

Student Reporter



Jonathan Kim

Grade 10
Culver City High School

Seagulls Reign Supreme in Culver City High School



Seagulls perch on top of the school gym, scouring the area for food and their next unsuspecting victim. [Source: Author, Jonathan Kim]

It's any other day at Culver City High School. The sky is clear, the leaves sway in the breeze, and the hallways and lunch patios are bustling with students after the highly anticipated lunch bell sounds. And perched on top of the school gym and cafeteria, lined up like an ordered military regiment, are seagulls menacingly overlooking this lunch scene.

At any given opportunity, these seagulls will swoop down and devour leftover school pizza, chips, and other food scraps scattered across the tables and campus. But

it's not just these seagulls' aggressive tendencies' that terrorize students, it is also their ability to bomb unsuspecting victims with their minuscule yet atrocious bird droppings.

"No one wants to be a victim," said one student anonymously. "Every day, I live in fear of this." And before you ask — no, this is not an overreaction. One cannot underestimate the impact of these explosive airborne detonators, causing irreversible psychological damage into each victim with a simple splat. Around campus, students have been seen running with their

hoods or even backpacks over their heads as they try to take cover from these foul, pooping machines during lunch and passing periods.

One victim commented anonymously on the experience, understandably hesitant to reveal their status due to the stigma that comes with being bombed by these birds. "I got poop on my shirt and I didn't have napkins, so I had to use water and notebook paper to clean it off," the student said. "It wasn't fun and I wouldn't recommend it."

While the pandemic and transition to online learning had forced the birds to relocate elsewhere to scour for food — students and staff hoping it would be for good — the return to in-person school has led to an even more aggressive and potent group of seagulls to emerge. And, despite the role that the pandemic played in altering the seagulls' traveling habits, CCHS students have differing views on a potential solution. "Just don't leave

out your food. Don't throw it out on the ground," said one student. Others believe the issue is irreparable, at least based on the current attitude among most students. "Realistically, no one will just stop leaving food," said another student. "This is their territory now and I guess we will have to try to coexist with them."

Nevertheless, all students can collectively agree on one simple truth; deterring these aggressive bird bombers from campus should be a high priority. Whether that be through enforcing a strict no-littering policy or instilling an environmentally sustainable mindset into CCHS students, which is especially relevant with a number of school festivities having just taken place during Earth Week, the blueprint for resolving this issue is in the school's hands. Until then, however, life on campus will continue as always — students living in fear, while seagulls, both figuratively and literally, remain on top.

Student Reporter



Sean Kim

Grade 10
Los Alamitos High School

My Experience Helping Refugee Families

Last weekend, I started a donation drive to help five Afghani refugee families that have recently moved to Long Beach, CA. The US Embassy had given these families apartments, but they lacked American clothes or even a good pair of pants for job interviews. Aiding these people has been amazing, and I will never forget what I learned from my experience.

I was only able to help with support from my classmates and a non-profit organization called Transitions In Motherhood. The company had been helping the refugee families since they arrived in California. The organization's altruistic volunteers devote their Saturdays to collecting, sorting, packing, and delivering donations to make the world a better place. I knew partnering with the non-profit would give my club members a hands-on experience and real-world perspective on the volunteering process.



All positive changes require diligent, passionate individuals. Partnering with the non-profit was a great idea! [Source: Author, Sean Kim]

Since freshman year, my club, Find Your Passion, has been looking for ways to impact the community. From elementary school festivals to ocean trash cleanups, members have made positive changes for society. When I learned about the families in need, I saw a perfect opportunity for the club's next project. I immediately got in contact with Transitions In Motherhood and offered my high school's support. Students wouldn't be able to help the families directly, but with the company's help, we

could raise donations by creating a clothing drive. Transitions In Motherhood loved my idea, and the plan was good to go. In partnership with the non-profit, I shared presentations in lunch meetings and created flyers on the official Find Your Passion Instagram. To incentivize donations, Transitions In Motherhood signed community service hours to reward donors. For each clothing item, we gave one hour, but we made sure to include a five-hour cap to avoid unhelpful donations. Af-

ter all, we wouldn't want thirty pairs of socks or twenty headbands. To spread the word, I asked my teachers for sticky notes during each class at school and handed out information about the donation drive to each of my deskmates. On the day of the event, I set up a booth and collection box at the local Transitions In Motherhood headquarters. By the end of the day, we received over two hundred articles of clothing, all from Los Alamitos High School students. The drive was a complete success, and it was a great feeling to see the results of our work.

This experience has been an eye-opening event that I will remember as I continue helping others. I have learned so much while working alongside my club members and Transitions In Motherhood. All in all, my experience helping refugee families has shown me that all positive changes require diligent, passionate individuals.

Student Reporter



Tyler Park

Grade 9
Harvard-Westlake School

Observing Europe's Support for Ukraine in its Cities

For spring break this year, my family went to three countries in Europe: the Netherlands, Belgium, and finally to a country only one country away from Ukraine, Germany. Despite the cultural differences between these three places, I observed that there was one thing in common; all expressed solidarity for Ukraine.

While many know that there is in fact a war happening, what caused it? We can trace the instigation of the war to the decades of political conflict after the fall of the Soviet Union. After the fall Russia lost a considerable amount of land, which was divided into countries such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, and more. Many of these newly formed countries joined NATO, the inter-governmental military alliance between 30 member states established in the aftermath of World

War II, for military and protection services against Russia. However, in 2014, Ukraine remains one of the countries to have yet joined this military protection alliance. When plans became finalized for Ukraine to be admitted into NATO, Putin, who believed Ukraine was still part of Russia, employed a puppet leader who broke ties with NATO. Enraged, the public expressed their disapproval of this action through the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity in 2014. This resulted in the unmarked Russian occupation of the Crimean Peninsula and eventually in the escalation of the ongoing conflict seen today.

With these thoughts in the back of my head, I traveled in Europe enjoying the historical landmarks and doing the typical things a traveler would do, but also noting the instances of Ukrainian solidarity. It was astonishing to see how many instances throughout the

Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany there really were. There were bicycles decorated in Ukrainian colors, protests organized by the #STAND WITH UKRAINE movement engulfing streets, and most ubiquitously, there were Ukrainian flags scattered everywhere.

As the war progresses, the topic of main concern is how to help the Ukrainians. Many civilians are using various means to deliver their message to their own governments and to alienate Russia. However, this is not to say that there is no consequence to these actions. While countries are sanctioning Russia and trying to find an appropriate means of discipline which would not endanger their own proliferation, it is up to the people to express economic support and solidarity for Ukraine. It is difficult to forget that Russia is one of the most powerful nations



A bike symbolizing support for Ukraine in Amsterdam. [Source: Author, Tyler Park]

in the world and cutting them off entirely from a country's economy could be devastating. Jan Mertens, a Uber driver, commented on how the Russian-Ukrainian war is affecting his daily life: "Since the EU has removed Russian gas from our countries the price of this has gone very high. I am an Uber driver and gas is something very important... but something important to me is also helping Ukraine. So even if gas goes up I will do this for Ukraine".

Student Reporter



Erin Jang
Grade 11
Troy High School

Now, The Ladies' Turn To Fight On The Field



During practice, the players prepare to start another match despite the scorching heat. [Source: TiffanyVo]

Hair flowing in the wind, the players shout excitedly to each other across the field as adrenaline courses through their veins. This time, instead of the usual boys' football team, the girls of Troy High School are preparing on the football field. Bringing back the tradition from before the pandemic, the football team presented a sports competition on April 8.

In an effort to reintroduce upper-classmen events, Powder Puff, a flag football exhibition game between the lady Warrior juniors and seniors, was held at Troy High School.

In late February, the upperclassmen had the opportunity to sign up for flag football organized by THS Warzone, the school's sports organization. With an initial price of \$25, participants received jersey uniforms as well as flags and extra equipment to prepare for the upcoming game.

On the first day of practice in early March, Powder Puff players began to assemble and build team spirit. The participants scheduled one-hour practices twice a week until April 7, accommodating the play-

ers' schedules as needed. Despite most being athletes, participants reviewed the fundamentals of flag football as well as game plays and routes. Alongside Coach Echavez and Coach Mason, six football players from the junior and senior football team each coached a respective group of lady Warriors.

According to senior Zackary Darker, both the juniors and seniors of the football team were excited to help the ladies practice. The members believed there were no other students with more experience, Darker said.

"We're the most qualified of the student body to coach," Darker said. "[The boys] all thought it would be a fun experience, and, thankfully, everything was able to work out."

Individual members of the football team rooted for their own class of lady Warriors to bring home the final victory. The coaches continued to ensure that each player felt comfortable and included in an effort to provide a fair chance at practice.

The annual flag football game gives lady Warriors the chance to play a rigorous sport for the school without the risk of fully padded football. Simultaneously, the game offers a collaborative and bonding period amongst the athletes.

"Aneventlike [Powder Puff] helps students connect with the rest of the student body and have an exciting time," Darker said. "The main thing students can look forward to is watching a game that rarely happens at the school and is completely different."

As the quarterback of the senior Powder Puff team and an athlete in Varsity softball, senior Anisha Venigalla left a message of advice for the future classes. "During practice, [the athletes] spent time playing around and interacting with each other constantly," Venigalla said. "Many of [the school activities] were taken away due to COVID-19, but as they come back, I encourage underclassmen to sign up and experience all these events when it's time."

Student Reporter

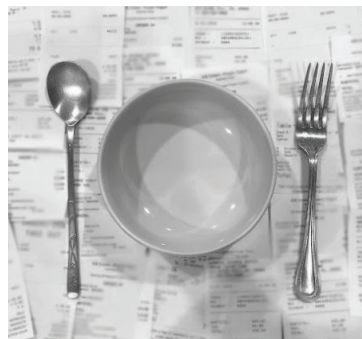


Audrey Park
Grade 8
Sierra Vista Middle School

The Undiscussed "Usual": My Experience as a Regular Customer

The usual features that decorate a restaurant may be paintings, window tables, or customers. Frequently lounging at my local eatery, a few individuals seem like accessories that come with the establishment. A common title for these revisiting consumers is "regular customers." However you may label regular customers, the recent pandemics have allowed many businesses to recognize these individuals as a returning beacon of revenue and more importantly, a reminder of the necessity of basic customer service. Similar to this worthwhile practice, a considerable amount of regular customers can appreciate the comfort that a consistent visit to a familiar location may instill.

Proclaiming oneself as a regular customer is the result of taking notice to a conspicuously familiar restaurant, cafe, or bar. Because I



Collections of receipts of a few regular customers. These volunteers consisted of my family members and friends, the location of receipts was not limited to restaurants. [Source: Author, Audrey Park]

weighed the familiarity between the cozy layout of a local tearoom and a self-serving restaurant I vaguely knew the menu too, I was able to narrow which environments I frequented. This natural process of revisiting a few eateries nearly went unnoticed until I became more aware of the juice bars I relaxed at after sports matches

and the local cafe I lounged at in the mornings. More specifically, entering this location at the break of day would present one with the textbook definition of a regular customer. My unusually long stays are often accompanied by my favorite cafe breakfast and drinks. Unlike the frequent but brief visits I would give to a local bistro or diner, this eatery's consistent, light breakfast meal always maintained the comforting idea of coming back. The instruction of this untampered routine keeps every morning organic and only exhibits my personal dependency on this cafe's familiarity.

Throughout the growth of commerce, readily available consumers have not been limited to the food industry. The impact of regular customers has been found to be prominent in retail and service chains in

recent years as well. Business owner Christine Lee states, "the first milestones of managing my business were connecting with returning clients. Steady progress is the foundation of many accomplishments; the two successful businesses I own today would be impossible without the confidence boost I started with; the reminder that my work was worthy of a revisit! Not only did good customer service continually emphasize my foundations, I was guaranteed the return of these customers as pandemic measures declined."

The beneficial business tactics that a solidified by "regular" customers are made possible through simple motives: easing into routines. Ultimately, becoming one myself has revealed a personal dependence on familiarity and transformed me into that humble "accessory" taking upon more seat.

Student Reporter



Ashley Seong
Grade 8
Canyon Hills Junior High

The Universal Appeal of Bildungsroman

The term "Bildungsroman" isn't found in our daily dialogue, as most people replace this term with the phrase "coming of age." The two terms define a genre that captures and plays with the idea of maturity. This maturation is usually found in the protagonist's loss of innocence, which is caused by a traumatic event that forces a change in their perspective of reality. This journey of innocence to maturity is exhibited in the concept of growing up, which is directed toward teenagers and young adults. We see this concept spiral around the film industry and novels, like the 2019 film *Lady Bird* or the popularized novel, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*. Consumers are shown to enjoy this cliché repetitively over the years.

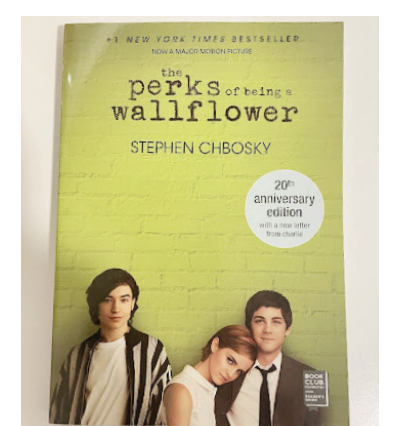
So, what makes this genre have such a universal appeal? One factor would be the relatable appeal. The setting of most bildungsroman novel takes place in the protagonist's adolescence, where emotions are intense and confusing, with desires for adventures and dreams. This is relatable and often more prompted

after perceiving characters who experience this passionate desire. The characters often undergo loss or pain in order to trigger this development of maturity, and with that, they are seen being confused and mad with the supernatural or dark reality. The audience is welcomed and relates through the universal desire to fit into society or to find one's purpose in their life.

The purpose and the manner in which the story is depicted is also a key appeal. These novels or films include the author's views on society. The classic example can be depicted by the popular novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky, which sold over 1.5 million copies and was soon turned into a successful film. The author highlights how the common but overlooked conflict of childhood neglect and abuse is the trigger for many different emotions and struggles the protagonist has to endure through his adolescence. These ideas and views are recognized by the audience, which makes it appealing to not just the viewers, but also the authors who prioritize in

spreading their true beliefs.

More than stories, films interpreted with the bildungsroman genre often feed into glamorizing concepts of problematic issues to make them more aesthetic or socially acceptable, which appeals to target audiences, like teenagers. The film industry encourages the use of alcohol and drugs by maximizing how exciting and efficient it is to remove feelings of discomfort, with scenes that make it more cool and acceptable. Directors also collaborate visuals into this journey of innocence to maturity. Lighting, scenery, and clothing are symbolic changes throughout films to display how innocence can turn into maturity. For example, the 2019 film, *Little Women*, goes back and forth from childhood to adulthood where color schemes of light to dark match the idea of innocence to maturity. The characters are seen wearing lighter colors during childhood, while the period of loss and maturity is represented by dark hues of blue and black, with cold winters.



The cover of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, a popular coming of age story that was later turned into a hit movie. [Source: Author, Ashley Seong]

The bildungsroman genre has produced the most popular films and books that can help others realize social conflicts our own reality has. This genre has remained popular throughout the years because many audiences look forward to the emotions the films or novels in this genre produce. The relatable events, author's purpose or problem with society, and glamorization help continue the spread of the bildungsroman genre to various ages.