housing crisis "in order to combat who have faced financial difficulties and rent arrears as skyrocketing rent increases in the area surrounding

Power also highlighted the work that UCDSU have done in the past year in order to assist student renters facing financial difficulties and rent arrears due to the Landlords will still be able to serve a valid notice pandemic, citing the retention of flexible cancellation of termination for tenants who have fallen into rent and refund policies for the current year, while promising arrears, once having given 28 days' notice to the tenant. to work hard to ensure similar measures are adopted cross-party bill on student rent protections put forward. UCDSU is committed to lobbying TD's and politicians,

With regard to licensees, Power highlighted a recent commending them for their work. Power said that



to the Dáil by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), and will watch intently as the bill progresses. which UCDSU has not been affiliated with since 2013,

### AFSAI CONTEST UCD ENGLISH MODULE

**AOIFE ROONEY** 

On March 4th, the African Scholars Association of retractions and corrections made in the letter about colour empowered and teaching them about Blackness In a letter to Dr Joseph from President Andrew Deeks, Ireland (AfSAI) addressed an open letter to the UCD the hiring practices. In a letter addressed to the AfSAI, or race consciousness." This comes nearly a year after he admitted that while UCD is "not yet fully addressing" ENG32569 Writing Black: African American Literature and Racial Consciousness.

The letter argued that the way in which the module was designed "invokes the history of the exploitation of Black suffering for personal and institutional gain and profit, as well as the unacknowledged appropriation of Black scholarship". The letter also accused UCD of showing 'bias in their hiring.' The AfSAI suggested that the School was "careless of its Black community of workers and students" in their choice to position a white scholar in a teaching role of one of the two modules in the School focused on Black experience.

Head of the School Professor John Brannigan stated in response to these claims that the "School has and diversifying our curriculum." He also called for

group regarding a white academic in a teaching role for movement. Professor Brannigan said that the module a module on Black writing was untrue. He states that they was offered in an "expression of alliance and solidarity were an existing member of staff, and were not hired with the Black Lives Matter movement and more broadly with the contested module in mind. Professor Brannigan with anti-racism." also said that the claim was "not only disrespectful to the module coordinator, but also impugns the reputation of the university." Dr Ebun Joseph, Chairperson of the AfSAI, responded to this statement by clarifying that "the system in the University and school which facilitates

been actively engaged in a process of decolonising "Black students, students of colour and White students students." benefit from having Black lecturers and people of

UCD voiced their support for the Black Lives Matter

address the issues as stated in their letter. Among them the issue is not about a singular coordinator, but about was the recommendation to require staff to complete annual training covering "diversity, equity and inclusion." They also think that the University should have an is not enough to teach students about Black suffering resources into the development of modules that aim and experience through literature, but that it should to topple racial stereotypes and prejudices, and that be taught by Black scholars. Dr Joseph argues that these seminars should be "mandatory for all incoming

the recommendations made by the AfSAI, he notes the establishment of a Race and Ethnic Equality Working Group in 2020, who are currently developing a University Level Race and Ethnicity Action Plan. They are aiming to speak to students and find out more about their experiences with race and intersectionality.

When asked how UCD might approach the teaching The AfSAI suggested ways in which UCD can begin to of anti-racism in third-level, Dr Joseph believes that it is the role of the University to platform qualified, Black scholars and that there is an obligation on universities to "empower Black lecturers who have the expertise to develop materials and teach antiracism courses." On equality audit commissioned by an independent body. the importance of this situation, Dr Joseph reminds The response from the organisation reiterates that it Foremost, the group argued that UCD should invest the university that "It is a privilege to read about racism while others live that experience."

### USI SURVEY REVEALS STUDENTS BELIEVE IRISH SHOULD REMAIN COMPULSORY.

### NICOLA KENNY

A majority of third-level students think Irish should current syllabus. remain as a compulsory subject up to Leaving Certificate level.

out by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and no emphasis was placed on teaching Irish as a living the results from the Report on the Teaching of Irish published on March 10th, 2021, has considered language beyond the classroom setting, in contrast to published by USI. "It comes as no surprise that students students' attitudes towards Irish language education the 21% who said they were encouraged to speak or across the country enjoy learning Irish and wish to see and examined the current curriculum's effectiveness in use Irish outside of class. achieving language fluency.

surveyed expressing the view that Irish should remain together, and 7% said they had no fluency. compulsory across primary and secondary level education. 26% believe it should be mandatory until be optional throughout.

medium education, with 70% of all respondents saying system." they would send their children to Gaelscoileanna (Irish Language Schools.)

81% of students said that despite demand, the most significant emphasis in their education was on reading A report on the teaching of Irish in schools, carried and writing over the spoken language. 54% stated that Officer, described how UCDSU entirely agrees with

Overall, only 21% of students surveyed said they schools." The report results reflect a strong interest in Irish spoke fluent Irish. 41% said they were reasonably fluent, language learning among students, with 67% of those 30% stated that they could string a few sentences

Reflecting on the findings, USI Leas-Uachtarán primary level education". the junior certificate level, while only 7% said it should don Ghaeilge and author of the Report, Clíodhna ní Dhufaigh, said: "There must be greater emphasis placed on speaking the language as part of the curriculum and education anything less than fluent in Irish. While it is all levels." The report also shows support from students for Irish on Irish as a living language outside of the education true that 50% of the current Irish Leaving Certificate

education at both primary and secondary level, and this not work in achieving fluency" he said. While the survey results show a high level of support demand needs to be met in the Irish school system. It for Irish language learning, evidence from the report is no surprise that students who had Irish as a spoken In addition, he stated that "UCDSU would like to suggests that many students favour reform to the language in the classroom got greater enjoyment out extend its unreserved support to USI and Conradh

of the course, and that needs to be encouraged," she

Tadhg Ó Maoldhomhnaigh, UCDSU Irish Language it remain a compulsory subject but are unhappy with the current curricular approach in our secondary level

However, Ó Maoldhomhnaigh outlined how the Union believes that "this problem is not limited to secondary level education but in fact stems from

"Students should not come out of 14 years of present Irish curriculum in the education system across is awarded on oral and aural skills, it is obvious that this system is not working and that exercises such as by USI between October 2018 and January 2019 and "This report shows a high demand for Irish-medium" reading a poem and rote-learning 20 Sraith Pictiúr do promoted by Students' Unions, na Cumainn Ghaelacha,



na Gaeilge in any future campaigns to overhaul the

1539 students took part in the survey carried out and Conradh na Gaeilge.

### **NEWS**

### CAO SHOWS INCREASE IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENCE COURSE **POPULARITY**

**HELOISE ROBINSON** 

CAO applications this year have revealed a larger number of applicants than usual choosing to pursue third-level education, and in doing so, veered towards science and environmentfocused courses.

CAO applications have reached 79,176 this year, rising this year has seen a record number of international applications. an additional 6,203 applicants from last year. The CAO has British applications to Irish colleges have risen by over a quarter. reported that as of their most recent data, UCD has had almost In addition to this, European applicants increased by almost 10,000 first-choice applications, a rise of 16% on last year, and 140%. Trinity College Dublin has received nearly 23,000, up 32% compared to last year.

The highest increase in applications has been to environmental courses, where there has been a record 70% increase in firstchoice applications. First choice preference for journalism has (124%). Architecture also saw a significant rise at 59%, and also increased by 58%, after it had been decreasing steadily for the past few years. Overall, science-based courses have received a significant amount of interest; medicine rose by 25%, and biology sciences rose by 21% compared to last year. Most applications for third-level education were in the area of health, business, nursing, and arts.

which has risen by 43%, social sciences which rose by 27% and increase of students from previous years applying to the CAO, pharmacy which rose by 26%. Arts has risen by 11%, following and a "higher expectation of better results" as possible reasons a decline in previous years. Transport services received the for the increase. highest decline in popularity at 44%, in comparison to last year when the subject recorded the largest increase, at 89%.

There has also been a 20% increase in mature student applications, which The Irish Times reported may be as a result of the pandemic. 8,727 people over 23 applied for the CAO. There was also an increase in those applying via the Disability Access Route to Education, with 7,839 applicants in total. Furthermore,

The Irish Times reported that UCD deemed the CAO increase of 16% in first preference application as a "significant anomaly". The University registered its most significant increase in radiography (188%), which was followed by sustainability several healthcare courses such as mental health nursing at

Deputy President and Registrar of UCD, Professor Mark Rogers told The Irish Times that there is "an expected demographic increase in the number of school leavers at Leaving Certificate level", however, he deemed the overall increase in CAO Other popular choices were hygiene and occupational health applications "more complex". He cited factors such as Brexit, an



### SUSI SCHEME TO BE REVIEWED

**HEATHER SLEVIN** 

the current Student Grant Scheme in December 2020, Harris. Previously, students applying to the grant have with the opening of public consultation for the purpose been evaluated in terms of their annual household of the review on March 12th.

Support Ireland (SUSI), is the sole authority responsible comes after the tremulous effects of Covid-19. With an for the awarding of student grants and has been extra €20m secured in funding in the 2021 budget for running for nine years. The review will re-examine the grant scheme, there are hopes that the grant may be the rate of maintenance grants currently in place, the made available to more students, adding to the more upper-income thresholds for applying students, taking than 77,500 students who availed of the grant in the into account the number of dependents in the home, as well as the availability of grants for both students in part-time education and post-graduates, and will consider how Ireland compares to other jurisdictions.

MINISTER Simon Harris announced plans to review direction of the SUSI scheme", according to Minister income, with an upper threshold that takes into account the number of dependents in the house providing the The grant scheme, known as Student Universal cut-off for certain applicants. The review of the scheme 2020/21 academic year.

The review is seen as an opportunity to plan for improvements in the application process. With the With this announcement, the public consultation the public consultation calls for students to relay their would allow students to have their say on the "future" experiences and help improve the availability of the benefit many students living far from the colleges and



consideration the long-term effects of Covid-19 to give could mean a re-evaluation of the upper threshold, students the chance to avail of third-level education which currently leaves many families cut off from the effects of Covid-19 and the ongoing economic crisis, in the future. There is a possibility that there will be financial support available. an increase in the value of the grant, which would grant nationwide. The review will have to take into universities they wish to attend. In addition, with the extra funding secured in this year's budget, the review

The public consultation will remain open until April 16, with the final report being presented in Autumn 2021.

### UCD SCHOOL OF HISTORY NOT FULFILLING GENDER EQUALITY AIMS

**AOIFE ROONEY** 

THE UCD School of History is failing in their gender equality aims in the area of staffing.

With the departure of Associate Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne from the UCD School of History, the department now has only two remaining female academics at this level. There are four Associate Professors roles held by men in the School, which means that there are currently two male Associate Professors for every one female. This is not in line with the School of History's Inclusion (EDI) strategy. While there has been the appointment that the situation in UCD is largely more forthright than other them, including eventually the provision of a new creche." of several women within the School of History in recent years, it universities in the State. has not extended to Professor and Full Professor level.

Assistant Professor Mark Jones from the School of History

On a college-wide level, lack of childcare support for staff is senior level leaving UCD, and the current male to female ratio

spoke of the measures the school was taking in their attempts also a problem. In the 2016 Higher Education Authority (HEA) to address the problem. He credits the Head of the School, report on gender equality in universities, 50% of respondents William Mulligan for much of the progress. This includes the named 'childcare provisions and supports as being of critical work done in coordination with the Athena Swan Award, of importance.' Childcare is an issue that disproportionately which 16 schools across UCD, including the School of History, affects female employees, and can often act as a barrier to are recipients of the Bronze Award. As part of the work on employment, so the opening of a creche for staff would have equality that would qualify a school for this award, the Head a positive impact on female staff and academics. Associate of the School has reformed the promotions process, and Professor Jones clarifies that the university is aware of the issues Professor Jones argues that "it will take time for this progress to surrounding childcare and that the "current university equality commitment to their pursuance of the Equality, Diversity and be reflected in promotions to senior levels." He also maintains plan may have some concrete proposals in place to address

among staff not in favour of gender equality, Professor Jones suggests that while progress is slow, it is being made, and takes responsibility for the need to be a part of the discussion on how to address the issue "We (staff members) continue to have robust discussions on how to accelerate that progress best."

Despite the departure of one of the few female academics at

### UCDSU CALLS FOR INVESTIGATION INTO PROFESSOR DOLORES CAHILL

NATHAN YOUNG

the UCD School of Medicine to be investigated under Statute 28 of the Universities Act, 1997.

In a press statement sent on Friday 19th March, UCDSU the general public who do not realise she is not an expert in virology, epidemiology, or public health.

right. Many people have justifiably been duped into investigation by the University". believing that Cahill is an expert in the field due to her links to the UCD School of Medicine and they therefore utmost importance that we as a University explain to of public health or virology, and we do have qualified Dolores Cahill does not have the expertise to inform Cahill"

the UCD School of Medicine.

President Conor Anderson stated: "Dolores Cahill has Cahill's continued escalation of rhetoric that endangers claims regarding Covid-19 restrictions and public organising events. This is a penal regulation. been propagating medically-inaccurate conspiracy public health, I have written to the head of the UCD health guidelines. She stated children wearing masks theories in service of a far-right political agenda. School of Medicine and the head of UCD Human would "never reach their IQ and job potential because throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, her Resources to request that Prof. Cahill be investigated their brains are starved of oxygen", and claimed that Wednesday] evening who were making non-essential words are far-reaching. Professor Cahill has amassed a under Statute 28 of the Universities Act 1997. This "the reason that globalists are putting down the masks is journeys. A number of FPNs will be issued as a result. huge following and exerts considerable influence over statute defines gross misconduct, in part, as "deliberate that oxygen-deprived people are easier to manipulate". A breach of public health regulations for travel without disregard for health and safety precautions likely to endanger another person." Given Cahill's disregard for public health advice and her continued rhetoric Síochána were carrying out an investigation following "Cahill is using her role in UCD to position herself that is putting the lives of ordinary people in danger, an alleged party in breach of lockdown rules in an Athy as an expert voice to the anti-mask, anti-lockdown far all while using her role in UCD, I believe this warrants Castle owned by Professor Cahill. While the Gardaí do told The Journal that her response was "No comment".

believe her position warrants listening to. It is of the medicine students on the issue of Dolores Cahill and breach of Public Health Regulations at a property in misinformation during the Union Council of the 15th Athy [on] Wednesday 17 March 2021". the public that Prof. Cahill has no expertise in the area of February. His report presented to Council that night stated that he had "held a town hall between myself, experts in this area in UCD. If you require accurate student reps from the school of medicine, SU executive Restrictions) (Covid-19) (No.10) Regulations 2020, as scientific information on viruses, please listen to officers, and academics to discuss the issue of Covid-19 amended, are currently in force. Professors in the National Virus Reference Laboratory misinformation and how to address that issue through or the Centre for Research in Infectious Diseases. student action, specifically as it pertains to Prof. Dolores

involvement in the organising of an anti-lockdown appropriate. event in Herbert park on St. Patrick's day. During her "As President of UCD Students' Union, and in light of address to the crowd, Cahill made numerous false

It was revealed later that Friday that An Gardaí Payment Notice." not comment on private addresses, a spokesperson from the Garda Press Office said in a statement; "An Anderson first stated that he was working with UCD Garda Síochána is carrying out enquiries into an alleged

"The Health Act 1947 (Section 31A-Temporary

"Where Gardaí identify potential breaches of the

UCDSU has called for Professor Dolores Cahill of you on Covid-19 and is merely telling you her political It is understood that the escalation to a public calling public health regulations a file is prepared for the DPP ideas and none of it is based on scientific research by for an investigation is a result of Professor Cahill's in each case or a Fixed Payment Notice is issued where

"Regulation 8, places restriction on persons

"Gardaí in Kildare did stop a number of motorists [on a 'reasonable excuse' can be enforced by a €100 Fixed

In a rare response to a press query, Professor Cahill

# OUR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM NEEDS SUPPORT.

DANIEL BOLAND

The IMO announced this week that up to 600 doctors may leave the health system by July. Daniel Boland asks what can be done to retain doctors and to keep our healthcare system from collapsing?

THE story of Irish doctors going to work abroad is not chronic manpower problems'. In 2018 there were 349 of 300 additional jobs for medical interns. Intern in The underlying problem that is highlighted by this is a a new one. As a medical student working in any given unfilled consultant jobs. A detailed study of doctor this context is a rather confusing term, but rather than failure to treat the wellbeing of staff as a priority. Irish hospital, it is more likely than not that the doctor migration between 2008 and 2018, from which this being the person doing the coffee run, these interns you are working under will regale you with unsolicited article draws many of its conclusions, confirmed that are qualified doctors in their first year of work after. An ongoing intercollegiate student-led campaign tales of their glory days in Australia. Indeed, in 2012 a a major draw of Irish-trained medics to Australia was graduation. Interns perform a huge amount of medical under the hashtag KeepOurDoctors is hoping to report commissioned by Fine Gael found that 65.5% the reputation for "good working conditions for health work in a hospital setting; ordering bloods, inserting reverse the decision to roll back the job numbers. The of final-year medical students at the time planned to workers and good staffing levels". leave the country. This does not tell the full story, of course. A fair chunk of that 65.5% did indeed leave the Doctors are only one part of Ireland's healthcare crucially flagging their more senior colleagues when a lamented that 'the emigration of doctors is eroding country to spend a few years adventuring and having machine. Nurses have similar workplace problems that patient deteriorates. So as the first wave of Covid hit and return on recent state investment in basic medical new experiences; experiences of both being on another equally need to be addressed. So too do allied health continent and of working in a healthcare system that professionals and all the general support staff that jobs to all medical graduates from Irish universities. This quality of medical education in certain countries is not was not creaking on the brink of collapse. For most, it help hospitals to run. Fundamentally, the HSE needs was a temporary measure while the country was in the to value its workers. Certain hospitals are well-staffed grips of recessionary cuts. So, in what is termed circular and do not suffer from overworking problems, but not the usual state of affairs. The number of intern posts trained doctors who may have poorer training. It should migration, many doctors emigrated for a while before they are the exception rather than the rule. A vicious available before 2020 was tied to the number of CAO be noted in the case of the abovementioned intern jobs, eventually returning home to Ireland. But as time has circle is created where a poor work environment leads places in medicine. CAO applicants are prioritised in that the students hoping to remain in Ireland may be of gone on and the recession faded into the past, hopes for to workers leaving. This creates staff shortages which the allocation system, guaranteeing jobs for all Irish international origin but are Irish-trained. improvement have died. In short, this is an old problem, leads to an even worse work environment and more graduates. What this meant was that every year before however, the Irish Medical Organisation's (IMO) recent vacancies. Indeed, the work shortages are tied. Doctors last, a large number of international graduates from Irish announcement is a warning that it is reaching critical are incapable of functioning without nursing support,

There are both push and pull factors that influence where doctors go. Pull factors attract doctors, and the major issues that push people to breaking point. As attempt to break the cycle of manpower shortages. part of their statement on the up to 600 non-consultant hospital doctors potentially leaving the country this In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic in April 2020, something doctors deal with from the very beginning of summer, the IMO referred to 'long working hours and then-Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced the creation their careers. This is what drives the culture of emigration.

while nurses spend ages chasing down doctors. It all leads to overtime, stress and unhappiness.

Covid has created a difficult situation for the HSE. include higher wages, lower-stress jobs, access to Healthcare systems will never have enough money at the this cut would be around €12 million. The rationale given working environment, and striving to retain them. Hiring specialist training programmes, and opportunities to best of times. Improvements in patient care are always is that last year was a time of exceptional circumstances 300 doctors who want to stay and work in Ireland is a participate in interesting research. We can do little to possible. Therefore, the age-old economic question and that the hiring decision was political. The arguments step in the right direction. influence the pull factors that other countries offer, as arises of getting the best value out of the money that that have been made in favour of this position have tempting as it might be to send a crack team of HSE you have. 2021's HSE Budget saw an increase of 21% centred around a lack of funding and concern around spies to sabotage all the MRI machines in Adelaide. or €3.5 billion, half of which was for non-Covid services. the training capacity of the HSE. There may be some What Ireland can do is reduce the push factors. These There are many worthy ways for that money to be spent. weight to these arguments, but a single statistic does a are the things that make it undesirable to work here. But in a healthcare system that is repeatedly referred significant amount to refute them. In 2019, before the Anecdotally, understaffing and overworking arise as to as in crisis, no overarching plans have been made to job numbers were temporarily increased, 33% of interns

worked more than 60 hours a week. This figure shows that the problem of understaffing and overworking is

universities did not receive job offers.

cannulas, writing up prescriptions, filling in charts and students in question have lived and studied in Ireland discharge letters, doing patient rounds, and most for the last four to six years. Previously, it has been much great uncertainty lay ahead, it was decided to offer intern training in Ireland'. This statement is on the basis that the was widely well-received. The more doctors the better up at the level of that in Ireland. And as Irish graduates during a pandemic, after all. This recruitment drive was leave, more and more places are filled by internationally

The Irish healthcare system has a vast number of multifaceted issues that need to be addressed, ranging from waiting lists to trollies to the handling of the still-This year, the HSE's National Doctors Training and ongoing pandemic. But one part of the solution is in a Planning Unit says it plans to bring intern places back systemic response towards valuing the staff currently down to ~750 from ~1100 last year. The money saved by employed, by listening to their needs, improving their

# HAVE WE REALLY REPEALED THE 8TH?

**SOPHIE LINNANE** 

Two Years on from the Repeal the 8th vote, Sophie Linnane asks whether the vote has had any real lasting effects or was it purely symbolic?

two elections, and public condemnation from both the way. United Nations Human Rights Commission and the UN Committee Against Torture, but in May of 2018, the autonomy over their own bodies - we were finally highlighted. given the right to choose. With one of the largest voter turnout rates in the history of the state, the people of Ireland voted overwhelmingly to grant abortion rights accessibility, with campaigners criticising the oftento women. With a yes vote of 66.4%, the voice of the turbulent journey to obtaining the healthcare needed. people was crystal clear. Change had come. A once Due to the "conscientious objection" clause within the deeply conservative, largely Roman Catholic country, bill, which allows medical practitioners the right to not which only a couple of decades before had voted to carry out abortions, many women have faced hurdles give equal rights of life to the mother and the fetus, was in their pursuit of a termination. This has proved to beginning to shift. Almost despite itself, a more modern be a barrier, particularly for women in rural Ireland. country was emerging, one with more liberal values and Of the 19 maternity hospitals in the Republic, only 10

period of time. It has moved from having some of the consultants failed to sign on to provide terminations. most restrictive abortion laws in Europe, from serving While under the legislation these doctors are required as the poster child for Pro-Life campaigners all over the to provide referrals to other practitioners who will world, to a country that by popular vote has legalised provide the service, this can still lead to people being a woman's right to choose. But, while progress has unable to access abortion services. This issue can be been made, and most certainly should be praised, particularly problematic for women when you also take there are still concerns. Many are calling for immediate into account the mandatory three-day waiting period improvement within the legislation, over fears that the and the 12-week limit for procedures to take place. health and safety of women is still under threat. So as 
The three-day wait period is a particular issue for those the country approaches the three-year anniversary of who may not have the resources to travel, which in turn the historic result, it's time to both look back and reflect will impact their ability to obtain the service elsewhere. on what has been achieved, and also to examine where WHO criticises both "conscientious objection" and the legislation still needs to be improved upon, to best "unnecessary requirements, such as mandatory waiting determine how the country can fulfil the voters' wishes: periods" as barriers to accessing safe abortions. This is to make abortions accessible, safe and legal to the an issue with which abortion rights campaigners have women of Ireland.

On the 1st of January 2019 The Healthy (Regulation autonomy. of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018 was signed into law. Since then, clear and obvious improvements accessed abortion services within Ireland in 2019.

highlights such costs on its list of barriers to accessing obtain the healthcare they need. safe abortions. Also, while doctors and other medical practitioners are allowed to refuse to provide abortion access abortion within the country, as long as they have Harris, the Minister for Health at the time, heavily criticised of severe sepsis as a direct result of being denied an

IT may have taken decades of grass-root campaigns, the time and resources to do so. We have come a long

However, major improvements still need to be made. people of Ireland voted to repeal the 8th Amendment. Despite the landmark 2018 vote and the overwhelming After years of struggle, that some had been involved support for a women's right to choose, serious in for decades, the women of Ireland were granted issues surrounding the new abortion laws have been

Problems have arisen around the practical issue of one which valued protecting the rights of all its citizens. actually provide abortion services. And, of these 10, 3 are located in Dublin. Recently, Kilkenny came under Ireland has come a long way in a relatively short particular criticism when all of their OBGYNs and particular qualms, and many believe it both endangers the lives of pregnant women and threatens their bodily

The language used throughout the Bill has also are visible, especially when you examine the number been heavily criticised. Even prior to the signing into of women who are now receiving abortion care within law of abortion rights, many had drawn attention to the Republic of Ireland. Before abortion was legalized, the problems that would arise due to some of the it was reported that up to 9 people were travelling to terminology employed. The Abortion Rights campaign the UK to terminate their pregnancies every single day. groups have noted how the term "risk of serious harm The numbers travelling have dropped significantly since to health", which is used in the Bill, actually has no real then, and while the exact abortion figures for 2020 medical standing, and for many, the ambiguity in the are not yet available, we know that over 6500 people language is of serious concern. It is feared that this will not only cause undue stress to pregnant women but could ultimately endanger their lives. Amnesty Another major success for the Pro-Choice campaign International has also criticised the term, and have pro-life campaigners who were picketing outside clinics is that all of these abortion services are free, as long deemed the threshold that many adhere to in regard and maternity hospitals. Harris blasted them in the as procedures are carried out within the first 12 weeks to "serious harm" as yet another barrier, and one that is media, condemning the "appalling" behaviour. These of pregnancy. The World Health Organisation (WHO) likely still forcing pregnant women out of the country to particular events led to a renewed call for the inclusion

Others have called for safety exclusions zones around services themselves, the legislation requires that they hospitals to be written into law. Many people have provide a referral to a doctor or a facility that will. All this described the abuse they have endured or witnessed the debate around Ireland's abortion laws was once means that, in theory, a woman will always be able to outside facilities that offer the service. In 2020 Simon again dragged into the public sphere. Savita died



PHOTOGRAPH CREDIT: LAOISE TARRANT

"Despite the landmark 2018 vote and the overwhelming support for a women's right to choose, serious issues surrounding the new abortion laws have been highlighted."

of safe exclusion zones outside of hospitals, but as of yet, these have not been implemented.

When Savita Halappanavar died in October 2012,

emergency termination. Despite doctors agreeing that a miscarriage was inevitable and pleas from both Savita and her husband, she was not given the medication which could have helped to induce her miscarriage and which ultimately could have saved her life. For many, her tragic and untimely death marked a significant shift in the conversation around abortion - Ground Zero, if you like. Ireland has come a long way since this heartbreaking event. The shift in public opinion and the writing into law of a woman's right to choose are both major steps in the right direction. But, to truly protect the women of Ireland, the continued presence of barriers to safe healthcare needs to be examined rigorously. As we approach the three-year anniversary of that historic vote we must, as a society, review what is still to be done.

# HEAD TO HEAD

# IS IT TIME TO HALT URBAN SPRAWL AND START TO BUILD UPWARDS OR SHOULD WE PRESERVE THE **CURRENT DUBLIN SKYLINE?**

AAKRITI SOOD AND JOSEPH KAVANAGH

# FOR

### **AAKRITI SOOD**

DUBLIN is one of the most popular destinations for Furthermore, given the lack of adequate public firms moving from London since the talks of Brexit first infrastructure, sprawl increases car dependency, and in The city needs to anticipate this migration but with the a significant connection to health ailments like obesity versions of one another, with architecture, retail chains remote working. ongoing housing crisis in the city, Dublin is increasingly and hypertension. Within cities, research from a variety and other urban features copy and pasted into urban becoming a less desirable place to live in. Only 6% of of countries has shown that denser metropolitan areas | centres across the globe (I am looking at you, "I heart fabric, and build up to sustain its growth and future.

measuring 60 meters and 40 meters respectively. Since among the residents, while sprawl with the increased the Influencers to take a photo of for Instagram? then, the buildings built in the city have been between privatisation of space in gated communities and fenced six to eight storeys tall. The current tallest building in backyards creates barriers. Many sprawl developments' Dublin is the Capital Dock tower, completed in 2018, relative homogeneity may reinforce class and racial

against high rise in Dublin have increased exponentially. The developers call the planning authorities too architecture in London.

Ireland is notorious for its suburban sprawl. This new lease of life. uncoordinated growth in the countryside, the expansion of community without the concern for its consequences is not a sustainable methodology for growth.

which is disruptive to the native flora and fauna built were that of good quality but like many other 20% of all carbon emissions in the world. Suburban Dublin sustainably. dwellings are an inefficient utilisation of resources. Therefore a dwelling in a suburban sprawl is neither economically nor environmentally sustainable.

conservative, and the planning authorities criticise high Zyberk have affirmed time and again that walkability | give the city its personality. You must remember at the towns and villages. This would have dual benefits, rise for being out of proportion with the scale of the between workplace, recreation spaces, and commercial | time, Georgian Dublin was the second city of the British revitalising the economies of these areas while being a city. High rise buildings have more often than not have facilities is an essential component for a successful | Empire. Dublin was one of the busiest ports in Europe, more sustainable move. The use of existing structures been met with resistance. Gherkin in London was highly balanced urban life. Hyper-proximity in urban living is an epicentre of commerce and culture. Of course, as is one of the most basic things we can do for the controversial all through its planning phase, but since becoming the focus of urban planning in many cities in | we know this began to decline, but the buildings echo environment. Sending concrete and steel into the sky its completion in 2003, it has become one of the most Europe, in the 15-minute neighbourhoods in Paris and a time of great prosperity for the city. The Georgian consumes energy during construction phases, but also recognisable landmarks and examples of contemporary Barcelona (all your everyday needs are accessible within terraces and streets are in themselves interesting, while in the production of building materials. It is all about

Urban sprawl increases land loss in the countryside, a misleading argument against high rise; the homes capital losing its cultural identity.

# **AGAINST**

### JOSEPH KAVANAGH

result, the locations where people live, work, shop, and | the last two centuries. However, it continues to retain skyline. play are often far apart, to the point where walking, | quite a number of these features. Urban squares such Since 2019, when new planning guidelines lifted the public transportation, and bicycling are impractical, as Fitzwilliam Square and St. Stephen's Green are very While I acknowledge the need to build, it does not restrictive maximum heights in the city, debates for and necessitating the use of a vehicle for all of these activities. | much present and valued by the people of Dublin. mean we need to continue to build on top or around Many urban theorists including Jacobs and Plater- this period. These features are what make it unique and identity. In doing this we can also revitalise our rural a 15-minute walk), and in the 20-minute neighbourhood | appearing to be uniform at first glance, on further balance in my opinion. We can house our citizens and in Melbourne. Dublin needs to follow suit to ensure a inspection you see that houses vary in height and minimise environmental impacts while also protecting window size etc. This is down to them being built in our cities skyline. groups of twos or threes, and it gives what should be a Covid-19 has highlighted and accelerated the need | very uniform street a language of a patchwork quilt. To for and planning of good density neighbourhoods | replicate the glass towers of the world make it feel like within the city. Failure of the Ballymun Project used is any other place in the world and would thus lead to the

and creates instability in biodiversity. Ireland has a estates built around the world at the time were 100% Of course, it is all well and good to say save our beautiful natural landscape that has been the source public housing, erected off a roundabout - a dead end. | Georgian streets and features and protect structures, of inspiration for many artists through history, and has The scheme was doomed to fail as amenities were but no one can deny the country needs more homes. attracted people from all over the world and must be not developed for a long time and the maintenance | We are in the grips of a housing crisis that the state has protected. From an environmental perspective, the was neglected by the City Council. Dublin is capable | not seen before and the amount of stock that needs to climate crisis is far more impending than it has ever of accommodating pockets of socially inclusive, high be delivered in the next number of years is on a level been, the impervious infrastructure on the natural rise and high-quality developments that can enhance that would make any government quiver in fear. So landscape causes irreversible damage and increases the cityscape and quality of life. The success of a city where will people live if not in sky-high soulless glass the risk of flooding through runoff. Low-density single- densification strategy requires the collaboration of all towers? The answer to me is clear and has become ever use dwellings have an average life of forty years, which is city stakeholders. High rise structures cannot be built more obvious in the last year under the current global half the lifespan of an average person. The greenhouse in a vacuum, urban landscape and placemaking need pandemic. The word that has been thrown around since gasses emitted in the construction process are roughly to become the focus in order to develop and densify the 70s, decentralisation, holds the answer in my opinion. Decentralisation, for any of you who do not know, is the idea of moving certain parts of government bodies outside of the capital city, to spread them around the urban centres of the island. This has of course happened,

GLOBALISATION has its perks, don't get me wrong, with the State Examinations Commission being based in but it has driven planning authorities, developers, Athlone as well as various other examples. Some were commenced. Studies indicate Dublin will be able to turn greenhouse gas emissions, with every household. | and employers to try and blur the cultural differences successful, but most were not. I feel it is time to try this attract more than 280,000 people by the year 2031. Increased travel time to and from a suburban house has | between cities across the world. Cities become varying again, but the difference this time is the apparent use of

Something that is worth mentioning is the new RTÉ the Georgian Dublin on the south side is residential. To with a greater mix of land use and improved public | Amsterdam" sign). The aim of this is to make cities more show "Cheap Irish Houses", in which the presenter combat the abandonment of Dublin, the city needs to transportation use fewer cars than less density suburban | familiar to the ever-moving, nomadic multinational shows potential buyers affordable homes located in let go of its conservative planning, increase the density and exurban residential areas. Studies indicate that city worker. Firms such as Google do not want to send areas around the country that are underpopulated. by building mixed-use developments within the existing dwellers in London and Paris produce half the amount | their workers into culture-shock when moving from This program highlights the presence of homes that of greenhouse gasses than their suburban counterparts. city to city. The result is a skyline that is beginning to are left derelict in areas or towns that are crying out repeat itself across the planet. Some city authorities are for repopulation. My point is, that at one point this Dublin has only a little history of height. Liberty Hall Not only environmentally, but suburban sprawl is also keeping a handful of features to make sure cultural and island had a population of around 8 million, and while and O'Connell Bridge house date back to the 1960s and not socially sustainable. Sprawl erodes quality of life; national identity is not lost completely, or maybe their a lot of people lived in poverty and in small tenement can hardly be called skyscrapers by today's standards; compact neighbourhoods foster casual encounters | tourist boards are making sure there is something for farms, they did live somewhere. Connacht went from having a population of 1.5 million before the famine to just over half a million in 2016. This statistic resonates What makes Dublin so unique you may ask? Why with the underpopulation of this region and that there should its skyline be preserved? Dublin is one of the is a real opportunity to spread our people into these stands at 79 meters tall. Dublin falls 30% behind divides by residential segregation. Commercial, social | British Isles' Georgian cities. It is in good company underpopulated areas. With high-speed internet and in building heights to other European capitals like and residential infrastructure are usually single-use with places such as Bath and Edinburgh also falling infrastructure, these places can come alive once again Amsterdam, Stockholm and Paris which are viewed as facilities and are zoned and segregated from one into this category. One cannot deny that the Georgian and take the pressure off the city of Dublin. This in turn exemplars of cultural preservation in European low rise another with open space, infrastructure, or other. As a | features have been knocked and chipped away during would make it more achievable to preserve the city's

Other iconic buildings such as Leinster House date from Dublin. We must protect our urban landscape and its

# REBUTTAL YES

### JOSEPH KAVANAGH

business plan. It has the language and arguments that comparison of Dublin to Amsterdam, Paris, London, and the multinationals and developers adore! All those Stockholm? I do ask, has she opened a history book? tantalising ideas of 15-minute cities and the perfect 
Each of those cities are former hearts of Empires and not unlike the ideas sold to us about suburbia in the language is bound to differ from the Dublin experience.

they define as "residential" development. A blurred trip to the shows to scaling Mount Everest. definition of what long term leases are has allowed developers of new high-rise projects to bend the rules these short-term rentals are considered "residential" reach into the sky. development. Does anyone believe all those student residences in Dublin were the result of student-led campaigns? I think not. You are looking at beds for the wealthy internationals, so our Universities can shake them down for their high fees. My colleague talks about densifying the city, but what happens when you densify it with temporary citizens? What sort of city do you get? It may not become a 15-minute city, but a one-nightstand city.

MY colleagues' argument is an incredibly persuasive Moving onto my counterparts' mention and Ireland was a slum at the start of the 20th century, so I do believe we are trying to cram in two hundred years

Despite the points made in both pieces, action needs and construct hotels and student accommodation. to be taken in our capital. Our people need places to Under the new guidelines of the planning authorities, live, whether we repopulate our dwindling towns or

# REBUTTAL NO

### **AAKRITI SOOD**

BOTH sides have pointed out the need for more nature ... man's method of expression." Cities have homes for the rising population. My colleague has always drawn people back, and the pandemic hiccup pointed out several architectural monuments in the city will be the same. work-life balance. I do wonder though if these are all have considerable higher populations. Their urban and yes of course these buildings have stood the test of time and what are we without our history? But the city extends beyond the historic core; the Docklands, but the waves of mass migration seen in the last century areas around George's Quay, Heuston and Connelly have already littered the country with a number of Perhaps it would be worth mentioning how Dublin's of construction into a tenth of the time. To compare our | lie within the city centre but would be no threat to the ghost estates. Decentralisation may work in cities in Planning Authorities have made alterations to what small capital to these cities is like comparing my daily | visual character of the Georgian core. These areas are other parts of the world which have become too large capable of accommodating high rise structures, adding to function, but in the case of Dublin, a good density is contemporary landmarks, and can become positive required to aim towards economic and environmental additions to the existing skyline of the city.

> Where the soullessness of high rise structure is unplanned sprawl and bring people back into Dublin concerned, there is no denying the fact that commuter before the core of this historic city becomes hollow. towns with their hours and hours of travel time, fenced off dwellings can also become a lonely and isolating experience. Humans are instinctively social beings and cities have always been the nucleus of civilisation. Since the ancient Greek Agoras, civic centres that served as the city's athletic, cultural, business, social, spiritual, and political hub, and facilitated people to come together and share their common interests with others. One of the most influential urban theorists, Lewis Mumford, wrote that cities are "a product of earth ... a fact of

Decentralisation is a term that looks good on paper sustainability. We need to learn from the ghost towns of America to protect the Irish landscape from the soulless,

### PERIOD POVERTY IN THE IRISH STATE

**AOIFE ROONEY** 

With reports of between 53,000 and 85,000 women in Ireland affected by period poverty, Aoife Rooney examines this issue.

aware of the extent of how many people are affected. products as a direct result of being unable to ask. In a joint report by the Department of Health and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration

cost of period products for one person is €121.

In February, the Department of Health published proposals are merely hypothetical at the moment. a discussion paper entitled Period Poverty in Ireland, National Strategy for Women and Girls, a document women and girls, with "nearly 60% of young women cross-party solidarity."

THE issue of period poverty has previously been a and girls reporting shame and embarrassment about

all public buildings". This would include, hospitals, products. Experiencing period poverty is not limited to this schools and universities, homeless services and direct definition, and can also include social and community provision centres. If this was to come into force, it would to pain relief would also constitute period poverty. The younger girls, who might not be at school, and those access menstruation hygiene products. The estimated between 53,000 and 85,000 women in the State' be in controlling and abusive relationships, and those period poverty is 2,591. Coolmine, a charity working of trauma, period cups are not a suitable option. according to the report. The minimum estimated annual who may not be able to leave their residence to access with those dealing with substance addiction, notes these products or have access to the funds to purchase that "clients with active addiction problems will have them. This motion has yet to be made into law, so these difficulties prioritising healthcare needs over substance reaching one that will necessitate specific considerations

which encompassed findings of the factors that and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman, wrote to direct provision of period products. contribute to period poverty in Ireland and addressed centres in recent weeks to request that they provide those most affected. The report referenced a Plan sanitary products to those living in direct provision free International survey which found that "50% of girls of charge. Dublin City Council also announced that aged 12-19 reported occasional experience of period they aim to provide funding of €100,000 to expand poverty". While this can be attributed to the inability to on an initiative to have access to period products in all of these groups are "among the most disadvantaged and afford products, it is also largely because of the shame of their buildings. On the topic of several similar bills marginalised people in Ireland". The inability to access and embarrassment associated with periods, in this being drafted on the same topic, Claire Hunt, founder period products stems from a large thread of prejudice, age group particularly. Humiliation and discomfort of Homeless Period Ireland (HPI), believes that "[period people in these groups often face issues in accessing discussing a period are largely evident among younger poverty] is a non-contentious issue, there should be rental accommodation, healthcare, employment and

An Irish initiative led by University of Limerick students, matter that Western countries were not particularly their period, with over 80% uncomfortable discussing. Anytime of the Month, is spreading awareness on issues. In their ability to access government supports such as concerned about. However, in recent years, the issue periods with their father or a teacher". This discomfort related to period poverty in an attempt to destignatize. Job Seekers Allowance, public housing or Child Benefit, of equitable access to period products has entered in having conversations about periods can lead to other periods. They are running seminars for businesses as they may be unable to provide documentation mainstream media, and more people are being made issues. It may mean there is a lack of access to period to educate employees on the stigma associated with confirming their right to reside. This then overtly affects They also surveyed 250 women and were able to Oireachtas motions on period poverty date as far conclude that "college students are disproportionately and Youth, period poverty is defined as "inadequate" back as 2019, as calls were made on the government affected by period poverty". Of their sample, 35% said access to menstrual hygiene, including period ensure access to a range of "free, adequate, safe and that they struggled to finance period products and accounted for with regard to period poverty. HPI founder products, washing and waste management facilities and suitable sanitary products and comprehensive, objective 75% said that they have worn period products over the Claire Hunt was also involved in research culminating

products to enable safe and hygienic menstruation are frustrating." Traveller and Roma women. It is reported that members education. Specifically, Roma women are disadvantaged

menstruation, a factor contributing to period poverty. their ability to purchase hygiene products they may need during their period.

Sustainability is also an issue that needs to be menstrual education information be distributed through recommended four hours due to lack of access to these in the 2019 Department of Health report that asked: "when the period poverty motion does pass was that they provide plastic-free products". While she said that While girls and women in second and third-level 'I would hope the government will look at sustainable isolation as a direct result of one's period. This can be address a large amount of period poverty in the country. education are unequivocally suffering the effects of options", there is an understanding that sustainable seen in an example of a young person missing school or While this tackles the main roadblocks most women face period poverty, those who are homeless, in direct products, for example, period cups or underwear, are a social event due to the side effects of their period. This in accessing period products, it does not cater to those provision, dealing with addiction and victims of domestic not feasible options for women HPI assist. Many women can extend to abdominal pains, of which non-access who may not have access to such buildings, namely violence are also suffering the cost of the inability to do not have regular access to hot water and washing machines, and some have a preference for pads. Miss issue of period poverty is being estimated to 'effect who live rurally. It also fails to address those who may number of homeless women who may be experiencing. Hunt also clarified that for many women who are victims

> The issue of period poverty in the State is a wideuse". If legislation on the issue were passed, it would of all groups of women to address the problem. While negate the need for a choice being made whether or not the passing of legislation that would entitle people who Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration a woman will get through her period with the assistance menstruate the access to a wide range of free period products is a positive change, Hunt reiterates that "it shouldn't be seen as something amazing or radical, the Other groups encountering issues in accessing fact that we have to fight for this change in 2021 is really

# PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE INTERNSHIPS PROGRESS DESPITE **DISRUPTIONS**

HANNAH WOODS

Students from the Dairy Business, Food and Agribusiness Management, Animal & Crop Production and Animal Science courses gave Hannah Woods an insight into the progress of their PWE, the effects of lockdown on their current plans and their future hopes.

Experience (PWE) plans but has made the planning was more than happy to work closer to home. process arduous and disheartening for many.

many FAM students, Kent hoped to go abroad not only the opportunity. travel, but gain experience, and get as much as he could out of PWE. When college came around last Autumn such a difficult time for companies".

of cCvid restrictions, but this did not dampen my "taking everything as it comes". enthusiasm". Through a series of orientations, group calls, and individual meetings, Kent was quickly adapted accordingly".

Castleconnor Co. Sligo, where online learning and dairy herds, the calving and breeding seasons were me to flourish in the UCD animal science course". The see it being the way it was before, but all we can do is Leinster Livestock in Granard, Co. Longford. Joyce challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic have make the most of it". not put a dampener on Quinn's drive and focus. She sees the animal science degree programme as hands-

THIRD-year is a personal milestone for the Agricultural and to forget about Covid for a little while". Placement Science students of UCD. It allows undergraduates during Covid hasn't allowed Quinn to follow her dream the opportunity to learn in a practical way, make of going to New Zealand for a month, but she looks connections, and develop their career path for after forward to the future and the possibilities of a longer college, be it on the farm, in industry, or in research. stint abroad perhaps. Having previously gone to Iceland The pandemic has not only changed Professional Work and experienced a unique robotic dairying system, she

Currently working with a 300 head Holstein herd Dathal Kent is a Cork native studying Food & in Enniscrone, Quinn will move onto the Kennedys of Agribusiness Management (FAM). UCD has allowed Aclare, whose system is based on stabiliser cattle. This Kent to make serious strides in becoming heavily innovative farm is not only carbon neutral but also a involved in all activities Ag Soc related, from being a part of the Devenish lighthouse farming programme. member of the winning Great Agri-Food Debate team 
Quinn is excited to see and learn from this experience 
PHOTOGRAPHED ABOVE: SEAN MCGREAL last year to running for the society position of Treasurer. but also see what she can bring back to her own farm. "Having suffered the blow in September that we were Animal science students must do the four main animal not going to be returning to on-campus classes for enterprises of dairy, beef, pigs and sheep. Quinn plans the first semester, my thoughts immediately turned to continue to Bogues' of Cavan to a large sow unit and to placement and the unknowns surrounding it". Like having little experience with pigs she is still excited for

"Anyone can go out on placement but if you want the stress of going online again was compounded with to do it properly, you must learn and see as much as the burden of finding "a suitable placement at what was you can. You have to pick your placements wisely" says Quinn, who is most looking forward to her 6-week internship with Teagasc Athenry's Research farm. Quinn After a series of virtual interviews, Kent got a looks to the future with great optimism for a return to promising placement with Interchem Ireland Ltd. "I campus in September and into the future to travel, work started virtually in mid-January due to the tightening and continue her studies, but for now, is happy to keep

Undoubtedly, Dairy Business students have introduced to the company's products, giving him an experienced the greatest impact on their PWE from within the agricultural sector. Doing a PLC before unparalleled look into the enterprise, where he has the pandemic. Cavan man Donal O'Gorman explained starting in UCD "concreted [his] belief in doing the for a portion of placement this summer took place - in found himself working in all sections of the business; the difficulties many like him find themselves in. "Being agricultural science course and pursuing a career from sales calls, to logistics and market research. "It is a dairy business student one of the most attractive within the agri-food industry". Beginning placement Paul and Stephan are well known for running their 900 a market that really interests me and the fact that I am aspects of the course was the option to do PWE abroad. in January, McGreal first went to the O'Connor's family head grass-based dairy herd and a piggery unit, there getting trained by experts in their field on products. The vast majority of the class were planning on going farm in Dungarvan Co. Waterford, where they run a is a lot to be taken from the opportunity to experience and animal care will be a real asset to me in the future", to New Zealand for six months where the adventure of fully indoor TMR system of 550 Holstein Friesian herd nearly an Irish system of agriculture abroad. When where he looks forward to taking on larger roles within getting abroad with a group of friends would've been milking in a 60 bail Milfos rotary. After 6 weeks of McGreal returns home, it's onto Lisbeg in Eyrecourt, the company and experiencing more of this very something else and it was definitely very disappointing familiarizing himself with dairying, McGreal moved Co. Galway who finish 1,500 bullocks yearly along with rewarding work. Looking towards the future, Kent is not not having the opportunity to go". O'Gorman luckily onto sheep where he is currently working for a lowland too concerned about the effects of the pandemic on found a placement with Woodtown Jerseys in Meath, sheep farmer in Roscommon who has 150 ewes line-up took a lot of thought and planning especially the college experience. "We were all in the same boat—a split calving system milking 450 pedigree Jerseys. lambing indoors. Having only previous experience—given the ever-changing Covid restrictions, but McGreal and I think companies will look to how we dealt with With that said, however, O'Gorman explained the with beef and tillage, Mc Greal has found new interests the problems that were presented to us and how we difficulties of finding PWE here at home. "The timing within the ag sector, especially in relation to sheep and have been more approachable, from their point of of our placement is planned so that we get to New dairy. His experience and expertise he has gained from view they were just delighted to get the help and I Zealand for the calving and breeding season. As the these farmers "has certainly expanded my horizons and was delighted to give it". He believes that the planning Aoife Quinn hails from a dry stock farm in seasons are switched in Ireland it meant that for most exceeded my expectations". the freedom of being at home has only allowed her to over so workloads had slackened off ". Looking towards In having to experience all areas of practical lecturers and friends, I've thoroughly enjoyed it. It's devote more time to the expansion of her own Lleyn the future, O'Gorman hopes for his long-awaited trip to agriculture, McGreal is planning on going closer to flock. "Growing up surrounded by animals and working New Zealand to make up for what he missed, but for home for pigs to John Sheridan. A fully integrated studying Ag Science here", McGreal adds as he looks on the home farm from a young age has not only given now, is looking forward to getting back to Dublin in piggery sees 5000 pigs in total with 500 breeding to the future with optimism at the safe return to campus me the initiative and drive to work hard, but has allowed September along with the rest of his class; "it is hard to sows. From here, McGreal plans to go to Martin Joyce's life in September.

Sean McGreal from Kiltimagh Co. Mayo is a driven herds all the while holding an esteemed health status on, and as an opportunity "to get away from the laptop Animal & Crop Production (ACP) student whose on the farm. This calf to store unit is the starting point for







PHOTOGRAPHED ABOVE: AOIFE QUINN

runs many different enterprises, mainly sourcing highquality cattle for beef finishers and top quality suckler impressive line-up for PWE leaves no rock unturned quality beef sold in his own shops in Dublin.



PHOTOGRAPHED ABOVE: DATHAL KENT

McGreal is among the lucky few whose travels abroad his case to Costello's in Brandenburg Germany. Brothers 1,500 mule ewes with a tillage operation. Naturally, this says that "sorting it wasn't a problem. Farmers couldn't could not have been done without the help of his PWE co-ordinators. "Surrounded by a positive network of been the most positive experience being in UCD and

### WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN INFLUENCER

DOIREANN DE COURCY MAC DONNELL

Sitting down the Mandy Maher of The Platform, Doireann de Courcy Mac Donnell asks all things content-creation and how the world has gone online.

LAUNCHING a business a year into a global pandemic is no mean feat, but successful businesswoman, Mandy Maher, knows where things are going. Maher launched the influencer agency The Platform on Friday, March 5th 2021. As described on their website, The Platform is designed to allow "brands to engage with social media influencers and content creators". From the moment it launched on Instagram, The Platform already had a significant number of famous faces and brands associated with its page. At the time of publication, the agency already had twenty-five clients listed on their social media page and website;

"The Platform is a sister agency to Catwalk Modelling Agency. We represent influencers and content creators for social media sites, which predominantly would be Instagram. Yes, we do Facebook and we will definitely be hitting-in on the TikTok area, but it is predominantly Instagram influencers really".

Maher is best known for her Catwalk Modelling Agency and has over twenty years experience in the modelling industry. As part of Catwalk, Maher has worked with everything from fashion shows and promotional events, to photoshoots and bridal fairs, and she features regularly on Virgin Media's Ireland AM as a stylist.

"The fashion industry got such a hammering in the last twelve months, and it's going to continue for another year, pretty much. Regarding Catwalk Modelling, we have pretty much wrote-off this year for work. Yes, we will do certain things, we're still legally allowed to do digital shoots on a one-to-one basis in order for businesses to stay alive, so we can continue those. But regarding doing any events or anything, until the hospitality industry opens up and until numbers can get back to some normality, we've written-off that. This is really where your influencer business is coming in because so many people are on their phones and they're really following these people.

they're sitting down with their marketing department their budgets now are for so many radio campaigns, so many newspaper campaigns, but now the big thing is social media [...] which will obviously fall under the umbrella of influencers and content creators. That's where it's going, this is only the tip of the iceberg I

Featuring influencers who cover everything from food and fashion, to home and fitness, the platform offers a wide array of influencers to follow, and from a business point of view, to collaborate with; "What we do then is that we decide, ok working out a package for them because they believe in them". them that they want to promote.

now for me myself are ones that I have been doing research on for the last couple of months, really, before I its fashion, whether it's food, whether it's home living about when you can decide to switch off; and interior, fitness. What we're trying to do is bring a diversity of different influencers that are on their social brands, and what promotions are going on.

stay true to their followers, so that they're not promoting something they know in heart and soul that they don't believe in the product, or it's putting on a jumper and they know in their heart and soul that they would not from nine to five, because it is non-stop. wear that jumper. So they need to stay true to who they actually are, because we are adamant on that".

content-creators, it is worth asking whether or not need to promote, you might set aside four or five this can be considered a sustainable career choice. 'Influencing' appears to have become a full-time job, and Maher agrees that this time last year she would have it is - and then you know you're finished at four or five been sceptical;

ago, I probably wouldn't have believed it as much as I hopefully we will be getting back there again! - that do know. Probably because we're all living in a world of kind of thing. It is important, it can actually suck you in everything being so fast, no one really took a step back and take over your life, which is not healthy". and actually looked at what's happening and what's going on. But moreso, since the pandemic hit last March 2020, I would say it is imperative for every business to survive that they need to have an online presence, without a doubt. We're not going backwards now, this is going to be our future. The last year would definitely have zoned in on that, because the bulk of us have been at home. So what do you do? The bulk of us have been on our phones all the time, and checking through what's going on through social media outlets, whatever it is, but this is the way forward [...] It's going to get bigger".

In a society where services are becoming increasingly difficult to be appropriately remunerated for, I ask whether this revitalised bartering system of goods in to show; exchange for promotion is difficult to capitalise on, and make money? For instance, you get sent a self-tanning lotion - how does that translate into paying for your rent?

contacting them to promote their brands and they're because I am now getting to know them. It probably

been exploited, and [...] people are contacting them to promote their brands and they're getting nothing for it. Effectively now it has got to the stage that this is their business, so there are a lot of influencers even some of the ones we have on our books - that this is their full-time job."

"A lot of influencers have

getting nothing for it. Effectively now it has got to the stage that this is their business, so there are a lot of influencers - even some of the ones we have on our "For brands, this is just a new way of advertising. When books - this is their full-time job.

"Effectively how it translates, if a client [or] a brand is looking to get promoted, they have to pay for it. That's the way it's gone. This is another form of advertising. Instead of going your traditional route of being your radio, or tv ad, or your newspaper, it's now your online advertising, and it's being done by people who have tried out these products. It's being done by the ordinary person at home, so for argument's sake you take the likes of Bellamianta Tan, these influencers are physically trying on that tan. And they're telling their followers, yes I really recommend this, it sits really do is that we effectively will deal with everything to do well, it's really easy to apply, whatever. If they don't with brands. Say, for example, a brand could contact me believe in it, they're not going to promote it. Well they about working with a particular influencer, and what we shouldn't promote it! Their followers are following

Switching off from work and the right to disconnect "The influencers I [...] actually have on the books right has become an increasing problem for many people around the world with the move from the traditional workplace, to the desk at home. Switching-off from launched - and it's people from all walks of life, whether social media is perhaps even more difficult. I ask Maher

"Absolutely. Even myself, [...] there were times when media pages so the regular person who's watching at I thought there were never enough hours in the day. home can actually see what's going on in regard to their But I put myself in front of the camera during the past year as well, I have been one of those people who have come in front of the camera - which I never would "But", she emphasises, "what's important is that they have been before - but I would say nobody realises how time-consuming it is. It is horrendously timeconsuming. It's actually more time consuming than what it would be for the regular person going to work

"But a balanced life is vital. But you need to be able to treat it as if you're going to work everyday. As our social media feeds have been saturated with So you know if you have got a particular brand you hours tomorrow for it, do what you need to get done whether it's photographs or videos content, whatever a clock in the day and you're ready to go home and do the family thing, do whatever you usually do in the "I can actually tell you if you said that to me a year evening, whether it's exercise, or going to cinema -

> Another issue which even the most sporadic of social media-users faces is what to show, and what to keep off the timeline. When this concern is coupled with your main source of income, and external pressures from collaborations or business agreements, this line becomes even more difficult to draw. While many parents choose not to show their children on their feed, there a significant number of well-known content creators who have their family front-and-centre, and some who even drive revenue and collaborations as a parent. As the main negotiator between influencer and brand, I ask Maher how involved The Platform is when decided how much the client needs to be willing

"Each influencer is very different. Obviously we only opened up this side of our business last Friday (March 5th), so it is a very new road for me.[...] Each "This is where I come in", Maher explained. "A lot of of our influencers I have spoken to individually, I have influencers have been exploited, and [...] people are a photograph of the influencers around my office,

wouldn't be as personal as it would be with my models, could sit down and write nasty things about other initially anyway, because I don't know them. So they're people, so me it says enough about them as a person. completely new to me as well, but I very much have Often you can get comments on stuff and they're never asked them then in regards to do they want to show their nice, but it's how you deal with it. You need to be able to family? I know for me, I don't put my kids on my pages. I grow a thick skin, and move beyond it. Unless it gets out don't do many home photos, or things from home with of hand - then you put it into the hands of someone in regards to my page because I know it's not really where authority at that stage, if that's the case".

I want to go. For me, I like to be able to switch off, and It's really down to each individual influencer".

reacts to such negativity;

"It is horrendously timeconsuming. It's actually more time consuming than what it would be for the regular person going to work from nine to five, because it is nonstop...you need to be able to treat it as if you're going to work everyday... it can actually suck you in and take over your life, which is not healthy".

home's home and it's separate from work. Where there It has become commonplace for people to have a are others who want to live the route of having their couple of social media pages. Often the second account family involved, and it's a very personal choice, I think. may only be for a specific interest, and may not have been created to earn revenue, but it reflects how social media has changed - everyone is now an influencer. If you follow Maher's social media accounts, you However, for others, their social media page may be would be aware that she has only recently begun to financially more worthwhile than their degree; flexible step in front of the camera herself. I ask her if she has working-hours, free products, perks and experiences, experienced the impact of trolling and how The Platform and potentially fame and a lot of money. I ask Maher what are the main things an aspiring influencer should

> "I would say to them, have their page, number one, staying true to who they are. For example, I would say to any influencer, you can't be a master of everything. You need to be a master of something. There's no point having a page in fashion (and fashion and skincare and beauty really would come under one umbrella because usually it does), but there's no point in her also being the mother in the kitchen doing amazing cooking, and 'watch my new recipes coming', because you can't do everything. Or now let's forget that and talk about wallpaper today. So I would say to any influencer they need to target what they actually want, what they feel they're good in, and what they feel followers of their

> "I would also definitely say do not promote something if you don't believe in it. There's no point going on as an influencer saying 'this toothpaste is amazing, it really whitens your teeth', and next week you're using a completely different brand. You need to be true to yourself because otherwise everything is going to fall flat. It won't work because people won't believe you, and if that's the case then they will start unfollowing you, and brands won't work with you either".

"Absolutely. It's huge. It's very hard. When you're in the public eye, you have to be able to take it. There are always going to be people that love you, and people that just don't like you, and that's fine, that's life, that's reality. But anyone that trolls people, really to me they have nothing else to do with their time, and if someone

### GAEILGE

# SEACHTAIN NA GAEILGE & FEACHTAS COMHARTHAÍOCHTA AONTAS NA MAC LÉINN

SHANE MACDOMHNAILL

I rith Seachtain na Gaeilge, chuir Aontas na Mac Léinn UCD tús le feachtas chun comharthaíocht dhá-theangach a chuir timpeall campas ha n-ollscoile. Tuairiscíonn Shane MacDomhnaill faoin bhfeachtas seo.

féile idirnáisiúnta Ghaeilge í Seachtain na Gaeilge, atá gceist ag an tAontas é sin a réiteach. Tá uirlís nua ar-líne ar an gceiliúradh is mó dár dteanga agus dár gcultúr curtha ar fáil chun an fhadbh seo a réiteach inar féidir dúchais a bhíonn ar siúl in Éirinn agus in go leor tíortha an tAontas a chuir ar an eolas faoi comharthaíocht eile gach bliain. Is modh léiriúcháin í an féile chun ár nach gcomhlíonann dlíthe maidir leis an dá-theangacht gcultúr a chuir in airde ós comhair an domhain ach, timpeall an champas. I leith an bhfeachtas seo, tá níos tábhachtaí fós, ós comhair muid féin. Ró-mhinic feachtas greamáin ar intinn ag an SU a rith chun ard a in Éireann a léirítear dímheas d'ár gcultúr féin. Tugann tharraingt i dtreo na ceiste seo. Maidir leis an bhfeachtas Seachtain na Gaeilge deis dúinn an ómós cuí a léiriú seo, dúirt Ruairí Power, Oifigeach na bhFeachtasaí agus don teanga agus don chultúr.

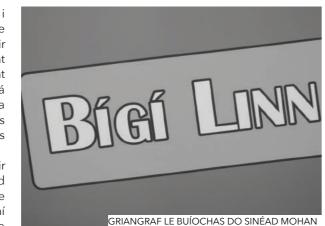
na Mac Léinn agus i dtreo An Chumann Gaelach agus na teanga a chur chun cinn ar an gcampas. iad ag déanamh obair na gcapall chun an seachtain seo a chuir ar siúil. Is léir go mbraitheann preab-Ghaeltachtaí an bhféile dá mbeadh siad ceadaithe.

Agus tús curtha le Seachtain na Gaeilge, sheol Aontas cinn agus muid ag dul ar aghaidh. na Mac Léinn UCD feachtas nua. Aidhm na feachtas seo ná chun comharthaí dhá-theangach a chuir timpeall campas an choláiste. Faoi láthair, níl dóthain comharthaí oibriuì le seirbhiìsiì eastaiit lena chinntiuì go seasfar

CAD is Seachtain na Gaeilge ann? De réir snag.ie, is dhá-theangach le feiceáil timpeall UCD, agus tá sé i Leas-Uachtarán an Aontais:

"Tá uirlis tuairiscithe forbartha ag an foireann SU maidir Ritheadh Seachtain na Gaeilge UCD idir an 1ú- le comharthaíocht neamhchomhlíontach. Mar institiúid 7ú Márta. Cuireadh iliomad imeacht ar siúl chun an phoiblí, tá freagracht ar UCD a bheith comhlíontach le seachtain a líonadh le siamsaíocht Ghaelach. Tráthanna hAcht na dTeangacha Oifigiuila 2003. Ní mór comharthaí gceist, oíche scannáin, díospóireachtaí, agus ciorcal ar an gcampas a thaispeáint i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla cainte le muintir Choláiste na Tríonóide, fiú a bhí ar siúil. agus socrúchán comhionann a thabhairt doiibh. Is dóigh Is léir go raibh deacrachtaí faoi leith caithe i dtreo Aontas Iinn go bhfuil sé seo tábhachtach chun infheictheacht

"Go minic, ní tharlaíonn sé seo i UCD. Bhuaileamar le agus a leithead linn - imeachtaí a cuirfeadh go mór leis foireann na Seirbhísí Eastáit chun an cheist seo a phlé,



le acht na dteangacha oifigiuìla go hiomlain agus qur áit fháilteach é UCD do chainteoirí Gaeilge. Tá feachtas greamáin sna saothair chun aird a tharraingt ar áis í an seomra caidrimh i mBloc Newman, áit a bhíonn chomharthaíocht Béarla amháin.

agus tá a fhios againn go bhfuil siad ag obair chun le linn SnaG agus bhìomar an-sásta leis an gcaoi a cursaí tríd mheán na Gaeilge atá ann sa choláiste? Ní comhlíonadh comharthaíochta níos fearr a chur chun ndeachaigh siad. Níl aon ghanntanas mac léinn atá fhéadfá a rá go bhfuil réimse fhairsing mhódúil ar fáil "Tá an uirlis seo forbartha againn ionas gur feiidir linn inár n-imeachtaí agus inár gcumarsáid lasmuigh de an bhucaint. Mar atá feicthe le déanaí i mBéal Feirste, is

Is dea-nuacht é an scéal seo do chainteoirí na teanga timpeall na h-ollscoile. Tá labhairt na Gaeilge ag méidiú agus ag scapadh. Ní chóir go mbeidh ceist ar bith ann faoi comhartíocht dhá-theangach ar oileáin na h-Éireann - áiteanna a mbíonn Gaeilge á labhairt, ba chóir go mbeidh an teanga sofheicthe. Is maith an rud go bhfuil Aontas na Mac Léinn ag tabhairt gealltanas go ndéanfaidis an Ghaeilge a thabhairt isteach ina gcuid cumarsáid agus imeachtaí chomh maith is gur féidir, fiú taobh amuig de Seachtain na Gaeilge. Deir an seanfhocail gur beatha teanga í a labhairt agus ní leor cúpla seachtain in aghaidh na bliana chun ard cuí a tharraingt ar an nGaeilge.

An ceist a bhéas i mbéal phobail na Gaeilge i UCD ná

seo, cad a dhéanfaidh an choláiste amach anseo chun an teanga a spreagadh agus a ghríosadh? Is maith an an Ghaeilge amháin le cloisteáil chuile lá i rith na bliana. Níl bó na Gaeilge curtha thar abhainn go fóill, áfach. Is "Reachtáil ár n-Oifigeach Tadhg roinnt imeachtaí tús maith é an méid sin, ach cad faoin ganntanas de paiseanta faoin teanga a chur chun cinn agus ag dul ar trí Ghaeilge i UCD. Is cath amháin í an bhfeacthas seo aghaidh oibreoidh an SU chun Gaeilge a ionchorprú atá tosaithe ag Aontas na Mac Léinn, agus cath gur fiú coiscéim chun tosaigh í comhairthíocht dhá-theangach.

## AN GHAEILGE DOMSA

SEANFHOCAIL NA H-IRISE

MOLLIE NÍ DHUBHÁIN

Tuairiscíonn Mollie Ní Dhubháin faoin gaol atá aicí leis an teanga agus faoin poitéinseal atá ann don teanga amach anseo.

Cad a chiallaíonn Gaeilge domsa? Is ceist chasta í sin. Ar ndóigh, is cúis mhór bróid dom go labhraím an teanga an t'ádh orm gurb iad teangacha na hábhar is fear liom náisiúnta agus go bhfuilim líofa sa Gaeilge mar is í an t-aon mar ní haon dóchas ann dom sa mhata agus san eolaíocht. teanga líofa eile atá agam, rud atá beagánín buartha mar Ach is buntáiste breise agus spreagadh chum foghlama déanaim staideir ar an bhFraincís mar chuid de mo chéim, é nuair atá tú go maith ag rud éigin agus nuair atá spéis ach sin scéal eile ar fad!

Ní raibh an Ghaeilge rud éigin a d'fhás me suas le. chun an teanga a mhúineadh. Níor rugadh mé leis an nGaeilge. Mhúin m'athair cúpla abairt dom mar shampla "go raibh maith agat", "Dia paisean agus an bród.

SHANE MACDOMHNAILL

Ritheadh blianta agus d'éirigh mé i nGaelige ar scoil. Tá agat i rud éigin. Agus, ar ámharaí an tsaoil, bhí múinteoirí iontacha Gaeilge agam a bhí spreagúil agus spreagtha

Ag ceithre bliana d'éag d'aois, thiomáin mo dhuit", "oíche mhaith" agus na huimhreacha a haon go thuismitheoirí ó Bhaile Átha Cliath go dtí an taobh dtí a deich, ach chun na fírinne a rá, níor aimsigh mé mo eile den tír agus d'fhán mé i gConamara ar feadh trí ghrá ná mo mheas ar an teanga álainn seo go dtí aois níos seachtaine ar fad. Shroich mé an Gaeltacht, áit a raibh an déanaí. D'fhás mé suas le cara darbh ainm Caoimhe agus Ghaeilge mar chéad teanga. D'fhéadfaí bród na teanga le go bhféadfaimis comhrá gairid a bheith again faoinár chuaigh sí chuig Gaelscoil agus ba mhinic a labhair a clann a mhothú san aer. Chuir na déagóirí óga eagla orm go gaelige sa bhaile. Chuir an tallann agus an paisean seo i raibh said in ann labhairt go líofa agus go tobann ní raibh leith teanga eile éad orm mar ba bhréa liom a bheith líofa. an t-eolas a bhí agam ar an Aimsir Chaite agus conas chothaigh an Gaeltachta mo mheas ar gaeilgeoirí agus leithreas?" do chailín a scríobhann alt faoi "An Ghaeilge Bhí mé spreagtha chun Gaeilge a fhoghlaim agus chun labhairt faoi mo chaitheamh aimsire chomh húsáideach spreag sé saol a mbeadh ról lárnach ag an nGaeilge ann. domsa", taispeánann sé seo an chaoi a bhfuil an Ghaeilge Gaeilge a labhairt timpeall na tíre. De ghnáth, theastaigh 👚 a thuilleadh chun dul i mbun comhrá. Ach, a bhuíochas ó thromlach na paistí na crainn is aired a dhreapadh ach leis an Gaeltacht, d'fhoghlaim mé a lán faoin teanga agus



í a labhairt. Mhúin mé níos mó den teanga do m'athair laethanta. Agus tá post páirtaimseartha agam anois mar sé cothrom a rá gur teanga marbh é. Mar chailín óg nach theagascóir Gaeilge. Mar sin, d'fhéadfadh duine a rá gur raibh a fhios aici ach "an bhfuil cead agam dul go dtín an

Mar dhuine fásta, bíonn Gaeilge ag taisteal liom gach ea. Aontaím go hiomlán go dteastaíonn tuilleadh airgead mise, bhí mé ag iarraidh teanga nua a fhoghlaim, aisteach, a húsáid ar feadh an tsaoil. Lean mo ghrá don Ghaeilge áit a dtéim. D'úsáid mé é le cairde thar lear, beagnach agus comhairle ach domsa, is cuid de m'aitheantas tá a fhios agam. Ach, is duine iomaíoch mé agus mar sin mar chuaigh mé chuig an Gaeltacht ceithre huaire. Bhí mar theanga rúnda nach bhfuil an pléisiúr agat í a labhairt. Éireannach, mo smaointe agus mo thodhchaí é Gaeilge bhí sé cosúil le comórtas chun an teanga seo a fhoghlaim mé ag cánadh, ag damhsa, d'imir mé spóirt, bhí grá D'úsáid mé é i mo shaol laethúil le cairde. Agus déanaim agus tá go leor eile cosúil liomsa. Dá bhrí sin, chun an chomh tapaidh agus a bhí mé in ann. Dá bhrí sin, bhí an samhraidh agam agus anois tá cairde agam ó timpeall é seo chun a thaispeáint go bhfaighidh mé gaeilgeoirí i cheist a fhreagart faoi cad a chiallaíonn Gaeilge domsa, Ghaeilge ina ábhar spéisiúil dom ó aois óg agus d'fhás an na tíre. Spreag sé díospóireachtaí le comhscoláirí faoin ngach áit atá ag iarraidh comhrá a dhéanamh agus i ngach ciallaíonn sé gach rud. Is bród é, is grá é, is cuid den bhaile é. gcaoi a raibh an teanga seo tábhachtach agus mar ba ghá áit tá Gaeilgeoir eile. Gheobhaidh mé gaelgoirí i sochaithe

ollscoile na hÉireann, sa Ghaeltacht, i gcruinnithe cumann agus ansin gheobhaibh mé daoine leis an paisean céanna ar an tsráid, i mbialanna, ar na meáin shóisialta, i dtíortha eile ar mian leo comhrá a bheith acu. Mar sin, labhraím Gaeilge chun a thaispeáint go bhfuil grá na teanga ag cainteoirí gaeilge i ngach áit. Uaireanta is aithreacha iad ag múineadh dá gcuid páistí "Dia duit" nó uarieanta is múinteoirí gaeilge nó daoine sa Gaeltacht ag labhairt Gaelige go líofa. Ansin, léirímid go bhfuil an Ghaeilge beo

Deireann go leor daoine gur theanga mharbh í an Ghaeilge, ach ní aontaím le sin ar chór ar bith! Tá "Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam" i gcroí a lán daoine. Dá bhrí sin, níl forleathan cé acu a d'fhás said suas i nGaeltacht nó nach

# " Beatha teanga í a labhairt. "

(ba-ha / tang-a /ee / a / law-ort )

The life of a language is to speak it.

1. Ní leor seachtain nó dhó i rith na bliana chun lasar na Gaeilge a iompar. Is gá go dtabhairfaidh gach éinne an Ghaeilge a thabhairt faoina gcúram féin. Labhair an teanga inniú, cibé caighdeán atá ionat.

# APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2021 POSITIONS OF Editor **Deputy Editor** NEWS COMMENT FEATURES SCIENCE AGRI AND RURAL AFFAIRS Art & Design Editor SINESS AND CAREERS LAW AND POLITICS GAEILGE THE HARPY ARE OPENING SOON. MUSIC FASHION FILM AND TV GAMES TRAVEL FOOD AND DRINK ILLUSTRATIONS PHOTOGRAPHY Join the Team FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT editor@universityobserver.ie www.universityobserver.ie/jobs

# AGRICULTURE & RURAL

# SCHOOL OF AG WOMEN ALUMNI REMAIN TO THE FORE

The recent International Women's Day celebrations have given students a chance to reflect on the role of women graduates in shaping our respective fields of study. The careers of some of most successful and influential female graduates of the UCD School of Agriculture are described by Ciara Ryan.

made a significant impact on the world is truly staggering. for a woman of any educational background indeed.

A suitable place to start is at the beginning with the Agricultural Science in Agricultural Economics in 1980 -Agriculture Committee, helping to draft CAP reforms. She was elected as First Vice-President of the European

WITH International Women's Day Monday 8th March Europe and Asia. Many within the agri-food processing, 2021 fresh in memory, it seems only fitting that a piece marketing and retail sectors would acknowledge her exploring some of the many influential women who have efforts and as one of Ireland's greatest businesswomen, walked their paths before us in UCD be celebrated. This an accolade recognised with the award she received year, the Ag Soc helped to celebrate the occasion by from IMAGE in 2013. As well as having 2,000 staff running both a photo competition highlighting the role employed, Caroline is also active as an Ambassador of current students in the food and agriculture sector, as for The Women's Fund for Ireland, a Bord Bia Board well as inviting alumni to speak of their experiences. The Member, Chair of the Horticulture Board of Bord Bia, photo competition and alumni videos were posted across Chair of Dublin Action Plan for Jobs Implementation Instagram and Twitter in the lead up to International Committee, board member of the Ifrah Foundation, and Women's Day. The list of UCD Ag Science alumni who have a member of the Export Trade Council. A formidable CV

Those who are familiar with the Agricultural Science first female graduate to pass through UCD's Bachelor of Association (ASA), will instantaneously think of the name Anne-Marie Butler on hearing the organisation Mairead McGuinness. Since then, Mairead's career has mentioned, she is the current President of the association. been both varied and exceptional. She began working 
The prestigious role is one offered to only the most in media where she worked on shows such as 'Ear to successful individuals in Irish agricultural circles. Butler the Ground', she also joined the 'Irish Farmer's Journal' completed a PhD focused on 'Design and Evaluation team, and rose to editor of the 'Irish Independent' of Optimal Dairy Systems' after her undergraduate farming supplement. Mairead then moved from the years in Belfield. She has also lectured for several world of journalism to a career in politics, where she years in UCD before moving onto her current role was elected as an MEP in 2004. Here she worked on the as Senior Agricultural Manager with Ulster Bank.

The final feature woman of this article is Karina Pierce. Parliament in 2014, a position she was subsequently reelected to. The latest achievement to be added to her a PhD in animal nutrition in UCD. She has worked as an belt is her appointment as Commissioner for Financial animal nutritionist for Brett Brothers, as well as lecturing Services, Financial Stability and Capital Markets Union. in Dairy Production in UCD. Pierce was also president of the ASA in 2011/12. Her academic ability was further Another formidable alumnus of the UCD School of recognised when she received one of the prestigious Agriculture is Caroline Keeling, CEO of Keelings since 
Nuffield Scholarships. Her most recent appointment 2013. Caroline has built up the Irish owned business as Senior Development Advisor at Enterprise Ireland by increasing its profits by 50% through an expansion is no surprise for this driven woman with the wide in operations to service markets in the UK, continental range of skills she possesses required for the position.



graduates of UCD, the list could continue much as politics, human fertility and banking. These women longer. Videos of many of the women who took part in will continue to be beacons of inspiration for both the International Women's Day celebrations are still future and current UCD Food and Agriculture students, available on the AgSoc social media. There are many who in turn seek to make their own mark on the world. alumni who have had diverse and influential careers in

Although this article only chronicles four female the world of food, agriculture and other avenues such

# STUDENTS WEIGH IN ON COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY **REFORM**

**NOEL BARDON** 

Ongoing reform of CAP is a hotly debated topic amongst producers and industry stakeholders, with the agricultural community of Belfield as keen as any to give their assessment of developments in the talks. With the tea-room closed and lecture halls empty, Noel Bardon reports on some of views held by students and faculty on the future of CAP post-2022

THE current reform discussions of the 2020-2022 CAP extension period have seen agri-environmental concerns come to the fore, with farming seen as a partial cause, unmistakable victim, and possible solution to the GHG driven challenges of climate change. Other sustainability concerns surrounding agriculture in Europe which also have come to in discussions include key areas of water quality, biodiversity, and reducing pressures on areas of ecological or archaeological sensitivity

Policymakers have long been signalling that taxpayers are becoming unwilling to fund larger, commercial-scale enterprises through the CAP scheme and that decreases in the annual CAP budget are inevitable. Many producers are hopeful that such cuts in funding will be geared towards these larger landowners, enacted through decreased payment ceilings, with family farms and small-scale producers insulated from the cutbacks. However, agreement on these policy issues is far off, with farmers likely to remain in the limbo for another while on the many details of future schemes. With the broad policy directions established by Brussels, preliminary indications reveal a CAP of reduced system inputs, consumer-orientated production, and an expansion of environmental measures. With these points in mind, two UCD students weighed in on the Irish perspective of proposed reforms from their experience in Irish agriculture.

Fourth year UCD Food & Agribusiness Management student Tadhg Murtagh stressed the need for sufficiently funded agri-environmental schemes to keep dry stock

"Many believe supports are hindering the ability of younger, potentially more efficient, and more environmentally conscious farmers to access resources, primarily land"

"Many producers who have overlooked previous agrienvironmental schemes such as AEOS or GLAS. may be convinced to subscribe to the new REPS through financial necessity'

farms operational. "It is the reality, with current beef prices, that agri-environmental schemes are necessary or the economic survival of family beef and sheep enterprises, particularly around the Midlands and West'". The Longford native noted the differences in enterprise dependence on income support by sector with "The only enterprise profitable at a reasonable scale for the mily farm would be dairying", also stressing that; "Dairy is not suited to the land type or off-farm job situations of many around Longford. Agri-environmental schemes are a win-win for these farmers and the environment".

Speaking on the relative ease with which further environmental measures in the new environmental schemes could be introduced at producer level, Murtagh believed the planting of hedges and the ecological enhancement of marginal, unproductive areas of land to be the measures most likely to be adopted in the Border, Midland and Western region (BMW). On the contrary, reductions in fertiliser and herbicide usage, as stipulated by the EU Farm to Fork Strategy, are likely to be the "most problematic options on a practical level for farmers", according to Murtagh's experience of the family farm's beef operation - typical of those in the area. The outcome of such policies is, in the student's view, a reduction in stocking rates right across the country. These reductions may not be forced through as a result of changes to the Nitrates Directive or the maximum stocking rates of schemes per se, but rather an "inevitable consequence" of the input constraints.

Murtagh also noted that a feeling is prevailing, as of late, within elements of the financial services sector in which he worked over his third-year Professional Work Experience (PWE), that the debt burden of expanded dairy enterprises may become heavier than anticipated. Many producers who have overlooked previous agri-environmental schemes, such as AEOS or GLAS, may be convinced to subscribe to the new REPS through financial necessity, should a downturn in milk price interfere with their ability to repay borrowings.

Fourth-year Dairy Business student John Mahon gave his thoughts on the subject, as someone with a knowledge of agricultural production systems outside of the EU. Mahon spent six months of 2019 on placement in New Zealand. Over his PWE, he worked on an 800 cow dairy unit on the South Island and alongside agricultural consultants in AgFirst NZ on the country's North Island. Speaking on the broad topic of producer payments, Mahon remarked on a belief for the potential for the elimination of payments to producers



in the distant future", referring to the elimination of farm payments in NZ. Such moves would take time however and require "existing subsidies incentivise and promote sustainable farm practices, showing farmers that management decisions can drive profitability" he added.

Mahon voiced concerns that; "as a dry stock farmer, heavily involved in the dairy industry, I think land entitlements have distorted land leasing prices and are potentially limiting the introduction of new young, skilled personnel to both sectors of the industry. The extent of this capitalisation of farm supports into increased land prices is a highly contested point at policy level. Many, like Mahon, believe supports are ndering the ability of younger, potentially more efficient and environmentally conscious farmers to access the resources needed to begin farming themselves, primarily land. The introduction of an early retirement scheme in the new CAP may be an option at national level, but tightened payment eligibility criteria on "active farming" may ease land supply pressures somewhat, at EU level. "I do not believe increasing ntitlement values for enterprises with lower returns than dairy will increase the long-term sustainability of these sectors. However, I do accept the entitlement system does require substantial change and such change could possibly benefit young farmers" he added.

Speaking on industry driven change, Mahon commented; "The potential for milk processors to reward involvement in environmentalism is also something I would not rule out, looking to the future". The movement of industry ahead of policy could strengthen the resilience of the sector, as producers change practice pre-emptively, rather than in reaction to legislation.

Dr David Stead, head of Agribusiness in UCD, ighlighted an often overlooked inclusion of many rm proposal documents; "A particular feature of this set of CAP reform proposals is the greater lexibility given to individual Member States. Thus, many of the decisions on the challenging policy issues will be made in Dublin, not Brussels." Some political commentators have voiced reluctance, however, to grant such liberties to member states pursuing policies seen as "un-European" or "illiberal", with the latter a selfdescription of one of these divergent central-European eaders. The autonomy would allow for region-specific solutions to Union-wide problems to be enacted in a manner that helps to avoid conflict at producer level. Safeguards must accompany this flexibility for the allocation of CAP funding by member states, to avoid the diversion of resources into oligarchical structures and faux schemes in such regimes.

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SCIENCE

# REPRESENTATION AND SPACE: AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR LORRAINE HANLON

JADE NORTON

Jade Norton, in conversation with Professor Lorraine Hanlon, discusses her work with the European Space Agency, her current research, and thoughts on women's representation in physics.

PROFESSOR Lorraine Hanlon is a lecturer and researcher in the UCD School of Physics. She graduated with a Bachelors and Masters in Experimental Physics before going on to work for the European Space Agency (ESA). Hanlon touched on many topics during our interview including the research that she does on gamma-ray bursts using the Integral satellite, as well as her thoughts on gender in physics and corporate sponsorship of space.

Hanlon got involved with the ESA after moving to the Netherlands to complete a research fellowship. Her passion for physics was there from day one but it was not until her masters, that she got involved in space projects and ".. got really excited about the connection between physics and space exploration". Her work with ESA continues to this day alongside her lecturing in the School of Physics.

Hanlon also works as the lead professor in Ireland's first satellite EIRSAT-1. Ireland's membership in the ESA allows Irish students to have advanced opportunities in space research and EIRSAT-1 is a small cube satellite that allows for a deeper understanding of a full satellite in a shorter timeline, requiring fewer resources. There is a huge academic and economic potential when a country engages in space activity and "CubeSats are a

space-oriented people with classic departments in and deployable mechanisms such as batteries or solar you find very interesting". She also mentions that there prevalent across the workforce and not just in physics. panels. Hanlon anecdotally mentioned how, during her time in European Space Research and Technology Centre, she used to walk past a door labelled Battery Testing Division and wonder "What on Earth they did there?" when in fact Earth was not the focus of the department at all, as even in space the biggest rockets and smallest satellites need batteries to power them.

There are eight sites across Europe under the female physicist in industry and academia, Hanlon

"The problem of having space owned by a couple of mega-rice individuals is undeniably dangerous as Hanlon is convinced that "space should be openly accessible democratised access and should not be in the hands of a few individuals to control who can go to space"."

umbrella of ESA, with copious numbers of other institutions working to enhance scientific knowledge brilliant way for students to get involved in the space on additional projects. To any interested student, Hanlon impresses that whatever you are interested in doing, it will be facilitated by the facility that you go ESA contains innumerable opportunities for to, as each focuses on a particular area and you do not need to know everything before you start. In the is ESA Academy that provides training for students who are interested in space which deals with systems neering, space communication and even space

> female students, it can come across as an intimidating environment to branch into. As a highly esteemed

welcomes change to this stereotype but admits that "the pace of change has just not been fast enough" and she has not seen much of a change in the hierarchy provided it wins a launch slot. "It will detect gamma ray during the 30 years that she has been in the industry. She notes that there is a "23-25% female participation" at some of the very first stars in the universe by using in physics and space but there is a big widening of the gamma ray bursts to pinpoint where they are". The gap again at senior levels".

the transition from early career to senior where Hanlon Guyana. states that: "we lose qualified, capable people - women, because career needs are not met". The one-size-fitsall expectation goes against reality and is not viable if you want more women in the workforce. "You have to it already 17 years old. The new Theseus mission is not acknowledge that there are certain times that [women] are not going to be able to work for family reasons.. and we don't recognise those kinds of breaks as essential does not seem to mind as the passion for her subject is for work-life balance". She does note that many major evident in my talks with her. employers such as ESA have taken this into account and have realised that these issues have to be addressed.

"Progress has been slow but finally it's looks like corporates and big agencies like ESA have realised that they have to do more and do better and do it faster"

Covid has provided a unique situation that has forced women". A lot of this is based on societal expectation and a -"this is how it has always been done" -mentality, engineering, physics, materials, robotics, structures, end, you may "focus on a narrow area but it is one that which is difficult to go against, but this is an issue that is a few individuals to control who can go to space".

> Despite the recent lockdowns, Hanlon's research has not been overwhelmingly affected, as her research uses data from the Integral satellite which is a large ESA gamma-ray satellite. There was an interesting discovery Physics is a very male-dominated subject and for in April which kept a lot of the scientific research going over the lockdowns, as the data had already been generated and it was a matter of analysing it.

She has also been involved in a study for a new ESA mission called Theseus which is projected to fly in 2032, bursts from the very early universe and allow us to look competitor mission will go to Venus and the decision for this will be made in June. These satellites will then The dynamics of female life often cause a dropout in be launched from the ESA space launch site in French

> Hanlon has worked on the Integral mission since her Master's days and since it was launched in 2002 - making set to be launched until 2032 and with these long-term missions comes a long-time commitment which Hanlon

When asked about her opinion of the media-heavy space corporations coming in the future she said; "I worry that the regulation and oversight of mega constellations that SpaceX want to build is very lax.. As what these companies are doing is ahead of where the regulations are and this may destroy the view of the night sky". We have to think of dark skies as a commodity much of our work back home but even this has not and resource that have to be protected as their loss helped women in some regards as "evidence has shown would also have an impact on radiofrequency. The that it is worse for women working from home because problem of having space owned by a couple of megathe burden of childcare at home has fallen on [some] rice individuals is undeniably dangerous as Hanlon is convinced that "space should be openly accessible democratised access and should not be in the hands of

# THE FLIGHT OF THE BUMBLEBEE

**ELLEN NUGENT** 

Bumblebees are a key pollinator group whose long-term decline has been associated with changes in crop fertilisation that could impact food cultivation. Ellen Nugent discusses UCD's Dr Dara Stanley's study, ecology, and what they need to survive.

The humble bumblebee is a staple of art, media and children's literature. Bumblebees, Genus Bombas, encompass around 250 species distributed throughout the Northern hemisphere and are considered one of the most important and efficien pollinating insects. Ireland is home to 15 species of True Bumblebees and 6 species of Cuckoo Bumblebees. These species have an interesting dynamic as the cuckoo bumblebee species take over a true bumblebee's hive, kill the queen, and enslave her workers to care for the cuckoo bumblebee's young.

Bumblebees are, unfortunately, a declining species - climate change, intensive agricultural practices, and land development have all affected bumblebee numbers. Fortunately, not all the genus of bumblebees are critically endangered yet, as each species declines at a different rate. These rates are affected by a wide host of factors; from nesting behaviour to the length of their tongues!

The Great Yellow Bumblebee (Bombus Distinguendus) is the rarest of Ireland's true bumblebees. It's a rather mysterious bee with very little known about its habits and habitats. UCD lecturer Dr Dara Stanley has recently authored a paper researching and collecting information about the Great Yellow Bumblebee. The paper investigated different habitats, plants visited by the bees, and the place of Bombus Distinguendus among Ireland's bumblebee populations. The study also collected information on these populations, which can be used in conservation strategies.

Bumblebees are seen throughout Ireland, but they live and thrive in specific sites, and need specific plants from which to harvest nectar and pollen. Stanley's research investigated four primary types of habitat: coastland grassland areas, grasslands rich in flora and fauna (species-rich), urban environments, and roadside verges. Bombus distinguendus was found only in grassland sites, although it has inhabited many different habitat types in the past - it is thought that agricultural modification of habitats has resulted in their widespread decline. Bombus distinguendus also showed a preference for plants such as Red Clover, Common Knapweed and Kidney Vetch.

These habitat and foraging preferences are common in Irish bumblebee species, with some small variations. This, unfortunately, can result in depleted resources for bumblebees - if all species inhabit the same areas and forage from the same plants, competition increases feed - this further reduces crop diversity, and results dramatically. Roadside verges and urban areas often support less bumblebee diversity, as they cannot provide for the specific requirements of rarer species.

Conservation of Ireland's bumblebee species, and bumblebees as a whole, is critical. Bumblebees are highly efficient collectors of pollen and have been proven to assist in the pollination of both significant crop species, and wild fauna of Northern Hemisphere countries. Insect pollination of crop species within the EU has been valued at estimates of 14 million represented by bumblebees. Bumblebee species are

"The conservation strategy of rewilding and reducing land use is highly effective but is rarely a strategy as it is often economically and time-consuming....These grasslands, unfortunately, are not efficient for agricultural activities bumblebees do not do well in single-crop fields or grazing land with limited numbers of grass species".

as hosts to parasites and microorganisms. Stanley's paper discusses methods of conservation for the Great Yellow Bumblebee specifically, but these conservation methods can benefit bumblebees, and Irish ecosystems,

The conservation strategy of rewilding and reducing land use is highly effective but is rarely a strategy as it is often economically and time-consuming. Rarer bumblebee species such as Bombus distinguendus thrive in species-rich, minimally processed grasslands. These grasslands, unfortunately, are not efficient for agricultural activities - bumblebees do not do well in ngle-crop fields or grazing land with limited numbers f grass species. Ireland has recently seen a move from the use of hay towards the use of silage for animal in a lack of forage species preferred and sometimes required by bumblebee species. The use of pesticides or herbicides reduces the possibility of these areas supporting bumblebee populations even more.

Urban and roadside habitats are more easily established and maintained than grassland habitats. Their success as a habitat is almost entirely dependent on human intervention: roadside habitats that are trimmed during foraging season cannot support bumblebees, but group-lead initiatives like the All-and diverse habitat areas. Plans such as these are also vital to Irish ecosystems, as pollinators, prey, and effective, but their usefulness to different species of



"Bumblebees are, unfortunately, a declining species - climate change, intensive agricultural practices, and land development have all affected bumblebee numbers."

bumblebees can be vastly improved if they are linked to even more diverse habitats such as grasslands, especially if the grassland is minimally processed for agriculture, which can facilitate the creation of 'habitat corridors'. Bumblebees have a very small foraging radius, and will not generally fly more than 1km from their nest - this means that rarer species with specific habitat requirements are unable to benefit from urban or roadside habitats if they are not in immediate range of their habitat. Creating corridors would allow these bees to establish hives closer to more easily established habitats, and somewhat reduce the need for rewilding agricultural land.

The decline of bumblebee populations is worrying, amidst a global trend of species decline, but hope remains for the conservation and growth of these insects. Urban and roadside habitat creation and ensuring that grassland areas with rare bumblebee populations are protected is a vital first step in stopping the decline in bumblebee numbers. Conservation initiatives and Agri-Environment schemes will be vital for educating and increasing interest in Ireland's agricultural populations. Increasing bumblebee populations is entirely possible with the introduction of habitat corridors and restricted processing of land would do wonders for the survival of Ireland's endangered bumblebees, and its bumblebee population alongside our populations of flora and fauna that are dependent on these habitats on the whole.

# THE EU'S BIO-DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMME: THE HERA **INCUBATOR**

JANA JOHA

Preparedness for the further is essential at a time when new and more transmissible strains of the coronavirus are emerging and spreading rapidly. Jana Joha looks at the EU's HERA Incubator that will provide the EU with a biodefense preparedness program.

THE European Commission has launched the 'HERA incubator', a European bio-defence preparedness programme that hopes to address the looming threat of Coronavirus variants. This plan aims to monitor future variants in addition to allowing researchers to collaborate and fast-track the development of future vaccines. The Commission unveiled their plan on Wednesday the 17th of February, promising to work with researchers, biotech companies, manufacturers and public authorities both in the EU and around the world to detect and prevent the spread of new variants. The EU has pledged €30 million from Horizon 2020 and €120 million from Horizon Europe.

This plan comes at a time when new and more transmissible strains of the Coronavirus are emerging and spreading rapidly. European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, warned that we are seeing "more and more cases of COVID-19 linked to variants". New variants are already present in Europe and in various other parts of the world. Some of these variants appear to be more transmissible, with the potential of becoming dominant strains. They even have the potential to reduce the efficacy of vaccines. The Commission recognises that this is a real threat and anticipates that there will be a future need for Food Safety, stated that we need to "have fully future preparedness. It has launched the 'HERA incubator' in order to address this potential. At a press conference, President Ursula von der Leyen explained that "the pandemic has shown us three things: we have to act build up trust in public health matters". early, we have to invest at large scale, we have to partner up. This is why we are proposing 'HERA incubator' now".

The EU hopes to bring together researchers, biotech companies, manufacturers, regulators and public authorities to monitor variants, exchange data and cooperate on adapting vaccines. The plan will focus on detecting, analysing and adapting to new variants, speeding up regulatory approval, and providing guidance on data requirements. They also plan to facilitate the certification of new or repurposed manufacturing infrastructures and support the rapid mass production of adapted or novel vaccines. Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and

"The growing threat of new Coronavirus variants looms over every government around the world. Now more than ever we need to stay ahead of this virus"

"President Ursula von der Leyen explained that "the pandemic has shown us three things: we have to act early, we have to invest at large scale, we have to partner up. This is why we are proposing 'HERA incubator' now".

adapted vaccines to be approved as quickly as possible through streamlined and predictable procedures, procedures that also allow citizens to feel safe and to

The funding provided by Horizon 2020, which is a programme that funds research, technological development, and innovation, will support various different research projects and investments. This funding will help to establish a new EU-wide vaccine trial network called 'VACCELERATE' in order to improve the tracking and analysis of virus variants. This initiative will support the rapid establishment of a clinical research network that will span 21 countries. €12 million has already been allocated and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) plans to work closely with the initiative.

Ireland is one of the 21 countries that is participating in VACCELERATE. The Irish partners are University College Dublin (UCD) and the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) which will be led from UCD by Infectious Diseases expert Professor Paddy Mallon, director of UCD Centre for Experimental Pathogen Host Research (CEPHR) and consultant at St. Vincent's University Hospital's Infectious Diseases department The main aim of VACCELERATE is to help determine the safety and efficacy of vaccines in priority groups such as the elderly, pregnant women and children and to assess the efficacy of vaccines for new variants.

The VACCELERATE initiative will also allow for better and more efficient sharing of data and collaboration. It will enable harmonised data collection and open

and sharing of data. Professor Peter Doran, who is the director of UCD Clinical Research Centre and Associate Dean of Research, Innovation and Impact at UCD School of Medicine, believes that "The VACCELERATE project represents a unique mobilisation of European research strength in basic and clinical research" and preparedness and response authority" - Kyriakides. that "the establishment of this programme will put European science at the leading edge of new vaccine

development and testing".

The HERA incubator programme will also adapt existing Advance Purchase Agreements (APA) in the hopes of speeding up regulatory approval of vaccines, the thing that will get us through this crisis sooner. The data packages and new/repurposed manufacturing nfrastructures as well as supporting the production to achieve those goals. Through the launching of the of adapted or novel COVID-19 vaccines. Advance HERA incubator, we may perhaps finally get ahead Purchase Agreements help address new variants by and emerge from this global pandemic sooner than helping to de-risk private investments in the early predicted while also being more prepared than data sharing and pooling for stronger and faster stages of vaccine development. The Commission aims ever before for future pandemics. Mariya Gabriel, analysis by reinforcing and supporting the European to use existing APAs to ensure rapid access to and Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, COVID-19 Data Platform which launched in April 2020 delivery of next-generation vaccines. This platform will Education and Youth strongly believes that: "Through with the goal to provide an open, trusted, and scalable 🛾 also serve as a first pilot for the EU Health Emergency 🗸 our joint efforts, we will better understand, diagnose European and global environment for rapid collection Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA). The and eventually overpower the pandemic."

programme is called the HERA incubator as HERA will focus on putting in place long term structures for risk modelling, threat assessment and surveillance. "The HERA incubator is really the precursor and strong nucleus for the future European health emergency

The growing threat of new coronavirus variants looms over every government around the world. Now more than ever we need to stay ahead of this virus. Continued collaboration and teamwork between scientists, biotech companies, governments and ordinary people will be European Union shares these beliefs and is determined

# AIR POLLUTION AND COVID-19 LINKED BY UCD RESEARCHER

**ORLAITH DOHERTY** 

Orlaith Doherty investigates what UCD's Professor Francesco Pilla study on air pollution changes over lockdown has yielded and how we can keep our fundamental right to

"This also suggests that the controlled motorization traffic pollution and limiting of other unsustainable human activities could be the most effective ways of improving the air quality of cities. "

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) in their 'Ambient Air Pollution' report in 2016 reported that air pollution is a major cause of premature death and illness worldwide. The most critical air pollutants are particulate matter (PM), ozone (O3), nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and sulfur dioxide (SO2). These chemicals are emitted largely through motorized transport, burning of fossil fuels for home heating, and industrial emissions. However, PM is generally considered the main player in

PM can come in the form of 'PM 10' or 'PM 2.5'. The or greater in diameter and PM 2.5 being 2.5 microns or less in diameter. The WHO considers PM 2.5 to be the most hazardous air pollutant to human health can penetrate and accumulate in lung tissue where it can enter the bloodstream, creating risk for heart, lung disease, and stroke. It has been linked to the causation children as well as exacerbating other respiratory conditions, such as cystic fibrosis.

In 2016, 91% of the world's population was living in places that the WHO classed as below breathable air quality guidelines. Their report states that air pollution was the cause of approximately 1 in 9 deaths worldwide. In 2018, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported that approximately 1,180 premature deaths in Ireland were caused due to poor air quality. The country's main human-driven sources of PM 2.5 was road traffic and the burning of solid fuels for home

University College Dublin Professor, Francesco Pilla, is one of the principal investigators co-ordinating an EU-funded project called iSCAPE, which stands for Improving the Smart Control of Air Pollution in Europe. The iSCAPE project is looking at ways we can design structures in communities in six cities across Europe to reduce exposure to air pollutants, building awareness of how cities and people can reduce air pollution. This month he co-wrote an article published in the Environmental Research Journal examining the status and impact of improved air quality in world cities due to COVID-19 mandatory lockdowns causing a temporary reduction in human-driven emissions, namely reduced traffic emissions.

Due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries across the world imposed mandatory lockdowns to restrict human-mobility. This triggered the reduction of motorized traffic, which is one of the key sources of urban air pollution. Professor Francesco the air pollution levels of many key air pollutants after the implementation of these COVID-19 restrictions. numbers represented the size of the particles in the air, Professor Pilla and his team performed their assessments with PM 10 particles being 10 microns or micrometres on key air pollutants by combining both satellite and ground measurements.

A total of 20 cities had been selected to evaluate as the inhalation of very small particles into the lungs the impact of lockdown on air quality. These cities was collected on three key air pollutants: NO2, PM 2.5, are Antwerp, Barcelona, Brussels, Chicago, Cologne, Denver, Frankfurt, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Milan, New York, Paris, Philadelphia, Rotterdam, São Paulo, of asthma in the developing respiratory systems of Tehran, Turin, and Utrecht. These cities were considered based on two criteria: high air pollution and high COVID-19 casualties.

"In 2018, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported that approximately 1,180 premature deaths in Ireland were caused due to poor air quality."

They estimated the variations in air pollution levels over time across different locations during the lockdown period from 1 February to 11 May in 2020 using a reference from the same period in 2019. The satellite remote sensing technology they used to analyse air pollutants in the listed cities was called TROPOMI. This stands for 'TROPOspheric Monitoring Instrument'. It is 
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council have most an instrument attached to the Copernicus Sentinel-5 precursor satellite, which was launched by the European extended pedestrian footpaths in their jurisdiction. The Space Agency in 2017 to perform atmospheric protected cycle lane from Blackrock to Dun Laoghaire measurements with a high spatio-temporal resolution Pilla's research work has made an effort to evaluate that is used for air quality assessment and climate older adults over the last year and is a snapshot into the

> Ground monitored air quality data was collected from different governmental sources such as the American look towards the future to help us rebuild healthier, and European Environmental Protection Agencies, and open data repositories, like the Google Earth Engine cloud platform. The ground monitored air quality data and PM 10 covering the time period of 1st February to 11th May in both 2019 and 2020.

The research demonstrated a strong connection between the decline in traffic volumes and a reduction

of NO2, PM 2.5, and PM 10 emissions across the cities. Specifically, it found that between the cities assessed during the study time period, an estimated 1,310, 401, and 430 premature cause-specific deaths respectively were avoided by the reduction of emissions by the mandatory lockdowns.

This also suggests that the controlled motorization traffic pollution and limiting of other unsustainable human activities could be the most effective ways of improving the air quality of cities. In reality, that would include policies based on an extensive rollout of active transport walking and cycling infrastructure, more comprehensive and electrified public transport amenities, and great provision of green space in cities to aid in the diffusion of pollution. The results of Professor Pilla's study can be used as a reference to introduce new public policies for promoting these critical public health policies to mitigate the hazards of air pollution towards our health -not to mention the cardiovascular benefits of being more active with the greater, more accessible active transport facilities.

Many city government authorities, including in Dublin, have capitalized on the opportunity COVID-19 has given to rollout active transport infrastructure. The notably rolled out extensive protected bike lanes and has been enjoyed by everyone from young children to healthier potential of our city. This study, co-investigated by UCD Professor Francesco Pilla, helps support these initiatives beyond their purpose for COVID-19, and to more accessible, and less polluted cities.

23Ú MÁRTA 2021 10 11 23RD MARCH 2021 Aoife Rooney reflects on the global vaccination effort.

vaccine distribution quickly ensued after the brief afford to bid for vaccines. sigh of relief when it was reported that vaccine developments had achieved approval. Large-scale vaccination of vulnerable groups was rolled out in countries gaining access to vaccines is that the many countries including the United States, China, and the United Kingdom. Months later, 121 countries have implemented vaccine rollout. While there is much as many doses as possible. This was a roadblock that conversation about the speed of vaccination in Western countries, such as Sudan and Venezuela among many countries, there are full continents that are only recently others, could not possibly get around. The ČOVAX getting access to vaccines.

While over 70 countries have yet to receive any Innovations (CEPI), and aims to provide equitable vaccinations, those in low-income countries are access to vaccine candidates, but also to support the particularly struggling. In Africa, countries are facing research and manufacturing of vaccines. As stated by challenges in implementing the effective rollout of a Gavi, "the initial aim is to have 2 billion doses available vaccine to their citizens. The large populations of many by the end of 2021." COVAX is already responsible for of these countries, as well as the lack of necessary infrastructure and support from wealthier countries, countries in the Global South. Despite this, the first PHOTOGRAPHY CREDIT: FLICKR, DOD PHOTO BY NAVY PETTY means that many will be some of the last to see large-scale immunisation. As of March 12th, for every 100 administered in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire on March 1st. people on the continent of Africa, only 0.48 of them While other countries have been steadily administering US and Europe to "urgently send up to 5% of their have had at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. This vaccines since December, this is still a positive is in stark comparison to the United States, where the development. Without the COVAX initiative, many of same measure currently sits at 31.98 vaccinated for the countries that have started to see immobilisation of every 100 people.

pandemic would shed a harsh light on the political and according to the White House. economic inequalities of countries with higher rates of poverty. To address this problem, the World Health It is a vaccine-accessibility scheme, aimed at ensuring between wealthy and poor countries in his call to the at the continent as a whole, it has only vaccinated 4.98 the equal distribution of Covid vaccines is accessible in

THE first COVID-19 vaccine was administered in a timely manner to all people, not just those fortunate early December 2020. A conversation surrounding enough to live in countries whose governments can

The main reason there is an issue with lower-income competition for vaccinations among governments was fuelled by their ability to wage more funding to secure pillar is coordinated by Gavi (The Vaccine Alliance), the WHO and Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness the administration of much of the vaccinations across COVAX vaccines in Africa were only beginning to be OFFICER 1ST CLASS CARLOS M. VAZQUEZ II vaccines would still be unable to access this healthcare some are hoarding the availabilities. Both Canada and due to lack of funding. US President Joe Biden is the UK have ordered more vaccines than necessary to Experts have been well aware that an event such as a to announce a contribution of \$4 billion to COVAX, immunise their respective populations.

Organisation (WHO) developed the COVAX initiative. addressed the issue of the widening equity gap severe inequity in South American countries. To look



coronavirus vaccines to developing nations". It has been reported that in the frenzy of countries trying to purchase the necessary amounts of vaccinations,

While the continent of Africa is where the overall lack French President Emmanuel Macron has also of access to vaccines is most prevalent, there is also

people out of every 100. It has a population of 430.4 million. Similarly, the European Union has a population of 444.9 million, yet has vaccinated 10.98 people for every 100. Paraguay is one country, in particular, that is suffering the cost of lack of access to vaccines and healthcare infrastructure with only 7,579 people immunised, despite a population of over 7 million.

One of the other factors that contribute to this inequity is access to specific vaccines. For example, the ability to administer the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is entirely contingent on the country having access to the freezers needed to maintain them and the infrastructure to keep the freezers going. While it is reported that the vaccine can now be stored at a higher temperature, it is only one of the many challenges that countries that are not in a position to ensure they can purchase vaccines are

The COVAX initiative is seemingly the only chance poorer countries have of attempting to kickstart mmunisation. The project is heavily reliant on the contribution of resources by wealthier countries. In order to effectively vaccinate the populations of lower-income countries, and in doing so address the global vaccination attempt, support must be given by wealthier Western countries to close the equity gap that has vastly widened in the past year.

# WHO IS ALEXEI NAVALNY?

MÉABH DE COURCY MAC DONNELL

Méabh de Courcy Mac Donnell considers whether Alexei Navalny is a symbol of Russian liberalisation or a unifying force for extremist elements

DUBBED "the man Vladimir Putin fears most", against him. The conviction was later annulled after the attention and interest surrounding Alexei Navalny European Convention on Human Rights ruled Navalny's continues to grow. Initially a member of the socialliberal "Yakoblo" party, it was not until 2007 that Navalny 27% of the vote, higher than some forecasts but in line established his National Russian Liberation Movement with his own campaign offices' projections. This was (NAROD) which he aligned with two nationalist groups. seen as a massive success given his lack of access to Navalny's following grew quickly, though his presence traditional forms of media and state TV. Nonetheless, remained mainly online. His blog attacked the alleged Navalny denounced the results and claimed they were corruption of many state-owned Russian corporations. illegitimate on account of an unfair election. Sobyanin's One mechanism used by Navalny to highlight state office refused to recount the results. misconduct was to become a minority shareholder in their agencies and use his membership within the company to question any dubious financing.

Following a series of protests and arrests in the years his 2013 sentence of fraud and embezzlement was 2011-2013, Navalny's name became more mainstream repeated, he was attacked with acid which resulted in in Russia. Navalny was protesting the parliamentary eye injuries, he was arrested and jailed for a number elections, alleging widespread electoral fraud, when he of days following rallies, and the Central Electoral was arrested and sentenced to 15 days imprisonment. Commission banned him from running on account red him widespread attention, which led of his co commentators to call the prosecution "a political protests; 257 people were arrested while calling for Putin "Vladimir the Underpants Poisoner". mistake". Anti-Putin rallies, followed by short periods of a boycott of the election, while 1600 people were detention and imprisonment, seemed to be Navalny's arrested prior to Putin's inauguration. trend for a time. He later faced more serious allegations of fraud and embezzlement, though these were widely believed to be attempts to damage his reputation.

right to a fair trial had been violated. Navalny received

Navalny continued to push the boundaries, announcing his presidential bid in 2016. He immediately came under pressure from state forces and supporters:

Navalny dominated global headlines in August 2020 when he was attacked by a nerve agent while on a flight to Moscow. Following an emergency landing and initial In 2013 Navalny ran in the Moscow mayoral election, hospital treatment in Omsk, Navalny was transferred to part he has never denied or clarified. Old videos show performing better than expected against the then-Berlin where it was confirmed that the poison came from mayor, Sergey Sobyanin. During the election campaign, the same family of nerve agents as those used to attack however, he was sentenced to 5 years in prison for the Sergei Skripal and his daughter in the UK. It further fraud and embezzlement charges that had been levied emerged that the nerve agent had been smeared in

"Opposition leader, anticorruption activist and lawyer, it seems that this growing figure is the force to combat Putin. But emerging controversies are beginning to cloud his hero image"

Opposition leader, anti-corruption activist and lawyer, it seems that this growing figure is the force to combat Putin. But emerging controversies are beginning to liberalisation of Russia? Or a unifying force for Russia's cloud his hero image. Navalny has made a number of xenophobic comments in the past, which for the most Navalny calling Muslim militants cockroaches who must be exterminated. In another, he claims he will deport non-White immigrants from Central Asia. He has used racial slurs to refer to Georgians in the context of the

Russo-Georgian war. (This comment he has apologised for). He seems to support the annexation of Crimea, saying he would not return it to Ukraine should he become president. In light of this attitude, in February 2021 Amnesty International revoked Navalny's "prisoner of conscience" status, though they still advocated for his release. In an explanation given by the organization, they stated that they could no longer afford Navalny this status as his past comments reached a level of hate speech that "constitutes incitement to discrimination, violence, or hostility"

Although it has been said that Navalny's approach to immigrants and foreign nationals have "softened" in recent years, it is also clear that Navalny's nationalistic tendencies are a cause for concern. Who makes up his support base? Liberals who want to fight corruption in the country or xenophobic nationalists who see a sympathetic leader? Supporters of Navalny argue that Navalny's underwear, causing underpants to become a these debates play into the hands of the Kremlin, who use his old statements on a regular basis to allege he is a fascist. But it is hard to argue that these are not valid

> So who is Alexei Navalny? The best hope for the extremist elements?

# THE FAR RIGHT IN IRELAND

**GRACE DONNELLAN** 

In the aftermath of last month's protests, Grace Donnellan discusses her opinion of the rise of the far right in Ireland

of far-right politics, which has been prevalent in both regards to their prevalence here in Ireland, and it is Europe and the US, as well as the conspiracy theories important not to dismiss them as ridiculous and without that often accompany this ascent, had not yet reached consequence. Ireland. However, the anti-lockdown and anti-mask proliferation of the far right.

with misinformation and conspiracy theories deserves audience. to be taken seriously. The baseless theory surrounding QAnon is centred on an anonymous, allegedly highsatanism and child sex trafficking. It is linked to white launched fireworks at the Gardaí in February. supremacy, neo-Nazism, anti-Semitism and violence hard to change their mind. Prevention would appear pose by comparing it to a non-existent 'extreme left'. In protections for refugees crossing the Mediterranean.

UNTIL recently, many would have argued that the rise to be the best cure. There is a need for vigilance with

movements that have gained popularity over the past 
The Covid-19 pandemic has created an environment few months and are intrinsically linked with this form of for these conspiracy theories to proliferate. In politics have shown that Ireland has not escaped the Ireland, elements of these theories seem to have been adopted by anti-lockdown and anti-5G groups. Individuals mistrustful of the government, those with This was clearly evidenced at the anti-lockdown anti-vaccination sympathies and even simply those protests in Dublin at the end of February. Two women exasperated with a year in lockdown, have been targets interviewed at the protests shared their beliefs that of right-wing recruiters. Fringe right wing political parties babies in Ireland were being killed and harvested such as the Irish Freedom Party and The National Party for "adrenochrome" to keep RTÉ celebrities "looking have also benefited from this spread of misinformation. young". While many may laugh off comments like At a rally held in August, similar to the recent protests, these, they are examples of the importation of far-right Dolores Cahill, chair of the Irish Freedom Party and QAnon style conspiracy theories to Ireland. This issue Professor in the UCD School of Medicine, was given an

Some of these Irish anti-lockdown protests have ranking government official known as Q who posted descended into violence. LGBT+ campaigner Izzy information regarding a 'deep state' working against Kamikaze was attacked while counter-protesting an Donald Trump when he was president, with ties to anti-face mask rally in September, while protestors

against minorities. In the US, QAnon has crept into One major problem regarding the far right in mainstream politics, with people associated with the Ireland is the lack of understanding surrounding it. movement believed to be involved in the Capitol In March, Billy Kelleher, a Fianna Fáil MEP, tweeted riots and Marjorie Taylor Greene, a believer of Q, that "there is no difference between the far right and

"This horseshoe theory of politics can be appealing to centrist politicians as it allows them to discredit the left, which would act against their interests if in power, and simultaneously disavow any complicity they have in the far right movement."

The increase in these far-right protests over the past year, despite a pandemic, demonstrate that we should no longer consider Ireland as a country free from conspiracy theories and misinformation. There is a wealth of discourse surrounding how to prevent this kind of rhetoric from permeating online, however, it is also spreading right in front of our eyes. The most important lesson we can take from other countries is to take this seriously and intervene early to prevent larger amounts of the population from being introduced and subscribing to far-right claims. In order for this to be possible, we need our politicians to reflect on their own actions and take a firm line against these movements

reality the far right and the far left share very few similarities. This horseshoe theory of politics can be appealing to centrist politicians as it allows them to discredit the left, which would act against their interests being elected to Congress. Much evidence shows extreme left". This kind of rhetoric displays a profound if in power, and simultaneously disavow any complicity that once people fall down rabbit holes related to lack of political understanding. It is also harmful as it they have in the far-right movement. In October these conspiracy theories and misinformation, it is very downplays the seriousness of the threat the far right 2019, Kelleher was absent from a vote on enhancing

The amendment failed by two votes, a result which was favourable among the far right. Fine Gael has actively worked with far-right politicians, such as Victor Orbán and Janez Janša, as members of the European People's Party in the European Parliament. Far-right activists are emboldened by these attitudes. As well as by the Irish media, who often bring on right-wing figures in the name of both-sides-ism.

their buying experience.

BNPL solves the current purchasing dissatisfaction

value cheaper. They reduce purchasing risks and take solutions. advantage of the universal perception of future values and costs as lower than those present-day costs - €80 spread over 8 weeks seems cheaper than €80 spent

in return for the provision of services to their customers. value of the underlying sale. The service is beneficial to retailers as it allows them to capture the business of customers who might require, or simply value, the flexibility afforded by the service. However, arguably more useful are those BNPL services that can be used anywhere and in any shop e.g regardless of whether

to realise the service's benefits. Indeed, a significant ubiquitous acceptance by merchants (or lack thereof).

Across a sample of 6 major BNPL services in Australia (including Afterpay) between 2016 and 2018, average quarterly revenues more than doubled, from AUD32m

alternatives, you do not need to understand financial multiplied more than 134-fold since their initial flotation million users since the start of the pandemic. the inevitability of fees. The simple instalment option, with lead merchants, for instance, Urban Outfitters and with a stated fee for lateness, is readily understood. In Levis, which indicates and prompts wider adoption by the potential to be a fatal flaw in some BNPL services. the words of Anthony Eisen, Afterpay's CEO, one of its merchants. Finally, Worldpay expects BNPL companies Indeed, some, notably Afterpay, do not conduct manual greatest assets is that is not "a chocolate box of different" to facilitate 4.2% of all global payments by 2024, with credit checks on consumers. If systems are not properly current average annual growth rates of 39% (Mavadiya, optimised, firms risk refusing viable end-customers 2020). Indeed, such is the growth and attraction of the and accepting non-viable ones. The automation of this Simultaneously, as a financing tool, it potentially market that established financial payment services such system raises the risk-level in this regard, as revenues

users would likely take it up as well.

The industry has been essential for keeping up signed up". economic activity during the pandemic with BNPL to AUD78m. Klarna entered the UK market in 2014. In platforms facilitating an estimated \$20-\$25 billion in 2020, it had 10 million customers, rising from 7 million transactions in the US last year. The UK BNPL market

**BUSINESS** 

## UNBOXING THE BUSINESS OF BOXES

**DEESHA GUPTA** 

Deesha Gupta examines the newly reinvigorated business of subscription delivery services.

There has been a growing trend among people to subscribe to some sort of a subscription service, even more so during the pandemic. This could be a direct outcome of either the initial supply scare in early 2020 or just a new, but expensive, method of lifting gloomy moods associated with quarantine. A burst of joy upon seeing cardboard boxes is not uncommon since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak. The number of home deliveries has significantly gone up, and so too have the subscription boxes. According to Royal Mail Group, 27.4% of Britons signed up for subscription boxes in February 2019 and this number has increased exponentially ever since. In fact, in a survey by CouponFollow involving more than a thousand Americans, at least 1 in 5 had acquired a subscription service at some point during lockdown to get products delivered directly to their doorstep.

But subscription services have been around for some time, and the coronavirus outbreak seems to be just one of the accelerators of this already booming business. According to the Shopify Blog, the e-commerce subscription market is projected to reach \$473 billion by 2025, up from \$15 billion in 2019. Even before the pandemic, subscription boxes were increasing in popularity, and according to Marketplace, the industry had already reached \$10 billion in value in 2018.

Subscription boxes are no longer limited to magazines or newspapers. They are available in almost all the categories of retail; from customised beauty products to meal prep, fancy stationery to clothing picked by a stylist. This peaking craze can very well be attributed to many reasons, the most prominent of which is convenience. Before the lockdown subscription boxes brought with them monthly ease and comfort. Post-lockdown, they will be considered a life-saver during the busiest days of the office, when you simply cannot afford the time to go to a store but can afford a subscription service. Because most of the boxes are often curated by the companies themselves based on the customer's preferences, they tend to find it hasslefree, seamless and flexible. And of course, they get an added advantage of skipping a trip to the store and the decision fatigue that comes along with it.

While the growth was slow earlier, the lockdown gave the industry an unexpected boost. As the pandemic progressed, so did the paranoia among the general population regarding the availability of essential goods (which apparently led to real-life hunger games over rolls of toilet paper), and so consumers started looking into alternative routes to obtain their daily necessities. The subscription boxes promised timely and regular delivery, making them a reliable source of shopping.

Some subscription boxes also gained popularity because they guaranteed to keep the occupants of the house occupied. People working at home have a lot of free time on their hands and boxes such as those containing craft items or pre-packaged ingredients for meals serve as great activities for family engagement and bonding. They ensure a sense of normalcy in a time when that is in such desperately short supply. Additionally, a lot of people just prefer get a monthly dose of dopamine. These feel-good

spoil and pamper themselves. In CouponFollow's survey, 39% of the participants confessed that they had signed up for subscription boxes simply because they njoyed receiving products in the mail.

packages are tailored so that the shoppers can fully

"They ensure a sense

of normalcy in a time

desperately short supply."

when that is in such

Although many of these organisations are not well established, and in the start-up phase, they still have managed to gain immense popularity through novel digital marketing strategies such as shout-outs by celebrities and social media influencers. Papergang is one service that is quite trending among the stationeryfanatics. The brand packages cute and aesthetic stationery- from rulers to notebooks, clips and tape, t has it all. Stitch Fix aims to help the fashionablychallenged, by delivering curated outfits for their customers each month. It also enables them to create customisable looks according to their body type, with input from professional stylists. Blue Apron is another famous service for all you out there who love to cook, but only when they have all the necessary ingredients and a detailed recipe to follow. This service offers premeasured food ingredients with elaborate instructions to create just about any dish in the kitchen.

One of the reasons why so many subscription companies have popped up over the years is because their direct-to-consumer business model is relatively simple. The consumer signs up to either receive a collection of products, or their preferred items from a selection, and gets them at the time of their choosing (i.e. fortnightly, monthly, seasonally). Once the payment nethod is set up, the transactions are usually automated depending on the number of deliveries.

The company on the other hand contracts out the production to manufacturers or suppliers and ensures that a steady production of the goods is available. A certain percentage of subscriber fee is given to the supplier, often taking the form of 'per unit, per minute or per click sale' based on the number of subscribers, time or amount of service/product used. The process to treat themselves to such subscription services to works smoother when the company is producing the goods in-house. But usually, because most companies

ILLUSTRATION CREDIT: SAMANEH SADEGHI MARASHT

and worth the ridiculously high fee.

The question that arises here is if subscription boxes will keep flourishing even after the lockdown has been lifted when people could easily access the brick-andmortar markets. It will ultimately all come down to the value these boxes provide. While providing surprise and enjoyment to the shoppers could definitely seem beneficial to business, it may not be enough for a consumer to pay for long-term. Especially in the time of coronavirus, when people are cutting down their expenses due to tight budgets, people may not view it as a necessity, but a luxury. In fact, in a survey, around 21% of subscription box consumers reported that they plan to cancel their boxes due to financial struggles caused by COVID-19 in the near future.

been catching the eye of many big retailers, and data from Subscription Trade Association (SUBTA) projects that by 2023, as many as 75% of direct-to-consumer brands will have a subscription-based offering.

Regardless of the challenges, this model has certainly

suspect the subscription box model is here to stay, but it will have to convey continued value to the customers if it doesn't want to fade in the long term.

# 'BUY NOW, PAY LATER': THE NEXT DIGITAL FINANCING REVOLUTION

**RORY CLARKE** 

Rory Clarke analyses the emerging 'Buy Now, Pay Later' industry to see whether its prescient potential stands up to scrutiny.

THE 'Buy Now, Pay Later' (BNPL) industry has grown from the 'seeds' of the credit card industry, watered by evolving attitudes towards digital financing. The job BNPL aims to do, its key value proposition, is simple: to enable users to buy products immediately and pay for them in instalments, without any extra interest being accrued. The product fills an 'opportunity gap', originating from the evolution of consumer purchasing trends. At a practical level, these services are often integrated into an e-retailer's website and appear as a payment option at checkout. Two key players, Afterpay and Klarna, will be used throughout this piece as key examples of the burgeoning industry.

This type of system has several significant advantages for both end-users and retail partners and merchants. The service allows end-customers flexibility in managing their payments without requiring them to apply for a loan, pay additional fees, or provide extensive personal information which might cause delays and frustrate

The targeted segment is those in short-term financial pain. Interestingly, this category is naturally two-fold -'actual' and 'soft' - both of which BNPL accommodates. Firstly, they aim to enable customers who would have actually been financially unable to purchase a product/service to do so, with the cost spread more manageably over fortnightly payments. Secondly, they aim to soothe the conscience of reluctant, impulsive or abashed customers who (whilst able to buy-upfront) can more readily accept a 'spread-out' an instalment payment pattern, rather than a larger up-front payment. Marketing campaigns emphasising instant gratification can take advantage of these users' characteristics.

of certain (likely younger) consumers who are unable or unwilling to get formal financial credit, which can be associated with middle-age and conventionality. Indeed, over 50% of Afterpay's customers are reported to be aged between 18-34. It provides the convenience & ease which credit cards can lack. Consumers are

attracted to the service's simplicity. Unlike many only a year earlier. Afterpay's own share price has is now worth £2.7 billion (\$3.7 billion) and has had 5 argon, battle with variable interest rates, or accept (Anon, 2021). Integral to this were strategic partnerships enables purchases to be, in present (and conscious) as Visa and PayPal have begun to create their own BNPL may be lost, or significant bad debts accrued, without

"A burst of joy upon

seeing cardboard boxes

is not uncommon since

coronavirus outbreak."

source the products from other manufacturers, the

In an interview with Retail Gazette, Adobe's

commercial business director Brian Green agreed that

this strategy is effective as it ensures a strong revenue

stream when subscribers pay every month, which allows

for better forecasting of the financials. He also added

that they increase stock predictability, and help retailers

remove the cost of aged stock. The biggest hurdle

these companies face is creating boxes that create

continuous engagement with the customers. With new

companies coming up every year, each organisation

needs to ensure that whatever they create is unique,

the beginning of the

prices of these boxes can often be quite high.

BNPL usage is expected to double between now and reputational damage from over-extended customers 2024. Whilst still accounting for less than 5% of overall struggling to meet payments, and the damage caused payments, the pace of growth is impressive. Moreover, to customers themselves, are distinct risks to the general dissatisfaction with traditional banking and business. This is particularly concerning for BNPL's Some BNPL firms operate by partnering directly with financing practices makes it sustainable with shifts young customer-base, who generally have less financial 'retail merchant clients' (RMCs), who pay merchant fees towards digital alternatives more prevalent. For literacy and self-discipline. In this regard, it is worth standard debit card services, Revolut recently acquired noting that an Australian Senate Inquiry voiced concern These merchant fees are a combination of a flat rate its 1 millionth Irish user. If a digital credit alternative was over a reported 1 in 6 young Afterpay customers being fee per transaction, and a percentage based on the more readily available, some of those digitally-inclined in debt. This has led to widespread calls for the industry

Furthermore, banking practices have historically been protection bodies across the world. This would align the 'sticky' -customers stay permanently with institutions BNPL industry with the standard (and heavily regulated) they opened accounts with as young adults. We have general consumer finance industry. already seen how BNPL demographics skew young. the financing BNPL has a formal partnership with them. If these firms can execute the promise they trade on and entrench themselves in the day-to-day financing sustainable and serious financing tool, particularly Klarna, a Swedish company, and (arguably) the of these groups, the segment is primed for longmarket leader, is one such firm. Unlike Afterpay, it is term, sustainable growth. Furthermore, the Covid-19 digital solution to short term financial pain which many a 'pay anywhere' firm - which allows more consumers pandemic "accelerated structural changes" in moving consumers are willing to take a chance on. Once they closer to digital solutions and online retail, prompting do, they become product advocates and promote it aspect of credit systems' convenience moves from their the Financial Times' editorial board to 'bid farewell' to through word-of-mouth. Much like Revolut, which has conventional bricks and mortar establishments in a now topped 1.2 million Irish users, there is space for recent opinion piece.

However, the reliance on automated technologies has the knowledge of the company. This flaw exposes companies to more than mere financial damage; to be brought under the regulation of the Financial Conduct Authority (in the UK) and similar consumer

The BNPL industry is not a fad or a phase, but a for the digitally native. It is an attractive and feasible the digitally native at least, to adopt BNPL to the extent that it "would be a surprise to find someone who isn't

SU ELECTIONS



and c) reduce the obvious democratic deficit.

studies that handily fits into the standard academic

calendar, and that change isn't costless, this would likely

require constitutional change and that can be difficult

Maybe you could get some of the advantages by just

on. Maybe a part-time Sabbatical Officer position that

COVID -19 has shown us that in real-world politics assignments and course matters and they will be paying making it easier to vote increases voter participation. This is of course helped by culture wars driving demand to vote and intense messaging driving information (of varying quality). Last April, the 2020 Student Sabbatical elections were held online, which at least in theory, is a very easy way to vote. Turnout was very poor, however, somewhere around 1,200 total votes out of a potential electorate of 32,000. Turnout in Sabbatical Elections is never staggeringly high, but this represented something of a nadir in student voting participation.

This March 31st and April 1st the voting is again to organise. However, I would counter that it does not online, and I expect (but hope to be wrong) that voter need to be the whole or even many of the sabbatical participation is not going to be huge this year either. This is mostly due to no particularly divisive issues to position that needs less preparation time, they could | from conversations but I don't believe that that makes | but not without acknowledging them or feeling shame vote on. However, you can help push up this number consider creating a new one. by immediately registering to vote at vote.ucdsu.ie/ registration and voting on one of those days. Whilst on the website, try and familiarise yourself with the candidates that you will be voting on.

My suspicion is that many of the votes will be Johnny than your average first-year class rep candidate to vote Nobody's harassed mates badgered into voting for Johnny, also voting for candidates in other races about which they know very little. I suspect this because this is the situation I found myself in last year. My Johnny Nobody, having urged me to register previously, politics as quickly and as cleanly as possible and to give engulfing wave captivating anything in its immediacy. a more congruent balance in expressing our emotions called me up on voting day to remind me to vote and so dutifully I went in to do so. But I was asked to vote on other candidates too, and I made some snap judgements, often based on the layout of their may encourage a struggling student to seek help there. | every emotion, should be treated with caution yet still manifesto and their general presentation (A word of advice to the candidates, work hard on making sure that any information presented to a last-minute voter in this fashion is your absolute best self, and not some dodgy angled Snapchat of an over-detailed manifesto). This low information voting is not uncommon in SU elections with lots of effort around voting day being focussed on getting people who know little or nothing to vote for your candidate or your issue.

There is also something off about students who will no longer be in college voting for candidates in these elections, as they are voting for a choice that will not affect them. And of course, incoming students will not get to vote at all on these choices that could be very important for them. I have already highlighted how little many voters know about the candidates so there is little advantage to this situation. And let us not forget that students voted on increases in the Student Levy in 2019 for students in 2024 to face. That was an absolute failure of democracy and should never be allowed to happen

I think I have a partial solution to some of these problems. I think that at least some part of the Sabbatical Elections should be held in October, after the start of the college year.

First years do not yet know if they will ever need the Student Union and so may be more motivated to find out about it. They will also be less burdened with **UGLY FEELINGS** 

ADESEWA AWOBADEJO



more attention to everything in their new surroundings. fundamental part of our lives. Be it in the peaceful effect when we recognise the emotion and become This should a) increase participation, b) increase voter | streams of happiness or the raging currents of anger, more self-aware of our actions when it is present. In knowledge, the first year and each year going forward, they are felt and experienced. I'm really curious as to how one instance this emotion, like hidden weeds, can be Of course, I understand that an incoming sabbatical ourselves? What are the emotions that might intimidate consumed and imagining the downfall of others, similar team will want the summer to organise, and that us in other people? What are the emotions we seek after to disappointment, jealousy can be a motivator to work sabbatical officers will want to take a year off of their and the very ones we shun?

It's easy to shy away from the more unpleasant There are healthy ways to channel emotions. I don't emotions and perhaps not have the language for think they need to be channelled in a destructive way. I them. However, it's one thing to shy away from ugly don't think outbursts are the answer but I think people feelings and it's another thing to completely deny are allowed to feel natural emotions. People can learn team and if the Student Union cannot find a sabbatical them. We can pretend they don't exist and omit them how to deal and communicate with these emotions them less poignant. I think most people can relate to because of them. I think it would make more sense to sit being told they shouldn't be jealous or angry or any of with the unpleasant emotion and see what it's teaching the emotions that would paint one to be immoral or a you. Sometimes emotions don't teach us anything, there making more of the class rep elections, especially the | bad person. I think we have the impression that some is no hidden message and that's fine too - we can still first-year ones, but I think it would be better to have emotions are completely evil and bare no moral serving see where the currents bring us or what the weeds grow something more substantive, and better prepared | and I don't know if I agree.

I personally hate the feeling of anger. It's a really I love how nature is a perfect balance of imperfection. them a significant voice as early in their college career | Sometimes it can be indistinguishable and or a still and welcoming those of others. as possible. First-year can be a very tough time and wave - indistinguishable to others but causing an feeling like more of a stakeholder in the Students' Union | impact nonetheless. I think anger in all its forms, like acknowledged as an emotion and not treated as a litmus test for maturity or morality. I don't think it should be demonised either.

> Sometimes I think about disappointment and how it's become the false equivalence of gratitude. Those situations where we can be disturbed by a particular outcome but don't allow it to linger too much because we have so much to be grateful for' or because 'it could've been worse'. I think that's a false equivalence. It's reductionist and does not allow for the nuanced array of feelings we experience. I think positive thoughts don't have to be a cognitive disservice. They can exist in their own right and not as a shield.

> Sometimes acknowledging some uncomfortable emotions can be essential to detect other uplifting emotions. Emotions hardly exist in isolation, they exist in a myriad of other things. That's why I think telling people not to simply not 'be', in relation to emotions, doesn't give account for so many other factors. How does one react to injustice or pain? Stoicism is not a realistic expectation nor is it the more intellectual option but it somehow is treated as if it is.

> I wouldn't enter the realm of extremism or advocate for people to act out harmful or dangerous thoughts based on supposed emotions. I'm just more interested in how we interact with unpleasant feelings. I've heard jealousy described as a harmful emotion and I agree. I think it can be harmful because of the effect

JOY. Fear. Panic. Excitement. Emotions are a it can have, but perhaps jealousy can be used to our we react to emotions in ourselves and in other people. detrimental yet can also bud into flowers. It doesn't have What are the feelings that we deem permissible in to be a twisted and diabolical thing. Rather than being harder and to strive for better outcomes.

has an express focus on first years and their problems. taxing and consuming emotion but I think anger can The ugly and absurd elements exist in tandem with the Maybe it's an election that is only open to first-years to manifest itself in various forms for many people. It isn't beautiful and everything in between. Nature presents an vote on. The idea is to introduce the first years to student | always visible, or explosive. It doesn't have to be an effortlessly balanced ecosystem. I wonder if we can find

### BREAST CANCER IS AN ISSUE FOR ALL WOMEN

### CIARA DEMPSEY

MOTHER'S Day is an interesting time of year for me. I appreciate the sentiment of other people, who post semi-breast cancer. sanctimonious tweets about being sensitive on Mother's Day to those of us who are card-carrying members of the Dead Mam Club. I weirdly admire my fellow members of the club, who post heartfelt tributes to their deceased mothers. I watch all of this from a distance. My Mam died much note.

same exact hospital where my Mam underwent most of Mother's Day getting checked to see if my breasts would might have saved her life. be the death of me, just as they were for my Mam, was equal parts traumatic and absurd.

breast cancer screening, particularly for young women.

Gino's motion proposes publicly funded and run breast me I'm probably fine and to wait for a phone call. Of the guaranteed immediate access to diagnostics services for Others have been kindly and considerate - and still insisted

assessment for young women who present with possible while a nurse stressed to me how high risk I am; how I to be more accessible. I don't necessarily enjoy dredging

It's the inclusion of young women in the proposed to get regular checks from when I'm forty-five. My Mam's The system is failing us. It's failing me, and it certainly failed motion that really stood out to me. My mother was thirty ghost of thirty-three years old is sitting on my shoulder and my Mam. It failed my neighbour, who died in her late thirties years old when she was diagnosed. She died by thirty- laughing. I'm trying, like my Mam did, to be proactive. I'm several years after my Mam. It's failed countless others; in three. She fought for her diagnoses for years; her GP demanding to be seen and to be taken seriously, and it 2020, Ireland had the fifth-highest breast cancer mortality when I was ten years old, and Mother's Day is a weirdly dismissed her concerns entirely. Eventually, she found feels utterly pointless. numbing day of the year for me. It usually passes by without herself on the waitlist for a breast screening. My Mam had an administration job in the hospital and not long after her Mammograms are not effective on younger women, I joked once about really starting a Dead Mam Club. But, appointment was made, a matron rang her work number to due to the density of the younger breast tissue. This in truth, I cannot bear to look into the eyes of another young Except for this year, when I found myself naked from the chastise her - to put it kindly - for taking up an appointment dense breast tissue, in conjunction with how common woman and see my own fear reflected there - that our own waist up, getting ultrasound gunk rubbed on my tits, in the in the clinic that she didn't need. Admittedly, dying is an fibroadenoma are in young women, makes self-checks genetics are coming for us, and all our GP can offer is leaflets. impressive way of saying I-told-you-so, but every day I carry very difficult to effectively perform. While I appreciate that her breast cancer treatment. The sheer irony of spending around the weight of knowing that an earlier diagnosis. I have been afforded the opportunity for an ultrasound, it is

I have been told by every doctor I have ever seen that I'm and then wait four, or five, or seven months and go through severely high-risk. I went to my GP in November, explained the whole process again. The proposed PBP motion allows So, although I usually steer clear of social media on I was having increased pain and she sent me to get for access to a triple assessment for young women who Mother's Day, I joined in this year. I joined in particularly to checked. It took four months until I was seen, they gave me present with possible breast cancer. The thought of not just voice my support for People Before Profit (PBP) TD Gino an ultrasound, checked my existing fibroadenoma (which, having a singular test, of having a testing that is vigorous Kenny's proposed motion, as a PBP member, on improved for those of you who have not had their breasts medically and accessible and actually considers young women would fondled, are benign lumps in the breast, common in young take such a weight off my chest (because that's where my women. I think I have about eight, at last count) and told tits are). cancer screening programmes for all women from age several doctors I have seen over the years, some have forty, a revision of the criteria for access to genetic testing, been condescending, insisting that I'm too young to worry. needs to be further consideration of young women. Early

a limited mode of screening. There is no process or routine for me; I'll just wait another year and tell my GP I'm in pain,

Globally, statistics are increasingly indicating that there

young women at risk of breast cancer, and access to a triple I'm too young to worry. I sat in a hospital room last week, detection is crucial and necessary and desperately needs need to limit my caffeine or smoking or stress and be really up the single most traumatic experience of my life, but careful...and then handed me a leaflet instructing me there is no separation of the personal and political here.

# **EDITORIAL**

coverage from the media and have been touched on in the pages of this paper, ignorance has been capitalised upon by Far-Right actors. They are using claims has been difficult for many of us, and there are important political questions that need to be considered in connection with one another. The first is St. Patricks that China attempted to "cover-up" the virus. Some are promoting conspiracy about what could have been done better and what should be done going Day anti-lockdown protests across the country, and the second is the 'Stop Asian theories about Covid being a bio-weapon. More still have taken to the racist forward, the use of this situation to capitalise on bigotry, stupidity, and hate must Hate' hashtag which has been trending on social media after 8 people, 6 of accusation the "weird diet" of Chinese people is to blame, as if pork, beef, or be strongly opposed. whom were of Korean descent, were murdered in a mass shooting in Atlanta, chicken meat could never be connected to a pandemic. USA. The hashtag has helped to shed at least some light on the vast amount of racial bigotry faced by Asian people, and not just at the hands of evil gunmen.

opposition to Covid public health measures are being used by the far-right to lockdowns and are weaponising it into a mobilising force against not just

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

the Irish Freedom Party (chaired by UCD's own Dolores Cahill) have taken the at the moment. The common thread is that both racism towards, and mistrust of, Asians, and fear, neglect, and desperation many people are enduring during the rolling gain political power and influence. As is highlighted in Andrea Andres' cover pandemic restrictions, but also immigrants, LGBTQ rights, and a plethora of

There are two stories that have in the past week gained a large amount of investigation, Covid's origin in China has sparked a huge amount of racism. This communities whose influence can be attributed to "Globalists". While lockdown

We at the *University Observer* stand against racism, lies, ignorance, and all As for the Covid denial, it is obvious that outfits like the National Party and forms of bigotry, and are perturbed by the hate and stupidity gaining traction

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**EDITORIAL** 

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### Dear [Editor], Dear Sir/Madam, Are RTÉ operating an agent or political provocateur Reading your article 'UCDSU should debate more

motions' (16/02/21), I was reminded of a moment in the most recent student council session which highlighted the issue depressingly well.

The chair of SU council noticed that a class representative had their virtual hand raised. Excitedly, Torris asked whether this student had something to contribute to the rather timid "discussion".

Much to the chagrin of the class representative in question they were forced to admit that they were not paying attention and believed there was a vote taking

While a solitary class rep sleeping at their post is hardly newsworthy, it points to the attitudinal issue of voting for every motion no matter what. That said class rep was voting 'aye' without knowing what was at stake is concerning to say the least.

It would be interesting to see what would happen at SU council if they did an MCQ at the end to determine who was paying attention.

Hugh Dooley, News Editor, College Tribune

agenda to avoid answering the following questions: 1. What has happened the money they got from the purchase of part of its lands at Montrose? and 2. Why are its top broadcasters still earning near to half a million euros a year? Come on government, lets have an enquiry into all of this immediately.

Yours faithfully.

Edward Mahon, Roebuck Castle.

Letters, corrections, and clarifications pertaing to articles published in this newspaper and online are welcomed and Letters should be addressed to:

University Observer UCD Student Centre, Dublin 4 Correspondence may be sent to

editor @universityobserver.ie

Jade Norton

Dear Editor,

Michael Tuohy (opinion piece, University Observer, South, also had to apologise for sharing conspiracy March 2nd) rather bizarrely tried to put the blame theory tweets in recent times about the September for the rise of the far right in Ireland on parties of the 11th, 2001 attacks in the United States. Clare Sinn Fein political centre and journalists. He made the outlandish TD, Violet-Anne Wynne has been vocal in her support of claim, "Recent governments have done nothing bit the anti-vaccine movement. encourage the rise of the Far Right in Ireland..."

He is correct that we are seeing small fringe groups when members of the force have been confronted with ideologies. abuse and violence by small groups who have little respect for the State.

The rise of the anti-mask, anti-5g, conspiracy theorists of the far right has been facilitated in most instances and platformed them.

this has culminated in her latest dangerous campaigns divisive, hate filled agendas. against Covid restrictions as well as engaging in racist and homophobic activity. Ms. O'Doherty sought to run for President of Ireland in November, 2018. She failed to secure a nomination and in a number of tweets, complained about Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael blocking her opportunities to contest. I know in the case of Fianna Fáil, this was because we viewed some of her of inclusion and equality, will continue to oppose the opinions as dangerous and unsuitable for a potential rise of extremism and to support the rule of law and occupant of Áras an Úachtaráin : the party did facilitate democratic principles, as well as standing for science. a number of independents to contest. The former All political parties that share those values will stand up journalist though was a regular speaker at Sinn Fein to the conspiracy theorists online or on the streets. Our events and she was endorsed by a number of left wing focus must be on preventing the growth of fascist or

Among those who endorsed her was Sinn Fein Kildare North TD, Reada Cronin, who last year was also reprimanded by her party for a series of anti-Semitic Wexford. and racist tweets. Two other Sinn Fein TDs, Martin Browne from Tipperary and Patricia Ryan from Kildare

Sinn Fein Facebook groups have been shown to be littered with conspiracy theories as well as racist, sexist emerging that spout conspiracy theories and some and homophobic language. I do not believe that the dangerous far-right theories. There is a responsibility on leadership of Sinn Fein condone any of this and I know all in public life to challenge this extremism. But these that some, such as Eoin O'Broin, have taken a strong fringe groups are deeply anti-establishment and like Mr stand in support of science and against this abuse. But Tuohy in his article, spend much of their time abusing the difficulty is that by riling up an "anti-establishment" Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, the Greens and the Labour Party. base, by dismissing what is described as "MSM" (or Members of all four of these parties have spoken out Mainstream Media) and by not cracking down on the loudly against extremism, against fake news and online conspiracy theorists, this fuels those on the fringes who conspiracy theories, and in full support of the Gardai are determined to gather adherents to their dangerous

Democracy is a very fragile thing. Ireland is one of the longest, continuous democracies in Europe. It should be recalled that deValera's 1937 Constitution was the first in the world to be adopted by popular vote and by social media. The slow pace of the tech companies contains articles that protect fundamental human rights. to address the spread of fake news and providing While through today's eyes, the document may seem platforms to disinformation has been concerning. But a little conservative, think about how radical some of questions also need to be asked of those who fuelled those views were in late 1930s Europe. Half a century those conspiracy theorists, who spread the fake news ago, the majority of European countries were under the control of authoritarian regimes (not just in Central and Eastern Europe but in Greece, Spain and Portugal Gemma O'Doherty has been a leading proponent of as well). We should not underestimate the threat of a range of conspiracy theories for a number of years and those on the extremes, particularly when they promote

> That means that we encourage healthy, respectful, political debate, and part of that involves a free press that is committed to balanced and fact based reporting.

> My party, as one committed to Republican principles other groups. Our democracy requires it.

Senator Malcolm Byrne

Senator Malcolm Byrne is a Fianna Fáil Senator from

### A NEARLY-SERIOUS LEAGUE OF IRELAND SEASON PREVIEW

**RONÁN DALY** 

Ronán Daly takes a light-hearted look at the upcoming season for the Premier Division, looking at the off-season developments and future perspectives of each club



PHOTOGRAPHY CREDIT: EDDIE LENNON

DOMESTIC football returned with the President's Cup on the 12th of March between Shamrock Rovers and Dundalk, with the Louth Club winning the annual curtainraiser for the 3rd time in the last 6 years on penalties. A hotly contested 1-1 draw saw Rovers defender Liam Scales' score a Bergkampesque goal and Dundalk new boy Sonni Nattestad score and receive a red card. On top of the Faroe Islands international's red card, there were also 6 yellow cards in a game that was supposed to be a friendly, showing early on that these two are ready to continue the rivalry which has gripped Irish football fans for the last two seasons. With the league season commencing on the 19th of March, let's take a look at the 10 teams competing in this year's LOI. DOMESTIC football returned with the President's Cup

Shamrock Rovers Whether Dundalk fans like to admit it or not, Shamrock Whether Dundalk fans like to admit it or not, Shamrock Rovers are the Champions of Ireland (even if it was a shortened season). When Rovers weren't busy losing what many Hoops faithfuls saw as God's gift to the world, Jack Byrne, they were raiding both local and title rivals for their best players. 2019 PFAI young player of the year Danny Mandriou switched north for south Dublin joining from Bohs and Dundalk duo Sean Hoare and Sean Gannon also make the switch to Tallaght stadium. Rovers may have lost their firepower in midfield by losing both Byrne and Aaron McEneff, but Stephen Bradley's men are still the side to beat this season.

Prediction: 1st

Bohemian FC

"The hipsters" of domestic football have had quite the resurgence under Keith Long, and their 2nd place finish last season was their highest in a decade. While their fans like to think of themselves as 'the big club', they lost the highly rated Mandriou to Rovers, following Dylan Watts and Roberto Lopes who have made the same switch from north to south in previous years. They also have to contend without 2020 PEAL young Thev also have to contend without 2020 PFAI vound player of the year, Danny Grant, who made the switch

to Huddersfield. Keith Long has more than proven his ability to cope with big loses. Despite some of these difficult results, Bohs are still one of the most exciting teams in the league who will no doubt be a joy to watch again this season.

Prediction: 3rd

Dundalk FC

The Lilywhites have dominated Irish football for 7 years now, winning 5 titles in the last 7 seasons. Chairman Bill Hulsizer seems to have had the strange revelation that the best way to win the title back off Rovers is to let two of your best players join them. However, the appointment of footballing director Jim Magilton seems to have steadied some of the off-field turmoil at Oriel Park. The FAI cup winners have looked outside of Ireland in the offseason, bringing in 8 new players, from 7 different counties and 6 of which have never played in the league before. Promising signs from their President's Cup win show the Louth side aren't quite ready to relinquish control on Irish football just yet. ready to relinquish control on Irish football just yet.

Prediction: 2nd

Sligo Rovers

The surprise package of last year's LOI campaign was that Liam Buckley's men manage to secure a 4th place finish and European football while playing some attractive football along the way. They seem to have this weird complex where they think that anyone else in the league knows that their full name is Sligo Rovers and not just Sligo, even trying to convince Shamrock Rovers fans that they are the "real rovers". Sligo have some of the most promising young players in the league in Ed McGinty and John Mahon and their star striker Romeo Parkes has returned after a year absence from the Showgrounds and they'll be looking to build on a successful 2020 campaign. successful 2020 campaign.

Prediction: 5th

Waterford FC

A team that looked full of promise after they finished 4th in 2018 having been promoted the previous season. Losing out on a European spot on the final day last season and having their 2019 European adventures cancelled because they seemingly forgot they were actually a new club formed in 2017 and therefore could not get a European license yet have hurt the club. What was previously a well-funded squad with a lot of promise now looks like one of the most mediocre squads in the league. Veterans Daryl and Brian Murphy should add some experience to the team, but it could be a tricky campaign for the only club left representing Munster in the premier division.

Prediction: 9th (stay up via play-off)

St Patricks Athletic

Stephen O'Donnell's first full season in management can best be described as mediocre after a 6th place finish last season. The former Dundalk captain has adopted a transfer policy of signing all his old mates that he used to play with in Oriel park, with John Mountney and Paddy Barrett joining Pats after Robbie Benson had linked up with his old midfield partner the year before. On paper O'Donnell has put together a really solid group of players with the likes of Chris Forrester and Lee Desmond also in the squad. If he can get them to be as good on grass it could be an enjoyable season for Pats fans.

Prediction: 4th

Derry City

After a brilliant campaign in 2019 that saw Derry finish 4th and qualify for Europe, 2020's 7th place finish brought the Candystripes back down to earth. Usually, even when things are bad on Bogside, they can rely on the league cup which they have won a record number of times to lift spirits. However, the FAI felt it was best to try to make lockdown as miserable as possible for Derry fry to make lockdown as miserable as possible for Derry fans by cancelling last year's competition. Fan-favourite David Parkhouse has returned after a successful loan spell in 2019, and they've also added Daniel Lafferty from Rovers and Will Patching from Dundalk to the ranks. If Declan Devine gets them playing the energetic football they played in 2019 Derry could easily go for a top 4 spot once again.

Prediction: 6th

Finn Harps

While those of us who are fans of Ireland's domestic league miss the matchday experience, you would be hard-pressed to find many of us who miss a 3-hour minimum bus journey to Ballybofey for an 8 pm kick-off in early March or October. Ollie Horgan is usually the first person to downplay Harps chances of survival every season but when it comes to relegation dogfights, there are very few managers in the country who are as experienced. Harps stayed up via the play-offs in 2019 and overtook Shelbourne on the final day of last to finish 8th, keeping Harps up without needing a play-off. They've kept hold of a majority of the players who kept them up last year and you'd fancy them to be a stubborn outfit once again this season.

Prediction: 7th

Drogheda United

Newly promoted Drogheda have had to contend with their noisy neighbours dominating Irish football for the last 7 years. A 3-year absence from the league,

suffering play-off heartbreak twice in the process, has seen manager Tim Clancy build a solid squad of both young and experienced players. They still use the Lourdes hospital's wi-fi, and much like Oriel park their ground is stuck in the '80s but they'll be looking to avoid relegation for the first time in 3 premier division campaigns. Tim Clancy has developed a squad more than capable of doing so with exciting young players. than capable of doing so, with exciting young players such as Conor Kane and David Odumosu as well as adding experienced players like Dane Massey, Gary Deegan and Dinny Corcoran.

Prediction: 8th

Longford Town

Longford only managed a 4th place finish in last year's first division but that didn't stop Daire Doyle's team from winning promotion via the play-offs. Incredibly, Longford have got 5 Aaron's in their squad for the upcoming season, despite there being no evidence to prove that having so many Aarons will help their survival hances. Predicting Longford to head straight back to the first division isn't a comment on the quality of their squad, they have a number of high-calibre players like Aodh Dervin, Robert Manley and Lee Steacy, whom a number of premier division clubs have tried to sign in recent seasons. One of the Aarons is highly rated to support the form Relative the seasons. oungster Aaron Bolger who is on loan from Cardiff City. Inexperience may cost Longford in the end but there is still quality in this squad.

Prediction: 10th

# MEYLER OPTIMISTIC AHEAD OF UCD A.F.C SEASON OPENER

**CAHAL MCAULEY** 

Cahal McAuley speaks to UCD Manager Andy Meyler ahead of the Students' campaign opener at home against Athlone



compete in a strong first division line-up which includes League of Ireland heavyweights Cork City and Shelbourne, who drop down from the Premier Division.

UCD AFC has had mixed results in pre-season with a 2-1 win over newly-promoted Premier Division Longford Town, followed by a 3-3 draw with Bray Wanderers, and 2-0 defeats against Shamrock Rovers, Bohemians, and St. Patrick's Athletic; respectable score-lines against some of the strongest teams in the country.

UCD boss Andy Meyler has been satisfied with what he's seen in the pre-season campaign as he prepares to lead the students into his second First Division campaign as manager. "Overall, very satisfied but pre-season is pre-season it's about getting shape and tactics, it's all about these things. You're not too worried about the results in the games particularly."

It's been a busy off-season in terms of transfers at the Bowl with four new arrivals to the squad. The students have brought in defender Sam Todd from Finn Harps, and midfielders Donal Higgins from Galway United, Adam Lennon from Athlone Town, and Sean Brennan on loan from Southampton.

Although UCD AFC has reinforced the squad with new players, they have also lost a wealth of experience with the departures of long-serving centre-half Josh "It's a strong league, stronger that last year. There's three full-time teams in the First Division, I'm not sure if that's ever happened before so we'll see where we go."

Collins, who has signed for Waterford FC, and striker Yoyo Mahdy who has been snapped up by Shelbourne.

Sam Todd has looked a capable replacement for Collins in the heart of the UCD defence, but the students may struggle without the attacking threat of Mahdy who scored 36 goals during his time with the club and left at ninth place on the club's all-time goalscoring charts. Mahdy and Colm Whelan formed a devastating partnership in last season's campaign as they netted 30 of UCD's 44 league goals. However, Meyler is confident that the rest of the team can replace the goals lost by this departure.

"I want all of us to step up and fill the gap. We probably didn't get enough goals from certain quarters of the team last year. We certainly didn't get goals from setpieces and we'll look to improve on that, but we'll also look to improve on the return from our midfield players and our full-backs that got in attacking situations last

"We defend as a team and we attack as a team, so a player here or there won't make any difference to our structure." UCD ended last season as the most dangerous attacking team in the league but were hampered by one of the leakiest defences in the division, shipping 29 goals, one more than eighthplaced Shamrock Rovers II.

The students will struggle to compete for promotion if this problem is not addressed, something which Meyler acknowledges; "I think we need to find a better balance to the play between defence and attack, we need to concede less goals obviously and we've been working on that in pre-season about where those goals came from last year. The defensive side is the focus for us."

It will be a difficult task to tighten up at the back and replace the goals of Mahdy, but if the students have been able to work on these sufficiently in preseason, they certainly have the quality to challenge for promotion once again.

Meyler recognises the quality of this season's competition but believes that qualifying for the playoffs for a second successive season is a realistic goal to set. "First of all, the aim is at least to get into the play-offs and after that promotion."

"It's a strong league, stronger that last year. There's three full-time teams in the First Division, I'm not sure if that's ever happened before so we'll see where we go."

"We have a good group, we have ambition to at least do what we did last year so we'll see where that takes

"We have a good group, we have ambition to at least do what we did last year so we'll see where that takes us."

UCD Association Football Club will begin their Airtricity League First Division campaign at the UCD Bowl against Athlone Town on March 26th, as the students look to return to the Premier Division at the second time of asking. UCD finished in third place last season as their campaign culminated in a devastating extra-time defeat against Longford Town in the playoffs last October.

The students face a difficult task to launch a similar promotion push in the coming season, as they will



Letter from the editor
//
Banksy: Paper Bags, balloons
and big ideas
//
OTwo Reviews: Mark
O'Rowe's The Approach
//
Women and the fashion
industry

Unpopular opinions

Pictured Above // Band members Skyler
Acord, Josh Manuel, & Tyler Carter from ISSUES
Credit // ISSUES

### **OTwo** Interviews

### Skyler Acord from ISSUES

Isabella Ambrosio

Isabella Ambrosio sits down to dissect ISSUES's new instrumental release, 'Beautiful Oblivion' with bassist Skyler Accord.

"That second opening band has... issues," my stepmom had commented when leaving the House of Blues in Chicago in 2013, poking fun at their name. The headliner for the show had been Sleeping with Sirens, with ISSUES as one of the openers.

I remember looking over and laughing, "Yeah, but they're *good* issues."

"Alright, Bella, whatever floats your boat."

Since 2013, ISSUES has gone on to take the hard rock scene by storm, offering a blend of R&B, jazz and metalcore, with a keen focus on genre-bending that's focal to their identity. Their uniqueness served them well, winning awards such as Artist of the Year in 2015 at the Alternative Press Music Awards (AMPAs) and winning Skyler Acord the award for Best Bassist in 2016 at the APMAs. Their 2016 release 'Headspace' peaked at #1 on the US Billboard Alternative and US Billboard Hard Rock charts. They've toured extensively, put out cutting edge music and have remained unbelievably respectable in recent controversies.

ISSUES released 'Beautiful Oblivion' in 2019, an album full of hard riffs, funky basslines and instrumental breaks with great vocals. But after a controversy in 2020, vocalist Tyler Carter was kicked out from the band and ISSUES rereleased 'Beautiful Oblivion' as an instrumental. There were no vocals on the album, and it showed ISSUES in a brand-new light. Their neo-funk, R&B influences radiated through the release, connecting hardcore choruses with melodic verses. The entire album felt cohesive and nothing felt overdone or repetitive. It was entirely stripped and mixed to be heard as an instrumental, and it was done incredibly well.

Skyler Acord entered the Zoom meeting room with a genuine smile and a bass in his lap. The conversation was ridiculously easy at first - he was inquisitive of why I had an American accent instead of an Irish one. He wanted to know about me, my degree, how I ended up in Ireland. It felt like I was talking to an old friend, small questions being asked back and forth, including how I started listening to ISSUES. I later wonder if my candidness and willingness to answer his questions influenced the way he answered mine. He had plenty to say, so I jumped into the questions after a ten-minute conversation about life with him.

I queried why ISSUES decided to release an instrumental album in a music scene where lyrics are considered to be vital to the song. "ISSUES is kind of a funny band" Acord responded, "Because I feel like most bands have a primary songwriter. And everybody kind of follows suit - so somebody will write the bass, somebody will write the drum part, somebody will write the guitar part, and somebody will be writing the songs with a co writer. But the way ISSUES writes is super collaborative, and I don't mean the band just writes the instrumentals all together and then Tyler [Carter] will throw his stuff on it. We all wrote completely integrated together. So, I would have an idea on the guitar part, AJ [Rebollo] would have an idea on the drum part, maybe [Carter] would have an idea on the drum part because he was a drummer. We would all have plenty to say about the vocals. It made sense because of a couple things: it made sense because we've always wanted to do an instrumental release because we align ourselves with the progressive community, a lot of our fans don't, but musically those are the bands we like and look up to. So, it made sense because they do that, and the instrumental is so important. Also, with losing [Carter], and in such a mysterious way... one way to protect the legacy from all of that controversy was to put out this instrumental thing we're all so proud of... It kind of made me feel good about ISSUES again."

This prompted me to ask about ISSUES and their roots. I asked where their neo-soul, funk, and djent influences came from, and whether said influences were implemented consciously. Acord kept telling me, 'great question', before easily sliding into the answer; "It was conscious. My brother, who many ISSUES fans know as Scout, and in the producer world, many people know him as Lophiile. He's not in the band, but he's my twin brother so he's always involved. Like I'll text him, 'bro, help me'... The whole thing was his idea. So, Tyler [Carter], after Woe, Is Me dissolved, went up to [Lophiile] and was like,

So, now when someone plays a low, bendy onestring riff, it's like 'oh, that sounds numetal' as opposed to like 'that sounds like those bands that used to mix jazz, death metal', you know what I'm saying?

'bro, we should start a band. What's poppin' now?'. And [Lophiile] at the point was like, 'currently, I like R&B, R&B vocals, melodic hardcore and djent'. So, the EP was an experiment to mix those styles in different ways. The self-titled was a manifestation of our favourite examples of the EP.

'The EP was literally every song we had at that point. There was no throw-away tracks. Everything that had been written had been released on the EP. I came in a little bit late for that, so I didn't have a whole lot of input on the writing, but I did play bass on it. I always say I'm a day one member, even if I wasn't official," he laughs, "So, yeah, it was a conscious decision and it ended up sounding cool. And it kind of developed into a true fusion. 'Cause I think there's a big difference in the fusion genre: say like, a jazz song with some rock elements versus fusion jazz, which is jazz and rock truly fusion-ed into its own thing. Same with nu-metal. For years, nu-metal, like early Slipknot stuff had like a weird hip-hop part, into a death metal part, into a jazz part, but it was technically 'nu-metal'. But it took years for it to turn into its own thing. So, now when someone plays a low, bendy one-string riff, it's like 'oh, that sounds nu-metal' as opposed to like 'that sounds like those bands that used to mix jazz, death metal', you know what I'm saying? So, that was our ultimate goal with 'Beautiful Oblivion', and I think it's the closest we've ever gotten to a true fusion. Because it's not necessarily that there's an R&B part and there's like a djent part, instead there's like an R&B riff."

From there, I mentioned that ISSUES songs are catchy, yet very riff heavy. And I asked him for the thought process behind that. He looks down at his bass before answering; "Actually, a funny story, the whole EP was based on solo Tyler Carter's material. Like, 'Love, Sex, Riot' was a pretty good song, over a really awful beat, same with like, 'Her Monologue'. Like these were all really crappy, early dubstep like," he then proceeds to imitate the sound, making me laugh, "Like really awful beats, cause [Carter] didn't really know who he was as an artist, but he wanted to write songs. So, he was just writing songs with anything he could. And basically, what we did was we took the vocals and ripped it off of the beat, so all we had was the

"In the computer software, you literally have a single track with the vocals. And then you build out the song under it, literally under it. So, you can have the vocal playing while you're writing the riff. So basically, that was the formula of the whole EP and the best songs on our self-titled, so the songs all of our fans like, 'Mad at Myself' and I want to say, my favourite, 'Tears on the Runway' and 'Never Lose Your Flames', even though it was a pop-punk-y thing. All of them were Tyler Carter solo songs that we just flipped into ISSUES songs. And 'Beautiful Oblivion' was basically, 'okay, all of our best and favourite songs were written that way. Why don't we just do the whole album like that?' So, we wrote the top lines to be as catchy of a pop song as possible, and then arranged the riffs."

This led me to my next question, wondering what the songwriting process usually looks like for ISSUES. Acord had a smile on his face as he recalled the beginnings of 'Beautiful Oblivion'. "How 'Beautiful Oblivion' started actually... initially, no one was sure of where we were

going to go. And I just had a vision to do the R&B thing a lot heavier, like a lot more R&B stuff and neo-soul since we had started thinking about [the album] in 2015. And 'To Pimp a Butterfly' [by Kendrick Lamar] was about to come out and the climate was very neo-soul, which I was super stoked about since that's what I grew up on.

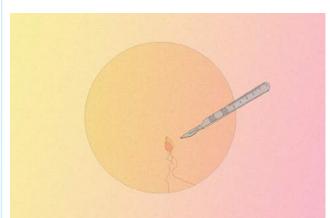
"I flew to LA and had a bunch of initial writing sessions where I would make beats and write songs with writers who were way better than me and they were all R&B people. So, this woman Ivana [Nwokike] from this group VanJess (a Nigerian-American R&B group), was one of them. We wrote 'No Problem' together, well, mostly her" he chuckles. "And this other guy, Jesse Boykins III, what a name, very elegant – so we wrote 'Here's to You' together. And those two initially looked nothing like the final product. So, it was just R&B beats. Like, in 'No Problem', it has that piano loop, right? So, basically, the verse with the bass, the piano, and the programmed drums – that was originally just the entire song. And she [Nwokike] wrote the entire song over that. And that's the best example of it, really. You can hear it, as the song goes on, all of the stupid ideas I had like, 'let's throw a riff here' or 'let's do this' or whatever, and it unfolds as if it were writing itself," he practically giggles this time. "And 'Here's to You', same idea, except the loop was way weirder, it was just like the intro, the weird harpsichord thing for four minutes straight, and then we riffed it and arranged it. So, it takes a lot of imagination when you hear early ISSUES demos."

At the time of the interview in November 2020, America had been dealing with mass protests due to police brutality incidents since the beginning of 2020. 'Blue Wall', from their 2016 release Headspace, addresses the police brutality occurring at the time. I had asked what the recent events had meant to him as an artist who had written the song four years beforehand and have it be just as relevant now, if not more. "Well, honestly, all of the stuff that happened from George Floyd on, everyone was just stuck in their house, forced to look at it. That's the difference. The nature of his death is no different than the stuff that has been happening for uh" - he jokingly checks an imaginary watch on his wrist - "400 years, or so. So, I guess the most surprising thing to me, was the fact that frankly, white people cared. And to put out a song that was directly addressing it, I guess four years before it became relevant to white people. It kind of framed how the paradigm had shifted, because when we had put that song out, it was not a popular opinion to have, and people were mad..."

Acord and I begin to discuss the history and evolution of genres. "The one thing I've noticed is every genre has a cultural lifespan... I think rock has been so complacent for so long that an idea like that is basically going to fight, not necessarily the rock scene, but the mainstream white culture at large. So, that's why it didn't get received very well. And now, after a few years, mainstream white culture has shifted because it's hard to ignore the George Floyd thing, right? And even though none of this is surprising for me, I've been watching, every time it's happened, it's never felt any different than George Floyd... One of the biggest takeaways, personally, from putting that song out in 2016 is the fact that, obviously me, and Tyler [Carter], Michael [Bohn] and the rest of the band have gone through so much, good and bad, and one of the things I will always be thankful for from them, is backing up the coloured folk in the band and being down to do that song... 'Black and blue don't get along/ Blue just wants them dead and gone' - that's me, just putting that out

"Their hearts weren't as connected to that issue, as obviously me or AJ, who see it every day and relate empathetically naturally to the victims. And that's something that white people aren't naturally going to have, because they don't experience it. And what they did, that I think any white person could do, is listen. That's all anybody has to do... They listened and they trusted enough to put that song out, and I will always be thankful for them for believing in the vision. Because they hold the microphone. And the fans that did latch onto that song and did appreciate it, I definitely appreciate them, big time. Because there was definitely a big backlash among the rock community. So, if they didn't stick up for us, it kind of would have been a bummer. Basically, what happened was it created a discourse. I think that people that disagreed with that song's message didn't understand that there were people in the rock scene that had a different view, and it kind of shattered their bubble a little bit and it shocked them that there were people who were a part of this scene to have a conversation with in the comment sections. And then hopefully, because repetition makes something real, so down the line, when George Floyd happened, they're going to be paying a little more attention."

We chatted about his origins with playing bass and it became clear to me why ISSUES is as successful as they are. They're filled with passionate musicians with an impeccable attention to detail who aren't afraid to push boundaries when it comes to genre and the music they put out. Skyler Acord's openness and candidness about all aspects of ISSUES was something to admire, and it brings a brand new meaning to an already impeccable instrumental album.



art & architecture // Architecture and the Environment // pg 3



literature & drama // Women writing Men // pg 4



muisc //
OTwo reviews: You're Welcome
//
pg 7



film & tv //
OTwo Reviews: Its a Sin //
pg 11

### **OT**wo

# Vol. XXVII

Issue seven

featured interview // pa 1 art & architecture // pg 3

**literature & drama //** pg 4

music // pg 6

fashion // pg 8

**film & tv //** pg 10

**games** // pg 12

**travel** // pg 14

**food & drink** // pg 15

staff writes // pg 16

staff writers //

Sophia Finucane Rory Galvin

contributors //

Simon Dobey Hannah Byrne Natalia Duran

Rory Clarke

Caoilfhinn Hegarty Aoife Rooney Katie O'Brien

Mystic Mittens Grace Vild

Emily Elizabeth Liam Ferguson Ellen Nugent

Lennon McGuirk Nicola Kenny Sophie Finn

Cahal McAuley

n editor //

art and design editor //

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otwo co- editors //

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Isabella Ambrosio

art & architecture //

agony aunt // Joanne Joanne

chief of illustration // Samaneh Sadeghi Marasht

Méabh de Courcy Mac Donnell

Nurina Iman Nizam





lette

Howyis all, Welcome back for the seventh issue

of the OTwo! Even typing that out is a strange one, to be honest. As weird a college term as it has been, it's definitely been a quick one. Not sure about you guys, but trimester two's midterm has been a bit of a blessing. We're up to our eyeballs in work but the break in routine is a welcome change of pace. The ever-present narrative on being productive aside, it's nice to get wobbly drunk on a Zoom call and

not have to worry about putting your hungover head in milk. Though this look at tv with an initial critical eye did front of a virtual lecturer the next morning. You've done more than enough to earn this, enjoy it. Though, there is always that pressure of getting things done over the midterm, isn't there? Work tends to be lumped on to make up for the two-week lecture gap, with tutors either totally unaware or blissfully ignorant of every other class leader doing the exact same thing. We've said it before and we'll say it again - if you didn't get as much done as you had thought or hoped you would try not to worry about it too much. Take it easy on yourself, the work will always get sorted in the end, and who's to say that twoweek respite wasn't necessary to go on a tear for the rest of the semester? Mind yourselves and take a minute out, you'll be grand.

Speaking of being grand, either for a full day (feeling grand for a full day in our current climate, should perhaps be reserved solely for people who win the lotto. Specifically EuroMillions) or even just a light grandness for a split second, our resident ironic fishing hat-wearing member, Simon Dobey, compares and contrasts our current pandemic world, with themes from our personal avourite of Beckett's rom coms: Waiting for Godot. If Beckett's prose is not your cup of tea and you are searching for a new gimmick to perform alone in your room at 3am to keep yourself entertained and distracted from searching 'Length of Harry Styles' Grammys Feather Boa in feet' for the seventeenth time that morning, we would recommend reading waiting for Godot, front to back, in an Emmet Kirwin slam poetry voice. By page three you will feel unstoppable. Please contact us with the results.

As per, we have another cracking issue! Isabella Ambrosio sits down for a chat with Skylar Accord of Issues. In Food and Drink, we have a look at some alternatives for your typical takeaway orders. And towards the end, some of the staff members are braving it all to give you their most unpopular opinions (note; we do not accept emailed complaints related to this, apologies xx)

Unfortunately, we only have one more issue for you after this. But the good news is, we still have one more issue for you after this. We hope to see you back!

Mind yourselves,

Andy Nolan and Ellen Duggan

Mr Rogers

It's quite funny when looking back on the advent of television to see how much doubt surrounded its viability. Given how many of us now spend weekends binging whole seasons at a time, it's safe to say some of those

opinions aged like a glass of warm lead to some positive developments.

Andrew Nolan

Enter Mr Rogers - a man who took umbrage with how television was being utilised and strived to create a warm, educational environment for kids to enjoy. With a big focus on a collective educational effort and special care paid to the child as an individual, Mister Rogers' Veighbourhood first aired in 1968 and ran until 2001 The show spanned 31 seasons and saw Mr Rogers endure as a popular figure in pop culture, even resulting in the 2019 release A beautiful day in the neighbourhood, which saw Tom Hanks take on the role as the presenter.

Becoming a childhood staple aside, many people who have met Fred Rogers are surprised to know that his persona on television is far from an act. Throughout the years, he developed a reputation for being a difficult interviewee, but only because he always took a particular interest in the lives of those who interviewed him. And he would take a plethora of photos - together on set, wearing sweaters, what have you. After some time had passed from their meeting, the interviewer would receive a package in the post with said photos in a scrapbook, accompanied by a handwritten letter thanking them for making his day brighter. One interviewer reported he received a call from Rogers months later to wish him a happy birthday, as he had taken a note of it. Letter responses were something he took very seriously - he took hours out of every day to respond to fan-mail, and it is widely believed he responded to every single fanetter he had ever received.

It's clear to those who have met him that Fred Rogers was as genuine and as sweet a person as they come.

# Mystic Mittens

Capricorn now is the time to reflect! You are considered to be the 'Father of the zodiac', but now it's time to take a step back from the madness - even if just enough time to roll another rollie for yourself. If you don't acknowledge how far you've come, how can you possibly continue forward?

Aquarius Don't be alarmed. A loveable furry creature may be entering into your life. Be patient with it - don't make any sudden moves! Whether it be a delightful rabbit, a stray cat, or a new boyfriend this creature deserves your love.

An opportunity of a lifetime is about to present itself in the form of a free improv class. Don't walk away from it. Taking on new ventures that terrify you will only work well for your confidence. Let loose, and try really hard not to end your set with pretend killing someone. Improv goers hate that.

This season's pottery class is next season's skill! Slowly, slowly your creativity is reaching ultimate peaks. Try setting up a new *Instagram* account dedicated to this outlet. Don't let the haters get in your head - there's a market for pottery pieces"

Hows that *Indeed* search coming along? This month brings with it a surplus in kitchen porter opportunities, as well as some clerical work. Don't turn your nose up at it, stubborn Taurus, your recent splurge on online poker has you needing a fresh income.



Deepen your pockets this month, baby Gem. You are in This month it may be wise to conquer your sartorial fears, sweet

for a lucrative venture. Be creative with it. Start checking Moonchild. Dressing for success and dressing to kill, although taking every life transition in your stride, adventure is where you under every cushion on your couch, some mysterious seeming similar to the blind eye, are in fact separated by the thrive. This month, attempt to enjoy the uncertainty that comes donor may Revolut you, or it might be as simple as length of the mood ring upon your left index finger. Notice when before a grand adventure. You may not know the coordinates, scratching every All Cash scratchcard your local Centra has. success beckons in your external environment, or when the need to 'kill it' calls your name. Keep the mood ring close at hand.

Trusty Leo, you may not like to hear this knowing your penchants for the exotic in life. But this is your month for going undercover. Remove the clip-on mane and store it safely in your Jansport. Post a status on all forms of social media, bar Linkedin, to explain you are taking a little 'phone break'. Respond to no one. Thank me later.

Although your analytical mind could give Sherlock a run for his money, remember that one episode of the Queen's Gambit does not a chess pro make. Your drive and appreciation of any journey that leads you towards knowledge is beautiful, but remember that there are checkpoints on this drive. And to not text whilst driving. And to trade-in your Mazda.

Your floaty nature may find you in light trouble at the best of times, little Libra. Although your intentions are as pure and transparent as the Bora Bora ocean, your mouth has a mind of its own. This month, why not utilize your voice memo application? Run your mouth from the safety of your own bed and find your social life rid of trouble.

By god, Scorpio, it is the TRUST for you this month. If you have been feeling a lacking sense of trust in others around you, take a sweet moment to explore your inner monologue. What's fuelling this? Critical thinking, hurt, boredom...I may not be a puring psychologist, but I will be damned if I am not the scientist of the stars. Attempt your own science experiment by delving inwards. You have got this.

### Sagittarius

Adventure is coming for you, Sagittarius! Famously known for but you know that you got this.

### art & architecture

### Architecture and the Environment

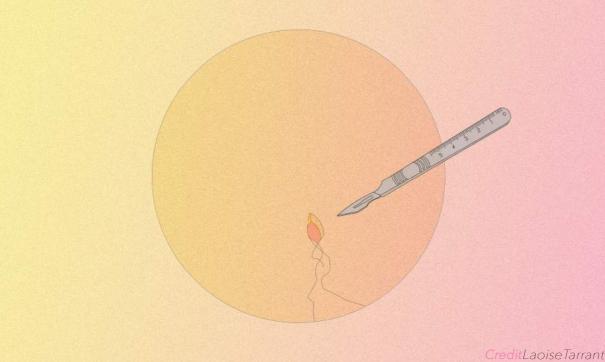
Sinead Keating

Sinead Keating investigates the role of architecture in addressing the climate

Scientists began observing and understanding the global climate in the early twentieth century. By the 1970s scientists were raising concern over global warming and climate change. There was an awareness that human activity was causing these changes, with scientists pinpointing the early 19th century as the beginning of damaging amounts of greenhouse gas emissions by human activities. Buildings and the construction industry account for nearly 40% of carbon dioxide emissions.

offset by using less carbon to run the building during its 20 countries under the umbrella of Construction lifetime. For example, a building can be highly insulated Declares - such as Landscape Architects Declare. so as to require less heating by non-renewable natural

There are resources to help with this process, with Irish Architects Declare Climate and Biodiversity Emergency being the largest group for architects in Ireland.



transportation to site and their assembly. This can be built environment have joined the movement across

resources and use solar panels to generate electricity. The future is in the hands of young people and education A building is expected to have a lifetime of 120 years, is arguably the most powerful resource to instil a need so decisions made during the design and construction for change and to combat climate change scepticism. of a building can have a huge environmental impact. Architecture students are taught about the issues and adapting to innovations in materials and building coordination within departments ensures that other over the building's lifetime. It sounds like a simple the solutions as observers, with a learned understanding thing to do - just design more environmentally friendly that the power to enact these necessary changes lies buildings. However, the process relies on multiple solely with those working in the industry. While there is superior material cannot be considered by an architect if people making a lot of decisions, which often aren't truth to this, students possess the power to mobilise, raise the architect does not know of its existence or application. The Deep Energy Renovation of Traditional Buildings is a the most straight-forward, which result in a finished awareness, pressure those in power to change legislation, Doing what you know well is good business practice, but resource circulated by Architects Declare to address the building. Implementing environmental consciousness at and pressure practices to address the climate emergency. every stage of a project is a difficult yet essential move. Architecture Education Declares is the student branch with a manifesto that addresses curriculum change. Signed by over 2400 students worldwide, the manifesto is designed as a letter to be given to the heads of schools to illustrate the concerns of students about the climate and Architects Declare was conceived in the UK by architects biodiversity emergency, and that these concerns reflect separate from the main design module which is run by schools since the 1990s and many scientists warn that the Steve Tompkins and Michael Pawlyn and launched with opinions in wider society. It begins "we are concerned that seventeen others on 30th May 2019. They were quickly at present our education does not give sufficient weight to and informed, they are in a better position to pass that pertinent that efforts are increased. Ultimately, Architects joined by hundreds of architectural practices around the the inherently ecological and political basis of architecture, UK. Climate change and the effects of the construction nor to our responsibility to meet our uncertain future with industry is no secret to those in the industry, but to see socially and environmentally informed practice." Six steps Being as environmentally conscious as possible with new self-government and no public blame-and-shame it such strong initial support highlighted the time-sensitive to making a tangible difference in architectural education construction is a large step in the right direction, but it has never been easier nor more important to join an nature of the cause. There needs to be more action are outlined in the letter to bring the movement beyond is the older building stock that bleed natural resources, organisation to make a real difference to our shared future.

The embodied carbon of a building is carbon dioxide now to generate real change. Irish Architects Declare just words. The closing statement rings true, "immediate through heating, water usage, and waste management generated in the production of materials, their was the second branch set up. Other disciplines in the efforts toward these commitments will not alone be There is some irony in designing highly sealed and sufficient, but that they are necessary is unambiguous."

> expertise. Every project is a learning process, and while sustainable transitions for urban areas to undergo in capitalism discourages sharing valuable information with the next thirty years. By modelling the city the aim is to competitors, in the interest of the environment, there unite teams that currently work separately. For example, is more to gain by sharing knowledge. Researching when digging up the road surface to build cycle lanes, methods is hugely time-consuming and it benefits the services like water pipes can be repaired or upgraded to industry as a whole to share findings. An environmentally perform more sustainably. Making changes area by area when it comes to the climate crisis, current building methods knowledge and skills gaps when it comes to upgrading must be weighed up against their environmental impact. older buildings. Again, sharing information is key. Architects Declare encourages the sharing of expertise There is an Architecture Education Declares summit on through events, a climate change toolkit for practices. the 10th of April for those interested in learning more. This allows for a trickle-down system of information in universities too. Experts deliver lectures on sustainability Children have been educated about climate change in practising architects. As these tutors become more aware time for complete damage reversal has passed so it is information on to students through design modules. Declare has a positive future outlook. There is strength

students possess the power to mobilise, raise awareness, pressure those in power to change legislations, and pressure practices to address the climate emergency

insulated buildings in the architectural studios on the A key part of architecture practices is the sharing of that bleeds heat. Retrofit 2050 is an initiative planning rather than service by service saves time and resources.

in numbers, and with an approach of encouragement,



### Banksy: Paper Bags, balloons and big ideas

Rory Clarke

Rory Clarke examines the history and evolution of Banksy, and what we know of the elusive artist.

Few artists are known as much for the manner in which they create and deal with their works as they are for their works themselves. Fewer still are revered near entirely for this. Only one, truly, is as infamous for shredding their work as they are for having it mounted in world-famous museums. You To continue the anti-establishment note, it is worth know who I'm talking about. Except you don't. Not really.

Ever since Banksy emerged in Bristol in the 1990s, he has been as much a concept as an artist. His pieces are instantly recognisable, with characteristic political and anti-authority undertones and interrogatories. A Banksy piece is instantly distinguishable, yet they are never signed. Initially, this may have been for self-preservation. His predominant medium of graffiti was, no matter how artistic or admired, categorised as criminal damage. Noting how the discrete style of stencil graffiti used is one of the fastest seems to confirm this narrative.

Moreover, the artist, prolific on Instagram and other social media sites, only claims and notifies the wider world of Copycats of Banksy do exist. Copyright law is, unfortunately,

newer pieces when social media has picked them up.

designed to prompt debate in areas that may have example, in 2010 he filmed a documentary of and with previously been considered uncontroversial. The most recent work Create Escape, which came to prominence maintain that Guetta is in fact Banksy himself. Likewise, earlier this month, depicts a prisoner 'escaping' on a real having often collaborated with the graffiti artist 3D, some prison wall with a 'rope' of paper and writing. It seems maintain they are one and the same. to point to an artist who believes in education over punishment. He even opened a temporary theme park, Never one to kill a buzz, you suspect that even if his identity Dismaland', in Weston-super-Mare in September 2015.

pointing out that whilst Banksy works are hugely valuable, the artist himself resents this monetisation. Most notably, one of Banksy's photos sold for over £1m at Sotheby's auction house in 2018, only to shred itself moments later. By its very nature, much of Banksy's original work was affixed to public walls or spaces. Questions quickly arose over who owned these works and what could be done with them. Chunks of walls and sides of mobile homes have been sold and protected to preserve a Banksy piece attached to them. Earlier this year a piece depicting a young girl hula-hooping with a deflated bike tyre was removed from a wall in Nottingham, purchased for a

However, as the world has got to 'know' Banksy, at 'six-figure sum' by a gallery owner. This was particularly least through his art, another reason for his anonymity criticised by the art world at the time; some argued it was presents itself; he eschews fame, interviews and largesse. a site-specific work, linked and reinforced by its location The trappings of modern celebrity do not attract him. in Nottingham, the home of Raleigh and general bicycle

The names of Banksy's pieces may not resonate to the famous French graffiti artist dubbed the 'Father of stencil same degree as the Mona Lisa or The Last Supper. This is graffiti not necessarily a surprise nor a failing of the work. Firstly, the pieces are not named by Banksy himself but given. Rare interviews given with a paper bag obscuring his face, monikers in the wider media. Moreover, it is arguable that cryptic press releases and social media posts have been in eschewing the cult-following enabled by naming and pored over by code-breakers and cypher specialists, both totemising a piece, Banksy invites people to contemplate amateur and professional. The artist's moniker itself has and absorb the pieces themselves, rather than merely been subject to Dan Brown levels of symbological and considering them a 'box to be ticked off a bucket list'. inevitably recognise some epoch-defining pieces.

The pieces are audacious and thought-provoking, merely a convenient way to hide in plain sight. For

production in the UK.

little use to a person who refuses to disclose their identity. To combat this, he has created a representative and Balloon Girl. Love is in the Bin. Bomb Hugger. Well Hung Lover. Devolved Parliament.

authentication body, Pest Control, which manages his art credits. Some think the artist is a copycat himself, being nspired to a large degree, in style at least, by Blek le Rat, a

textual deconstruction. None of these efforts to unmask Nevertheless, Google the above phrases and you will the artist have yet succeeded, although some popular theories abound. Several purport that the collaborations Banksy engages with are not collaborations at all, but filmmaker-turned-street artist Thierry Guetta. Some

> were guessed correctly, the intractable silence would continue. He is determinedly unique in that way. Named in Time magazine's Top 100 Most Influential People in 2010, adored across the world and proudly subversive, the influence of Banksy, elusive and anonymised as he is, is undeniable.

### An 'ugly' UCD building explained: The Old Student Centre

Sinead Keating

Sinead Keating looks at the original beauty of the Old Student Centre

inception. David Watkins Cronin's winning design for outdoor seating for the student bar. The bar was always the 1967 competition was low on the list of priorities for intended to have a separate entrance to the front the emerging Belfield campus, not helped by the lack and was described as "lavishly fitted" at its opening. of available funds. For years, students had temporary facilities, including a student bar in a Portakabin opposite the restaurant building. A new competition for a student centre was launched in 1991 and again a winner was chosen



with a two-story building with ribbon windows and straight lines that sat well with the modernist science block nearby. Originally, there was a cafe with outdoor seating on a terrace at the front, sheltered by the slim The Old Student Centre had a long and difficult overhanging roof. The sunken courtyard remains as

There is a sense of threshold upon entering the main building, with the low ceiling guiding the student into the main top-lit double-height space. The beech roof without foresight into when it would be financially viable curves like the hull of a ship, suspended between glazing to build it. Eventually, a decade later and funded by the that allows an abundance of light in. The warm beech £50 capitation fee paid by the then 18,000 UCD students, is continued in panels wrapping the first-floor gallery it was opened by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern in May 2001. access to meeting rooms and health services. The gallery The beech roof curves like the hull of a ship, suspended between glazing that allows an abundance of light in.

originally also housed the clubs and societies offices before the growing student population inspired a newer, larger Student Centre. The Students' Union shop was also originally here, at a 45-degree angle to the gallery above, in 'The Kiosk'. Entirely clad in beech, it sat as an individual element in the space. The bare concrete blocks delineating the ground floor Students' Union offices continue the love of raw concrete seen on campus. Enlarged steps of beech and tile providing seating looking into the multifunctional space. The original white square tiles on the steps were replaced with patterned colourful tiles in a move to add a more youthful and contemporary feel to the space when the new Student Centre was being built.

To the eastern end is a large room with retractable bleacher seating capable of housing 600. Beech panelling and deep blue brick were used to create a simple yet sophisticated palette as this was the main event and entertaining space in UCD at the time.

There is a connection straight through the entrance to the square behind. As a car park when the Student Centre was first built, it drew people through the Student Centre on their way around campus. With the cafe, shop and other events, it had a lively daily cycle of use and reuse. The car park behind is now a green space that is popular on sunny days with students playing basketball and enjoying the rare good weather, although it sits in a more sidelined location now as a result of more campus development at the opposite end of campus. The addition of the new Student Centre development draws the population from the original building, but the old Student Centre remains a central part of many student's social lives on campus.

### literature & drama

### Beckett in isolation

Simon Dobey

Simon Dobey takes a look at the relevance of the works of Samuel Beckett in today's world.

In the past year life as we knew has ceased to exist. It has been replaced with a reality so strange it echoes a Beckettian drama. The works of Samuel Beckett primarily concern the abject boredom which all of humanity encounters during its existence. Beckett, who was raised in the leafy Dublin suburb of Foxrock, fled to France just after the outbreak of the Second World War. He famously said; "I would rather France at war than Ireland at peace." During the war, Beckett worked for the French resistance accompanied by his friend Alfred Peron. Peron was arrested by the Gestapo and never seen again, but Beckett narrowly escaped their clutches and fled to Vaucluse France, where he remained until the end of the



### Mark O'Rowe's The Approach

Hannah Byrne

Hannah Byrne *praises the streamed* live performance of The Approach and what made the play worth watching.

Every story has more than one way of being told. The question is: Which one do you believe?

Writer and director Mark O'Rowe plays with this concept

His plays, Waiting for Godot included, examined the effect of collective trauma, of a lived experience that was too close at hand to truly comprehend its devastating effects.

Beckett's experiences of war undoubtedly had a major impact on his work. His plays, Waiting for Godot included, examined the effect of collective trauma, of a lived experience that was too close at hand to truly comprehend its devastating effects. The natural response to the sort of trauma and boredom we experience according to Beckett, "is the compromise effected between the individual and their environment, the guarantee of a dull inviolability. Breathing is habit. Life is habit" Habit for

Project Arts Centre in Dublin during the week of the 18th questions about the lives of the other women make you In an engaging post-show conversation, O'Rowe revealed of January. From the virtual theatre foyer to the seamless think about how much of her silence about her own life that the play was conceived out of his "curiosity for the camera work, the streamed performance brought the is a cry for help

The three women have grown apart since their student days in Ranelagh, showing that deep friendships can three Irish women, but O'Rowe shows us how a seemingly be lost when life gets in the way. Despite their attempts mundane catch-up can reveal more about us than we to rekindle, it is clear that time has changed them. O'Rowe's psychoanalytic writing and meticulous directing telescopes time as he lays a breadcrumb trail of clues for The Approach begins with Anna (Aisling O'Sullivan) and the audience to follow and explores the nature of female friendships, one of the major themes of the play.

O'Rowe kept the audience guessing with minimalistic staging and the haunting transitional music of Philip Stewart. The set, designed by Sinead McKenna, consisted of a sea of floating chairs suspended above the stage, The portrayal of sisters Anna and Denise shows that an ambiguous design that keeps the audience from although estranged, they possess similar characteristics knowing exactly where the women are meeting, leaving from their fiery tempers to their strong opinions. It up to the imagination. The women also wear the same costumes for the entire 60 minutes and this, too, serves insecure Cora grabs your attention from the moment to blur when and where these conversations take place, in *The Approach*. The show was broadcast live from the she steps onstage. Her reserved nature and persistent providing the play with an important universality.

Beckett constituted control over the vast unpredictability of the universe. The pandemic disrupted old habits, but we quickly found new ones.

Vladimir: "We could do our exercises."

Estragon: "Our Elevations"

Vladimir: "Our Relaxations"

Estragon: "Our Elongations"

The characters in Beckett's post-war plays experience a sort of ambiguity towards their past. The history which shapes their very existence occurs to them only through a mystified haze. In the dystopian reality of Endgame Hamm, Nell and Clov elegiacally yearn - "ah yesterday" while Vladimir and Estragon experience a fragmented

memory from everything to the events of the previous day

to the origins of our religious and moralistic values.

At the core of Beckett's post-war plays is a recognition that in the face of existential boredom, one of the few comforts is found in human connection. Stripped of our ability to connect with others, the depressing core message of Beckett has been revealed to us in its full, truly ugly form, is that we are simply waiting for death, all else is merely a momentary distraction on a linear path. In recent times, conversations have felt like those held between Estragon and Vladimir, going nowhere but in circles. I have had various discussions concerned primarily Beckett is to develop a habitual nature. "Habit", wrote with how we used to live, a topic on which everyone has a

> human condition." This curiosity was explored through each woman's varying behaviour, depending upon who they are talking to, and is a stark reflection of real-life which highlights the realism of his writing.

> The live stream performance also included a chat feature where viewers could post comments. This was particularly heartwarming in the minutes before the play started with people sharing where they were watching from, tuning n from 44 countries, from places as far as Alaska to New Zealand. Seeing people around the globe supporting the Irish theatre industry shows how prominent a place Irish theatre holds worldwide. This global support as the actors took their bows speaks for the success that The Approach has had through its balanced depiction of relatability and

Like any college student, I am a coffee enthusiast. A morning cannot start well without an overflowing cup of

joyful black coffee. And in the midst of early chirps from the magpies, while half of the world lays asleep, I like

to sit in the big faded brown couch that waits for me in

front of my window every morning. In one hand I hold my favourite mug, it has a multicoloured male chicken

stamped on it with the words "Nice" written on top; I'll let you figure that one out. And in the other hand, I hold

my daily dose of life questions, a short philosophical read

I like to believe that waking up early isn't for the hard

across McConaughey's memoir, Greenlights.

### book nook :

Greenlights by Matthew McConaughey

Natalia Duran

Natalia Duran commends Matthew McConaughey for his new biography and explains why she recommends reading it.

Life, and all that comes with it, is a journey. A ride along I think reading *Greenlights* led me to question my actions, what can sometimes be a smooth, less travelled route. Or perhaps, a bumpy road with heavy traffic. Anywhere you without even meaning to, teaching me how to keep an go, at any given time on this journey- there will be a sign. It may be a stop sign; it may be a caution sign or every now get out of my comfort zone, it taught me the importance and then, it may just be a green light.

Matthew McConaughey, in his new biography, Greenlights of things I thought I knew a lot about, and still managed (2020), talks about the journey that is life, the unsolvable to surprise me, to shock me and even made me disagree riddle we are all walking through. The Oscar-winning in good spirit. The purpose of McConaughey's biography American actor, best known for his leading roles in Dallas

Buyers Club (2013) and Interstellar (2014), decided to take

would solve life and make it easier. It was about learning

wasn't to show a concrete plan full of ideologies that
would solve life and make it easier. It was about learning a different turn in his career and publish a memoir, but he how to create your own beliefs, how to find your own path prefers to call it, "an approach book." In his new book, he and how to be yourself without stepping on anyone else's divulges details of his personal life, the experiences he freedom. This is what makes it worth reading. It's all about has had, and the lessons he has learned over the years his life and the experiences he has lived through, yet it which led to his coming up with his own approach to gives you the space and freedom to shape it into your living: "how to get relative with the inevitable," a state of own life, to take what serves you and dispose of whatever success he calls, "catching greenlights".

It wasn't until very recently that I started reading nonread what the book was about. I find it so fascinating how we the abstractness that comes with being human. all live in the same world and can have an endless number of approaches, ideologies and beliefs towards life itself.

### what to read

spirit of live theatre into homes worldwide.

may like to admit

in a colloquial Irish style.

The play revolves around the idle coffee table chats of

Cora (Cathy Belton) seated at a circular table admiring

a bracelet with Denise (Derbhle Crotty) who is quietly

your bracelet actually" - plunges the audience into mid-

conversation, showing how O'Rowe writes conversation

Alongside this, Belton's performance as the wide-eyed,

observing in the shadows. The opening dialogue - "I like

This book puts into words, and brilliantly conceptualises the abstractness that comes with being human.

my values, my knowledge of life and those around me open mind. McConaughey's memoir challenged me to of knowing when to speak my mind and knowing when not to. It was so interesting to me how a book could speak doesn't. It's a book that teaches you to realise what works for you and how to put it into action.

fiction. It wasn't a book I thought I would be interested in, but I chose it without thinking about it twice. My curiosity toward what felt like a foreign genre got me researching non-fiction books. And, as a film student and a big fan story may work as a guide for others who wish to catch story may work as a guide for others who wish to catch of Dazed and Confused (1993) I knew about Matthew more greenlights, to be okay with who you are and learn McConaughey as an actor, but I realised I never thought of that eventually, every red and yellow light must turn green. him as more than that. I was immediately captured when I This book puts into words and brilliantly conceptualises

### where to read it



**Credit**SamanehSadeghiMarasht



workers, for the fast-paced, or the never-ending energetic souls. Instead, it's for the daydreamers, the poets and the life-wanderers. It's a safe time for anyone who likes to defy it all, to test it all, to put the world on edge because nobody is awake to stop you. And thus, I join sipping coffee, wrapped up in a blanket and reading anything that allows me to meditate on this game that we call life. Greenlights successfully got me doing so.

> McConaughey's simplicity, wit and wisdom taste beautifully during the verge of a spring morning. He has become my teacher before college, my early coffee date, my friend that always has good advice. Believe me, I never thought I'd be the kind of person who would enjoy reading in the morning instead of sleeping in, but I do, and I think that's how I know I have found a great book. Because, before the world begins again on yet another day, before the everyday ups and downs arrive, I decide to sit on that couch and feel the rising sun come up through my window while holding a steaming cup of coffee and

forgetting about it all through the pages of that book.

And my friend, I hope someday you do too.

### platform for fresh faces to the artform. Writing

Katie O'Brien

Competitions

Katie O'Brien talks about the benefits of writing competitions and how you can get involved.

started. Writing competitions give new and experienced

Writing competitions are easy to find and apply for, by searching "Writing Competitions 2021" and your country word count and deadline, and you also could be asked to apply with a pitch followed by your written manuscript by working in a semi-structured environment.

Writers benefit greatly from the personal growth competitions to enter, here are a few to help you on your experienced in these competitions by gaining confidence way in their work and learning how to receive and apply helpful feedback. It can be a challenging thing to put your work Grist's Solutions Lab, Fix, has announced that they are publishing world. Competitions are easy to find and enter out into the public sphere to be judged, but rest assured running their first no-fee short story writing competition and span across every genre and theme, so every author, that these competitions are there to help you improve

authors platforms to have their work published, whilst Publicity is another thing you can gain from these competition is for adults, 18 years or older and authors also improving their writing skills by introducing them to competitions, which is a hard thing to come by as a new must have no previously published work. Fix's submission other authors and constructive feedback. Competitions author in the literary arena. These competitions open you website has a section dedicated to FAQ'S and contains a are great ways for newer authors to have their names and your work to the platform of an already established link for the submission portal. circulated amongst the media and present a ready-made company or publishing house, giving you a wide public

have an increase in motivation to create and be creative can be found on their website.

If you're having trouble finding or deciding which writing that take place all over the world. These competitions are

that will centre around the theme of climate change. no matter their style or genre, is catered to succeed. Being a writer can be a very daunting and challenging process, but luckily, writing competitions can help get you literary judges who want to help you succeed.

With the benefit of constructive criticism from a panel of future ancestors. Submissions for the competition close April12th 2021 U.S Pacific Standard Time. This

audience and even introducing you to fellow writers.

Another, quite important, benefit of participating is

Another competition that is currently open is the TCK Publishing poetry awards. This competition is calling for motivation. Some writers find it extremely difficult to write all poets, regardless of previous publishing, to submit and feel motivated when they are only working towards five poems consisting of no more than 500 words. of residence. When applying for the competitions you will personal deadlines. When you have an external set Submissions close March 31st 2021. The winner is set to usually be given a theme or topic to write about with a deadline to reach for a competition or publication, you be announced on April 21st 2021, and more information

> These are only two of a vast amount of writing competitions a great way for authors to gain experience and publicity in their field and give them the confidence and personal growth necessary to expand their opportunities in the

### Hen Writing Women

Aoife Rooney

Aoife Rooney takes a close look at the way female characters are depicted by male authors and filmmakers, through praise and criticism.

The characterisation of the female body and intellect through literature and film at the hands of male writers and filmmakers has long been seen as anti-feminist. While there is a myriad of male writers who do justice to their female characters, there are also many who miss the mark. It is worth noting that while fictitious works are not always an attempt to capture an accurate representation of girls and women in today's society, the inaccurate representation of women in the arts can still be damaging, especially to young, misrepresented consumers of the media. So much of what should be celebrated about being a girl and a woman is echoed throughout books such as Matilda and School of Rock, but can also be damaged by works such as Gone Girl or Once Upon A Time in Hollywood.

Look no further than infamous male author Roald Dahl for the blueprint on how to write young women as role models for readers. In all his main female characters, there is a constant appearance of assertiveness and ambition. While the author often includes petulance and stubbornness in his characters, it is not a discrimination most of his main characters are children, most of whom tend to be stubborn and petulant. One of the most enduring figures in children's literature, Matilda (1988), has been a role model for curious, young girls for over 30 years. Roald Dahl wrote the character, without intending her to be seen as annoying or obstinate, but to be inquisitive about the world around her and determined to have the education she deserves. When, even today, there are millions of young girls not being provided with their right to education, this book is an enduring testament to the importance of access to that right for girls; and has yet to be eclipsed by a female

Much of Dahl's positive female representation is echoed in Richard Linklater's 2003 film School of Rock. The film, while at its core is about a spiralling almost 30-year-old hijacking a private school classroom, treats the female characters in the movie with the same level of respect that the men receive. There are many talented young students whose musical talents are cultivated and fostered. The young girls in the movie grow to become more self-assured as the feature progresses, and show

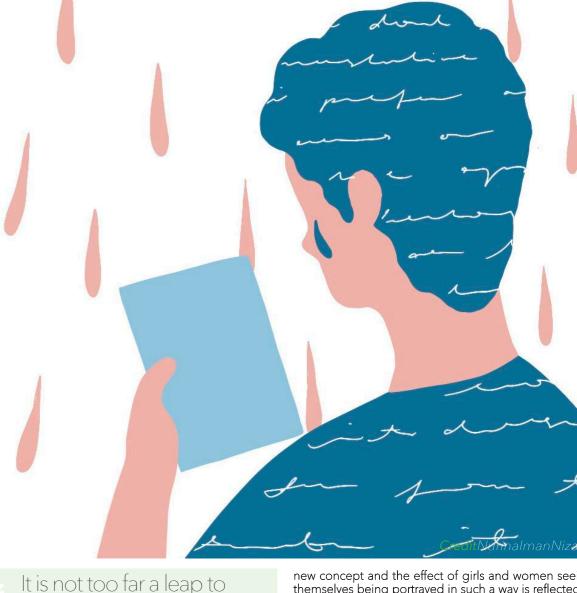
real character development in equal parts for the male and female characters. Richard Linklater also directed Everybody Wants Some, albeit an aggressively maledominated cast, but which made a superb attempt to write self-assured, actualised female characters into an overwhelmingly masculine narrative. The film's female characters compromise nothing and are wonderful examples of how all young women should be given the

While there are many examples of male-backed progressive female characteristics, more often than not it is women writers and filmmakers who have to carve out space for female role models in the literature. This sentiment is echoed in Gone Girl. In the film adaptation directed by David Fincher (2014), there are notable differences that could be categorised as misogynistic compared to the book written by Gillian Flynn. There is an overt over-sexualisation of the female character in the film;, when Rosamund Pike's character Amy kills Desi, she is scarcely dressed and in an intimate moment with him, whereas in the novel, the victim is simply drugged. While there is an argument for how words on a page translate to an image on screen, it is interesting that Amy's character is placed in a position of vulnerability, ınder the victim. Despite the viewer's awareness of Desi's vulnerability, given what is about to happen to him, Amy cannot take too much control. She has to be lying under Desi, and in the process gets covered in blood and momentarily pinned under a dead body. It seems as though it is too much to ask that a female character could kill a male character while their dignity

Interestingly, Nick's character (Amy's husband) is made out to be far less misogynistic in the film than he is in the novel. Despite Nick assaulting Amy and berating her several times, it is still a much more dialled back version than on the original pages, with Flynn playing up the misogyny every chance she gets in the novel. t is quite surprising when, at the end of the film, the audience is still sympathetic to Nick. While Amy is clearly the worse of the two characters (by one dead body's worth), Nick is far from innocent. The story's infamous 'Cool Girl' monologue tells it all: both counterparts of a relationship are pretending to be something they are not, but it is the woman in a heterosexual relationship who is expected to maintain the cover, to stay the 'cool girl' even though the man in the relationship has long stopped pretending he is who he was when they met.

One of the most uneasy examples of the physical embodiment of misogyny in film is that of Quentin Tarantino's obsession with specifically female feet in his movies. In his film Once Upon a Time in Hollywood (2019), Tarantino used every opportunity in the screenplay he wrote to have the feet of the female actresses be fixtures in the scene. It is to the point of distraction. It becomes uncomfortable that there is so much emphasis placed on a body part that all characters have, but only the female actors' feet are objectified. Tarantino uses female actresses' feet heavily in Pulp Fiction also, but noticeably less so in male-dominated films such as The Hateful Eight or Django Unchained.

The objectification of women written by men is not a



assume that there is a correlation between the negative representation of young girls and women in literature and big, real-world problems, such as the gender pay gap, violence against women, and access to education and healthcare

new concept and the effect of girls and women seeing themselves being portrayed in such a way is reflected in female life. It is not too far a leap to assume that there is a correlation between the negative representation of young girls and women in literature and big, real-world problems, such as the gender pay gap, violence against women, and access to education and healthcare. All of this is threatened when young girls are portrayed in a light that perpetuates harmful stereotypes of women being less than their male counterparts. When women are portrayed in a fair light by writers, it usually paints a picture of empowerment and self-actualisation.

Female characters too often end up as a vehicle for a man's success or the supporting role in a man's story. The importance of written representation has long been stated, so when women are given the chance to pull attention from male voices, their feet should not be in their way, and the time should be taken to listen to women stories in order to proportionally represent them

### Women writing Men

Caoilfhinn Hegarty

Caoilfhinn Hegarty discusses the love triangle cliche in YA Fiction and how men are represented by female authors.

Tropes make the storytelling world go round, especially when it comes to writing romance. Would you like starcrossed lovers? Love at first sight? Fake relationship? Soulmates? Enemies to lovers? Arranged marriages? Or how about that old reliable of the Young Adult genre: the love triangle.

Love triangles are as ubiquitous in YA fiction as the teenage girl protagonist, which is why you usually find them hand in hand. For years, the analysis of this trope was centred on the girl and usually adopted a critical tone. After all, what sort of message were we sending young girls if we kept depicting the choice between boyfriends B plots seemed to get disproportionate focus from

Mortal Instruments, and The Hunger Games. The thing up a sizable chunk of the buzz. about these triangles is that they nearly all have a 2:1 boy/girl ratio, for every starring lady there are at least In Cassandra Clare's, The Mortal Instruments, Clary Fray

these vampires have managed to get themselves into aspects of the protagonist's life (although - spoiler - it Smith, examining this fraught entanglement is one of the was Clary's brother for the better part of two books.) main sources of development for the three characters. Damon and Stefan have always been competitive and What's noteworthy in these novels is the dynamic the vitriolic siblings, something the relationship triangle male characters have with each other. In The Vampire exacerbates and explores. However, it's Elena who really Diaries the three most prominent men, Stefan, Damon, gets the most out of this story device, as her choice and Matt, don't noticeably engage with any other male between the brothers comes to signify a larger choice characters but themselves, with Elena serving as the she has to make between the dark and the light in her focal point of most of their scenes together. Gale and own nature. Illustrating this dichotomy, Damon is the Peeta don't interact properly until the third book of The moody bad-boy while Stefan is the knight in shining Hunger Games trilogy, and they're not shown to build armour, two popular archetypes of the teenage girl's up a network of allies or friends to the same degree as love interest. To hammer home the correlation between Katniss. In fact, by the start of the second instalment, it's Elena's choice of romantic partner and the type of made clear that Katniss is the only meaningful non-family destiny she's setting herself up for, the series starts with relationship that either of them possess. In The Mortal her breaking up with her blonde, All-American high Instruments, Jace and Simon's exchanges consist mostly school sweetheart, Matt, signalling that she's leaving the of throwing insults. The only significant connection mundane world behind.

What do these supporting roles add to the reader's understanding of their protagonist and the story she's living out, and do they have a role outside of that?

(they're pretty much always straight) as one of the most Katniss Everdeen, protagonist of *The Hunger Games* consequential decisions of their life? Even in novels with trilogy by Suzanne Collins, faces a similar existential strong world-building and gripping narratives, romantic choice when it comes to a romantic partnership. Peeta Mellark and Gale Hawthorne end up being framed as the embodiments of two routes Katniss can take, with her decision having almost moral implications. Gale, If you were in anyway immersed in teen fiction this past the aloof type with a hidden soft spot, and Peeta, thedecade-and-a-half, chances are you're already having boy-next-door, ultimately represent the choice Katniss Twilight flashbacks, but there was also Matched, Delirium, must make between anger and revenge, and peace and and The Selection- three YA dystopian novels where the hope. The Hunger Games was lauded internationally for dystopia element revolved around who the characters the way it handled mature themes, such as exploitation, were allowed to love. When I think of the love triangle war, and trauma, but by the time the last film adaption books I enjoy, I come up with The Vampire Diaries, The was released the Team Peeta vs Team Gale debate took

two satellite men. What do these supporting roles add is inducted into the seductive and supernatural hidden to the reader's understanding of their protagonist and world of the Shadowhunters partly because she comes the story she's living out, and do they have a role outside across one of their number, Jace, and he takes an immediate interest in her. Jace is the 'jerk with a heart of gold' love interest, representing all that is thrilling In The Vampire Diaries, Elena Gilbert is the object of and dangerous. Clary's friend from the mundane world, affection of the two Salvatore brothers, Damon and Simon, starts as a loyal childhood friend with a crush. Stefan, and the fact that this is the second love triangle The boys are another set of options that reflect dual together means it should say a lot more about them is interesting that Clare decided to amp up Jace's illicit than her. Throughout the first seven books written by L.J. aura by making the characters and readers believe he

Jace has with another man is his "parabatai", Alec, a



the "traditional" wish fulfilment of romance comes along with a much broader scope

level of brothers. Simon manages to make one male friend, Jordan, who then promptly dies. For the most part, all of the above characters don't have extended friend groups or strong ties to other male friends.

Across these girl-driven YA series, there is a pattern of the protagonist's love interests becoming, to various degrees, the personifications of choices the heroine gets to make about who she wants to be and the life she wants to lead. They also usually play a supporting role, encouraging and/or challenging her as her character develops. In the three examples given, the romantic heroes all admit to being inspired or influenced for the better in some way by the heroine. In a genre driven by women writers and women readers, it should come as no surprise that these books contain a fair amount of wish fulfilment, but the "traditional" wish fulfilment of romance comes along with a much broader scope for self-reflection and exploration. Perhaps the true wish fulfilment is the ability of love in these stories to help the protagonist navigate her way through the difficult questions that circumstance throws at her, and to discover meaningful answers.

for self-reflection and

exploration.

### music

Pitched to perfection the emotional effects of production and mixing

Andrew Nolan

"Slowed and reverb", "pitched to perfection", "639Hz" - Andrew Nolan looks at how select methods of mixing can impact a song's emotional significance.

Low-mood music is by no means a new trend. Music has been used as an expression of emotion for generations. With time, though, things naturally evolve. As more bouncy pop music came to the forefront, low-mood songs became an important counter and variation to charts otherwise filled with more breezy content. This is no different in modern times, as artists from sub-genres such as emo-rap see significant success. In an interesting turn from the norm, a newer method has seen increasing popularity these days - slowed and reverbed remixes. What this boils down to is pitching the song down and drawing it out for a more serene, melancholic effect. With these mixes becoming a more frequent commodity, what purpose do they serve in today's music scene? Do they carry significant merit, or are they nothing more than the whiskey-drinking gloomy cousin of the Nightcore trend that plagued YouTube for much of the 2000s?

Having seen a rise in popularity in recent times, it's important to look at the original mixes that saw the trend blow up. Going from YouTube uploads, some of the earlier examples of these mixes gaining traction came from artists like Juice Wrld, Lil Peep and Lil Uzi Vert. It was rarely their upbeat releases that were given this treatment, with such mixes more reserved for more emotionally heavy tracks. Listening to this version of an already depressing song is certainly an experience. With a lowly intention from the off, there is no reliance on the mix to add anything - only accentuate what has already been written. What this creates is a much more visceral, gutting listening experience where heavy notes hit harder. Though, this process isn't one reserved solely for alreadysad music. A quick online search would yield results for a breadth of genres being mixed, even going as far as



Do they carry significant merit, or are they nothing more than the whiskey-drinking gloomy cousin of the Nightcore trend that plagued YouTube for much of the 2000s?

otherwise fast-paced metal tracks to beef the sound up further. For me, the most interesting is the mid-2000's R'n'B/Pop. Artists such as Kendrick Lamar, The Weeknd, Kanye West, Ne-Yo and Nelly Furtado all yield popular results when searched for. What makes these editions so interesting is how they unlock a quality within familiar songs that could otherwise have gone unchecked. Relistening to a once lively 2000s classic that has been pitched down highlights a nostalgic underpinning that, while already present revisiting previous favourites, is dialled up a notch by these changes. Such feelings that stem from these versions are not hidden knowledge. There is a prevalent association with songs of this nature and those that self-identify with a very reflective, longing lifestyle. You need only search any vaguely sad song,

Another key aspect of slowed and reverbed songs is the visuals. These mixes are often accompanied by an animated loop, commonly from The Simpsons or a collection of anime. These clips are edited to fit a very Lo-Fi image, usually sprawled with VHS effects or other alterations to give off a vintage/80's feeling. The key element of this package is the music, of course, but the imagery used goes some way to fill in a bigger picture. The overall presentation highlights the nostalgic potential of the music, with the imagery supplementing this with a feeling of otherworldliness, providing excellent potential

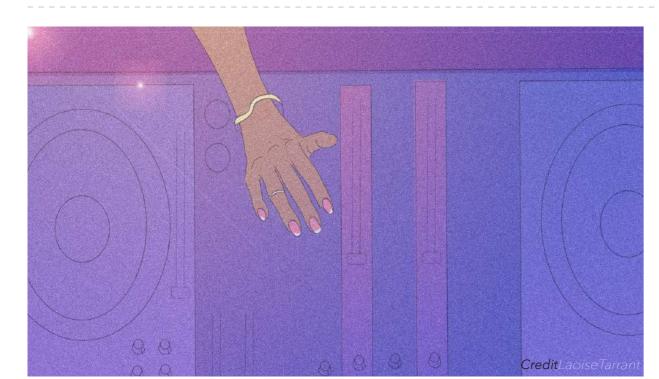
followed by 'Doomer Edit' to see evidence of this.

Apologies in advance to the music purists among you, but I would nearly argue that this style of editing is the natural heir to the 'unplugged' variant of music from times passed. It is not necessarily a replacement, of course, as

The overall presentation highlights the nostalgic potential of the music, with the imagery supplementing this with a feeling of otherworldliness, providing excellent potential for escapism.

acoustic-style musicianship still occupies a broad space in today's scene. Rather, it is an alternative and is more viable for genres dominating the forefront today that may not translate so well to a six-stringed rendition. With the ncreasing availability of quality production tools today, seeing an increase in electronic-based tracks, pitching the song down fits as a suitable workaround. It is a method that isn't terribly hard to execute, manages to portray the same intimate, personal editions often found in acoustic versions, and has already amassed a wide listener base. Artists like *DJ Screw* highlight that this style of production is not a new one, and given its recent attention, it seems probable that interest in the style will only grow.

Given the direction popular music has gone in, it's really intriguing to see how changes in production can allow for meaning to be conveyed through a fresh perspective. With a dedicated community working on songs from popular artists within the hour of release, it seems like the slowed and reverb method could become a musical mainstay. And as production tools evolve and more people become involved, it could evolve in a plethora of



Sisters with Transistors

Ellen Duggan

Ellen Duggan explores the IFI premiere of a documentary centring on women in electronic music

On International Women's day of this year, the IFI premiered Sisters with Transistors, a documentary focusing on the untold stories of women's role in the early The film touches on everything from the mind-altering experimentation of Electronic Music.

Presented by the IFI, aemi and Dublin Feminist Film instruments, such as: 'The Tape Bow Violin', which utilized to our ears. recorded magnetic tape as opposed to traditional

Stick', which Anderson described to the Universal Music

"It is a wireless instrument that can access and replicate audio technology. She was one of the founding figures for her Graduate degree in Berkeley, California, she came any sound. It works on the principle of granular synthesis. This is the technique of breaking sound into tiny unit for the BBC created in 1958 which created electronic to its mysterious workings for two decades. Cianni is segments, called grains, and then playing them back in different ways. The computer rearranges the sound are played back in overlapping sequences to create new her career she opened the Oramic studios for Electronic in Sisters with *Transistors* for being the first lone female textures. The grains are very short, a few hundredths of a Composition, dedicated to the sound techniques she to ever score a Hollywood Film, The Incredible Shrinking second. Granular synthesis can sound smooth or choppy had spent her life developing and honing. depending on the size of the grain and the rate at which they're played. The grains are like film frames. If you slow One of the most unique tape movements in this history Last but not least, Laurie Spiegel is an American composer, them down enough, you begin to hear them separately".

have found them threatening, or embodying a future liberating they found working and experimenting with of their own sounds and to separate themselves from which is still used in recording studios today. male-heavy environments in which their creativity was stifled and questioned.

possibilities of digital synthesis, the more recent revival of analogue recording, the saturating 'perfect pitch' of autotune which can still be heard on the radio today Festival, this documentary, narrated by Laurie Anderson, to varying degrees, to the powerful democratisation an avant-garde composer and performer best known of music-making for a generation of bedroom music in which Oliveros released pieces focusing on musically on the musical world we exist in today, we can retell for her 1981 track 'O Superman', lay the groundwork for producers. All of these powerful developments are meditative practices. Her 2015 TED talk; 'The difference the History of Electronic Music, with their names clearly the pioneering heights of women in the electronic field directly linked to the musical work of the women featured between hearing and listening', sums up her life's work stamped upon it. through its choice of narrator. Anderson spent many years in Sisters with Transistors and their influence is still with us beautifully. Oliveros engaged with listening as a form of developing various electronic and experimental musical today, although these women's names may be unfamiliar

horsehair on the bow. It was used in live performances 
The film is shaped by rarely-seen musical archival footage

of these female musicians being interviewed, performing Delia Darbyshire reached a heroic status as the their newly pioneered electronic sound for an audience, composer of the Dr Who theme song, one of the first or simply for the camera. The film centres around ten solely electronic pieces of music used on television. She women: Clara Rockmore, Daphne Oram, Bebe Barron, describes in this documentary how hearing the air raid Delia Derbyshire, Maryanne Amacher, Pauline Oliveros, sirens in her hometown of Coventry as a young girl served Wendy Carlos, Eliane Radigue, Suzanne Ciani, and Laurie as her musical inspiration. Darbyshire can be heralded as Spiegel. With some of them still alive to tell their own bringing early electronic techniques to wider audiences. accounts of their musical work, and some of them passed - we understand the importance of singing the songs of Mary Ann Amacher gained electronic music experience history's unsung heroes.

virtuoso violinist from Lithuania. She gained notoriety as a sound artist, she had a penchant for overwhelming tonal violinist with the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia velocity and deep love for science which encroached Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. In 1928, upon all of her musical work. Amacher worked extensively Leon Theremin patented the first accessible electronic in later life with a set of psychoacoustic phenomena musical instrument: the Theremin, an instrument which is known as 'auditory distortion products', specific tones controlled by physical contact of the hand of the player, which are generated in the ear. These tones have a long or 'thereminist'. Rockmore mastered the instrument and history in musical theory and scientific research. assisted Leon theremin in its design, fine-tuning earlier models to enhance precision. She began to bring the French Composer Elaine Radigue began apprenticing theremin to concert halls, consolidating herself and the with the founders of Musique Concrete. Defined as a type instrument as pioneers in the electronic music world. In of musical composition that utilizes recorded sounds, the words of Rockmore; "I had to make - and then meet these sounds are then modified and manipulated to - my own standards; I had to win the public over into create a form of musical montage. Radigue is famed for thinking of the theremin as a real, artistic medium".

Daphne Oram began working for the BBC as a sound to manipulate previously recorded audio and 'The Talking engineer at the tender age of 18. Beginning her career Suzanne Cianni is perhaps the most lauded of all of the in radio broadcasting during the 1940s, Oram dedicated women included in this film. Cianni has been Grammythe majority of her free time to investigating and nominated five times throughout her career for her experimenting with newly discovered developments in electronic works of musical composition. Whilst studying of the BBC's radio phonics workshop; a sound effects across the Buchla synthesizers and dedicated herself sounds to be used as incidental music to be used for film responsible for having scored iconic advertisement and later television. She was one of the earliest electronic soundbites through electronic music, such as the sound fragments into continuous strings or random clusters that musicians to compose from field recordings, and later in of a Coca-Cola bottle being opened. She is also noted

came as a result of the work of Bebe Barron. As a wedding currently residing in New York. She grew up well versed in present, Barron and her husband were gifted one of traditional music, proficient in both the guitar and the lute. The film, directed by Lisa Rovner, follows the extraordinary the earliest tape recorders, which utilized magnetic As a music student in New York in the 60's, Spiegel was composers who incorporated machines into their musical tapes. Together, they founded one of the first private introduced to the analogue synthesizer and her classical process at a time when others in the music industry may electroacoustic studios in New York, where they recorded career as she knew it was changed utterly. In 1973, Spiegel artists such as Tennesee Williams and John Cage. In began working for Bell Lab's programming computers, a in which humans were losing control. It discusses how 1956, the duo made history by recording one of the first skill she combined with her musical knowledge to create electronic film scores for Forbidden planet. In their home the first musical composition software: Music Mouse. musical technology. It allowed women to be the masters studio, Barron created the practice of 'multi tracking' Music Mouse quickly turned in to a hugely in-demand

> 'Why are there no great women composers?' is the activism, and in today's world, stands in opposition to the listening habits encouraged by streaming sites.

as a student of Karlheinz Stockhausen and later came to collaborate with the likes of John Cage and Merce The film opens with Clara Rockmore, a classically trained Cunningham. As an American electronic composer and

> her incredibly long compositions, but since 2001 has been mostly composing for acoustic instruments.

Woman starring Lily Tomlin.

application and was among one of the first examples of music software available to consumers.

provocative title of the essay Pauline Oliveros wrote With every woman we are introduced to, and the musical for the New York Times in 1970. Oliveros, a composer legacy they have left behind or are still creating, we and accordionist, dedicated her life's musical work to understand the importance of voicing the unvoiced, and challenging gender bias within the musical community placing our gratitude in places where, perhaps, society and the world at large. Oliveros was a founding member of has told us it cannot be placed. Through hearing the the San Francisco Tape Music Centre, an electronic group pioneering music these women created and their effects The Evolution of Female

Grace Vild

Grace Vild dissects the history of R&B, looking at the women who started it and the women who are changing it today.

getting more and more 'out there' as my grandmother like rap was. Of course, like with all things it was first would say. It has always been younger generations at the dominated by men, but women still had their voices in forefront of pushing music forward as an act of rebellion there. One of the most popular earlier R&B artists was against the status quo. In the 20s and 30s it was Jazz, (hi, Aretha Franklin. While she did not write some of her most Cab Calloway's "Reefer Man"!) and in the 50s and 60s, famous hits like "Respect" and "You Make Me Feel (Like it was Rock <sup>1</sup>n' Roll. One can almost imagine a 15th- a Natural Woman)" she did write songs such as "Rock century Lord refusing to let his daughter go to see a Steady" and "Spirit in the Dark", both of which made it minstrel performance because the madrigals were too onto the Billboard Hot 100. Both of which are incredibly scandalous. The point I'm trying to make is that music will hard to not dance around to. "Rock Steady" has a funk always be pushing the limits of what's acceptable. Even vibe to it as she calls her partner to dance with her and today, you probably won't catch me playing Lizzo with my move their hips.

Genres are never static; they are always changing and is) / In my hips from left to right / (What it is) / What it is is evolving, like the incorporation of Hip-Hop beats into R&B. Genres themselves are almost a problematic subject as / Oh! / (Wave your hands up in the air) / Oh! / (Got the it's nigh impossible to have each and every song fit neatly feeling and ain't got a care) / Oh! / (What fun to take this into a box for categorisation. But, I digress. The evolution ride / Rock steady will only slide)". of the lyrics written by female R&B (Rhythm and Blues yes I had to Google it) artists have evolved, just like the While not overtly explicit in any way, it certainly does the "Princess of R&B", she did not write any of her songs.

Smithsonian described the origins of R&B as: "A distinctly key. African American music drawing from the deep tributaries

You're Welcome

Andrew Nolan

Oftentimes, fanbases tend to split into two sides; those

that embrace the change and are a little more open to

hearing new things, and those steadfast in the sound that made them fall in love with the music in the first place.

There is no real right way of doing this - Bring me the Horizon have arguably only begun to reach their peak

with their latest releases, but then you have AC/DC kicking

about for decades with the same two-song formula. The

only true guideline is that whatever you do, do it well,

'Brick Wall', which is a little softer in its introduction. It is

Album: You're Welcome

Artist: A Day to Remember

this jarring when compared to the last, it's hard to nail down any sort of cohesion

As much as it breaks my heart to say, I can't confidently Change is welcome, of course, but when each track is this say that A Day to Remember have achieved this with their jarring when compared to the last, it's hard to nail down latest release You're Welcome. I would usually find myself any sort of cohesion. This is only accentuated by the on the side of the division that welcomes change where inclusion of tracks like 'Degenerates' and 'A last chance it works. And therein lies the main issue of this record - to dance', which sound like they were pulled straight from it doesn't really work. It doesn't take much time at all for their earlier releases. As I continued throughout the rest issues to arise. The first three tracks sum up my grievances of the album's runtime it became clear to me exactly what with the album pretty well. For the first track, you have was wrong with it - the album is one big identity crisis.

reminiscent of Matt Skiba-era Blink 182, which could Some bands do more than succeed in attempting this definitely work well. Until, that is, the break of the chorus switch - metalcore outfit Architects just saw their first UK hits and the sound switches entirely back to their original, number 1 with their vastly different For Those That Wish heavier sound. 'Brick Wall' follows this formula throughout, to Exist. The key difference is that this record has a clear and while it isn't bad at all, I have no idea how you would identity. It still plays around with the old and the new, but even go about categorising it. Any tonal expectation the overall picture is a clear one. It then only becomes coming from this track shifts entirely with 'Mindreader', a question of quality. You're Welcome isn't a bad album. which embraces a modern take on some of pop-punk's Jeremy McKinnon's vocal work is still impressive, and most recognisable tropes, minus A Day to Remember's the tracks aren't necessarily poor, but the lack of identity heavy touch. Following this you have 'Bloodsucker', which is detrimental to its overall presentation. I wouldn't drastically switches the formula again - this time a lot more recommend continuous relistens, but you might find the pop-esque with a distinctly modern Fall Out Boy sound. odd addition to a playlist.





Arguably since the Victorian era, music and lyrics have been It was music born of struggle and oppression, much charts like Janet Jackson, Whitney Houston, and Mariah side chick to know who she is

The evolution of genres is an important aspect to mention. is - what it is) / It's a funky and low down feeling'/ (What it I might be doing / (What it is) / This funky dance all night

genre. And sorry Aaliyah stans, though considered to be have sexual undertones, as sensual dancing usually leads to...well, another form of dancing. The moving of the hips while dancing would have scandalised the older R&B first emerged as a genre in the late 1940s, first being generations, who were used to big band and swing conservative in the sense that there's no grinding or used as an umbrella term by the white male-dominated dancing. This gyrating was something new. This music is music industry as any music written and performed by about letting loose and having a good time. Let go of African-Americans. By the 60s, it had evolved beyond this your cares and just jive and dance. Most importantly it's sex and cheating lovers - something older generations boundary and into a genre of its own. It includes elements about sexual freedom. While it doesn't say this in so many of blues, jazz, gospel music and a whole array of music words, the message is clearly there when you listen closely popular among the African-American community. The and interpret the lyrics. This message of letting-loose was

of African American expressive culture, it is an amalgam of Towards the end of the century, R&B had started to see ala Beyoncé, newer, younger artists have emerged, artists jump blues, big band swing, gospel, boogie, and blues influences of another popular genre created by Black like Jhené Aiko and of course, the iconic Lizzo. In the era that was initially developed during a thirty-year period that Americans - Hip-Hop, along with mainstream pop. R&B bridges the era of legally sanctioned racial segregation, became entwined with Hip-Hop and Rap, forming into bodies and souls. Take Lizzo's "Truth Hurts" for example. international conflicts, and the struggle for civil rights". the genre we hear today. New names rose in the R&B In one line she says: "I put the sing in single, ain't worried

when each track is

Carey. It also saw the emergence of girl groups in the genre. Perhaps one of the most popular girl groups of the time was Destiny's Child, made up of Beyoncé Knowles, Michelle Williams, Kelly Rowland (predominantly). One of their best and most well-known songs, "Say My Name" is possibly one of the best-known R&B songs, winning 2 Grammys and is certified 3x platinum. Lyrically, the song is about a woman calling her lover, who she suspects is cheating, and asks him to 'say her name'. When he hesitates she believes it's because he doesn't want his

AsLizzosowonderfully putsit "Why men great 'til they gotta

"Let's call this song exactly what it is / (What it is -what it "Say my name, say my name / If no one is around you / Say baby I love you / If you ain't runnin' game / Say my name, say my name / You actin' kinda shady / Ain't callin' me baby / Why the sudden change / Say my name, say my name / If no one is around you / Say baby I love you / If you ain't runnin' game / Say my name, say my name / You actin' kinda shady / Ain't callin' me baby / Better say

> While also not overtly explicit, the song does relate to explicit content. The repetition of the title phrase 'Say my name' carries its own connotations. While a bit more gyrating going on (thanks conservative revolution. Ronald Regan and Tipper Gore, thanks a lot) it does still deal with would not be used to hearing on the radio by girl groups.

> This brings us to today. The power divas of early R&B have paved the way for this new generation of female R&B artists. While some of the names have stayed in the game, of #MeToo, female artists are taking ownership of their

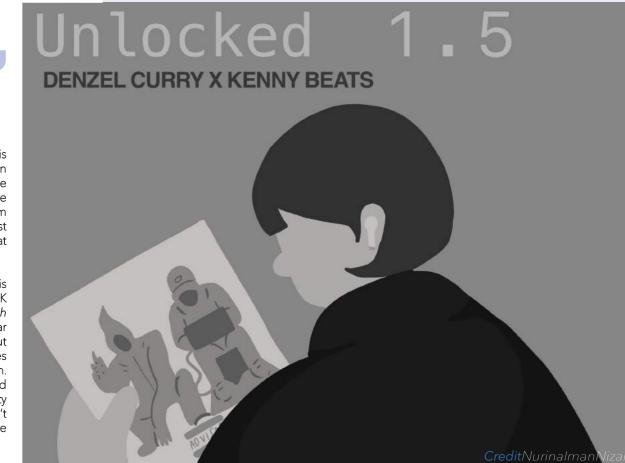
We have entered into the era of R&B songs that talk about women themselves, not about wanting to dance with your man or worrying about if your man is cheating on you.

about a ring on my finger." We have entered into the era of R&B songs that talk about women themselves, not about wanting to dance with your man or worrying about f your man is cheating on you. I have found that in older R&B songs sung by female artists, there is a lot of loveydovey-ness or raging against a man who has wronged them - all to do with men. I feel like there should be a Bechdel test for music; if it's just a song about a woman moaning over a man it fails.

be great?" This generation of female artists is throwing off the shackles that have defined women by their relations to men and have started to portray themselves in a new light. With songs like "WAP" by Cardi B and "Body" by Megan Thee Stallion, music is being made by two powerful black women embracing their bodies and sexualities in a way that has not been done before. Music, and art in general, has always been about pushing the boundaries and even finding new boundaries and pushing them. At the vanguard, increasingly so, are women. Tired of being stepped on and being defined by their relationship to men, women are breaking their constraints and the glass ceilings above them, both boundaries that have long needed to be broken

Unlocked 1.5

Album: Unlocked 1.5 Artist: Denzel Curry x Kenny Beats



Florida rapper Denzel Curry and producer Kenny Beats In a similar vein, "Track07" (now the second track) gets a first teamed just over a year ago for the original of  $\,$  more fantastical remake, with Georgia Anne Muldrow's Unlocked, an almost 18-minute concept album and short version introducing ethereal female vocals. Singer Arlo film released in early February of last year. Unlocked 1.5 Parks lends a new verse on the remix, which includes is a remix of the original, and an interesting project in its Bjorkeque singing of lines like "My third eye's open, I own right with tracks built on or entirely reimagined by feel absolutely free//Violence in touch with my own inner a series of guest producers and artists including Benny energy"and spoken-word pieces of a similar spiritual theme. The Butcher, Joey Bada\$\$, Godmode, and many others.

original project - interesting vocal snippets, powerful anything new with the instrumental or even the chorus. instrumental samples, disjointed and unpredictable Benny the Butcher comes in hard with "All these racks flows, both lyrically and musically. Content-wise, Denzel in the ceiling got rappers back in they feelings// Curry is braggadocious and occasionally nerdy, drawing Treat the game like Trump voters did the Capitol on Science Fiction, video games, superheroes, and rap building" as the opening lines, but overall it feels lazy battles. The remixes keep with this theme. Tracks like The compared to the new things done to other tracks.

Also confusing is why "Take It Back v2" features twice, once remixed by Charlie Heat, and one by Godmode.

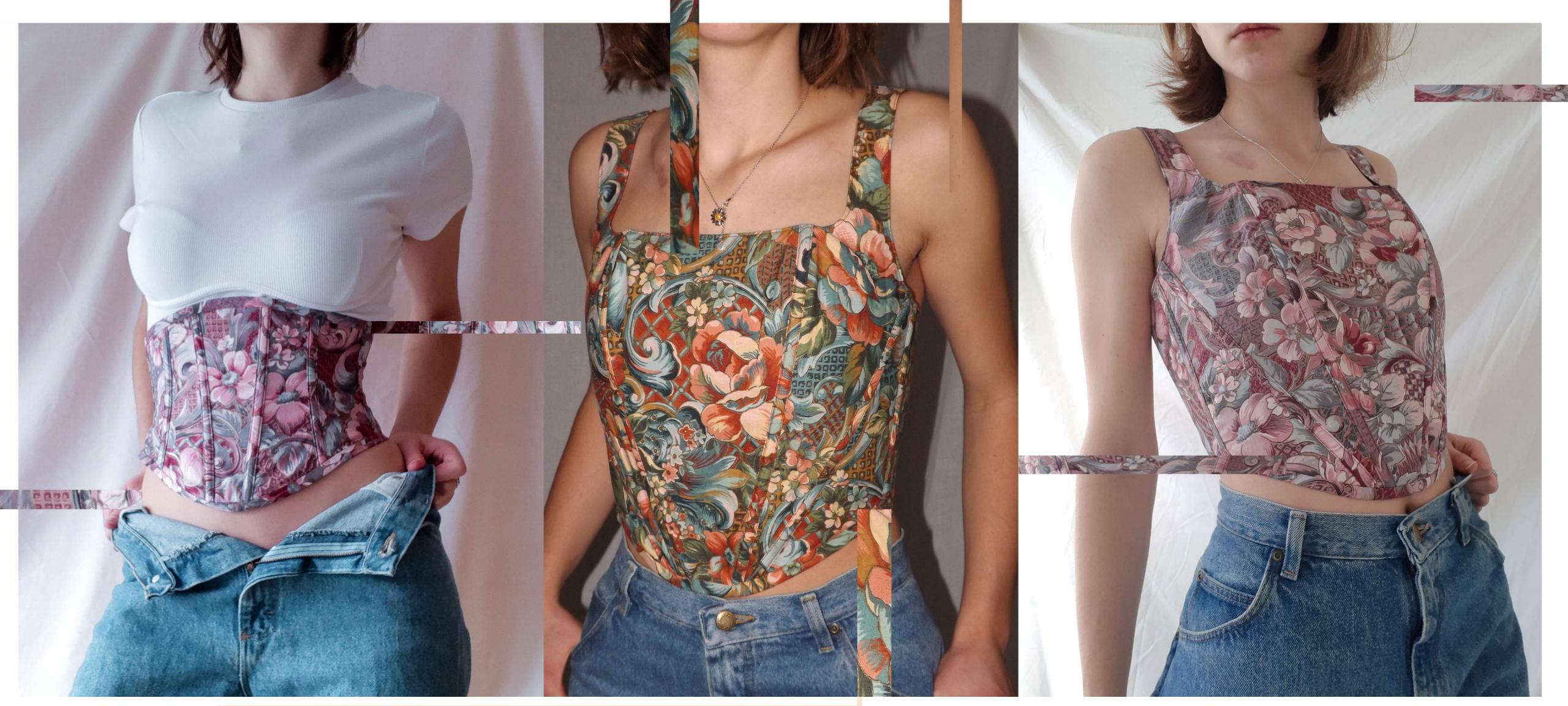
Alchemist's remix of "Cosmic.4a" sounding more alien in that remind you of old-school TV sci-fi or 8bit video themselves a disservice in not checking out this record. games, but with a meaner edge. Appropriate for a track with the opening lines of; "Drip-hop, born from the crackpot//This is for the infants, the haves and the havenots//Meet us at the trap spot so you can be an Astronaut".

The project isn't without its flaws. Occasional tracks Unlocked 1.5 builds on what was so great about the such as "Diet\_1.5" feature new bars but don't do

> Also confusing is why "Take\_It\_Back\_v2" features twice, once remixed by Charlie Heat, and one by Godmode. Neither are bad remixes of what was a decent track originally, although Charlie Heats is stronger and more aggressive, while Godmode's is more mellowed and trance-inducing. It serves well as a callback, but with the whole record lasting less than 20 minutes, this feels less like a reprise and more like a repeat.

Everything about this mini-album slaps. It's innovative and fresh, building and improving on the original while having its own identity. The remixing and new features make most tracks distinct from their original, and the reordering of the album helps give the whole album individuality also. Even if you don't like the than the original, with noises and instruments mixed original for some reason, rap fans would be doing





### 1500s Court to Bridgerton

Sinead Keating

Perhaps it's women reclaiming a historically restricting undergarment and making it "fetch", or maybe it's merely a Tiktok trend, regardless, Sinead Keating looks at the history of the corset and how it has come to be outerwear in 2021.

The corset has been making headlines recently thanks to Bridgerton, a regency era drama and one of the The early Victorian corset was worn with large shoulders were enforcing femininity. The protest received worldwide most popular shows on Netflix last year. It spawned the and cushioned hips in dresses to emphasise the attention and the burning of bras was an icon attributed 'Regency-core' trend on TikTok. Online searches for hourglass shape and draw attention to the small waist. to the movement. Carol Hanisch, one of the organisers corsets and elbow-length gloves have spiked as the trend As larger shoulders went out of style, corsets were tied of the protest, commented "I often say that if they had aims to recreate the clothes, hair and makeup of the time tighter to continue achieving the same definitive shape. called us 'girdle burners,' every woman in America would in a modern way, like wearing a corset with jeans. The A tiny waist was seen as desirable by men when choosing have run to join us". This implied that the media chose to corset has been on the rise in recent years - in 2019 Kim a wife, so women aimed to appear ever slimmer. The focus on the casting-aside of the much-appreciated bra Kardashian made headlines for her extreme hourglass wearing of very tight corsets, known as 'tightlacing' as opposed to the more uncomfortable and restrictive figure at the Met Gala that she achieved using a tight became popular in the 1840s, giving women tiny waists corset. The role the corset has played has evolved hugely at the expense of discomfort and severely restricted over the centuries.

was introduced by Catherine de Medici to the French "promoting promiscuous views of female bodies and Courts in the 16th century, where it took hold. Named superficial dalliance into fashion whims." They promoted Over time, the bra became the daily undergarment of 'stays', it was a funnel-shaped undergarment that gave the idea that tight corsets would bend the ribcage and choice and girdles morphed into the contemporary women the appearance of a straight, smooth torso with rearrange internal organs, potentially causing weakness shapewear often saved for occasions. From the 1960s, breasts pushed up to create a contrasting roundness at and damaging fertility. Female expression in fashion corsets were largely confined to fetish fashion, with the top. This silhouette complimented the wide cone- was discouraged by the voices of 'moral decency' which occasional appearances in high fashion. The rise of the shaped skirts of the time, but the primary purpose of stays denounced the claims of the beauty, health and good internet allowed for niche fashion trends like the corset was to support the bust and improve women's posture. posture brought by corsets as pure vanity. It restricted bending at the waist by causing the wearer later sixteenth century, whalebone was introduced. you, from this moment has begun". Despite her writings, unrestricted movement with appearances and style.

Whalebone stays were more rigid than earlier fabric stays, the corset remained the norm until the early 20th century,

corset, be it bought or homemade. The Victorian corset corset, although many older women still wore corsets. was an hou<mark>rglass</mark> shape rather than the straight-edged cone of earlier centuries. Spirals of steel held the shape Feminists and civil rights advocates launched the and a busk became a popular way to fasten the corset Women's Liberation movement with a protest at the Miss rather than lacing. The busk is a thin, straight piece of steel

America pageant in 1968. Central to the protest was a bin with hooks on one side and holes on the other, not unlike painted to read "freedom trash can" into which they threw

The first popular form of a corset originated in Italy and Vocal men described corsets as a dangerous evil; which gave weight to the movement.

to hold their back straight. It did not cause breathing Tightlacing declined in use and in 1873 the early feminist period dramas has brought the Victorian hourglass corset discomfort and is largely considered by historians to Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward wrote "Burn up the corsets! back into the mainstream, this time as an item worn by have been comfortable and supportive to wear. In the ...and heave a sigh of relief, for your emancipation I assure choice by people who balance the values of comfort and

allowing them to be laced tighter and as such, a desire for when women began to wear the girdle. Unlike a corset a smaller waist began to emerge. This was halted by the that focuses on compressing the waist, a girdle flattens empire waistline coming into fashion in the 1790s, where the hips, achieving the straighter figure of the time. Mary the skirt begins right below the bust and flows straight Phelps Jacobs patented the first bra in 1917 which could be worn with a girdle on the lower torso, reducing the need to wear a corset for support. Now with more practical The corset re-emerged thirty years later as the empire and comfortable garments available to offer support and line faded, just before Queen Victoria took the British shaping, the corset fell out of favour, A shortage of steel throne. During this time the industrial revolution allowed due to World Wars I and II led to women being asked for the mass production of clothing, the corset included. not to buy corsets. After WWII the availability of metal led Women in all aspects of society were able to access a to the underwired bra, rather than a resurgence in the

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bras, corsets, girdles and other 'feminine' items. They described these as "instruments of female torture" that garments like girdles and corsets in order to prevent women from being drawn to support the movement. breathing capacities. The rise in religious morality in the Parallels were drawn between the women at this protest late 19th century spawned arguments against tightlacing. and Vietnam war protesters who burned that draft cards,

> to grow among cosplayers, boudoir models and people interested in historical fashion. The huge popularity of

### Emily Elizabeth Emily Elizabeth Emily Elizabeth Sewing

### Emily Elizabeth Sewing

rNurina Iman Nizam

Ellie McCreanor

Emily is a UK based designer who is driven by recycling and reusing second hand and vintage materials in her pieces. She has been sewing from a young age and has recently started making her corsets and selling them on her Depop @emilyash02 and her Etsy shop Emily Elizabeth Sewing. She plans on furthering her brand with sustainability in mind whilst studying textiles and fashion at

It appears that there is a moral to all of James Merry's defined, and is where our attention may centre. However,

"The concept works precisely because of the socially constructed connotation it subverts: the perceived 'femininity' around anything floral or embroidered, which clashes with the mass-produced machine-made corporate logos".

### The Masked World: James Merry

Ellen Duggan

Ellen Duggan *unravels the beauty* and importance of James Merry's

As our relationships with masks continue to evolve and personalise a year into lockdown, one artist appears to have tackled their efficiency at hiding for the purposes of protection, yet revealing ourselves and our contexts in familiar ways.

James Merry is a 41-year-old embroidery artist and is currently Bjork's Co-Creative Director. He became popular through his hand embroidery on the logos of popular 90's sports clothing brands -interweaving brands such as Champion, Nike, Reebok and Fila with flora inspired by the Icelandic countryside, where he now resides. Of this process, Merry speaks about taking brands emblematic of urban environments and 'fertilising' them, emphasising with every stitch the sharp metaphor of mass-produced, industrial items of clothing instilled with the fertility of

work, which centres around our own attention: where it gravitates naturally and what we inclined to recognise due so beautiful. to its perceived societal importance. Upon first inspection of his reworked sportswear, the logo is familiar, clearly slowly but surely, the moss delicately stitched atop the brand name comes clearly into view and the embroidered flowers rear their heads. Of this process, Merry states:

His mask pieces, keeping with the central morality of his work, draw attention purposefully away from the centre of the face using a variety of fabrics. He achieves this through hand moulded and embroidered silicone perched on the wearer's forehead, or neon thread looped through the front teeth. It is never instantly visible where exactly Merry's masks fit onto the head, where they begin and the face ends, as it is never initially identifiable where precisely his inspiration heralds from. Much of his work appears as an exo-skeleton, or in Bjork's case at FIJI rock festival, 2017, external vocal cords embroidered onto pleated tulle.

Merry studied Ancient Greek at Oxford University, an academic period in his life which he describes as a 'detour' from his current occupation. Coming from a family in which his mother is an artist and his father a vicar, it is easy to see the marriage of the merits of these occupations within Merry's work: the artistic nature to which he rebuilds the traditionally conservative and domestic associations with embroidery, with the devout dedication he applies to each of his handmade pieces, evident in his much spoken about sleepless nights in hotel rooms on tour with Bjork, stitching together his latest wearable creation for her next performance. When Tilda Swinton commissioned Merry to create a mask for her appearance at the Venice Venitian mask - creating a gold, handheld creation that gently warps and bends around her hand.

which is also highly functional in allowing artists to be present yet slightly protected from the saturation of the camera flash- has never been so pivotally important, nor

### Women and the fashion industry

Ellie McCreanor

The fashion industry is changing into a safer more accessible space for all women. Ellie McCreanor explores the issues in the industry that have led to this change and the women that are implementing them.

Some of the most iconic people in fashion are women, would become clear that this applied to more than just the from Donatella Versace to Kate Moss. However, in recent movie scene. The movement sparked large companies to years we have seen a move away from a fashion world make changes within their workforce, including Condé of size zero models and weekly trends. Light has been Nast, the publisher of Vogue. When allegations emerged shed on the lack of diversity and size inclusion within the about the sexual misconduct of photographers Mario Film festival, he submerged himself in the history of the industry, along with sexual harassment and abuse at the Testino, Bruce Weber and Terry Richardson they issued hands of photographers and those in positions of power. a statement saying "In light of these allegations, we will In an industry where only fourteen percent of fifty major not be commissioning any new work with them for the brands are run by a female executive, regardless of its foreseeable future." The #MeToo movement has been Art that may be worn and performed in, translating the main market being women, women are now reclaiming a major step in the right direction to weed out sexual internal into the language of the external audience - but their space and transforming it into a more inclusive and predators from the industry making it a safer space for safe space to empower and embrace women.

> The fashion industry has, for years, idealised the size zero lifetime of discrimination and misconduct. However, the body and the "nothing tastes as good as skinny feels" changes are being made for, and by, women. mentality. The Victoria's Secret fashion show was an event that truly glorified this notion, with models partaking in intense, low-calorie diets in preparation. The influence of this could be seen across the internet as videos began popping up everywhere with titles like "I Tried The Victoria Secret Model Diet And It BROKE ME". Victoria's Secret is not the sole culprit of this kind of behaviour. The idea of skinny as a main western beauty standard is embedded deep in the fashion industry. Though, this is starting to change. The women leading this change are women like Tess Holiday with her #effyourbeautystandards and

Nyome Nicholas, to name a couple

In the summer of 2020, Instagram removed pictures of Nyome from its platform, claiming they breached its nudity policy. Nyome called them out for this as not only a black woman but as a plus-size black woman, providing comparisons with other images of thin, white women showing more flesh that were not removed. This, as a result, not only ignited an entire movement but changed Instagram's nudity policy in favour of larger bodies and black bodies. Furthermore, in January of this year, she was the cover girl for GlamourUK. Successes like this, however big or small, are huge wins for the body positivity movement in fashion. Ten years ago, Nyome would not have graced the cover of any UK fashion magazine.

Sexual misconduct is another major issue within the fashion industry that has come to light in recent years. The #MeToo movement in 2017 started a much-needed conversation about sexual assault in Hollywood and it everyone. The fashion industry clearly has a ways to go as five years of positive change is not enough to undo a

### film & tv

### The Rise of Anya Taylor-Joy

Aoife Rooney

In the wake of Anna Taylor-Joy's Golden Globe win, Aoife Rooney takes a look at her career so far.

What marked her biggest year to date, Anya Taylor-Joy commenced 2020 by breathing new life into Emma, and bookended it with her most acclaimed role yet, as Beth Harmon in The Queen's Gambit. Taylor-Joy has received critical acclaim for both roles, most recently becoming the first Latina to win the Best Actress Golden Globe in a Limited Series. She was also nominated for her title role in Emma at the same ceremony.

It may be hard to believe that the Argentine-British actress starred in her first movie only six years ago: Robert Eggers' The Witch, for which her performance was praised. The following year, she was catapulted closer to household name territory with her role in M. Night Shyamalan's second instalment of the Unbreakable series, Split. Fast forward to late 2020, The Queen's Gambit sets the record as the most-watched Netflix Original with over 60 million viewers, a feat which was later eclipsed by Bridgerton. The fact that a show focussing on chess could hold such a title is testament to the screen presence of Taylor-Joy and the vibrancy and fervour with which she equips all of her characters.

Taylor-Joy was born in Miami in 1996 and then moved to Argentina where she stayed for six years before settling in London. Taylor-Joy protested the move so much so that she refused to learn English for two years before giving in. The actress has cited films to be one of the factors contributing to her learning of the language. Taylor-Joy was scouted by a modelling agency while walking her dog when she was 15, and it was through this encounter that she was able to pivot her focus towards acting.

Despite receiving recognition for her role in The Witch, it was her portrayal of Casey Cooke in Split that really cemented her face in the minds of movie-watchers. The role saw Taylor-Joy tackle the challenge of paying a kidnap victim at the hands of 'Barry' (James McEvoy) a man dealing with a dissociative identity disorder. Taylor-Joy's character encounters the 23 different faces of one man, and in doing so, cemented her talent as one of the most highly sought-after actresses in the industry. While the film is primarily centred around McAvoy's character, Taylor-Joy manages to compel the viewer's attention - her ability to switch demeanour depending on which personality she is talking to as impressive as McAvoy's ability to embody them. Since then, Taylor-Joy has been as busy as any relatively new actor could ever hope for. So far in 2021 alone, the actress is linked to three projects, including *Last* Night in Soho, directed by Edgar Wright, starring alongside Thomasin McKenzie, Matt Smith and Terence Stamp.

Around the release of Emma, which saw Taylor-Joy in understandably more coverage of the actress as it was not a big ensemble cast. While completing press for the film, she spoke of her anxieties in taking on the

people in the industry, who defend their place not with

levels of imposter syndrome that we are all familiar with.

If one were to only look at the actress's two most alone; it has been done before and done well. Gwyneth the game of chess that it is not surprising that chess Paltrow played the role the same year Taylor-Joy was playing websites saw unprecedented increases in traffic. born, many undoubtedly arguing that, like many remakes of classics, there was no need to try and get yet more One of the things that makes Taylor-Joy so attractive it is now Taylor-Joy's smirk that comes to mind when the need be. She has the unique ability to blend in when a singular leading lady role for the first time, there was infamous character is mentioned, her somewhat wildcard she wants to on-screen, making her presence all the casting cementing her as a serious name in Hollywood. more known when she decides to do so. This was seen

role; 'I am the first ugly Emma and I can't do this.' One only tenfold. Again, from Taylor-Joy's perspective, the role to sit back and assume a dignified, self-assured stature, of the things that makes Taylor-Joy so endearing is how was a risk. While there are clear advantages to the role (a only to make sure everyone in the room was aware of inherently likeable she is, unlike many successful young singular leading role promoted and financed by one of the her presence when she decided she wanted to be seen. streaming giants), it was still about chess, in the 1960s, from alent but with connections or circumstance. Taylor-Joy is a female perspective. While the numbers clearly dissolve While it is clear from her work that Anya Taylor-Joy is an quite the opposite. She has proven herself to experience any doubt over the series' success, there is always some unparalleled talent, she is merely getting started. The doubt that a niche concept might flop. It is undoubtedly actress is cited to be currently filming an untitled David arguable that the main reason that not only did that not O. Russell film, which is rumoured to be out later this happen, and in fact was resoundingly successful, was year. She is one of the busiest actors in the industry at the popular recent projects, it gives an excellent indication that Taylor-Joy embodied Beth Harmon so well. Her moment, a fact that is unlikely to change any time soon. the courage and foresight she expels in booking portrayal of everything from isolation and addiction, roles. Emma was a considerable challenge in the name to solidarity and triumph, lends itself so eloquently to

nileage from the classic Austen text. Despite concerns, to a casting director is her ability to be unassuming if so expertly throughout The Queen's Gambit: her ability

Her portrayal of everything from isolation and addiction, to solidarity and triumph lends itself so eloquently to the game of chess

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Odin O'Sullivan

Impassioned Odin O'Sullivan discusses the perils of considering all media, and in particular all cinema, as 'content'

Martin Scorsese, besides being one of the worlds greatest living filmmakers, is nothing if not a loving devotee to the craft. This man loves cinema more than anything and has done innumerable things in the support of the art form. Due to this, he often comes into conflict with those who would rather consider cinema and media more generally as something simply to be consumed or as something to be acquired, something defined by its monetary value. Last year when he said the Marvel movies were "not cinema" it outraged a number of people (whose personalities are inextricably tied to watching a bunch of millionaires in tight spandex suits jumping around in three-hour-long commercials for the US Military). But the man does not miss, and recently he decried the designation of all media, cinema included, as "content." In this article, I intend to take up where good ol' Uncle Marty left off and flesh out why the use of the term content is so damaging to cinema and media more generally.

There have been a number of linguistic developments in the life of film, television and media. From movies to pictures, to films, from Cinema with a capital C to entertainment, and escapism, all are terms that have come to designate and describe film and television. Alongside linguistic developments, there have also been developments in form and distribution. For what is often termed the world's youngest art form, cinema, and visual media more generally, has truly gone through an extraordinary number of shifts, the largest of which is probably the rise of video on-demand, streaming services, and the internet. What was once restricted solely to the cinema became a standard of the home; first as home media (VHS, Laserdisc, DVD) and later, as a more individualised and personalised form of media taken up by the business world and the corporations to put on in the background while hoovering the floors. everything as a 'content provider' and streaming service. consumption, the streaming service. This is not an article and companies who acquired or built media empires. It All art has value beyond the monetary and to refer to it as to decry the rise of streaming - I would see that as largely a has become a dehumanising catchall for the media/art/ content, a word so far removed from its original meaning. As the pandemic drags on and cinema's face extends positive development if it did not mean the destruction of music/cinema that they own or are about to acquire. As that it might as well mean gruel, is to treat it as if it is a to closure, I encourage the use of streaming service, but brick and mortar cinemas - but instead to decry something which both streaming and internet video production has "content [has become] a business term for all moving and acquisitions, and not something created by artists. recommends that which you've already seen. Wade into

This collapsing of artistic designations into one formless homogenous blob of 'content' is something that should be resisted - not because to associate cinema with vlogging is wrong, but because they each have their own merits and exist as their own torm

when discussing a film. Such debates still take place but it is often boiled down to the rather dismissive "all style no substance" line. The term content has since been to pass the time with while you eat your lunch or something Martin Scorsese states in his article for Harper's Bazaar byproduct of corporate media giants and their mergers also that you are aware of the algorithmic loop which created through its homogenization; the term 'content'. images" and what was once used in Netflix board meetings to describe what they hosted on their site - The branding of all media as ,content' is one of the key - Watch it actively and think about its value as cinema. Once used in serious film studies circles, the term has now been quickly taken up by the general public. factors in the rise and consolidation of Disney's near- Refuse to think of it as a piece of content indistinguishable

permeated our lives, ,content' arose in the popular lexicon as posting videos on sites like Youtube began to become a viable career path, and even served to make some people extremely wealthy. The term ,content' became a useful catch-all term for that which was not cinema and not television but instead videos posted to these sites. Often branching across the entertainment spectrum from vlogs to instructional videos to sketches, the mediascape on Youtube became so varied so quickly that a term like ,content' allowed for an easy, if simplistic, way to designate it. From this sprung the term ,content creator' the job title which came to replace the semichildish sounding ,YouTuber'. ,Content creator' was vague enough to encompass everyone from teen Vine stars (remember Vine?) to old woodworkers giving tutorials from their garden. Its lack of specificity is a direct import from the corporate world, their insidious businessspeak often working to give you the least amount of information while sounding as important as possible.

Although the term allows for a convenient catchall, content is now such a widely used phrase that it has become the standard when discussing everything from video essays and vlogs to cinema. This collapsing of artistic designations into one formless homogenous blob of 'content' is something that should be resisted - not because to associate cinema with vlogging is wrong, but because they each have their own merits and exist as their own form. The forms can collide or oppose but they are different. The difference is a good thing and designating all moving image-based media as 'content' is an attack on the different. Streaming service giants like Netflix seem to provide access to a wide array of ,different'. Reality television series sit next to documentaries and children's television in the "recent releases" section. But the truth is in compiling all of this media together and feeding our own tastes back to us in an algorithmic loop not only narrows the media we can watch but also lends itself to categorize it all as content. When the service provides you with a "stuff you might like" list, often replete with their own original productions which you have no real interest in, the active aspect of viewing diminishes. We are more likely to just click what is put in front of us than engage in the search for a film or show which we actually will enjoy or will challenge us. After all, if it's all content, it's all the same, right?

and deleted. They become nothing more than something

"content" would often be contrasted against "form" One of the many corporate-speak phrases which has monopoly on contemporary media. Once a company from the suggestion beside it.

Referring to all media as content systematically devalues art and the labour it took to produce it. They are reduced to commodities to be bought, traded, streamed, consumed and deleted

with a very specific brand and ethic (not to be confused Referring to all media as content systematically devalues with ethics, of which they have none) Disney has since art and the labour it took to produce it. They are reduced to expanded to absorb as much 'content' as possible like commodities to be bought, traded, streamed, consumed the shapeless and faceless villain it is. The designating of all media as content allows Disney to shift its focus, away from family films and animation towards anything and

the wilds of Netflix and find something new and strange.

Malcolm & Marie

film

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reviews

Odin O'Sullivan

Odin O'Sullivan *reviews* Malcolm & Marie, the first Hollywood production to be produced entirely within the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sam Levinson's latest feature film Malcolm and Marie stars John David Washington and Zendaya as the film's two title characters, a filmmaker and his girlfriend who have just returned home after the premiere of the former's new movie. The first Hollywood feature to be written, financed and produced during the Covid-19 pandemic, it features only the two eponymous characters and one location, their ostentatious house.

The film's main conflict is their volatile relationship: Malcolm left Marie out of his speech at the premiere and when she points this out, so begins a long night of interrogating why they're together. Beyond this, the film's premise holds little weight. Directed and written by a white man the discussion of the Black artistic experience, racism, and the tendency to treat Black artists as a monolith seems bizarre and misplaced. Levinson, the creator of Euphoria and son of acclaimed director Barry Levinson, has his name tagged in the trailer for this film as "from visionary director Sam Levinson" but it is hard to see what exactly is visionary about a hackneyed black & white two-hande heavily dependant on monologue and the word "fuck." Although the performances of Zendeya and John David Washington are strong and, as two highly competent actors, convincing, all of their work is let down by the script.

As I'm sure you're already thinking, yes, a film about a filmmaker has been done to death, and yes, this film does not tread any new ground. In fact, aside from the ostensibly central narrative of the relationship between Malcolm and Marie, the film takes quite a large amount of its one hour forty-five run time to attack film critics. Malcolm's constant and vitriolic disavowal of the film critic referred to only as "the white L.A. Times woman" and then

film critics in general reads clearly as a proxy argument The positives are that Washington and Zendeya are, for Levinson, whose previous feature, Assassination Nation of course, wonderful to look at and have a significant project saying nothing as if they're saying everything. eceived mixed reviews from critics. The assertions that  $\,\,\,$  amount of chemistry. When they aren't speaking the film critics know nothing about cinema and can't ever god-awful dialogue their performances are excellent, truly understand art are both pathetic and ridiculous.

They reek of an insecure filmmaker who would rather up and coming stars. The location, though ostentatious, believe all his reviewers are stupid and wrong than that is beautiful, and although at times the cinematography his art just wasn't very good. To borrow a vernacular term, take the L Sam, so your last film sucked, pick up and move quite well constructed at times. Despite this, it is difficult to on. We all make garbage in our careers, but we don't cut through the self-importance of this film. Both Levinson

looks like an expensive perfume commercial, it can be all get John David Washington to be our whinge-proxy. and his proxy, Malcolm, are painfully pretentious. To argue

it is hard to see what exactly is visionary about a hackneyed black & white twohander heavily dependant on monologue and the word 'fuck.'

that critics force political readings on the supposedl apolitical medium of cinema to generate clicks, in a film that is overtly political in its discussion of race and artistry, is not only ridiculous but simply impossible. To make the presumption that cinema, or art, can ever be apolitical reveals the director/writers own biases and privileges.

I embarked on this review due to the Oscar buzz which surrounds this film and I must conclude my review by asking, why? Nothing about it is particularly striking, and its content verges on the cringe at times, but I hink such media speculation belays that which the Oscars responds to; significant actors in a 'serious'

# over rated

### Friends

E. Keogh

E. Keogh makes the case for why Friends is Overrated

even near digestible, the show uses the generic and mind- they had brief appearances, while the main cast and numbing laugh track to trick the audience to believe the almost all of the reoccurring side characters are white. jokes are funny, akin to how The Big Bang Theory operates.

The group hangs out in the Central Perk cafe, and live of Chandler's Dad, Helena, revealed to be a that she has lost the weight, has a group of friends

Friends (1994-2004) is probably one of the most unfunny in one of the most multicultural places in the world, transgender woman played by a cis-woman, was committed over its run, as are some shows that air today, sitcoms I've ever had the displeasure of watching. yet the cast is almost exclusively white, and with the subject to many transphobic jokes. The actor who but ideas only get better as society becomes more many, the show relies on offensive jokes—exception of a short arch involving Ross's love interest, made at the expense of mocking the LGBTQ community, Charlie Wheeler, and Rachel's love interest, Paulo.

portrayed Helena has stated that she wouldn't be comfortable portraying the role again, seeing as it women, and BIPOC. To put it plain and simple, the show There aren't any recurring BIPOC characters that should've been a trans woman who portrayed her all has aged like milk in the summer sun. To make the jokes aren't merely used as background props. Even at that, along and that there are many capable trans actors.

> The show also loves to body shame characters. Jokes directed at Monica seemed to exclusively in some The show did little for non-cis roles. The character episodes refer to her body weight as a child, and now

and is worthy of love. It's not exactly the message you'd want to be sending to the viewer base in the 90s, but now that it's achieved its status as one of the greatest sitcoms of all time, today's young people are being subjected to its unfunny, harmful jokes also.

The show's fans have always been quick to defend it, saying it was inclusive to gay men and lesbians, but jokes were aimed at Ross for marrying a lesbian, and many jokes were made at the expense of gay men, for example, all the times the group singled out Chandler and the nanny that Ross's ex-wife hires.

The counterpoint made is that it's a product of the time it was made and that PC culture is going too far. Yet shows like The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, Fraser, Star Trek, and Golden Girls, although not perfect, did more to promote acceptance of sexuality and gender than Friends. Again, they're not perfect, but they did a hell of a lot more for minorities without introducing characters merely for the main characters to progress. The shows are guilty of some of the sins Friends have



It's a Sin

Liam Ferguson reviews the hit television series It's a Sin

Queer as Folk's creator Russell T. Davies has come out with a new miniseries that has garnered an intense amount of critical praise, and rightfully so. It's a Sin follows a group of friends, most of whom are young gay men, as they navigate the scene of 1980's London while the looming AIDs crisis uproots and changes their lives. Bolstered by a plucky sense of humour, poppy visual and musical presentation, as well as unmatched performances from the lead and supporting cast, the series gut-wrenchingly captures an extremely grim portion of recent history that showcases the negligence of public health officials.

The series largely focuses on the perspective of three young men who have left rural homes to pursue their dreams in London, all sharing a flat. There's the central protagonist Ritchie (Olly Alexander,) the flamboyant Roscoe (Omari Douglas) and the reserved yet polite Colin (Callum Scott Howells.) Their performances are incredibly compelling and nuanced. The series is quick to switch from happy-go-lucky to devastating, and these young actors are effectively able to present and move through these tonal shifts as their respective characters react to the events unfolding. Alexander's character Ritchie manages to convey his initial denial and underlying fear as the panic around AIDs starts to take hold of the narrative. Douglas effortlessly portrays the brash, proudly out Roscoe, while Howells performance makes it clear that Colin is a character to be protected and loved at all costs. These three are only propelled forward by an astonishing supporting cast. Big-names such as Stephen Fry and Neil Patrick Harris show up to steal scenes every now and again, but it is Lydia West's performance as Jill Baxter, the mutual friend of these men, that resonates with the viewer. Without spoiling anything, the direction her character takes as the world around her ignores the crisis largely killing gay men by the dozens is impressive and West clearly has a deep understanding of the script she was given.



The show is directed beautifully. Visually, the series tonal dichotomy presented by director Peter Hoar and is truly unapologetic in its critique of the NHS and captures a neon 80's setting, with its many nightclub assists the show in achieving its state of excellence. and party sets, while its upbeat music serves to deliver a carefree attitude that Julls the viewer into a sense of Finally, the subject matter at the forefront of It's a Sin is of Trust reported record high HIV testing after it had aired. security before the next big, tear-jerking moment. The show relies heavily on its sense of humour half to make the characters as believable and likeable as possible and the creators of the series into the final body of work. It in this review because I cannot stress enough how it truly works. On the other hand, sequences of genuine

extreme importance and the fact that it is handled with such care lays out just how much passion emanates from I have intentionally stayed as spoiler-free as possible is not often that a show comes to network television much this show needs to be given proper attention. drama are shot to reflect life as closely as possible, and (with this being a Channel 4 series) and deals so overtly Hilarious, heartfelt and ultimately heart-breaking, It's a the series does not pull any punches when displaying with raunchy sex scenes while also highlighting an Sin is an important and unmissable piece of television the health officials in the U.K who wilfully ignored a important conversion around how the AIDs epidemic that is as close to perfection as one could hope. disease that cost the lives of thousands of people. The was handled. The show wears its heart on its sleeve

impact is already being felt as The Terrence Higgins

### games

### Cyberpunk 2077: A retrospective on a futuristic mess

Liam Ferguson

After months of fans waiting for Cyberpunk 2077 to finally be fixed, Liam Ferguson looks at the games release, the problems they encountered, and how they game functions after patches and updates.

of the most hotly anticipated games in recent history with it to satisfy shareholders with a timely game release. Cyberpunk 2077. First unveiled in 2012, with radio silence following that was only broken at E3 in 2018, the game

Then we get to the release window for Cyberpunk, and all matter, and an overall unforgettable experience, CDPR the unrivalled success they attained with The Witcher 3. What followed, however, were multiple delays, overworked

of Night City for an energy drink entitled 'Chromanticore' if things needed to get worse at this stage from a PR aspect. with the tagline "Mix it Up" that displayed a transgender character model with a bulging penis holding a can of the Shortly after release, CDPR promised refunds to any Twitter page. At the time, representatives from CDPR this blatantly transphobic marketing ploy would come back to showcase a company willing to appeal to the As mentioned, studio leads at CDPR promised that

character models look like mushy PS2 era people, textures are popping in at random intervals and it can barely maintain 15 FPS even outside of combat.

In November 2020, The Witcher 3 (2015) developer CD came out around CDPR being a toxic place to work in, Projekt Red (CDPR) released what was quite possibly one it came as no surprise that the studio heads mandated

had a lot to live up to. Promising an extremely vibrant hell begins to break loose. Reviewers were given codes open world that would elevate the genre to new heights, to the supposedly hundred-hour game mere days prior a rewarding RPG system that made player choice truly to release and were suspiciously only given copies to the PC version, leaving the PS4/Xbox One versions to be positioned it as a game that would define their legacy after reviewed after people had already bought copies. The game was mostly reviewed pretty well, averaging in the 7's to 9's out of 10 with many ultimately reiterating that staff, edgy marketing strategies, and a broken mess of a it was a good GTA style narrative with some cool worldproduct that was quickly stripped from the PlayStation building, but that ultimately would not set the world on Network. So, how did all of this happen? And almost fire in terms of innovation. Get to release day and there is four months after launch, has it been remedied at all? rage. On PS4 and Xbox One, the game simply does not work - character models look like mushy PS2 era people, The first signs of trouble for *Cyberpunk* came about when they really began to market the game in 2019 as the barely maintain 15 FPS even outside of combat. To add geared up for the initial, unrealistic date of April 2020. An to this, the game managed to bypass certification which advertisement displayed a poster within the game world resulted in a sequence that gave some players seizures, as

drink. Many people within the transgender community players that were dissatisfied with the version they knew rightfully took issue with this fetishized advertisement was unfinished given that they intentionally only marketed as CDPR already had a history of making tired, stale towards the PC and PS4 Pro/Xbox One X versions. Of jokes at the expense of trans people on their company course, being the mismanaged company that they are, CDPR could not deliver on these refund requests. In promised that there would be a wide variety of gender- an unprecedented move, this led Sony to step in and nonconforming characters present within the final game pull the game from their storefront entirely in an act portrayed in a positive light, as well as this example that can only be considered a mercy kill. Refunds were of hyper-sexualisation present inside Night City. This then given to anyone who requested one. Microsoft was, of course, a lie, but more on that later. Ultimately, kept the game in their store but offered refunds as well.

most die-hard gamergate supporting kind of players, a variety of characters from all walks of life would and was an early warning sign of the performative be portrayed within the game, including your own activism the game delivered in its final release. customisable protagonist, V. This included them touting a deep, layered character creation that seemed weird To continue touching on the pre-release aspect of to include in a first-person game, to begin with. The Cyberpunk that served as red flags, in September of performative activism continued as it was said that you 2020 it was reported that CDPR had ordered employees could choose to play as a transgender character, stating to begin working for six days of the week, as the team that Night City would reflect a world rife with body rushed to bring out a game that could be considered modification that makes gender irrelevant. This was not anything close to "finished." This was in contrast with the case in the end, as gender was tied to the voice you comments CDPR co-founder Marcin Iwinski had chose, meaning while you could pick whatever genitalia made almost a year previously, promising a no-crunch on whichever model you chose, you would ultimately have culture when developing the hotly anticipated game. to select the "female" voice option if you wanted to be Crunch, an industry term used to define excessive referred to with she/her pronouns inside of the game. We workweeks and overtime usually in the leadup to a somehow live in a world where Call of Duty lets you use release, is a problem faced by many mismanaged they/them pronouns, but what was being marketed as the game development companies, and as more reports most open and diverse RPG in history couldn't manage was present the top brass at this company as spineless



To discuss it from a gameplay perspective, *Cyberpunk* So, here we are, in the months after release. CDPR have is fine. The gunplay is no better than Fallout, the driving largely kept quiet after promising to fix the game. They on PS5/Xbox Series X or PC. The story is at complete back the proper next-generation releases farther. They odds with itself as side quests have almost no bearing also provided a vague roadmap for hotfixes that will on the overarching narrative as a result of its state of to be much real consequence from whatever dialogue PlayStation storefront, it is clear that there is still a lot of

It is easy to see that the PS4 and Xbox One versions and how they should market their titles going forward. were nowhere near ready at launch, so one can only imagine the state of them before release, and there is no way top executives at CDPR were unaware of this

is abysmal and the world is pretty enough if you play it delayed the multiplayer mode out of 2021 and pushed supposedly make the game work on last-generation urgency, and the performances are all rather good. consoles. A major patch was posted up for the title in he RPG aspects often fall flat as there does not seem late January, but as the game remains absent from the options you choose. Personally, I managed to roll work to be done. The studio was then hacked in February, credits on what was being touted as the largest and which caused the delay of the second major patch that most ambitious game ever made in around 35 hours. will supposedly make the game truly playable on those consoles. The company managed to destroy their Finally, at the beginning of January 2021, Iwinski posted a incredible reputation overnight by releasing a half-baked video on Twitter "apologising" for the state of the game. game that delivered on pretty much nothing it promised He continued to perpetuate the lies that dug him and his to. It's fair to say that Cyberpunk may never recover and company into this hole by saying that they were simply become the incredible experience that people wanted it unaware of just how bad the console versions were, and to be, but hopefully, CDPR will take this failure as a moment basically laid the blame on the quality assurance team. to completely reassess how they function as a company,

# Rage quit: Football Manager

Andrew Nolan

Andrew Nolan shares his experiences with the wild, detailed world of the Football Manager Games.

I'm not really into sports games on the whole - they're not bad, but if I have time to play Madden, I probably have time to play something a little better. FIFA has always been the one exception, though. Namely, through its manager mode. See, I'm an Arsenal fan, and we've been pretty God-awful since around the mid-2000s or so. Through FIFA, I can at least pretend we're somewhat CreditSamanehSadeghiN decent. Having played FIFA's Manager Mode since the days of the Xbox 360, I figured I would take the nosedive into its more intricate, detailed sibling - Football Manager. (FM20 is my choice of poison, for reference. It was on sale for €20, and I'm not about to spend extra for the same bike with a fresh lick of paint released a year later).

I knew there would be differences, of course. After all, FM is pretty much sold on its complexities. I'm also selfaware enough to know that most of my grievances with the game could be solved if I was actually good at it, but I digress. My first season in the game was a jarring experience - I made a few tidy deals after selling on some players, and I thought I had a pretty okay-looking squad, all things considered. It wasn't until the first big game of the season, against Manchester United, that I noticed a few disparities. With tighter purse strings, I could only make one somewhat quality signing. In the same timeframe, my opponents had apparently been able to sign every decent striker in the world and still had spare change for a



A part of me admires this dedication, the other part needs to take his hour lunch

break.

budgets, but come on lads.

I suppose that's the beauty of it. High highs and low lows, to take his hour lunch break. after all. Still, I wonder if I should worry about them.

On the topic of the players, some of them have been with clear attention paid to the little details. But good treated harshly on the virtual scene. A key example I'll God, those games would put you on the smokes. give is Kieran Tierney. Legitimately one of Arsenal's best



quality goalkeeper. They were only short of paying LeBron 🏻 players in real life, in-game, the man's bones have the James to swap sports. Okay, different clubs, different structural integrity of soggy Weetabix. I had to take him off injured every two or so games for my first season, and he's far from the only one. Outside of that, you'll have I got slapped around that game, as you would imagine. so-called 'elite' strikers like Alexandre Lacazette missing Immediately following the match, I get a prompt that the open-goal sitters on the other end of the pitch. Look, I Board - my bosses - are 'disappointed with the result' and know Arsenal haven't been great these days, but if you my job security has been lowered. We're talking about job were to believe Sports Interactive's take on the club, you'd security here lads. While I was still enjoying the game, it have a subpar Goalkeeper playing for a team made up of made me seriously question the FM purists I knew. All I semi-professional postmen and walking sick notes. Oh, could imagine was them, clocking out of their very real, and if you try to sign a player from abroad, be quick, as very stressful jobs, and choosing to unwind and enjoy their players need a work permit due to Brexit restrictions. A evening by getting shouted at by their virtual boss. Though, part of me admires this dedication, the other part needs

The FM series are all well-written love-letters to the sport,

OTwo nostalgia review

### Cartoon Network's Fusionfall

games

Rory Galvin

Rory Galvin takes a trip down memory lane with baby's first World of Warcraft: Cartoon Network's Fusionfall.

the outset of their release. No matter the actual quality, the rose-tinted glasses will always leave good memories I played Cartoon Network Universe: Fusionfall (mostly just



**Credit**SamanehSadeghiMarasht

by that warm, nostalgic feeling, but if you know, you know.

Imagine the year is 2009, and in between episodes of known as Fusionfall) for the first time overtenyears ago now, Chowder and Ben 10 were advertisements for a game other plot, but there was no need for one - the magic of

For an MMO, it has the depth of a paddling pool, but when I was ten years old it felt so fulfilling to level up, use stronger weapons, and explore new areas... it was my first experience with an MMO, and I loved every second of it.

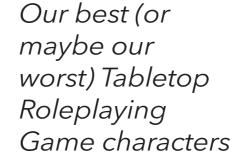
of *Fusionfall* from these epic cinematic ads on TV; did they look anything like the actual game? Of course not, but it got kids like me interested and later on completely hooked.

Fusionfall is an online MMO (Massively Multiplayer Online game) made by Grigon Entertainment, a Korean developer following the huge trend of popular multiplayer games left in the wake of Blizzard's World of Warcraft. The general Some games are entirely fuelled by nostalgia, even from Fusionfall is definitely one of those games that is backed up premise is that the world has been taken over by some evil alien called Lord Fuse, and it's up to you, your friends and a huge showcase of Cartoon Network characters to fight back and stop the invasion. There really isn't any on my family's home computer that ran on Windows Vista. that would absolutely blow your mind. I first saw the world being in that living world was more than good enough.

Playing Fusionfall is like any other MMO, but dumbed down for a younger audience. There is a very basic combat and gear system, where you mostly focus on wearing stuff with the higher number, and choosing which 3 abilities you want on you during a fight. It's kind of like going back to an old *Pokémon* game and realising that it's too easy, but Fusionfall shines elsewhere. It has a weird vibe - the developer went with an anime-inspired art style to make everything feel uniform, and once you get used to some of the strange character design choices it works quite well. I can be in the Cul De Sac from Ed, Edd and Eddy, talk to the purple monster Eduardo from Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends, take a flying Mojo Jojo monkey to my next destination, and somehow it all fits. Another thing with the art style is its reliance on cel-shaded graphics to give things a more cartoonish look, and for a game made to run on computers considered ancient by our standards, it kind of holds up.

There are so many memories I have attached to the world of Fusionfall. Getting home from school and booting up the game while I'm still in my uniform, upgrading gear to my level just because they look cool, or even staring at the beautiful key art on the loading screen. For an MMO, it has the depth of a paddling pool, but when I was ten years old it felt so fulfilling to level up, use stronger weapons, and explore new areas - only after doing about 500 fetch quests. Despite how repetitive it could get, it was my first experience with an MMO, and I loved every second of it.

Unfortunately, Fusionfall was a bit of a flop despite the huge amount of people playing it (chalk it up to mismanagement, the developer going bankrupt, and no actual paid element in the game), and the servers were shut in 2014. For a long time, I thought I would only have memories left of the game, but multiple dedicated fans came together to bring the charming MMO back and now it's here to stay. Well, unless Cartoon Network's lawyers hear about it. Let's hope they don't find this article.



Get out your handbook and try to roll twenty, as we talk you through some of our favourite Tabletop creations.



Sadie Ní Dochartaigh - my beloved bard 'i Fox - the hangry Vampire

in the land of Scart for her extraordinary lute solos, her | and bad attitude. She's also a vampire. unique sense of style, her sharp wit, her ability to disguise herself beyond recognition in a second's notice... and a As the first character I ever created for the RPG system few other words I can't put into print.

After leaving her father, she found her way to a school for young adventurers. A ranger, wizard, necromancer, and a  $_{
m I}$ girl who Sadie could never figure-out were assigned to | Dungeons and Dragons is well-known in the RPG worktogether to understand how to explore the world. That turned out to be a cult, and the five adventurers embarked on an uncertain journey, guided by the mysterious 'M'. | Masquerade, however, only uses 10-sided dice, with 6 | can always get a smile with his extremely unfunny jokes. During their traversal of a strange jungle, Sadie would I or over counting as a success. The better you are at a have much difficulty coming to terms with her foundfamily, and only be her true self around Selune the panther.

Sceptical of Sadie, her friends tried to uncover her past to no avail. Managing to escape the jungle island and meeting the local lord through the means of spell and | Another fun system used in the game is Hunger. It's a | it's just really emotional. battle, Sadie and her companions found themselves in points scale of 0 to 5; where 0 is like the feeling after you she lashed out and, in her usual fashion, ran into the woods. The ranger sent Selune, unwilling to let her go you burn energy to heal yourself, you use a powerful alone, and they found a log to sit by and stargazed.

cast a thunderbolt at a cloaked figure in the distance. He | (he was making paintings out of people! And not in an | the adventurers. shouted to stop, and that he was a weary traveller trying to  $^{\perp}$ find his sister. Sadie and Jaskier had been reunited after | because that was his name) was fairly impervious to magical | It would humble the adventurers to have Dadd around. The so many years, but it was like they'd always known each damage, and so Fox was ideally suited to punch him to magic users would learn that life was so much more than other. Sharply, Selune started to hiss at something. She was then launched into a tree and knocked out instantly.

Jaskier was swiftly stabbed at the monster as Sadie was thrown back onto the cold ground. Her cast lightning only seemed to push the figure back 10 feet. Jaskier tried to stand up, blood dribbling from his mouth but collapsed back onto the ground. Tears began to flow, and concentrated her stream of lightning at the being, but he kept advancing until he threw her back 20 feet directly into a fallen tree. All went silent. The figure disappeared.

Sadie looked down and saw the branch protruding from her chest. She struggled to breathe. As Jaskier with all his strength stumbled over to her, he screamed for help. "Jaskier," she faintly whispered "tell...tell them I'm sorry...I'm so sorry" as Sadie took her terminal breath. Her pupils widened, her hands became cold. Jaskier tried all the spells he knew to heal her, writhing at each failed attempt. Her blood-soaked clothes became covered by flowers and foliage from all the spells Jaskier tried, as though she was wearing a fine green gown. The sun began to rise as the townspeople gathered to witness the horror that had occurred, the scene that death had left.

I loved Sadie as a character, and I'd be lying if I said I didn't miss her. She was my first proper character, and I like to think I gave her a fitting end.

Ellen Nugent

Vampire: The Masquerade, I would confidently say Fox His only attributes are that he can do really bad magic played. She does, sadly, also qualify as the worst, due to my absolutely abysmal luck while playing her

skill, the more dice you get to roll, trying to get enough | I've never had the chance to play Dadd Daddison, as when successes to perform a task. I'd made Fox good at running, punching, jumping - skills I thought would help when we tracked down a suitably evil vampire art dealer and started a fight with him and his minions.

Players gain hunger-points for a number of reasons: attack, or things aren't going so well and you start getting frustrated (or hangry, as my group liked to joke).

Sadie's sleep was disrupted by footsteps nearby. She This sets the scene for Fox's run-in with the evil art dealer inspirational way.). The art dealer (I'll call him William, death. You can imagine my annoyance (and mounting Hunger) as everything I tried to do failed. Grappling, kicking, even jumping towards him - nothing I tried to do worked.

All except for one roll. One critical little roll.

overly good luck during the session? That attack brought | but began to pray for the party, and Dadd in particular. me to 5 points of hunger - time to eat the nearest person. Which was William, as I'd just chomped down on his neck.

For all of the failures that session, they paled in comparison drinking and stealing their power).

The storyteller even allowed me to break the rules and make another roll to resist killing this man - "If you can get even one success in this pool of all of your dice,

Dadd Daddison - master of the magic trick ¦ Glob - the dim kobold fighter

May I introduce Sadie Ní Dochartaigh: renowned bard | Meet Fox. Small, mohawked and armed with a crowbar | One of the characters I'm about to describe could either | One of the major appeals of Dungeon and Dragons is be the best or the worst. His name? Dadd Daddison. Class? None. Race? Human, subspecies: Dad.

> was one of the most fun characters I've ever created and tricks and make really bad dad jokes. He's not proficient with any weapons, he's not a real magic user, and his motivations were to go on a really cool adventure with some really cool people so he could have a new community for its use of multiple kinds of dice, the badass story for his kids. He's wholesome, kind, always most famous being the 20-sided dice. Vampire: The has water and snacks for the other party members, and

> > I play D&D I usually want my character to have a good story, a big sad start, a happy middle where friends are made, drama ensues, and a heartbreaking twist to what happens to my character. It doesn't always end in death - sometimes

a tavern. One of Sadie's friends tried to send a drunk | eat an entire cheese garlic loaf by yourself, and 5 is an | My plan for Dadd (who coincidentally shares a name with | act recklessly. He would constantly try to climb larger older man to mess with her, and when she found out, | underliable, unstoppable urge to eat the nearest person. | a background character for another campaign I'm in with | enemies and frequently found himself flung across the undeniable, unstoppable urge to eat the nearest person. I a background character for another campaign I'm in with no affiliation) is to play him the proper way - as an absolute goofball who contributes to nothing but moral by telling okes, being the comic relief in stressful situations, and after ights have happened, for him to go up to the biggest slain foe, poke them with a stick, and proclaim a glorious win for

i just magic, and that the true magic came from enjoying yourself and making others happy. The ranger would think she knew everything about tracking and hunting, until Dadd showed her a compass and a map. The Half elf Cleric would always say Dadd taught them nothing, but decided to try biting William, as everything else up to that ! in reality, they would be quite impressed at his spirituality, point had failed - and this time I succeeded. Remember | and the respect he had for all things living and good, how I mentioned gaining hunger points by performing bringing a hidden smile to them. The Cleric would pray Sadie mouthed "I'm sorry" to Jaskier as she turned and powerful attacks or being frustrated, and that I hadn't had to their deity not just for themself and for all things good,

> He'd go to taverns and ask for a cocktail no one had heard of before, and end up taking the only drinks they had going; to me trying to not let my character eat William. I failed at | ale. Dadd would always go to taverns and try to play tricks trying to stop myself from drinking his blood. I failed at that were so obviously fake magic, and his friends would act trying not to kill him while drinking his blood. I failed at a amazed as he'd pull a coin from behind one of the party trying not to commit the worst crime possible in vampire 1 members' ears. Dadd would be cowardly in all except one society: Diablerie (killing another vampire via blood of the biggest battles the party would face, where he would quickly unsheath a massive sword from the rangers back, and run towards the 50-foot tall giant, screaming "FOR MY KIDS AND DAVE". The scene would be set that everyone present would see him for the hero he was, before the giant flicked him 40 feet straight into the nearest tree, Il let you not kill him" - every single dice came up a giant flicked him 40 feet straight into the nearest tree, ailure. A side effect of committing Diablerie on a more sword and all. The party would hear a faint "I'm okay" from powerful vampire is that they take over their new host, I a distance. In the end, Dadd goes home, to be with his o I spent the next session sadly failing rolls to try and I kids and husband. Scratched up, swollen eyes, and broken stop Fox being taken over by an evil bougie art vampire. Left arm, Dadd would recall all the adventures he's had with would be the big bad villain for our following campaign. his new friends, and although they would continue on their quest, Dadd would be happy he just got to be a part of it.

Lennon McGuirk

the freedom in character creation. The variety means that sometimes you make beast slaying gods of characters, but every now and again you end up making a completely ridiculous character that cannot accomplish the simplest of tasks.

For me, that character was Glob, a tiny kobold fighter with more flaws than brain cells. I rolled so badly on my character's ability scores that my dungeon master offered a reroll; however, justly determined, I decided to nave some fun with him.

Now the first major issue with Glob wasn't his low intelligence score. Many characters have low intelligence and they usually make up for it in other areas. No, Glob's main issue was that he was a fighter with low strength and dexterity as well as an armour class and hit points so low hat almost any roll in combat would land a dangerous hit. This meant that Glob spent more time out of combat recuperating his injuries than anything else, and his low intelligence meant that he would continuously room. If he was within melee distance, you could be certain that Glob would try to bite you. One example I can think of is the stone golem that the party was fighting in a dungeon. During the fight, Glob decided the best way to attack the golem that again, was made from stone, would be to bite it. He of course promptly broke multiple teeth and did more damage to himself than the enemy. He then proceeded to try to bite the stone golem again, before being launched into a nearby wall.

Though being treated like a rag doll during combat wasn't the only issue Glob had during his run. He had an undying love of dragons. If Glob saw a dragon he would immediately do any request it asked. I knew that here would be no dragons as enemies in the campaign as I had cleared it with the dungeon master beforehand, but what I was not aware of was the dragon egg kept in a glass cabinet in one of the museums that Glob was stealing from. He immediately forgot the mission opting instead to spend about 3 in-game hours trying to remove the egg from the cabinet without alerting anyone. Of course with Glob's luck, he rolled multiple nat-ones and caused a massive fight to break out. He did, however, get his egg. Which he spent the remainder of the campaign intensely looking after until it finally hatched. I feel it important to point out that this idiotic kobold-fighter now had a dragon imprinted on him. It was a recipe for disaster. Every single quest ended in burnt down buildings due to the inseparable pair. One of which didn't even have a name because Glob could barely speak coherently enough to name his new friend.

hat dragon would ultimately prove to be Glob's downfall Non-playable characters from all over the world, who had n injured or had property destroyed by Glob and his friend, banded together to try to kill the dragon. Glob, in his infinite wisdom, ran straight into this mob to try to protect his friend and sadly he did not return. However, we did get a very nice origin story for the dragon that

### travel

### The world from your bedroom

Nicola Kenny

Nicola Kenny discusses how she has expanded her world in the past year and offers escapism suggestions during current restrictions.

The Pandemic continues. And so too does our desire to travel and experience the world once again. As vaccines roll out, we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. But how do we quench our need for adventure and wanderlust in the waiting months? How can we find ways to connect with other people and cultures?

### Escape with words

Travelling has opened me up to new ideas, people, and places. It has drawn me into unfamiliar territories of the mind. During the pandemic, reading has provided me with a similar sense of relief and escape. Reading is an adventure from the moment you pick up a text, sparking conversations and inspiring ideas. Reading transports us to new and exciting places.

There is a fantastic selection of Irish travel writers, namely Manchan Magan and Rosita Boland, who describe their thrilling global adventures in evocative and colourful detail. Reading Magan's Truck Fever and Boland's Elsewhere, we become a part of the extraordinary journeys they have taken across the world throughout their lives. Exploring different cultures and societies, their writings reflect how the experiences we have on our travels and the people we meet along the way can dramatically shape the course

See the Cuirt International Festival of Literature from the 21st to the 25th of April for further escape and inspiration. This festival aims to celebrate and shine a spotlight on national and international literary talent. Hear from different voices at home and abroad that will be sure to lift and excite

..and watch something afterwards

For me, photographs highlight the magic of every day and allow us to discover and delve into alternative worlds. Take a journey to the mountains of Northern Albania or across the Atlantic Ocean by looking at young Irish photographers' work in Point.51 magazine. This is a new independent print magazine exploring essential contemporary issues in Europe. Working with people fascinating people along the way.

> Pick up unusual ingredients from your local supermarket's global shelves and organise a cultural feast with your

Screen media's immersive quality has provided me with the pleasure of adventure and delightful escapism during the pandemic. Transport yourself to the West every nday night by watching North America with Simon Reeve on the RTE player. In this series, explorer Reeve travels the entire length of the Americas from Alaska to worldwide, their visually arresting images offer something Costa Rica while learning about contemporary social and places. In the last year, I have found that by closing my political issues, experiences epic landscapes and meet eyes and listening, I can connect with something greater

flatmates or family.

### food & drink

### Childhood Treats

Imagine you're eight years old again. You're standing in the door of the shop, and you have a crisp five euro note clutched in your sweaty little paw. Your eye ranges intently over the glittering array of sweets, crisps and minerals. How are you going to spend this windfall? Watermelon slices? Jelly snakes? Curly-wurleys? Rancheros? Sophie Finn, Andrew Nolan and Nathan Young indulge us with their sweet sweet nostalgia.

The act of walking out of school on a Friday, doing some awful mental maths to gauge how far the wandering 50c coin I found could run me, was biblical

Cupboard Love: Coriander

Doireann de Courcy Mac Donnell

Doireann de Courcy Mac Donnell

was overdone, it tastes like soap. I listened to friends and a plebeian).

world. Known as cilantro in parts of America, it can be into my own hands.

subconsciously took on the opinions of others. But I will

used fresh, with its flat green leaf and long stalks, dried,

introduces us to Uncle Johnny's

Moroccan tagine.

writing you an entire article.



The Gobstopper

### Sophie Finn

of the taste (I actually recall believing they tasted slightly of chalk), but because they literally lasted FOREVER. Growing up in the middle of nowhere means you learned to be crafty with resources. We had it timed perfectly. We could make a gobstopper last 2 and a half weeks, or the shopping.

eagerly await the day we went to town and our mam would say the magical words "you can get something from the shop". My oldest sister would be given the crisp €5 note, and we would race to the nearest newsagents. We would bag, no matter how much I was kindly given. If I had a delicacy of soft-serve ice cream, the kind that only came then spend as much time as we could (undoubtedly euro, I'd get one euro's worth, so on, so forth. Just to from a van. receiving several suspicious looks from the shop assistant) clarify, that would be one euro of blue bonbons. I'm not surveying the different sweets and imagining the amazing sure what happened in the lives of some people that The village I grew up in was far too small to justify regular Finally, we would settle on the predetermined traditional sincerest apologies. one gobstopper each (I always always wanted a pick n mix, but every time my sisters convinced me of what an with jaws painfully strained and a chalky taste in the mouth.

Being a child of the recession, this bliss couldn't last. was, in fact, a thing. May God forgive us for that one), but and flakes were extra, but we all coughed up for them. Eventually, the day came when my mother decided this more often than not we're left grieving for what once was. lavish habit could not continue and we were downgraded ensued, with my eldest sister arguing it was a violation of the rights of the child, my middle sister crying, and I in what could only be described as a state of bereavement. Eventually, we resigned ourselves to the reality and went home, staring mournfully at our one measly gobstopper.

overcome with the shock, mutinously grabbed the her huddled in a corner gnawing at the massive globe. my 800 queries, that is. Unsurprisingly this did not end well, within 5 minutes we heard screams and she had chipped an incisor. We were But blue bonbon, my heart is yours. never allowed a gobstopper again

I was worried the mint

and tomato would

to friends.

Coriander, or coriandrum sativum, as Google would With lockdown restrictions depriving me of his cooking

inform me, is a herb used in cuisines from all over the for the best part of a year now, I decided to take matters

or as a seed. It is sublime in a tomato salsa, the opening According to the (proper) recipe, for this dish you will

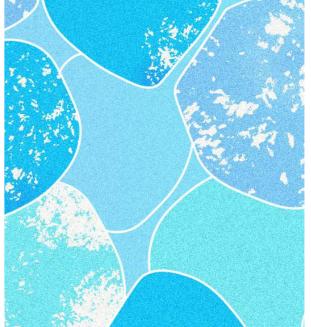
receive a strongly worded letter informing me this article onions, 4 cloves of garlic, 2 red deseeded chillies, 2

be bitter (and weird)

enemies as opposed

having spent time in Mexico, Africa and all over, his

understanding of food and flavour is second to none.



Blue Bon-Bons (and treats we have lost)

### Andrew Nolan

all immediately remember (I'm not entirely sure why The the children. Bear in the Big Blue House got its own make of crisps, whenever the next time our mother would bring us to do but sure look you'll hear no complaints from me). For me, Growing up in a small village in Offaly, the ice cream van the safest bet would have always been bonbons. The act was relatively rare. The local corner store did sell ice lollies of walking out of school on a Friday, doing some awful and Cornettos, and my parents would buy tubs of ice My eight-year-old self and my two older sisters would mental maths to gauge how far the wandering 50c coin I cream to serve as dessert after Sunday dinners, but these found could run me, was biblical.

The routine was strict, though. There was never a mixed which was simply "nice", by the same name as the rare

Accomplished Irish Historian Meditations for the Anxious The other time soft-serve was available was when we went Boost bars, but they just feel off. It's just not the same.

This one is entirely personal, so think of this as a one-way cream therapy session: was the blackcurrant flavour of Lucozade a fever dream I had? There was legitimately nothing I don't get soft-serve ice cream much nowadays, would rather have after school than one of these bad despite living in a city where it's available in almost every Upon returning home, my middle sister, obviously boys. Nobody outside of my friend group at school ever McDonald's or Supermac's branch. Much like how one remembers it, though. And no, before you suggest it, would probably not want a Christmas dinner served on gobstopper and sprinted to her room, where she therein mixing Ribena and 7-up doesn't replicate it. Though I a sunny morning in place of breakfast, a large part of the attempted to eat the entire thing. I still vividly remember guess it'll have to do. Until Lucozade reps answer one of experience of the ice cream cone is time and place. My



### Ice Cream Cones

### Nathan Young

My favourite childhood sweets were gobstoppers, the There's a reason why "like a kid in a candy shop" is a Looking back, there is something sinister about ice cream giant multi-coloured ones that cost €1.50 in town. They phrase. It's hard to think of a feeling like it - being given vans, although we didn't think it at the time. Just as a were the OBSESSION of me and my sisters. Not because the stray fiver and an abundance of freedom meant you clown's makeup lands them in the uncanny valley, the were leaving that shop with full pockets and a happy head. music from those vans is almost happy, almost what joy is supposed to sound like. Unlike clowns, however, the ice I feel that growing up in Ireland there are a few staples we cream vans fulfil their promise. They bring ice cream to

> are not the same. Not that I didn't like ice cream from a tub, but it always seemed unfair to refer to that food,

combinations we would buy when we were old and rich. led them to prefer strawberry, but all I can do is offer my visits from the ice cream van. He would occasionally visit on a sunny weekend morning, presumably planning on spending the afternoon in a busy town near the Honourable mentions must also go to the sweet Kinder playground. Most of us would be inside, watching extravagant waste of money that would be, pick n mix being extortion by another name). We would then spend can of American Cola. These aside, there's always a soft of the music. This was one occasion where the stranger in the following weeks in a state of extreme contentedness, spot for discontinued treats that no longer bless Centra a van promising treats was to be believed. Having hassled shelves. Now, sometimes they are pulled for a very good our parents for change or raided our money boxes, we reason (this is your reminder that the Tayto chocolate bar ran out to be at the front of the queue. Strawberry sauce

to.. one gobstopper. between three.. \*gag\*. We were Mind recently posted an Instagram video that unlocked to the seaside in the summer. Having grandparents in understandably in extreme and bitter shock. Much fighting the memory of Moro bars. Yes, okay, you can still buy Wexford and Cornwall, most summers were traditional seaside affairs, complete with fish 'n' chips, sandcastles, donkey rides, and, of course, cones of soft and sweet ice

> flatmates and I spent one summer in Clare, next to the seaside. One day early on, we got ourselves a round of cones. It wasn't as soft or as scrumptious as I remembered it being. It was actually rather sickly. Though, the memories it brought back made me appreciate it.

# Vaccine passports and

Anna Blackburn

Anna Blackburn *discusses the history* of vaccine passports and why many countries are beginning to consider them essential for safe travel and tourism.

What most people don't know is that vaccine passports are not a new

idea

It has been a long time since most people have left their opportunity to travel this summer, but there is much country of residence or even their 5km, and unfortunately, debate surrounding the viability of this plan. Many people

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drastically, and the possibility of vaccine passports offers a vaccine passports would. way to start rebuilding these industries.

has received the full dose of a COVID-19 vaccination, today became a requirement of international travel whether that be the Pfizer, BioNTech, Moderna, during the First World War as a way to protect countries' AstraZeneca, or the recently approved Johnson & borders. With the Spanish Flu pandemic raging across Johnson vaccine. It would also likely include other Europe, governments realised that the passport was not necessary medical information, such as recent Covid test enough to keep people safe. As a result, the League results and any possible underlying health conditions. of Nations added health requirements to international mobile apps, such as the CommonPass, IATA Travel Pass, out in the conditions most favourable to public health". and the IBM Digital Health Pass. As well as these, EU propose their own 'Digital Green Pass' next month. These diseases such as Malaria, Polio, Yellow Fever, Rabies and digital health passport applications aim to make country- even Measles on arrival. specific vaccination documents, which would have been accessible and internationally recognized.

The vaccine passport would give Europeans the effects on everything in our lives, from major widespread



the wait is not yet over. With the limited number of are raising questions about ethical concerns, specifically vaccinations across the EU and globally, local and regarding individual rights such as the privacy and international travel restrictions persist. However, officials in freedom of choice involved in making this documentation Europe are proposing the implementation of a 'vaccine a requirement of international travel. Several airlines have passport' to international travel requirements as a means already begun the process of checking passengers for of alleviating these restrictions somewhat. As a result, proof of vaccination or Covid-19. Emirates (an airline there may yet be a chance to travel abroad this summer. group based in the United Arab Emirates) was the first introduce rapid blood testing for Covid-19 prior to The vaccine passport would allow for a gradual reopening allowing passengers to board flights. Qantas Airways in of tourist opportunities to help European economies get Australia has said they plan to start requiring proof of back on their feet. Tourism in Europe is a hundred billion vaccination as a prerequisite for flying with the company. euro industry, bringing in over €750 million annually and While these airlines, as privately-owned companies, have funding more than 14 million jobs. With the pandemic the right to practice these safety measures, many feel at large over the last year, these numbers have fallen that it is infringing upon their individual rights, just as the

unique and appealing during this time.

Flavours feed the mind and soul, and should be celebrated

and explored as we wait out the coming months. There

is a delicious and diverse offering of student-friendly

recipes online from Irish Cook's such as Donal Skehan.

Skehan's food reflects the time he has taken over his

career to travel and find inspiration. His 'You can do it

too' approach on his website and YouTube channel is

precisely the kind of encouragement we need during this

time. Equally, The Happy Pear brothers have a brilliant

collection of cookbooks, inspired by their adventures and

international café team. These can be purchased online

Pick up unusual ingredients from your local supermarket's

llobal shelves and organise a cultural feast with your

latmates or family. Bring the joy back into your kitchen

by cooking together while dancing to complementary

music. Make it an occasion that will carry you away to the

places you desire to visit.

What most people don't know is that vaccine passports What is a vaccine passport? It is proof that an individual are not a new idea. The standard passports we use Many private companies are in the process of developing travel in 1925, stating that transport should "be carried Vaccination requirements have been in place for many President Ursula von der Leyen said that the EU would years. Countries around the world require vaccinations for

previously distributed as paper certificates, more easily As globalisation continues to expand, countries have not only the right but the responsibility to protect their citizens. The Covid-19 pandemic has had long-lasting

seen over the past year, increased international mobility

countries have

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responsibility

their citizens

It's true, no one can force you to be vaccinated for the Coronavirus. It is an individual right whether or not you choose to get the vaccine. Though, it seems that the likelihood of vaccine passports being incorporated into travel is only going to continue increasing. Many government officials are still hesitant to approve this proposal due to a lack of information on new variants, like the UK's B117 variant, and concern regarding whether or not vaccinated people could still carry and spread the virus. These scientific blind-spots and ethical concerns are slowing the implementation of vaccine passports, but many officials still see them as essential for safe tourism.

vaccine, and furthermore the vaccine passport, is a way

of protecting citizens from imported diseases. As we have

There is no shortage of immersive foreign language films to watch as part of this year's Oscar celebrations. Open your mind to provocative ideas and culture and engage with favourites such as Danish film DRUK or Tunisian

film The Man who sold his skin. These films and many others are available through MUBI, an online streaming platform focussing on classic and arthouse cinema. An exceptional student rate is available and worth looking

into considering the quality of the foreign language films

During the last few months, I have been amazed at how Ireland's cultural centres have found new ways to

adapt and produce work that reflects the diversity in Irish

culture and society today. Of note is the third edition of Dear Ireland, a series of three-minute postcards

from underrepresented voices in Irish society, hosted

online by The Abbey Theatre. This latest edition asks the question: 'What does it feel like to be you, right now, in

Ireland?' Featuring a superb range of voices, including

the Discovery Gospel Choir, Tailtiu Theatre Company

and the Africa Centre, this series offers new angles and

The Project Arts Centre have made similar efforts in recent

months to provide its audience with new ideas and culture. In February, they hosted SPOTLIGHT: Eire to the world, a

collaborative, creative and interactive project focusing on

highlighting artists of black heritage in Ireland. The film,

available on YouTube, shows live performance, spoken

word, acting, podcasts, and fashion from a diverse set of

Audio is an imaginative medium that brings us to faraway

than myself. Outlook from the BBC World Service brings

you extraordinary, first-person stories from around the

world, with recent episodes transporting listeners to

places like Egypt, Cameroon, and New York. These stories

are, at once, expressive and enlightening. Equally, RTE's

The Documentary on One podcast features stories that

connect us with the broader world as told through the

Additionally, tuning into music offers a fantastic sense

of escape. Streaming platforms have become places of

great discovery and cultural diversion. In the dark of night,

escape your 5km by popping on your headphones and

As we wait for our next great escape, feed your mind with

what is available to you at home. Encourage and maintain

your curiosity and sense of wonder for our incredibly

diverse world. Soon enough, we will be able to embrace

dancing to the widening beat and rhythm.

the outside once again. What a joy that will be.

Irish lens.

perspectives on Irish society and culture today.

voices from different cultures and backgrounds.

Or catch up on online events

So if travelling abroad this summer is something you intend on doing, you will need to check your destination country's vaccination requirements. The World Health Organization website has a list of every country's required vaccinations upon entry. The purpose of vaccinations is to prevent the spread of deadly diseases like the Coronavirus and the vaccine passport is a way of ensuring that you are not at risk or pose a risk to others when travelling to other countries. Covid-19 is not going away anytime soon.

Travel during Summer 2021 seems very likely to be reliant on the Covid-19 vaccine passport in order to prevent another global outbreak of the virus and keep people safe. And while they are still reluctant to do so at the moment, government officials must favour the collective over the individual to prevent a pandemic of this size and devastation from happening again.

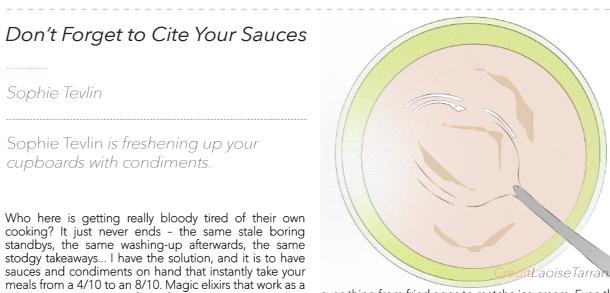
helps viruses spread and mutate at an alarming rate, something which no one wants to experience again. Don't Forget to Cite Your Sauces

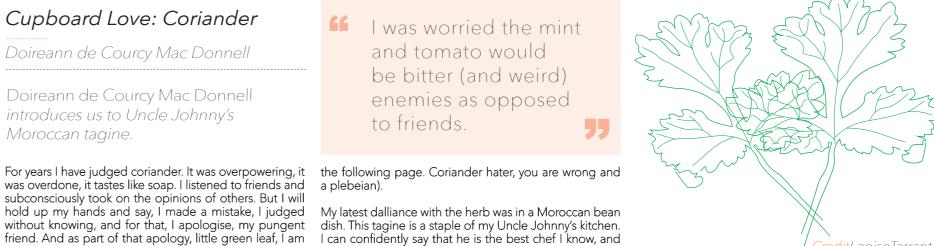
> Sophie Tevlin is freshening up your cupboards with condiments.

Sophie Tevlin

cooking? It just never ends - the same stale boring standbys, the same washing-up afterwards, the same stodgy takeaways... I have the solution, and it is to have sauces and condiments on hand that instantly take your meals from a 4/10 to an 8/10. Magic elixirs that work as a salad dressing, on a stir-fry or fried rice, instant noodles, as a sandwich relish, on ice-cream in a pinch... etc etc. So here I have a recommendation for a condiment and a recipe for a sauce, and both I can promise are very far from boring and stale - about as far from boring and stale as you could get if Jamie Oliver was standing on the North Pole and you were standing on the South.

First, the condiment. Laoganma chilli oil with dried fermented black beans, chilli flakes, and Sichuan pepper.





Mint?! I mean intellectually I understand that mint is a fresh herbs - which aren't extortionate anymore and you staple in Moroccan dishes and my head said 'okkk', my can find them in all supermarkets really - you're going heart said 'tread with caution'. I was worried the mint and to want to use them. I would recommend using the flourish of an aromatic curry, or the perfect finish to your need a tin of haricot beans (I used broad beans because tomato would be bitter (and weird) enemies as opposed remaining parsley and coriander for Chimichurri Burgers. Mexican madness. I emphatically believe that any dish it that's what was in the press), 2-3 tablespoons of ghee to friends. But, as it turned out, the mint was exactly what You can put the mint to good use in a Mojito. Waste not

should be entered under the "unpopular opinions" on teaspoons of sugar, 2 teaspoons of harissa, 2 cans of As you would expect, you begin with the oil/butter/ghee

chopped tomatoes, a bunch of fresh parsley, a bunch of fresh coriander, and, a bunch of fresh mint.

touches, it enhances (though, as I write this I wonder will I (I used a spray oil and a bitta butter), 2 finely chopped the dish needed. Every day is a school day.

need to understand the bones of a dish - the basic flavour be vegan. But it also wouldn't be as nice. components and what they do, and any techniques used. Then you can start riffing. In this instance, it helps to think

The Acid: a splash of rice vinegar (cider vinegar if you mixed them together they're going to separate again. That means you also need something to emulsify the other ingredients - that is, to make them stay together when they really want to be apart, like a tactful manager To that, you're going to add about three peeled garlic soothing the egos of a band of quarrelling rockstars. In mayonnaise, it's mustard. In Bon Appetit's Green Sauce blender, which is easily the best thing about this recipe), No.4, (Google it, trust me) it's tahini and white miso. In and a knob of peeled ginger (ditto. To peel ginger, scrape your parents' marriage, it's societal pressure and blind habit. (Maureen, you can do so much better. Call me?)

The earthy base, emulsifier and oil of this particular sauce is going to be about three heaped tablespoons of peanut Taste, and add more of whatever you think it needs. That's outter. You might be used to thinking of peanut butter as it! The process is basically: 1) put ingredients in blender everything from fried eggs to matcha ice-cream. Even the sweet, but the good-quality ones are 100% peanut and way it looks on the plate delights me, a splash of bright work equally as well in savoury dishes. In Southeast Asian orange like going on holiday. I never thought anything cuisine, peanut sauce is a usual accompaniment to grilled would knock Zacusca off the top spot as queen of the chicken skewers (satay), and that's what I've based this condiments (and, MY HEART) but here I am, just a woman recipe on. It pairs well with rice and noodle dishes, and standing in front of a jar of chilli oil, asking it to continue it's punchy and bright and intense and eyes-wideningly being available in most Asian groceries and online tasty. Add the peanut butter to the jug of your blender, and then add:

lob in some onions, garlic, chilli and sautée. Once they begin to colour, it's time for the sprinkle of sugar, the harissa and the drained beans. Add the tomatoes and a little water to ensure the beans are submerged, and cook until it begins to boil. Once it's bubbling you can reduce the heat and leave to simmer for thirty minutes. Sprinkle your tagine with herbs, salt and pepper and let it simmer for a further ten minutes, and voilá.

I served this with boiled baby potatoes, though as far as I'm aware this dish is traditionally served as is, or with chunks of bread. In my uncle's rendition, he usually adds diced meat and some fruit, so I also added lamb (after the onions and garlic) and apricots (at the end, when simmering). Prunes do the job too. I made the stew in the morning and let it sit, and I think the flavour was better for it. It was delicious. Not as good as Johnny's - he makes his own harissa. It's quite easy to make and you do reap the rewards of making it fresh, I used a little jar though - but my version was still pretty darn tasty. Give it a go.

PS - Since you're going to the effort of sourcing all these want not. Thank me later.

of this sauce as similar to a salad dressing. To make salad don't have it) and the juice of a lime. I'll add lemon juice dressing, you need something salty, something oily, if I have one handy - combining a few acids makes your and something acidic. Now oil and water are naturally finished concoction bright and punchy - but don't leave incompatible, which means that five minutes after you've the lime out either. Fish sauce, coriander and lime juice is a dynamite combination, as you'll know if you've ever had

> cloves (you don't have to grate them if you use the it with a teaspoon), a teaspoon of honey, and a sheaf of fresh coriander, stalks and all. Save a few leaves for a garnish and blend it all together, adding as much warm water as you need to get a smooth runny consistency. 2) press button. It'll probably take you less time than it took to read this (Aw hell, a gal's gotta fill a page out somehow)! The peanut sauce will keep for a few days in the fridge. Saute a bag of pre-chopped stir-fry veg in a wok, boil some rice noodles and an egg or two - I do this in the same pot, though I have a dim feeling you're not supposed to. Drizzle your sauce over the top and you have lunch in ten minutes. Just keep in mind that the pungent kick of the raw garlic, while extremely delicious, might mean you have to wear a mask inside the house

Ok! On to the sauce! Making your own sauces at home, as The Salt: a good glug of soy sauce and a good glug of It is intensely savoury, spicy, crunchy – it tingles and dances opposed to paying silly money for a small jar of something fish sauce. The more complex and umami the salts, the on the tongue. I am obsessed with it. I have eaten it on that won't taste as good and fresh, is dead easy. You just better the flavour. If you left out the fish sauce, this would

### staff writes **Unpopular Opinions**



Andrew Nolan

Star Wars has always sucked

(This is more aimed at those who make it a mission to gatekeep everything that isn't the original trilogy of movies. Yes you.) There's this notion that Star Wars turned awful at some point during the late '90s and almost everything from that point onwards is sacrilegious. Which is fair enough, you're more than allowed to think that - I just differ in that I think the original three movies suck as well.

These fans seem to hate the newer instalments' writing, but the one thing that everyone seems to forget is that the first three movies have some dreadful lines in there, too. I've had this argument with friends a lot, and even though I'm a big fan of movies myself, I get so much enjoyment from seeing how angry people get defending them.

My personal favourite story of this is when I tried to tell a friend that Star Wars is for nostalgia merchants and that while there's a lot to enjoy (which I do), they're not exactly good films. To which, my friend got a little bit emotional about how much the movies meant to him, and how seeing Disney butcher the franchise made him feel genuinely down. Seizing an opportunity, I told him that one day more people will remember Rey from the Disney movies than Luke Skywalker from the originals and that we weren't the audience anymore. then told him to stop crying over laser swords. He did not react well. I'll leave out the expletives.



Sinéad Keating Brown clothes aren't nice

My wardrobe is a good mix of black and colourful clothes. I'm partial to a nice white, cream, beige or grey neutral piece but one colour I just don't do is brown. I'd extend my distaste for the colour to clothes other

people wear as well as my own. I'd normally say your body your choice, but, when it comes to clothing, brown clothes cross the line. Muddy ground, dog poop, bare trees, and dull winter days are not vibes I want to stir up. Coming from a family of redheads, I've heard the

argument that anything along a scale of mustard to brown tones suits their colouring, but I genuinely don't see brown as a flattering colour on anyone. A grandad's brown corduroy, a school uniform's awful brown jumper, 'good' brown shoes... get rid of them all. There are so many nicer natural tones and colours to bring a bit of joy or sophistication to your look without succumbing to brown!

I see Zara trying hard, aligning their website with a Vogue photoshoot, but no cool cut, shape or pose can distract from the fact that brown clothe's are simply lacking. Brown leather is outdated but the worst of all is brown velvet... and I say that passionately as a lover of velvet. There's nothing a brown garment accomplishes that another colour can't do better, which is why I am quite comfortable in my blanket statement that brown clothes just aren't nice.



Ellen Duggan

Living near the city centre does not make you cool

I truly could not tell you how many times I have sat back and listened to a mid-twenty-year-old male tell me precisely how long it takes him, down to the nanosecond, to amble into town. Given the fact it has been mere centuries since I have conversed, face-toface, with anyone other than my housemates, there is a possibility I may take artistic licence with this example of said conversation

Me: So...where do you live?

Man: Aw boy! I'm actually based in Phibsborough for the time being. Honestly like, I cannot imagine living anywhere else in the world. It's the epitome of like, Times Square in my eyes, not to get too 'grandiose' here, ha ha ha! Like if I was arsed to count every cent I have saved on public transport since moving here, I would literally be loaded. LOADED. So like, it takes me about 10 minutes to walk into town and that's like a 'stop and smell the flowers pace', you know what I mean? Like if...god forbid...I am on my scooter we are talking like 6 minutes. It's so quick it's basically time travel like. Ha

You would think, given the short distance that this individual is trying to explain, that a short monologue would be favoured. But no. You would be wrong

Living close to town does not make you a hero. It does not make you cooler than my Baldoyle based lifestyle. No one wants to hear you speak at length about how long it takes you to get to Boojum on a unicycle at 2am from a smoking area. Please, leave us alone and purchase a diary in which to vent.



Nathan Young

will never "Let people enjoy things"

Letting people enjoy things is a nice thing to do. If people enjoy things, it makes them happy, at least for the time they spend with said thing. Unfortunately for these people, I don't care. It is simply untrue that it doesn't affect me. Other people's tastes affect culture. If I am to share the streets with bronies and 30-year-old Hufflepuffs, then I reserve the right to at least give out about it.

If cinema-goers only want Disney films, then money will only be put into making those films. If only trash music gets downloaded, then only trash music will be played in the pubs I want to drink in. And this is all before we actually look at what media consumption does to the mind. Do the philistines not realise that *Harry Potter* fans

Like fast food, there is nothing wrong with liking some garbage media, but if someone told you they *only* ate nuggies and tendies you would be right to look at them with pity and disdain. I also like some trash media. The difference is that it's not the only thing I consume, and I don't take it personally when someone mocks it.

The bad news for me, but good news for those I'm attacking, is that I'm nobody. No matter how many times I say things that are right about whatever trash the mainstream has fallen in love with, it's still everywhere. If someone's ability to enjoy the mulch Marvel are feeding them is dependent on my approval, then the problem is deeper than I can help with.

Knitting doesn't make me a granny.

E. Keogh

I'm a very creative person. I've been knitting and crocheting for as long as I can remember. My Mam's friend taught me when I was about 8 to do it properly, and my love of my crafts has only grown with age. When my Nanny heard about my hobbies, she dug out her bag of hooks and needles for me to have, and she showed me all the jumpers and hats she had made over the

years. I made hats for my roles for plays in my primary school - my favourite had to be the iconic red hat from Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory. When teachers found out I could knit and crochet, they were really surprised that a young "lad" like myself could knit. So why was that so surprising? It stuck with me nonetheless that interest in such crafts wasn't normal for a boy. Even in the scouts, a place I thought was relatively judgement-free, knitting was almost a taboo subject. There was a badge for it so, of course, I went for it? I had to give a presentation on it and bring a few pieces I had made. Then came the questions. "Isn't knitting for nannies", "knitting is for girls", "you're a boy, why do you knit, isn't it girly".

In my all-boys secondary school, I was terrified of other boys finding out I could knit and crochet, I never wore any of the hats or scarves I made until I was outed in second year, and then I was targeted as a result. All the slurs you could imagine, being called a granny, the whole lot. So why is there such an opposition to boys knitting? Getting work experience in a knitting shop was a dream come true, but it was only after an awkward interview where I had to defend my knowledge about crafts, that was still met with scepticism even after I had demonstrated my know-how, that I got a placement.

In university, I realised I was Nonbinary, so the whole boywho-knitted thing died out, yet people still associate knitting with grannies and aul ones. One of the phrases I noticed popping up more and more commonly was

"knitting and crocheting explains the whole nonbinary thing, like its a telltale sign of being queer". Is it? Why is knitting a sign or a trait of being feminine or not straight? Sure, I turned out to be queer, but why is it accepted almost universally by people as this hobby you can only do if you're anything but straight, cisgender, and manly?

Anyone can knit and crochet, it only has these associations because over the years the ill-defined position that men have to take is to separate gender roles into what a man can and can't do. Being able to do a craft like knitting and crochet should be something to be proud of - it's not easy memorising stitches and being able to keep your tension in a piece. So, why don't we start recognising these crafts as something anyone can do, no matter your gender, sexuality, or without assuming that someone who does them "obviously" fits predefined criteria instead of acknowledging that no matter what I am, I can crochet a sick looking Baby Yoda. Another critique of these crafts is its slow and boring, but I ask the question; Who has 15 Baby Yodas? The person who can crochet, me.



# recommends

# Staff Unsung fictional character

E. Keogh

Sydney Novak

For me, it has to be Sydney Novak from Netflix's I am Not Ok With This (2020). She was the representation I desperately needed as a teen, and that many teens still need today. Netflix didn't market the series very well, and because of Covid, this show and many others were cancelled due to "budgetary constraints"

Sydney Novak is one of only a handful of characters that is actually portrayed by a teen the character's age. Sydney is a 17-year-old trying to find her way in the world, cultivating her powers, while also trying to be a normal teen. With the help of her friends Stanley and Dina, Sydney navigates being a poor, queer teenager in a boring town in Pittsburgh.

The superpowers part isn't relatable, sadly, but being a queer teen in a small community with only a couple of friends definitely is. Sydney, as all teenagers do, points out all faults she perceives in herself. I am not okay with this demonstrates to teenagers that they're not alone in struggling to become young adults. It's definitely a comfort show for me, the characters feel so authentic, and they deal with issues in a constructive way, rather than being portrayed as gorgeous mid-20-year-old actors with no problems.

Along with Sydney giving viewers representation, and being authentic, she's also a badass queer superhero with telekinesis. Unfortunately, as mentioned, the show was cancelled, and fans were left with a massive cliffhanger. It's unlikely that we'll get a season 3 due to Netflix's decision, and alas, Sydney will continue to be the unsung hero truly appreciated by few.

Cahal Mc Auley -

Chewbacca

In a franchise with a pantheon of characters as rich as that of Star Wars, there are bound to be a few characters who don't receive the recognition they deserve. The standout one, however, is surely the long-suffering Chewbacca, who's contributions are underappreciated in not just one but two trilogies.

It all began back in *A New Hope* where even after infiltrating the Death Star and returning to save Luke and the rebellion as a whole, Chewbacca doesn't receive a medal, even when Luke

A reasonably plausible explanation has been given that Chewbacca refused a medal as Wookiees do not like to receive material rewards for deeds done. This is undone in *The Rise of Skywalker*, however, as what reward

does Chewbacca receive for being overlooked for a second trilogy? The very same medal that he should have been awarded for saving everyone the first time around. The plight of Chewbacca is summed up in *The Force Awakens* where soon after seeing his best friend of several decades be impaled by his own son, the grieving Chewie is roundly ignored

Though a beloved and valued character, Chewbacca surely deserves better than this, and in an era where every second character seems to be getting a spin-off film or show, we can only hope that our favourite Wookiee can finally take centre stage at some point in the future.

by Leia she runs to hug Rey, someone she has never met before.

Liam Ferguson -War Machine

A character I feel is criminally underrated is James "War Machine" Rhodes (also known as Rhodey) from the MCU. Rhodey, played by the always delightful Don Cheadle is often tossed aside as a simple Iron-Man clone, but he's so much more than that.

Rhodey is the only character to have suffered any real consequences from the team breaking squabble that occurred in Captain America: Civil War, getting paralysed from the waist down. He offhandedly mentions this in Infinity War as he now is only able to walk using mechanical braces, but without any kind of apology from his team members who caused this, he takes it on the chin because he is a champ. He's Marvel's only disabled Avenger and gets no credit for continuing the save the world

On top of this, Don Cheadle is great. He has amazing comedic timing and an elegant presence on screen, often landing some of the best jokes in these movies. He's a genuinely great character that just is barely given the time of day in the public conscience or the movies themselves. Luckily, he is set to star in his own Disney Plus series, Armour Wars, sometime in 2022 so hopefully this will properly allow the potential of Rhodey to shine as Don Cheadle is able to absolutely go off and steal every scene Doireann de Courcy Mac Donnell -William Thacker's friends

Notting Hill has to be one of the best rom-coms going. First released in 1999 (the golden age of the rom-com in my humble opinion), it stands the test of time. To be perfectly honest, the rom" part of the rom-com is so not the reason to watch this. Starring Julia Roberts as Anna Scott, the misunderstood beautiful Hollywood superstar, and Hugh Grant in his classic foppish, boy-next-door, quietly-'I'm actually really sexy'-type as William Thacker, from the outset, you know where we're going.

However. Go Tobann. Until. A stellar diversion from the overplayed whirlwind romance appears in the form of a dinner with William's friends. The friends are presented as a group of pretty standard people; with problems, and embarrassments, and normal characteristics. Eating dinner with people I like and hanging out afterwards, letting the food and liquid accompaniment envelop you in a food coma, is my favourite thing to do and it's here where the movie excels. It is pleasant, and funny, and poignant, and in a haze of the usual romcom heartache and long looks and ust, it is a welcome intervention. It feels human.

The unsung characters of the movie are really the entire ensemble cast (here's bizarre housemate Spike's shoutout). Notting Hill is cheesy, and predictable, and oh so unrealistic, and if the film were to be made today it undoubtedly would look very different. But don't let your takeaway from the movie be the classic (and bleugh) "I'm just a girl standing in front of a boy" but its spot-on portrayal of dinner and a couple of *gloiní* with good pals.





Hello! My name is Joanne Joanne - drag legend, eleven-time Grammy winner, full-time resident of the tunnels in the Newman Building. This is the first instalment of what will be OTwo's best ever Agony Aunt column - that's right, the good people at The University Observer saw the way 2020 has gone, thought about who can be there as a light in the dark for the struggling students of UCD, and settled on a twenty-year-old drag queen from the backarse of County Wicklow. I'm as delighted as you are! I'll be answering your questions on love, sex, college or anything else via submissions in my Tipbox - do send your questions in! Nothing is too weird! I am incredibly nosy!

"Dear Agony Aunt, I really need to get out of my parent's house and I have an essential job that will let me travel, but if I were to move I could only afford to move in with my ex-boyfriend.

It's been a while since we dated and we both get along as friends, but I don't know if I should put myself in a situation where I could make things uncomfortable for both of us because I just want to live independently. What should I do?

Conflicted in the George"

¡Escandelo! I will be the first to admit that I don't have a lot of experience with actually moving out - all of my drag things are either in my childhood bedroom or hidden in plastic bags in the spare room. Every day, I live in fear that my parents will find them.

I get the financial insecurity, I really do - but I really don't think moving in with your ex is a good idea. I don't think it matters how well ye get along as friends if you ultimately want to live independently - if you have a feeling it might be awkward, you're probably right. Not to be plugging a Facebook group in a college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college newspaper in 2021, but there's this group I'm a member of college n of called Queer Housing Dublin LGBT+ - I can only assume that's relevant to someone called Conflicted in the George. It's updated pretty regularly and it's a good way to find places to live where you know for a fact your roommates or housemates will not be homophobic. We all love a bit of conflict, but I would pass on living with a homophobe.

If there's really no other option, let me know and I will personally move in with you and your ex. I won't be paying rent and I will not contribute in any meaningful way, but I know good telenovela drama when I see it.

"Dear Joanne Joanne

in his own show.

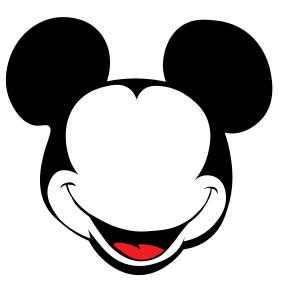
Should I pay for Disney+ or continue to stream by...other

I am really poor in fairness.

Other means, bro. I've never had Disney+ specifically - technically, I've never knowingly bought a subscription to any streaming platform. The only time I have was when I forgot that my month's free trial of Shudder was up and I woke up to sixty euro missing from my bank account. Normally, this doesn't happen to me - I've been using my friend's Netflix account since the start of first year. (Hi Carla!)

I don't know what these ~ other means ~ of streaming are, and for legal reasons, I cannot condone piracy in a student newspaper - but I will say that Disney+'s business practices feel a bit suspicious. I saw something on Twitter the other day about a so-called "experiment" they were doing where they charge already-paying subscribers an extra thirty quid to watch their newest movie a few months earlier. Thirty quid! The cheek! The nerve! The gall! The audacity! I know very little about Disney+ but I do know that I love a bargain - and that does not sound like one. Either share an account with someone else or be ready to make a whole load of email addresses to get those free trials.

That's all from me this time! I got a lot of submissions for this issue - more than I could answer in one go - but if your question wasn't answered this time don't let that stop you from sending them in! If you would like to ask for my advice, you can find the link to my Tipbox on the UO's "Contact Us" page and their social media pages. You can find me (and the link to the Tipbox) on Instagram at @joannesquared, and you can catch me on Saturdays downstairs in the Newman Building eating a Petit Filous in the corner between 4 and 5am.



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