

H1 Personal Composition | Speech

'That is no country for old men'

Does our society believe that the elderly should even have a voice anymore?

In a western society where our lives have been completely modernised by technology, what happens to those who don't join the 'trend'? The revolution of technology first sparked in 1997 with the world's first social media platform. The site was called 'Six Degrees' and while it is no longer functional, it had one million users at its peak. Since then, the pace of modernity has been changed with Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accumulating over 2 billion users. This wave of a digital new beginning allows messages to be sent across the world in less than half a second, and for free! It has become a necessity in our lives and appears flawless, unless of course you're not on social media. What happens then? Well, you get left in the dark as the world moves forward, without you. This doesn't seem like much of an issue for Gen Y or Gen Z, but what about the 65 to 95-year-olds? They didn't grow up like this, so why should they have to die like this? There is no simple answer to this question because even we don't know how the world will look when we're 95 years old, not even the vast internet of knowledge can tell us that. What we do know is that old age brings a certain wisdom the internet doesn't have, an experience of life that should not be left behind.

So, what's the problem? Where's the problem? Is there even a problem? The answer is yes, and for a lot of us, it's already too late. Thousands upon thousands of elderly people will die in nursing homes with no family to comfort them in their final moments. This is the world we live in today and maybe we can't change it tomorrow, but we *can* change it. 60% of Irish citizens over the age of 65 are in nursing homes. The vast majority of that 60% will die in those nursing homes. We live in a society that treats old age like a disease that needs to be quarantined off in case, God forbid, it hinders our capacity to succeed. But how can you claim success with such sin on your soul? You

can't! This treatment and attitude must stop, not only because it is unfair but also because this is what we are teaching our children and one day not so far away it will be us in those glorified prisons. I propose we take care of the ones who took care of us because it may just be the most morally fulfilling thing we ever do. By doing this our children will carry on like this through their lives too.

Ireland is a country of unbiased perspective as we have proven time and time again. Let us change the path of old age with treating others as we want to be treated ourselves. Let us influence the world to follow our footsteps and seek a new future encouraging the involvement of elderly citizens in society. Let us turn the tide and create a more positive environment for future generations to live in. Who are we to judge who lives and dies? You might argue that's an over-exaggeration of the situation, but I'm a firm believer that although everybody dies, not everybody lives. I refuse to allow myself to hinder anybody's right to live life to the full, regardless of their age, and you should too.

'That is no country for old men'. According to who? We have the choice to choose what this country stands for. I say we become the change we seek in life, and who better to lead us than those who have lived before us and are still around. I say give the elderly a voice and make this a country for old men!