



ZENITH's first issue for 2015 brings you an exciting spread of the old and new! Look out for a bumper collection of students' essays, one of our favourite staple sections. J2s, still uncertain of how to improve on P1 reasoning skills? Then don't miss our ever-handy skills section on dealing with P1 questions with criticisms. This issue's Highlight section also features the winning entries for the Library's Print and Screen competition.

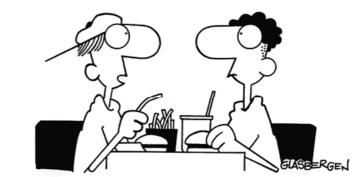
Congratulations to the J3s on their outstanding results, some of whose essays are featured here! In the meantime, J1s and J2s, all the best for your upcoming Mid-Year Exams!

You are most welcome to send feedback and suggestions in enhancing future issues of ZENITH.

Editorial Team

Mrs Janice Lok Miss Hafizah Amid Ms Farhana Hajiah Najimudin Mr Max Cheong Miss Vanessa Tan

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"I forgot to make a back-up copy of my brain, so everything I learned last semester was lost."



... in ZENITH

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ZENITH Essay Selection

Editor's advice to students:

While you may find the examples and points in these essays useful in answering other questions, please be judicious in using such information in a manner that is <u>relevant</u> to the POC of the question you are answering.

How far, in your society, should unpopular views be open to discussion? [2013 A

levels Q12]

ingaporeans, as with the people in many other societies, have a routine of going with the general consensus and doing very little or nothing to acknowledge or appreciate unpopular views, unless of course the issue is something of personal concern to them. After all, as pragmatists may question, what are the benefits of considering unpopular views, given their lack of support from the masses? Also, how will acknowledging, what more discussing, these unpopular views help Singapore's society to grow and mature? Upon considering these questions, I nevertheless believe that it would be highly beneficial for my society, Singapore, if unpopular views are open to discussion.

The political establishment here takes the view that in a multicultural, multiracial society such as Singapore which has faced violence and bloodshed due to racial distrust and resentment in the past, it would be more beneficial to have unpopular views closed to discussion and censored to prevent conflict occurring. We see this present particularly for racial and religious insults and comments. The Media Development Authority (MDA) would first block the offending page and locate and charge the culprit responsible for the comments. An unfortunate example is Amy Cheona, a NTUC membership assistant director, who in 2012 commented about the noise generated by Malay weddings in the void decks and said that they should just save up and get a "real" wedding at a

hotel. In less than 24 hours, her post was removed, she was given a stern warning by the police and she was fired from her job (which was vacant two hours later for job applications). Indeed, such censoring of views may be seen as justified as it upholds the overall peace of the society. Nevertheless, upon deeper examination, is not such a form of treatment for unpopular views a superficial and temporary solution? In not questioning why such views arise or the rationale of such an argument, it leaves the root of the problem untouched. This would, on the surface, give an impression of a cohesive and united society, but there may be hatred and resentment hidden underneath which may cause many more issues to surface or even escalate further down the road. Therefore I believe that unpopular views, if kept closed to discussion, would only delay the issue and not solve it; opening it up, on the other hand, brings benefits, of which will be outlined further in the following paragraphs.

The first reason why unpopular views should be, to a large extent, open to discussion is that it reinforces the importance placed on freedom expression by Singapore's society. Freedom of expression is considered by the United Nations to be one of the few inalienable human rights granted to all human beings in all societies, and Singapore is no exception. To facilitate freedom of expression in our society, all views, not just the popular ones should be brought up for discussion. This would help bring localized issues up to the national level for discussion, and through this, help all aspects of our society feel more included. A prime example of this would be the issue of foreign worker treatment in Singapore. Two years back, the issue of treatment of foreign workers never came across the public's consciousness, and when some individuals and organisations tried to surface it, they were ignored and such an unpopular issue was closed to discussion. Only after a strike initiated by Chinese bus drivers and subsequently the unforgettable riot involving the Indian workers in Little India, was such an issue brought to the public's attention. Upon doing so, many organisations became more aware of this issue and regulations were reformed to help improve the living conditions of foreign workers. As such, it opened the unpopular view of the poor treatment of foreign workers up for discussion. This has shown that when unpopular views are brought up for discussion, it may invoke change that would improve the more neglected aspects of Singapore's society, making it a better society. For this reason, I believe that unpopular views should be open to discussion.

Furthermore, as a first-world nation who declares herself to be a democracy. Singapore should uphold the principles of democracy and not restrict the discussion of unpopular views. Since Singapore is a democratic society, and pluralism is a key component of any democratic nation, it raises the pertinent issue of how pluralism is to be upheld if unpopular views are not up for debate. In principle, through pluralism, all views of the society would be brought up and thus, the nation would to be able to work together to come up with a solution that encompasses and takes into consideration everyone's opinions. This would allow the governing body to become legitimate as now the more unpopular aspects of society become visible and accounted for and the people would no longer feel oppressed and excluded from society. While I admit that it is impossible to consider everyone's views in our society, a small step that we can take towards pluralism is to not close off unpopular views from discussion. This would help the nation to be more inclusive and the government to earn real political legitimacy; therefore I feel that unpopular views should largely be open for discussion.

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Lastly, I feel that unpopular views should be open for discussion as when we open up these unpopular views for discussion, it truly helps our society to grow and mature. When unpopular views are brought up for discussion, it is an indication that these views are not only acknowledged but also respected. It lets everyone know that there is an issue and people can no longer avoid it and run. It drives people to think and educate themselves on the matter. Overtime, people would grow more accepting of the view and understand the rationale behind such views. In fact, surfacing unpopular views for discussion would be unavoidable as Singapore's society would naturally evolve to include people with unpopular views. An example of this starting to occur is Singapore's attitude toward LGBT rights, through the use of the Speakers Corner at Hong Lim Park, to host the Pink Dot campaign. Through this event, it has raised public awareness on the subject and made more people more tolerant and understanding towards such opinions. Surveys Singaporeans have shown that over the past 5 years, the number of people accepting of a gay lifestyle has grown from 30% to 50%. It can even be suggested that in the coming years, Singapore's society would reach a tipping point, whereby something must be done to acknowledge this view on the national stage. Through this, Singapore's society would grow to become a more inclusive and mature society, making Singapore a better place to live in. Therefore I believe to a large extent, unpopular views should be open for discussion.

All in all, I feel that Singapore's society should allow unpopular views to be open for discussion as it would help our nation to grow and mature, and further enforce our democratic system of governance. While I do concede that some views may cause conflict in the society, I strongly believe that Singapore is more than able to handle them, and through it, grow.

Benjamin Ng 13\$102



Although some points overlapped across paragraphs, the essay brings up several



interesting and mature arguments which have been insightfully supported by the use of appropriate examples.

Consider the view that mathematics possesses not only truth, but supreme beauty. [2012 A levels Q7]

athematics is not something alien to us. Rather, it is something that is always around us and something that we use daily, whether we know it or not, from buying food at a restaurant, to the circuits that reside in the recesses of our computers. While there is no doubt that mathematics is highly pervasive and useful, we fail to ask the more philosophical question as we go about our daily lives: Is mathematics beautiful? Is mathematics truthful? To both questions, I would argue that not only does mathematics possess truth, it possesses a beauty supreme to all others.

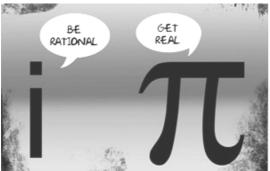
First and foremost, the very nature of mathematics itself causes it to be truthful, as the well-defined rules and loaic of mathematics result in very little ambiguity and room for debate. Three plus eight will always yield a value of eleven in our conventional decimal system, but in the case of the less often used octal and binary systems of counting, the yielded answers of thirteen and 1011 respectively are still equal to what we know in our minds as "eleven". In contrast, in other disciplines such as literature or philosophy, or even in the more theoretical portions of physics and chemistry, arguments for every possible opinion can always be made, resulting in a myriad of conflicting answers. What message did Shakespeare want to convey when he drafted A Midsummer's Night Dream? Do we have freedom, or are we just living our lives in an endless accordina unchanging cycle Nietzsche's theory of eternal recurrence? The answers to those questions can be debated for as long as one desires, but mathematics possesses an absolute truth in the fact that a problem, a question, always has a set of well-defined solutions.

Those opposed to my point of view would no doubt argue that mathematics does not always possess truth as it has been frequently exploited by organisations and individuals for their own selfish purposes. Banks frequently hide behind a veil of innocently small numbers, concealing the fact that a compounded interest on a loan may become larger than a loan itself. Bernie Madoff's Ponzi scheme involved the lure of great exponential returns, while he himself profited immensely by using the money of new investors to pay off his preexisting ones. While I do admit that mathematics can indeed be used for untruthful purposes, I would refute any claims that mathematics itself is inherently untruthful. In these cases, mathematics was simply a tool, while the actual deception laid in the fact that people failed to read the small print or were lied to outright. Hence, such untruths were more a result of human activity and influence than the fault of mathematics itself.

I am also of the stand that mathematics possesses a beauty supreme to all others as it has a certain elegance in the way that its principles, methods and results come together to form an aesthetic whole. Neatness lies in the way that if vectors are able to form a proper geometrical shape from head to tail, their resultant will come to nothing. Finesse lies in how a simple equation like the Euler's identity, $e^{i\pi} + 1 = 0$, can succinctly capture five fundamental mathematical constants while reflecting numerous other mathematical principles at the same time. Hence, l argue that mathematics possesses supreme beauty in the way that the questions posed by it and the answers given by it form a complete and refined whole.

Another reason why I feel mathematics possesses true beauty is the fact that Nature itself follows a mathematical pattern. The Fibonacci sequence, generated by adding the two previous terms to form the next, is simplistic and instinctive enough to derive. Does it come as a surprise, then, that the growth of branches on trees and leaves on stems





adhere to this pattern? Even the rose, too, a symbol of love and beauty, grows its

petals according to this simple yet elegant pattern. Humans are not exempt either from having an unconscious preference for this pattern. Scientists have found that faces conforming to specific proportions following the Golden Ratio coincidentally, is derived Fibonacci Sequence), were thought to be attractive than other faces. Accordingly, some icons who exhibit these features are celebrities admired for their looks, such as Marilyn Monroe and Brad Pitt. This only reinforces the fact that the aesthetics we admire in nature and even in our fellow human beings follow some mathematical rule or other, and it is this elusive form of patterned order that makes it obvious that mathematics possesses supreme beauty.

Those opposed to my views on mathematical beauty may argue that there is no beauty to be found in mathematics as it is highly technical in nature, requiring complex and specialised knowledge of the subject. On the surface, is that it true some aspects mathematics, such as Russell Whitehead's proof that one plus one equates to two, may look like a hellish mishmash of symbols to the untrained eye. However, I argue that the perceived lack of beauty is due to the majority's limited interpretation of mathematics. layman's understanding is usually restricted to what they have been exposed to in what practical school and mathematics has for the most part, such as in finance and economics. In such a coldly practical context, mathematics seems to possess no beauty. However, in this case, we fail to realise that mathematics encompasses a much larger domain, including the simple yet hidden aspects of mathematics in nature that all can appreciate, to the complex, logical proofs that are valued by numeracy connoisseurs. The practical elements of mathematics are but a tiny slice of what it has to offer and what the layman fails to know or understand of its ability to inspire beauty, should not simply be dismissed as absent.

Mathematics has been serving mankind for many long years since its inception centuries ago. With this, it is easy to forget the beauty of mathematics as it has been relegated to merely just another of mankind's problem-solving tools. However, it does not take a cerebral mind or an esoteric taste to appreciate the beauty of mathematics. Think about it – what could be more beautiful than a machine that sits quietly, that runs like clockwork throughout the ages, which never fails to provide a correct answer? Perhaps, this quiet efficiency is the most beautiful of all the other traits of mathematics.

Wong Jin Jye 13S212



This is an eloquent and knowledgeable essay, whose strength lies in the simplicity and clarity with which it delivers its arguments.

'Contemporary music has no artistic value.' Is this a fair comment? [2008 A levels Q10]

we hear the term 'contemporary music', what first come to our minds would most probably be pop music icons such as Lady Gaga or Rihanna, and charttopping groovy hits like 'Happy' or 'Shake it off'. Contemporary music simply refers to the music of today's generation, whose production, in many people's perception, entails areat deal of artificial enhancement using recording technology. Furthermore, the present world that we live in has been made homogenous by the

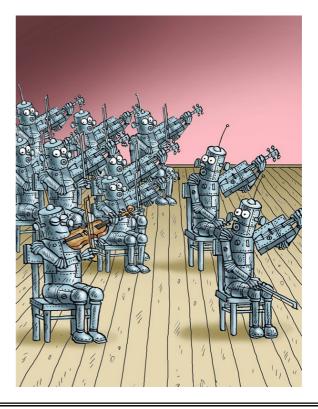


invasion of Western pop culture, and the music that we listen to is not an exception to this trend. Given both of these points, it is inevitable that contemporary music's artistic value is constantly being questioned. However, I strongly believe that regardless of how much our generation's music has evolved into a completely different creature from the past, it still holds, perhaps even greater, artistic value in terms of the artist's talents and skills, originality and social message.

A great number of music lovers from the generations of our parents and grandparents find contemporary music rather clichéd or formulaic due to the artists' tendency to follow the audience's popular preferences as well as their pervasive use of technology in its production. It is not uncommon for us to feel a sense of déjà vu when listening to a new song, because of its similar-sounding melody and even lyrics to other songs. That is why many people think that today's music has lost its originality, which is one of, if not the most, essential elements of gesthetics in music. However, let us remind ourselves that artistes make music to share with us its beauty and wonder - and it is not wrong for songs to follow a particular formula and tune if eventually, it helps the artistes to reach out to a larger pool of audience and allow more of us to connect with each other through music. A recent remix by a DJ named Gregory Todd of the six most popular country songs since 2011 has gone viral on the Internet. In fact, the cadence and rhythm of these six songs were so similar to the point that they can be mixed into one so seamlessly. Furthermore, according to many music enthusiasts, the hybrid tune and lyrics of this composite song even managed to encapsulate the spirit of the key global events in that year while sounding amazing. Hence, no one can call these songs clichéd for they belong to, as we all know, the music genre that places the greatest emphasis on meaningful lyrics and astounding instrumental melody.

On the other hand, the usage of technology in recording, editing and producing music actually unlocks the door to a world of "audio magic" and sound

creativity that our artistes have never known before. In 2014, Daft Punk, a famous French electronic duo who is considered the techno-wizards of the American music industry, walked away from the Grammys with the most celebrated award of the night - Best Album of the Year. This shows that their music has been acknowledged by the most prestigious panel of music experts for its creativity and bravery to tread unknown paths, shattering any doubt that people may have for contemporary music. And who has not heard of classical artistes who have used music technology to give their music a unique sound – particular to their own interpretation of set pieces whether Brahms, Mendelssohn or Bach – such as the world renowned pianist, Maksim, the record-breaking virtuoso violinist, David Garrett, and the best-selling string quartet of all time, Bond? Even famous pop music cover artistes such as The Piano Guys as well as Scott Bradlee's Postmodern Jukebox, who have unabashedly used technology to revitalise their renditions of popular tunes deserve to be known for their abilities to give listeners a different, newer perspective of their favourite songs. As such, we should be thankful for music technology as it offers us a fresh musical experience.



familiar stereotype Another $\cap f$ contemporary music is that it is nothing display than а of choreography and good looks, instead of a celebration of vocal talents, the latter being what we think music should be about. The pervasive popularity of Korean boy bands and girl groups in Asian countries due to their dazzling appearance and professional choreography is the most prominent example supporting such a notion. Yet, contrary to the view that modern music's artistic value has become a thing of the past with its loss of emphasis on vocal superiority, the example of Korea's music industry, which is the second largest in the world, demonstrates clearly to us how modern artistes have redefined music on a more holistic and professional level. Artistry is a concept that must emerge from the hand of the creator and the mind of the beholder concurrently - in fact, it is a natural instinct for human beings to be drawn to things that visually appeal to us. By integrating the factors of appearance and dance moves intensively into their songs, many modern artistes now attempt to put up the most perfect performances their relentless effort to refine themselves in other skills apart from vocal or instrumental ability have inevitably set a higher benchmark for audience's expectations, making it even harder for other artistes to succeed in such a competitive industry. The landscape of contemporary music has therefore changed the way we, as music lovers, celebrate musical talents. It is now on a more expansive scale, encompassing holistic skills that promise to give us the most worthwhile entertainment. Let us not forget that this phase of contemporary music was spearheaded by the King of Michael Jackson, who had revolutionised pop music of his era with his legendary dance moves and commanding presence. stage Contemporary music hence holds great artistic value in the way it shines its limelight on the most all-rounded talents.

Lyrics, another essential part of music, are the soul of the song, which when sung can evoke powerful emotions and be a reflection of today's human conditions. In comparison with John Lennon and his famous song, "Imagine", which has certainly withstood the test of time to become an icon of peace through music, our contemporary artistes do not fall short in making music that delivers impactful social messages too. Thus, music today is able to conserve an important aspect of music, which is its meaning. The song "I was Here" sung by Beyoncé, one of the popular artistes of today's generation, speaks of her desire to leave a mark on humanity before she dies. As the song was performed on the United Nations World Humanitarian Day, Beyoncé's music thus becomes a vessel to channel her feelings to a billion people's hearts from all backgrounds, asking them to join her in making a change in the world for the better, which was the social cause the event wished to highlight. Likewise, the song "Gangnam Style" by PSY which took the world by storm in 2012, with a recordbreaking 2 billion views on YouTube, is not just another commercial song popularised by a funny dance or humour. Upon deeper analysis of the song by lyricists, the audiences were impressed to find a subtle message about wealth, social status and value in the South Korean society, satirising the materialism that sometimes follows its people's aspirations to success. If commercial artistes like Beyoncé and PSY can make such meaningful music, we should get rid of our prejudices towards contemporary music and embrace the social messages that it presents to our society.

Indeed, I believe that music is one of the most powerful forces in the universe. It can touch our hearts, unite us as one, brighten up our days or even bring tears to our eyes. But most importantly, music can withstand something that human beings cannot: time. Music that allows us to celebrate originality, talents and social causes is one that has true artistic value. Where words fail, music prevails. If we are able to keep up the faith and love for contemporary music, I trust that one day, we will all be able to see that it can continue to inspire aenerations humanity to come.

Trinh Vu Linh Chi 14S101





Good insights were provided by the writer and accompanied by interesting examples from many genres, highlighting her knowledge in this topic. While fluently written, the essay could have been more succinctly expressed though.

'The world would be a better place if everyone spoke the same language.' Discuss. [2006 A levels Q7]

ith English being dubbed as the universal language of OUr contemporary world, the interesting question of whether the world would be a better place if everyone spoke the same language has become more pertinent than ever. Common sense tells us that this, clearly, could ameliorate the condition of our world, as the cumbersome language barrier can be overcome, vastly improving communication for the human race. However, I argue that homogeneity in spoken language worldwide does not promise us a finer world as we may imagine, due to the problems of prejudice, differences in thinking, cultural dilution and decreased creativity.

Before embarking on a defence of my point of view, I must first admit that language homogeneity could benefit the world in terms of communication. It decreases misunderstandings caused by the dreaded language barrier, and has the potential to improve the quality of life for many as it increases efficiency in daily tasks. From a practical viewpoint, this uniformity in language could be of potential help to others. In Georgia, USA, some Hispanic immigrants receive substandard healthcare due to being inept in English, and worse, few hospitals have Spanish translators. Such a situation could be circumvented if everyone spoke the same language, alleviating the suffering of vulnerable groups of people like immigrants. I do concede that such daily inconveniences could be minimised if we all spoke the same language, but in our present world where simple translations

can be done through simple hand-held technological devices, it would be hard to claim that speaking the same language would bring about that much benefit.

On a larger scale, there are those who argue that language uniformity can help to solve conflicts between countries by miscommunication. caused instance, during World War II, the dropping of the Fat Man and Little Boy atomic bombs was triggered miscommunication. When the allied leaders called on Japan to surrender, the Japanese Prime Ministers' reply, comment" was mistranslated into, "not worthy of comment". At this, the Allies were enraged by Japan's arrogance, and decided to take action, and the rest is history. Named by linguists as, "the world's most tragic translation", this incident could have been avoided if the countries spoke the same language, preventing the nuances in meaning from being lost in translation. However, such a view has its limitations in the present day context. numerous diplomatic the exchanges between countries, and the availability of translators, such a scenario would no longer pose such a problem. This incident could thus be dismissed as a oneoff occurrence, and hence the benefits gained from having a common language are at best minimal or rare.

Language homogeneity is indeed a tantalizing idea, yet, the above benefits would likely not be reaped given the deep-rooted and fundamental problems that persist in our world. There are still the problems of prejudice, and the different ideologies that people cling to, and these have consequences despite the same language being spoken. For example, Eric Garner (an Afro-American), clearly said, "I can't breathe" when the police put him in an illegal chokehold, yet they did not release him, resulting in his death. Although a great majority of Americans speak English, not everyone's quality of life is improved, nor is there necessarily peace and fraternity as we all would like to believe. There still is underlying prejudice discrimination towards groups. Also, conflicts still occur even though countries may speak the same language, due to differences in ideology or standpoints. There have been many brutal conflicts between nations and regions that share a common language, such as in North and South Vietnam, in Northern Ireland between Protestants and Catholics, and between various factions in Somalia. Therefore, language uniformity does not necessarily make the world a better place, as long as prejudices and differences in thinking continue to exist.

A universally spoken language would also raise the issue of cultural dilution. When everyone speaks the same language, it could lead to a loss of cultural diversity, and possibly cultural extinction, due to the lack of usage of other local languages. In Singapore, some teenagers converse in English, and neglect their mother tongue, which correlates with the increasing disinterest towards their own culture's customs and celebrations. Another example would be India, where over 400 distinct tongues are being phased out in favour of English and Hindi. As a result, many of India's languages are on the verge of dying out and this is culturally devastating, as the ability to comprehend local medicinal knowledge, ecology, environment, spirituality, art and mythological histories, is lost. Knowledge is extremely vital for the advancement of humankind, and when this knowledge is lost due to linguistic extinction via cultural dilution, it is a real pity. Depriving the world of potential ground-breaking discoveries from the unique knowledge of different cultures, making everyone speak the same language does not help in improving the world's condition.

Lastly, with linguistic homogeneity, our creativity and performance suffers. Studies have shown that speaking multiple languages is beneficial academically. Students who studied a foreign language develop greater cognitive skills, such as mental flexibility, creativity, divergent thinking and higher-order thinking. By everyone speak the language, we would not be allowing ourselves to fully develop and utilise our cognitive capacities, affectina productivity and advancement humans. In addition, the concept of linguistic relativity states that the structure of a language affects the ways its speakers conceptualise the world. For instance, a very commonly used phrase in Thai translates to mean "never mind", which encapsulates the Thais' easy-going mentality and way of life. If everyone were to speak the same language, our world views would be restricted and similar, as speaking another language would actually allow us to see things in more varied perspectives. Limited world views negatively affect our creativity, and this drains the colour out of life, and it might even mean that we miss out on wonderful new pieces of art or scientific trains of thought. Thus, everyone speaking the same language does not make the world a better place as it does not allow us to develop novel ways of thinking.

In conclusion, contrary to popular belief, linguistic homogeneity does not necessarily make the world a better place. It does admittedly allow for some practical benefits such as improved communication and understanding, but it does not vastly make it better as we may think because of the above-mentioned drawbacks. I think it is not worth the sacrifice and the world would be better off preserving the diversity of its spoken languages.

Yeo Bi Xuan 14S502



This is a well-organised and balanced essay, with use of clear signposts. A good range of apt illustrations that are well developed was also provided, making for an interesting read.

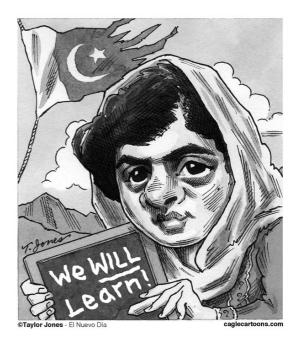
'Women will never enjoy the same rights as men.' Do you agree? [2006 A levels Q6]

orld War II, although a bloody reminder of humanity's capacity for violence, was also the spark of a more subdued and important revolution for mankind: a proliferation of women's rights. From the American housewives who were allowed to vote, to the creation of an all-women air brigade in



the Soviet Union, World War II was an important catalyst for women's rights that has evolved to what we know and appreciate today. Hence, given the great progress in women's emancipation from the past to the present, I do believe that women will eventually enjoy the same rights as men.

Firstly, I believe that women will enjoy the same rights as men as both men and women have different political and social perceptions of women's rights and roles today. With the many women's rights movements that spawned over the 1960s to 2000s, such as the famous birth control and reproductive rights movement of 1968 to the Feminist movement now, both men and women have now come to realise that women are not the lesser being in the human race, but are of equal standing as men. Thus, misogynistic views that portray women as mere 'baby factories' or 'lesser creatures', that were once tolerated, or even celebrated by the public, are now highly scrutinised and condemned by both men and women alike. In addition, men's infamy for being male chauvinists was also debunked when both genders rose together against sexist bigotry. Hence, different political and social perceptions today assure that both men and women can sympathise with one another's difficulties and successes in life, and thus any sexist attacks on women can no longer distort men's view of women anymore. It is hence no wonder that a recent incident involving a male politician heckling a fellow female politician while she addressed the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly drew much protest from the Japanese, female and male alike. The heckler, Tokyo Assemblyman Akihiro Suzuki, eventually apologised for his inappropriate behaviour but nevertheless had raw eggs pelted at his office and his Facebook page flooded with harsh criticism of his shameful conduct. This illustration highlights the sea change in the Japanese's perception of women. Thus I do believe that women will enjoy the same rights as men due to the reason that a paradigm shift has already begun and is gaining momentum.



Secondly, I believe that women will enjoy the same rights as men as both genders have access to education today. After World War II, education became more widespread and in-depth to cater to arowing public needs for skilled and highlyeducated labour. Hence, women are now more educated than before, which empowers them to stand up for the rights they deserve. A great example is Malala Yousafzai, a Palestinian activist who was schooled by her father. This led her to fight against the Taliban's oppression of girls' right to education by blogging for BBC and going on the television. Although she almost lost her life fighting for her cause when she was just 15, this backfired for the Taliban as she rose in international fame, and is now a champion for women rights around the world, while showing just how vile the Taliban in Pakistan truly is. To boot, she was recently awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her fight for girls' rights to education. Therefore, with education, women now know how to wield the tools they need to ignite change for themselves and other women alike. In addition, this gives women social mobility, allowing them to fight poverty, caste or any other social markers that inhibit their freedom to fight for change. Hence, with better education for women, I do believe that they will eventually enjoy the same rights as men.

Finally, I believe that women will eventually enjoy the same rights as men as many women around the world are today given political suffrage. As social and political perceptions change from before, most countries give women suffrage as a sign of political maturity and equality for both sexes. Thus, as women are finally able to vote now, they are able to have their voices heard through their vote for their favourite politicians. Likewise, politicians must also take into account female voters' needs and concerns, such as employment and social equality, in order to earn their votes during the elections, since they now technically make up half of the votes. Hence, politicians voted into legislation nowadays are more involved in women's rights than ever before, as a way to reel in more female supporters. These elected politicians will then actively address the women's rights issues of his or her voters tabling new policies, speaking on behalf of women in national debates and voting on policies, thus aptly representing their female voters' concerns. For example, Hillary Clinton, the former Secretary of State of the United States, has always pushed for equality for women both in America and internationally. One can never forget her scathing remarks about China's abuse of woman in the 1995's World Conference on Women in Beijing, or the criticisms on Taliban's abuse of women in Afghanistan in the 1990s. All these built her reputation as a champion of women rights in America. Hence, it came as no surprise that her political support is strong in the USA, especially amongst the female voters who are currently rallying for her to run for the presidential campaign in 2016. This thus shows that political suffrage empowers women to vote for who best represents them, who in turn address unfair policies and laws against women, allowing women to eventually enjoy the same rights as men.

Detractors of my view may argue that while most women do enjoy similar rights as men, job equality is still greatly lacking for many countries. For example, Korean Chaebols or business conglomerates rarely have any women taking on executive positions and even then their pay is still noticeably lesser than their male counterparts. Although this is true now, I do

believe that this would not be the case for the future. One must understand that the female rights movement is a rather novel idea that has not run its full course. Hence, we have much room for improvement to reach perfect equality. A great example is none other than Japan, where Prime Minister Shinzo Abe recently said that women are an irreplaceable asset in Japan's road to economic recovery and that the "glass ceiling in Japan shall be broken". This is in stark contrast to the infamous male-driven society Japan is known for. Hence, although most societies have work to do in this regard, most of them have and will put in hard work to bridge female and male income gaps and job opportunities, which in turn shows that in time to come, women will eventually enjoy the same job rights as men.

Some pessimists also argue that women in certain developing countries are still deeply oppressed by patriarchal societies, showing that women will never enjoy the same rights as men. For example, places such as India still suffer from a high incidence of sexual crimes committed against women, such as the infamous case where a woman was brutally gang-raped on a bus in 2012 in New Delhi and eventually died from her wounds. Another notable example is Saudi Arabia, where women are still campaigning for a seemingly basic right – the right to legally drive. Although this is true today, I still believe that all women will eventually enjoy the same rights as men. This is due to the widespread coverage and condemnation of such crimes internationally, such as the rape case in New Delhi stated above. This forces the governments of these countries to keep a closer eye on its people and enforce the law more strictly, so as to keep its dignity on a global stage. The silver lining for the 2012 Delhi rape case was the aftermath surrounding it, where the Indian government scrambled to catch and prosecute the guilty, while new laws protecting women were pushed out swiftly, all amidst the watching eyes of both the national and international press. Thus, with this pressure to treat women fairly by other countries, I believe that even patriarchal societies will one day succumb and give women the equal rights they deserve.



Hence, I believe that women will eventually enjoy the same rights as men.

It has been sixty-seven years since the Paris treaty was signed by the Allied nations in 1947, and women have already come so far to forge a better and brighter future for themselves in the form of equal job opportunities, fair courts and social mobility. All these are the triumphs of women rights, all done in so little time, which gives me hope that in the next sixty-seven years, women rights will surely become equal to men's.

Goh Ting Qi 14\$111



Excellent and current examples beef up soundly-reasoned arguments. The strong personal voice is used to good advantage to add a sense of personal conviction to the essay.

How far is your country prepared for future crises?

[2006 A levels Q6]

anked as the second safest country in the world, Singapore experiences a low crime rate, little to no occurrences of natural disasters and has been enjoying rapid development. The lives of Singaporeans have been peaceful with few crises for the past few decades. However, can the same be said for the future? Some believe that Singapore would not be able to shelter its citizens indefinitely in the face of external pressures such as terrorism and global conflicts, as well as internal issues such as social stability. Despite such concerns, I Singapore feel that has laraelv implemented relevant measures policies that anticipate future crises, and is thus very well prepared to deal with whatever problems that may occur.

First and foremost, Singapore has prepared its citizens well by ensuring that they are aware of what to do in a crisis. This will allow the people to respond calmly and rationally during times of disasters, while coordinating their actions with

government efforts to deal with the situation. This is further supported by a robust crisis management plan that the country has for most types of crises. One example is the network of sirens that the Singapore Civil Defence Force installed around the island that constitutes Singapore's public warning system. The public is educated to recognise various public warning signals and what to do when they are sounded, such as the "important message signal" made of pulsating blasts and the "alarm signal" made of wailing blasts. In schools, fire drills are conducted regularly to ensure that students know how to react in the event of a fire, mobilising them to leave the premises in a quick but orderly fashion to a zone. The same evacuation procedures that students are well-versed in can also be adapted to deal with various other scenarios like a terrorist attack or a bomb scare. Given the level of preparedness of its people, Singapore is definitely ready to handle future crises.

Additionally, Singapore is a technologically advanced country, constantly pursuing and adopting the latest innovations in technology. This enables us to overcome limitations and better prepare ourselves against external threats that we may face. One such aspect would be in the field of military defence. Singapore has been tapping into various forms of technology to create superior weapons that can compensate for our small defence force. The most prominent of these include the Advanced Combat Man System (ACMS) which serves to provide soldiers with enhanced survivability and lethality by equipping them navigation systems, tracking systems and head mounted display. There are also other forms of technology such as the Formidable-Class stealth frigate which is a warship and SSPH 1 Primus which is a selfpropelled howitzer. This has led to the reference of our army as the Generation Fighting Force", with an emphasis on being an advanced network force. This focus on technology has also been extended to other critical security areas, with CCTVs installed in many sensitive locations around Singapore to monitor for terrorist or other disruptive

activities, while our immigration checkpoints boast thermal scanning abilities and biometric identification systems to actively lookout for potential threats entering our country. Through continued investment in modern technologies, we would indeed be able to anticipate, detect, and neutralize potential threats quickly and effectively, leading most to believe that Singapore is indeed prepared for future crises.

Moreover, Singapore is also developing various ways to be self-reliant and free its dependence on other countries for resources. In times of crises, Singapore would be vulnerable to potential shortages in supplies such as food and water that it imports from other countries. To avoid being held hostage to such situations, Singapore is coming up with creative solutions to sustain itself. One such example would be vertical farming in Singapore. Company Sky Greens has developed a way to grow crops vertically at protected outdoor green houses. Known as the A-Go-Gro vertical systems, these methods of farming can produce significantly higher yields than traditional farming all year round and potentially account for up to 50% of the vegetables we consume in the future. Another example of self-sustainability is NEWater. With Singapore's water contract with Malaysia ending by 2060, NEWater is aimed to account for 55% of the water we consume in the future. As of now, NEWater is responsible for 30% of the water we use. Given the continuous drive towards selfsufficiency, one cannot denv that Singapore is able to deal with potential crises.

Some critics may argue that in recent there have been several unexpected happenings in Singapore that it was evidently not prepared for. Sensitive issues such as religious and racial tensions remain a bugbear that Singapore is unable to fully resolve and remain potential threats to its otherwise peaceful society. One such example would be the riot at Little India by Indian foreign workers occurred spontaneously. response by the police was criticised for being ill-prepared for handling such an unprecedented event. Yet, even though it is definitely true that there will be unexpected things Singapore may not have anticipated, it would be too hasty to give us a failing grade on our level of preparedness for crises. The nation has still shown the ability to learn quickly, adapt and improve on how it deals with any crisis. Despite facing no civil unrest for more than 40 years, Singapore's police were able to quell the riot without any fatalities, while being grossly outnumbered bv inebriated crowd. While they could have managed the situation better on hindsight, the fact of the matter is that they were dealing with a new crisis for the first time, and were able to defuse it in a relatively effective manner with no casualties suffered. Moreover, the various government agencies learnt tremendously from this incident, implementing a slew of measures to prevent such incidences from repeating itself. Such examples include introducing laws that prevent public consumption of alcohol on weekends and public holidays, deploying additional police officers to patrol the area and installing more police cameras in the vicinity. A Council of Inquiry was also set up to further explore other possible learning points. Singapore's adaptability, responsiveness and eagerness to learn from its encounters show that Singapore is always ready to address any possible crises that are on the horizon.

Other detractors may argue that Singapore's level of preparedness against crises might be undermined by a new generation of leaders that do not have the best interests of the people at heart. They cite the recent spate of corruption as an indication that the government is being infiltrated by self-serving individuals that care little for the country's welfare and more for their personal profits. Examples include Edwin Yeo, Head of Field Research and Technical Support for the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) who stole up to \$1.7 million government funds, and Peter Lim, Chief of the Singapore Civil Defence Force (CDF) who gave IT-related government tenders to certain companies in exchange for sexual favours. However, I would argue that there are bound to be black sheep in any organisation. While we cannot completely weed out such individuals, it does not suggest that the



organisation as a whole is rotten. More should importantly, we recognise Singapore has little tolerance for such individuals, dealing with them swiftly and harshly. Both Edwin Yeo and Peter Lim were promptly removed from their posts put behind bars, while government has further reviewed and tightened its anti-corruption policies. Today, Singapore is ranked the 5th least corrupt country in the Global Corruption Survey, indicating the high level of quality and integrity in its leaders. As such, Singapore is most assuredly under the good leadership of capable leaders able to meet the challenges of the future.

To conclude, Singapore is a country which is definitely prepared for future crises. However it should also be worth noting despite being well prepared, Singapore is not complacent and is always expecting the unexpected. Always aware that a war can be sparked at any instant and an economy can fail at any moment, she is always forward-looking preparing herself for the worst. As athlete Jackie Joyner-Kersee said, it is better to look ahead and prepare, than to look back and regret.

Tay Li Si 14S302



Although some of the views presented here on Singapore could have been better hedged in order to sound less extreme, the points are nevertheless valid and supported with relevant examples.

Is there still a place for penmanship in the digital age? [2014MJCJ2MYEQ8]

rom the Declaration of Independence, to a hastily written love letter by Napoleon Bonaparte to his lover Josephine, penmanship has always played an integral role in making our mode of communication inimitable and unique. Whether it is the long, fluid lines of the cursive style or the elaborate, vigorous strokes of the Gothic manuscript, not only is the ability to write well cherished, but

also the art of doing so beautifully. Yet, since the advent of the type-writer, followed by the word processer, ad infinitum, specialised modes of writing have increasingly lost their position as an important means of communication. Indeed, with the power to type comes the loss of an art – penmanship – which seems to be slowly embarking on a pernicious fall from its former glory. Today, at a time when beauty appears to have been forsaken, comes a hope –the appreciation of penmanship has seen a revival in recent years in the ways that connoisseurs of fountain pens, calligraphy, and writing in general have gathered together to develop new ways of sharing and enlivening their interest from its moribund state. Like them, I am also of the view that penmanship still holds an important place in the digital age.

Technophiles and even the general populace share the view that penmanship is outdated – a relic of the past that is useless in the face of efficient and modern technology. They argue that technology has given us the ability to express ourselves at an unprecedented speed, especially as the time required to formulate and type out a paragraph is much less than if one were to write it out fully. Therefore, they argue, why bother when a much more efficient and powerful tool is at one's disposal? Indeed, I do concede that offers one much typing greater convenience and efficiency than writing. However, what technophiles fail to consider is that the act (and art) of writing, to physically allow ideas to take form on paper, is lost in the shift to typing. We are exchanging the right to express ourselves permanently for the possibly detrimental ability to erase – to take back what we did wrote without consequences especially in the ways that we need to carefully mull over as well as reflect on our own thoughts before penning something down on paper. The implications of such a trade-off have been damaging. A recent study by the Fountain Pen Network has found that there is an inverse correlation between poor penmanship and the ability to express oneself clearly. Certainly, as we change from actualizing our ideas and thoughts on paper and therefore



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experiencing them, to typing and being able to delete words, we lose our coherence of thought and precision in articulation. The powerful, speeches of Abraham Lincoln has given way to the ambiguous, unclear whisper of George Bush Jr. The digital age, with its rapid fire spurts of information, threatens to worsen our ability to express ourselves. Thus, I feel that penmanship is still relevant as it promotes the necessary skills we need to put together and communicate clear. exact and organized thoughts and ideas especially across to others around us.

Supporters of digitalization would also go on to insinuate that the changing needs of modern society calls for further changes to our platforms of communication. Arguing that penmanship was only relevant in the past because it was the few modes of communication available, they derisively claim that it is not only old-fashioned to keep it alive today but also irrelevant to our current-day desires and needs. In the digital age, the constant deluge of information necessitates а rapid, impersonal and concise response, and penmanship is simply too bothersome and personal to be of use. Indeed, new technology continues to embrace interconnectivity, and convenience like Google Docs, which allows one to type on the go and even collaborate with others who are all typing and contributing to a particular document at the same time. What then, is the need for penmanship in this hypersonic generation where speed is king? Be that as it may, I still feel that penmanship holds renewed power in the digital age. Due to the backlash of the digital age, which has taken all personal sentiments and eroded them for brevity and the ease of access, there is now reiuvenated interest in developina penmanship as a tool and as a skill; for while it may be considered to be 'inefficient', it is still a powerful and intimate means of communication. A personal letter, written by hand in a beautiful script, can convey layers of meaning and emotion far beyond the reach of static, constant letters on a screen. The unique licks of the letter 'L' as it glides on paper in the cursive script may define character; the occasional bolder and stronger emphasis may reveal powerful sentiments; and inconsistent, unsymmetrical paragraphing may actually unveil hidden anxieties; these are all intimate, personal, and even romantic aspects of penmanship which allow it to continue to be relevant amidst the unfeeling interaction of the ironically named Age of Interconnectivity. Thus, I concede that while digital technology grants us a much more accessible medium, penmanship still holds a place through its ability to capture human aualities and emotions.

There is also a certain beauty associated with penmanship that allows us to fill the void of uniformity and conformity created by modernity. In the rush and hurry of our current Age, we often overlook the simplicity and beauty of naturally written and designed things. Connoisseurs of penmanship have often found much pleasure in structuring words and phrases in marvellously artistic and individualized ways. Calligraphy is a perfect example of an art that continues to serve us well in the digital age. As humans, we are naturally drawn to all things beautiful, and recent advertisements by Vogue and Paris



Baguette featuring a man participating in calligraphy are testaments to its undying charm. Additionally, the cursive script adds a layer of prestige, eloquence and stature to a product especially when written (or drawn) by an expert in the field of Indeed, penmanship. not only penmanship beautiful, but the very act of it is also alluring. It allows us to slow down and contemplate before endeavouring to put pen to paper. There is also a certain attraction in the pens associated with penmanship. To have to take time to maintain a dip pen or a fountain pen, to slow down our fast-paced lives to carefully clean and wash out the nib and refill it with ink, is a key appeal. Truly, it gives us the opportunity to actually take time out of our busy, hectic schedules to devotedly care for and protect something. For us to be able to do so liberates us from losing our humanity in our pursuit of efficiency. Many have sought and found relaxation in the beauty of penmanship – the annual World Pen Fair held in Mitsukoshi attracts thousands of enthusiasts, which illustrates how penmanship has and continues to be relevant to some. In an age where we fail to even pause and think, the beauty and eloquence of penmanship, together with the genuine care attributed to it, allows us a breather, and such is the continued relevance of penmanship and its place in the digital age.

Penmanship also carries with it a history that has lasted for as long as men and his desire to express himself have existed. The very act of putting pen to paper is creating history, for ink that stains is permanent. For what is writing, but the desire to set an idea in stone? Writing provides us with a reliable means not only of transmitting information, but also of recording and finally transmitting information. Thousands of years of history have been preserved and discovered through writing. The Dead Sea Scrolls are centuries old, but they can still be read and have provided us great insights on religion, culture, and the lives of people in the past. Even holy texts like the Quran and the Bible have survived for aeons through the simple act of emulating the original, authentic copy, and indeed, it is difficult to argue that in today's day and

age, whether the original copies of books and typewritten texts are able to survive that long. Perhaps, our everyday lives which are hindered by frequent computer crashes and lost unsaved documents point us to the time-tested medium of penmanship. Hence, penmanship still holds a place in the digital age as it is a time-tested and powerful means of storing information.

Lastly, it is important not to forget that the digital age comprises also of the elderly who may be technologically illiterate. In consideration of those who may choose not to accept the rapid changes of modernity, penmanship offers relevance in the form of communication and even in terms of lasting memories. Penmanship holds a certain nostalgia for the elderly, of a time long past, a memory cherished from their first fountain pen given to them by their parents and later handed down to their children, then their grandchildren. The ability to communicate with and cater to the elderly, as well as enabling them to be relevant to us is an important role of penmanship. In fact, certain fountain pens such as a Montblanc or a silver-plated Parker are treasured and highly valued items even in today's modern context. As such, in the age of digitalization, we must not forget our most cherished and respected seniors, for rejecting penmanship would not only be ostracizina technology-illiterate, but disregarding years of sentiment founded on pens and writing, which is considered nothing short of callousness.

Therefore, I feel that penmanship still holds a place, and will continue to hold a place in the digital age for it is an artefact of the past that is all at once beautiful, sentimental, and yet still relevant. Only when we lose our humanity and the qualities that it encompasses will penmanship be finally relinquished.

Bryan Tan 13A101



A fairly well-written essay with a strong voice and keen interest in the subject matter, which managed to raise relevant, salient points supporting the need for penmanship and



consistently addressed its benefits especially in today's digital age.

Is interdependence among nations really beneficial? [2014MJCJ2MYEQ12]

᠘ ■ am not an Athenian, nor a Greek, but a citizen of the world," proclaimed a Greek philosopher at the end of a gruesome war. The Hellenic world grew in might and stature as a result of mutual cooperation and assistance despite its fragmented nature. It established itself as a model civilisation in the ancient world, an exemplar for others to emulate. Yet, in this day and age where the political landscape is so characterised by interdependence between states, one questions the benefit of such a prevailing system. With the loss of individual autonomy and national sovereignty for the sake of the greater good of the international community and the shambolic economy resulting from overdependence, should states still clina to this paradigm? I still believe that it really is beneficial in spite of all its shortcomings. enhances military power through multilateral alliances, brings about material through provident economic wealth unions and gives nations a louder voice in international dealings. Although extreme, unmanaged interdependence can be more harmful than beneficial, it is still a useful principle for nations to exist by.

Interdependence among nations, especially militarily, is truly beneficial in increasing the chances for countries to achieve their highest priority - existence. Multilateral alliances have been key in allowing states to aggrandise military power despite their own individual constraints, to meet the demands of selfdefence. In pooling their resources together, countries are better equipped to fend off security threats and attacks by foreign expansionists. Bringing back the example of the Hellenic city-states, this point is clearly expressed in resounding victory against the Persians in the Greco-Persian Wars of the 5th century BC. Divided, quarrelsome and puny, the independent nations of Greece were easy pickings for the covetous Persian Empire. Yet, uniting their men, arms and wits through the formation of the Delian League, the tiny democratic allied states managed to repel the attack of one of the largest armies assembled in ancient history. Their mutual dependence, not individual effort, allowed them to achieve such a feat and avoid the existential threat. This is seen today, with nations still sharing intelligence and weaponry in functioning military alliances. The Five-Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) is a military alliance binding Great Britain, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand. Formed in the 1970s, the alliance is meant for the more battle-hardened and experienced troops of Britain and Australia to provide expertise and assistance to the other members in the event of an attack. interdependence among nations, viewed from a purely military dimension is indeed beneficial to states, giving them added muscle and a better fighting chance in world built upon а considerations of realpolitik.

Nationalists, on the other hand, may shun interdependence for military purposes as it leads to countries being embroiled in unnecessary conflicts they were not initially involved in, for the mere sake of assisting an ally. In most inter-state alliances, agreements are built upon a clause where an attack on one is an attack on all, making countries legally bound by treaty to assist allies in their disputes. Public opinion resents this, as it compromises a nation's sovereignty in forcing it to help others in potentially destructive wars that do not concern it in the first place. Peace in pre-war Europe was built on the Alliance System, in an attempt to deter aggression that had scourged the continent for centuries. Yet, as bilateral disputes arose, it implicated even far-off nations in a regional conflagration. World War I saw armed struggle between Austria and the Serbians involve the Russian Empire, Germany and later even Great Britain, as they joined in defence of their allies. This demonstrates how even a spark in the Balkans was able to create a general European war as a result of mutual alliances. Interdependence, therefore, can do more harm than good if the countries unaffected by a rising threat,



being forced to come to the aid of their confederate, do not stand to gain from the alliance but in fact, by being burdened with obligations to defend the coalition, become worse-off. However, if are imposed, such risks interdependence may be mitigated. Such can include ensuring that only if the threat in question endangers all the confederate states should the spirit of the alliance be invoked. This was the case in the World War II - the US remained in isolation from a conflict that appeared to exclusively involve its European friends, until she was rudely awakened to the realities of her own danger by the attack on Pearl Harbour. Only then did she provide help to her dependent allies Britain and France. Hence, interdependence that is measured and limited can still increase a nation's defensive options without dragging it into its allies' squabbles.

Pragmatists may also decry the notion of interdependence economic seemingly plagues the world today with its added risks and structural flaws. The portent saying "when America sneezes, the whole world catches a cold" is no child-like adage. It very realistically encapsulates the dangers of overt interdependence in the global economy. Today, countries are more vulnerable to changing conditions in overseas markets a workers' strike in China raised prices of iPhones worldwide last year as output was affected. Unbridled currency speculation and the subsequent bursting of the property bubble in Thailand caused the region-wide Asian Financial Crisis in 1997. The reversal of one nation's free trade policies like low tariffs can mean the loss of markets for another nation's exports – as it was in the late 1970s, when Americanimposed protectionist measures restrictive import quotas and Voluntary Export Restraints hurt Japanese exports to the US. Thus, it really may outwardly seem as though economic interdependence is an unforeseen curse that stifles countries into the same yoke of vulnerability, and I concede thus. However, despite this, there is no question that aside from occasional episodic economic meltdowns that have borderless ripple effects, throughout history, inter-state commerce has brought



prosperity to many nations. Economic globalisation in the last few decades in particular, has linked countries through production, trade and consumption, moving capital and jobs to developing countries, and resultantly led to the acceleration of economic arowth and the drastic reduction of poverty in these countries. As a case in point, China's phenomenal economic growth since 1978 has been nothing short of an economic miracle, its once paltry GDP growing at an annualised rate of 9%, surpassing US recently to become the world's largest economy. On a more global scale, the economic interdependence that economies today, numerous when with prudent combined national policies, economic has undoubtedly translated to global economic growth and the reduction of global poverty rates by half from 43% in 1990 to 21% in 2010. Such benefits are undeniably linked economic interdependence and one should not miss the forest for the trees merely by focusing on the occasional recession.

Of course, economists sound the warning bells about uneven economic growth across nations, and how economic interdependence only benefits some nations, but not others. However, before we allow these economists to preach gloom and doom about the dangers of economic interdependence, we should perhaps take a look at history. Human history is littered with the gold circulated between every manner of human political organisation – between great kingdoms and maritime republics as well as from one humble mountain village to another. The modest merchant is witness to how economic cooperation has brought about enhanced material wealth, and that

autarky is impractical as such a nation will doomed to exhausting its resources while consumer demand grows stagnant. The Hanseatic League is a prime historical example of economic interdependence - a collection of unremarkable market towns on the Baltic seaboard that, through the trading of furs, timber and herring dominated maritime trade in northern Europe. They enriched themselves by securing the passage of these goods and through collective military power, defended their interests and those of their merchants. In recent history, the establishment of multinational institutions like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and World Trade Organisation is a sign of greater economic interdependence. They preserve international economic order as community of free-trading nations that benefit from one another. Acting as an authority against those pursuing economic exclusivism while providing financial help to nations opening up to the forces of global trade, these modern 'merchant guilds' symbolise the spirit of economic interdependence. Leading the reformation of the global economy after the Second World War under American auspices, they brought the world into a Golden Age of Capitalism. This was a period of free trade, high growth and unprecedented wealth that lasted three decades. Thus, economic interdependence should not always evoke images of unemployment, rising debt and other woes it may sometimes cause, as the colour and variety it adds to societies touched by an exchange of goods with far-off regions far outweigh its potential risks.

Another reason for my support of interdependence among nations is the advantages it brings to them on the international stage. 'Nations' – being a collective term to refer to any group of people that share a common culture – may not necessarily be states but components of wider political entities. One then wonders why they have chosen to remain in formal unions with other nations instead of acting independently. The fact is that nations have a greater voice if they collude as part of a regional organisation or – in extreme cases – amalgamate to

form wider states. This gives them greater diplomatic influence in the form of added bargaining power at negotiating tables. For instance, the political cohesion of six Native American tribes of the northeastern Atlantic seaboard into a united Iroquois Confederacy created the most formidable challenge to European colonisation of the Americas. Where superior political sophistication of the Europeans was able to undermine squabbling native communities through a policy of divide-and-conquer elsewhere, the Iroquois, through their hold over vast swathes of territory and informal heaemony, were able to compel greater concessions from the Europeans. They played the British, French and Dutch against each other and survived the tide of colonialism longer than less cohesive tribes. In modern times, the European Union has rallied together countries including those that used to be part of the former USSR to vote on issues like human rights and animal welfare. By holding a seat as an observer in the UN, it gives a chance for lesser European states to have their agenda and interests heard on an international level. Therefore, interdependence is indeed beneficial as it gives smaller states - and indeed small nations – a chance to air their concerns by standing together as a larger and more imposing political entity, in the global arena.

In the rough and tumble of international affairs, might is right. No nation can stand alone without reaching out to its neighbours for assistance and receiving help in return. Few are the nations today that can afford the price of isolation, especially in so integrated a world. Thus, interdependence is imperative to ensure the long-term viability of all states.

Muhammad Faris B Joraimi 13A301



The writer certainly possesses a strong and engaging personal voice. This is coupled with valid points supported by an astonishing range of examples, all of which make this essay an excellent read. Keep it up!



Consider the appeal and value of superheroes today. [MJC2014JC1PEQ10]

ear after year, superhero-themed films have dominated the movie screens, with at least two to three being released each year, and even more being slated for release in the subsequent years. Superheroes have long piqued our interests and stirred our imaginations, dating back to the World War II period where stories of heroism and personal sacrifice were oft told and repeated by subsequent generations, and their admirers have grown steadily – even booming in recent years. The appeal of superheroes is clearly very strong, as their extraordinary traits and ventures offer us an escape from reality; but their human traits simultaneously allow us to identify with and relate to them. While their value might be debated, I would argue that superheroes do in fact have value, certainly in the monetary sense and perhaps, more importantly, in the moral sense as well.

Superheroes have a strong appeal due to their remarkable, sometimes other-worldly and fantastical traits and exploits, which we as mundanely ordinary humans are often drawn to. These make-believe worlds of superheroes liberate us from our supposedly dull, prosaic lives, stimulating our imagination by helping us see the extraordinary in the ordinary. Science and technology, seen as incredibly dry and boring topics to some, are made exciting in the tales of superheroes. The creation of the metallic element 'adamantium' in the Wolverine comics which was surgically injected into his bones to give him super strenath, metallic retractable claws and incredibly rapid healing abilities which thus repeatedly prevent his death is an example of 'science' in superhero tales. In the X-Men comics, the machine Cerebro is able to detect and glimpse into the minds of humans and mutants all across the globe, even being able to pinpoint their exact location, which is an advancement in technology that we do not have in real life, but the prospects of which are terribly



exciting. Science and technology in superhero stories have generally been used in innovative and much more advanced ways, giving powers to ordinary humans or causing intense conflict when misused by the foes of superheroes. Thus, there is little doubt to the appeal superheroes have as their world enthrals us and stimulates our imaginations.

Apart from the extraordinary traits that superheroes have, what may appeal to us more on a subconscious level would be their human traits. The superheroes we see in comics or in movies stumble too, and have to face completely human struggles as well – Kurt Wagner, otherwise known as the Nightcrawler, faces discrimination and strugales for acceptance due to his physical appearance of blue skin, yellow eyes, pointed ears and a prehensile tail that renders him devil-like in appearance. The fantastic Spiderman, when not in his signature red and blue suit, is the average Peter Parker, who struggles with romance problems as seen from his awkward behaviour around the women he has feelings for. Steve Rogers - before undergoing the Super-Soldier Serum as a part of Operation: Rebirth to become the Captain America we all know - was greatly disheartened by his inability to serve in the army and was often picked on both verbally and physically because of his physique. These struggles that superheroes face are experienced by the average human as well, thus making them all so relatable to us despite their sometimes other-worldly nature. Indeed, we are able to identify with them and



empathise with their struggles, therein lays their appeal to the common man.

Additionally, the value of superheroes, while sometimes debated, can clearly be seen in the monetary sense. Through the popular screen adaptations of superhero comics, such as Dark Horse Comics' Hellboy and DC Comics' Green Lantern, there is a great potential for revenue to be created for the movie industry. Just looking at Singapore alone, when The Avengers was released back in 2012, it was the top grossing film in Singapore while The Dark Knight Rises, one third of Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy, and The Amazing Spider-Man followed in the second and third positions respectively. Worldwide, the X-Men franchise, which has a total of seven films to date, has grossed over US\$3 billion in total and three more films are slated for release in 2016 and 2017. Even some of the more renowned actors who play and reprise the title roles in many of these films could stand to earn a lot of money, especially Hugh Jackman in the character of Wolverine and Robert Downey Junior in his part as Iron Man. In fact, many of them have commended by critics and fans alike for their uncanny ability to bring such comic book superheroes to life particularly on the silver screen. Additionally, the writers and artists behind superhero comics can experience a surge in interest and sales of their original creations as well - perhaps, earning even more so today than they did before as the movies that adapt such comic book characters and storylines increase the superhero aficionado base, leading to more people being interested in superheroes and purchasing the comic books. Also, the monetary value of superheroes does not just lie in how much revenue it brings in, but can also be seen in how much money is spent on them. Fans are more than willing to spend a lot on superhero-related merchandise just to add to their collection such as illustration books, DVDs, figurines, props and costumes for cosplay, just to name a few. Hence, the value of superheroes monetary demonstrated by the significant amount of money earned from and spent on superheroes.

However, since these superheroes exist in a world with powers like enhanced abilities

and with villains that could very well destroy humanity as we know it, realists would argue that they are thus of little or no value to us due to their far-fetched nature, which makes them not very applicable to our lives. While I would have to concede to such an argument since the abilities and technology in superhero worlds are indeed not seen now and perhaps not even in the near future, to view superheroes as such would be too dismissive. Beyond the fantastic and "unrealistic" nature of superheroes, their stories often convey important messages and impart moral values. The humans versus mutants analogy in addresses discrimination – while mutants may be 'far-fetched' on the surface, the message behind such an analogy is the discrimination against different races. Captain America teaches us to stay true to our principles and values as even before he was chosen to undergo the Super-Soldier Serum as a part of Operation: Rebirth, he was initially chosen to be a part of it because he had displayed his true courage and selflessness by throwing himself over a grenade to protect his fellow soldiers from the shrapnel if it had exploded. Even the oft-quoted piece of advice, "With great power comes great responsibility", while originally by Voltaire, is respected and popularised through its use Spider-Man the comics. Other superheroes (not necessarily from comics) such as The Incredibles demonstrate values like having strong family ties and teamwork. The world of superheroes also carries the message of the impacts of victimisation – indeed, a number of superheroes face villains who turn to evil simply because they have been unfairly treated and deliberately victimised. In coming to terms with their decision not to use their powers for good but instead for evil. The Brotherhood of Evil Mutants in Xinstance, rationalise for misdeeds by arguing that their powers are used to defend themselves and others like them against persecution and discrimination. While it may be uncommon in real life that victims become evil villains capable of mass destruction, extreme examples of perhaps gratuitously violent 'freedom fighters' in the Middle Eastern region could shed light on the similar idea that victimisation breeds further violence.



Thus, superheroes do have value as they impart moral values and important messages to both their readers and viewers, and to boot, in a much more interesting and therefore impactful manner.

The adventures of Wonder Woman, Batman, the Avengers, the X-Men or even more recently popular - the Guardians of the Galaxy may be incredible and otherworldly, but they do appeal to many people, being both fantastical yet simultaneously relatable. Beyond the monetary value, superheroes and their stories have an important moral value as well, perhaps even making them more important since their strong appeal gives them a larger viewer base to impart these values upon. Whatever the narrative behind the next superhero series, one can be sure that many will find it both appealing and valuable.

Aliah Aman Aljunied 13A301



The range of examples is impressive, ranging from comic book superheroes to even Walt Disney films. Also, the development of each paragraph was thoughtfully done with careful attention paid to addressing both 'appeal' and 'value' of superheroes. Well done!

'Books are always more powerful than their screen adaptations.' What is your view? [MJC2014JC1PEQ1]

he Maze Runner by James Dashner was adapted into a motion picture and recently opened in cinemas in Singapore. Movie critics were quick to bemoan that it was yet another dystopian film in the same vein as The Hunger Games and Divergent, screen adaptations which inferior to the original counterparts. Indeed, I believe that books, more often than not, are more powerful than their screen adaptations, be it television shows or movies, albeit with some exceptions.

One of the most pertinent reasons as to why books are often more powerful than their screen adaptations is their ability to invoke stronger and richer imaginations than films or dramas ever will. Quite simply, books rely upon the intricacy of wordplay in order to immerse the reader, drawing him into the novel's universe. Every scene that unfolds as we read is pieced together seamlessly in our very minds and each of us has subtle differences in our versions of the story. Screen adaptations can hence be said to be merely one interpretation of the said story. The stunning visuals we take in on the screen, however, leave no room for imagination, for we as humans cannot naturally alter how we see things or undo what we see. Hence, it can be said that invokina more vibrant and imaginations for the story within the confines of the narrative is a strength that screen adaptations cannot compete with. It is not without basis either. In a rather grim illustration, criminologists ascertain that reading works depicting violence rather than watching shows of this genre has a stronger impact on the mind and more likely to influence readers to turn to criminal ways. The power of imagination is strong and books harness this far more effectively than their screen adaptations.

Another reason as to why books are usually more powerful than screen adaptations is that books leave readers wanting more. The author can certainly take credit for it. The narrative of a book is often deep and engaging and leaves readers eager for the next book. Screen adaptations normally lack that surge of anticipation books have. They are based upon completed novels and the franchise is often completed before the screen adaptation airs. To illustrate, Mockingjay, the last book of the Hunger Games trilogy, was released in 2012 and the movie adaptation is set to be released in the upcoming holiday season. People may be glad that the final movie is finished but the excitement is very much muted because the story everyone wishes to know was unveiled in the book two years prior. Screen adaptations thus fail miserably at replicating the cliff-hangers their source masterfully materials crafted. Movie reviewers will point out that the conclusion of the screen adaptation of Catching Fire, the second book of the trilogy, is rather anticlimactic compared to the book itself as the essence of it is not fully captured in the film. Hence, I believe that books are usually more powerful than their screen adaptations.

In addition to the above points, books undeniably provide a more accurate and integrated story as desired by the author, thereby creating a story that readers easily understand. Screen adaptations, as the name implies, are adaptations of the original source material and there is a high possibility, almost a certainty that the story is altered to suit the director's needs, resulting in discord between the original narrative and later adaptations. As a result, screen adaptations provide a different portrayal of characters, not just physically but also characteristically. This is can be seen in many movies, one of which being Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief. The adaptation has so many differences that the story feels less solid and the characterisation not as wellwritten as it should be. In fact, the author, Rick Riordan himself, disapproves of the misappropriate handling of his source materials and has not watched any of the adaptations for his books. Even scenes that were unnecessary in books are added to films and dramas either as 'fan service' or for commercial purposes through product placement. They are often out of place in the context of the story and only serve to damage the otherwise robust narrative. The Game of Thrones is a perfect example which critics have harshly singled out for containing many nude scenes which are completely extraneous and non-existent in the original A Song of Ice and Fire series. Such questionable additions harm the portrayal of characters and affect the flow of the story. Hence, I believe that books are more powerful, in terms of being true to the story, than their screen adaptations.

Despite the strengths that books have over their screen adaptations, it would be unwise to presume that books are always more powerful though. It is crucial to note that at times, especially in terms of reach, screen adaptations can be more powerful than books because they are able to garner a lot more publicity than books will. Film adaptations and their trailers generate a lot of attention and the casting of famous stars creates even more buzz. L would thus concede that this is indeed one area in which screen adaptations are more powerful than books. In today's world of social media and the Internet, movie trailers are widely found and shared across the world while books are struggling to maintain their place in the hearts of readers in today's fast-paced society. It is undeniable that book sales tend to be a lot higher during the duration of movie screening, a trend captured with JK Rowling's Harry Potter franchise. The proliferation of the Internet also makes videos more appealing than a wall of text. People are more inclined to watch rather than read while on the go. The use of social media in promotion of screen adaptations is a successful one and this is shown in the adaptation of John Green's The Fault in Our Stars. The movie's publicity was almost entirely done through social media and the movie was ranked first in its weekend. Such successful publicity efforts are rarely heard of for books and that is why I concede that in this field, screen adaptations are more powerful than books.

Screen adaptations will only become even more common as books become more exciting and interesting for directors to adapt. The Maze Runner is only the beginning, as more novelists write and dream about their works becoming motion pictures. Ultimately, we must remember that it is the author that makes this a reality and the drawing power of a book depends on the author. Similarly, a good director or even marquee actors can add to the power of screen adaptations. There is clear subjectivity in this area. Personally, I have enjoyed both books and their screen adaptations, and often find that they complement each other rather well. Therefore, it would only be sensible to conclude that books, though powerful, are not always more powerful than their screen adaptations.



James Feng 13S305



Although the author chose to concede an OV, the clear signposting from the start of the essay made the essay coherent and easy to follow. The sound arguments are also well-supported with a wide range of apt examples, clearly showing the writer's passion for books.

ls stress really harmful?

[MJCJ2MBT13Q8]

ften cited as the root cause of unhappiness and ill health in workers and students, stress is seen as overwhelmingly harmful and undesirable. People undertake tasks they deem as stressful because they have no other choice, hence the adjective 'stressed' to describe someone is often conveyed with sympathy in regards to the subject's 'sacrifice' in bearing the burden of stress. However, is stress really as harmful as we are conditioned to think? Lookina past the heavily verbalized emotional and physical damage stress allegedly causes in people, as well as the view that stress is an indication of not coping well, one will find that stress is not as fearsome as so many of us make it out to be.

Firstly, one should not solely pay attention to the negative impacts of stress on one's well-being, such as headaches and insomnia, because stress is essential for a healthy overall psyche too. Stress is a primal mechanism that we often claim is forced upon us, but in actuality comes almost from within. Stress serves as a form of motivation for a person, an emphasis on the importance of getting a particular task done. To be stressed about something is to place great importance on succeeding at it, and this inevitably comes with worrying that one will not. This can be seen in all students - when a student says he is stressed about doing well for an examination, he believes it is important to do so and worries about it. The want to accomplish causes one to fear not accomplishing anything; but this fear is separate from stress. Stress instead



provides a driving force, a purpose and a goal, without which one will feel less motivated to complete tasks.

Secondly, that stress causes tension and an accumulation of fatigue is not entirely negative. Like any other obstacle one faces in being healthy and happy, 'what does not kill you makes you strong', as philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche famously said. City dwellers who plan to live out their education and careers in the city learn to cope with stress by getting used to and even learning to manipulate it to their advantage. There is doubtlessly a limit to the amount of stress one can take before succumbing to the Pandora's Box of selfdoubt and desperation stress is apt to open, but as with all other limits, why not push them further? To avoid stress because it could be harmful is to avoid living because it could be painful. By accepting and constantly battling the side effects of stress, one will always be surprised to find out that one is sturdier than initially believed. As auoted from motivational speaker, Nick Vujicic, who was born without limbs, 'The human spirit can handle much worse than we realize.' And indeed we can. Human history is littered with the illustrious acts of heroes who won the battle of mind over body. From the fearless Joan of Arc who routed the English army to Mahatma Gandhi who led British-ruled India to independence, these heroes survived tremendously challenging and stressful circumstances. For the rest of us, who may be students preparing for examinations, working mothers juggling career and home or the sole breadwinner of a family, we too are everyday heroes who have shown that the stress of daily life that assails us cannot really break us.

Thirdly, stress is one's protection against the unpredictable in life. It prepares one for adversaries, conditioning one to be ready to face them at any moment. Stress prompts urgency and efficiency in doing things, and admittedly causes one to think of the worst possible scenario sometimes. However, that is far from harmful, because now that the mind has considered a possible source of danger, it is now more able to adapt to deal with it. To draw an analogy, at the microscopic level, stress to one's immune system wreaks havoc - cells die, defensive mechanisms are forced to work at full efficiency to eliminate the threat invading the body. However, in the aftermath of the destruction and strain on one's body, the immune system becomes faster at identifying and repelling foreign substances thereafter. When a person is stressed, he or she is aware and alert, and therefore able to react faster to a perceived threat. Conversely, the lack of stress from being unaware of a threat renders the person ill-prepared for the catastrophe that follows. Ignorance is not always bliss, and stress, in this case, brings greater eventual safety.

That being said, the aforementioned limit of stress one can take is a very dangerous one to test, and the toll from pushing oneself too far can be frighteningly large for one to bear at times. It is all too easy to be consumed by stress, as it is a subconscious state of mind. When one ponders a minute too long about the grim possibility of failure or the difficulty of one's current mission, the uncertainty and selfdoubt that were meant to push one closer to their goal blocks it out instead. Stress, like all other challenges in life, will bring sweet rewards to those who conquer but severe harms to those who falter. Wellloved Oscar-winning actor, Robin Williams, recently committed suicide, shocking friends and fans alike around the world. Globally, 800 000 people, or one person every 40 seconds, commit suicide every year, according to the World Health Organisation. Stress indeed is no child's play, especially for those pushed to the limits of sanity. Yet, this is not an unrecognized problem. Many countries around the world, albeit in more developed countries with the necessary medical resources, place much emphasis on treating mental problems such as anxiety, depression and schizophrenia, putting in place support networks and counselling helplines to prevent one from tipping over the edge. For those who felt that an escape from this world was the only way out of misery, alas, if only these souls had the strength to open their eyes to the sources of help available to them.

For most of us in the human race though, feeling stressed is a normal sensation, which most of us learn to live with over time given the inevitability of stressors in each and every one of our lives. However, viewing stress as necessarily harmful, and trying to avoid it all the time, does no one any favours. Stress is not really as harmful as it seems and viewing it from a positive light may strengthen us instead. As Winston Churchill said, 'a pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.'

Chung Min Qi 14\$111



The writer displays good control over language and a personal voice suited to the writing of philosophical essays. The varied use of quotations and real examples lend credibility to the otherwise abstract arguments.

Do media reports on scandals do more harm than good? [MJCJ2MBT15Q3]

ith the advancement of technology and new media, it is now very easy for information to spread around the globe, reaching millions of people worldwide. Scandals, in particular are a very common form of information that is widely circulated around the Internet. While scandals are often deemed as fodder for meaningless gossip, and said to do more harm than good, I beg to differ. As



scandals serve a wider purpose to reveal the truth and also raise awareness on important issues, I am of the view that scandals do more good than harm.

Firstly, media reports on scandals can reveal the truth on salient issues in society. Many issues that plague society, such as corruption and violation of human rights require the media to report it in the form of scandals so as to reveal the prevalence of such problems. As scandals are often a favourite topic for gossip, presenting certain issues in the form of scandals can effectively shed some light on the issue. Without media propagation of the issue in the form of scandals, the issue will most probably be hidden from public knowledge, and the truth would never be revealed. For example, the plight of domestic workers in countries such as Singapore and Hong Kong are often unknown to the public. By highlighting their suffering in the form of scandals, such as the high profile abuse case of Indonesian maid Erwiana in Hong Kong in 2014, the issue received widespread attention from the public. Also, the corruption scandal of former Taiwanese president, Chen Shui Bian had also been revealed through media reports in the form of a scandal, which allowed the people to know the truth behind their corrupt government. Thus, media reports on scandals do more good than harm as they can uncover the truth, benefitting society at large.

Furthermore, media reports on scandals can bring justice to the victims of the scandals. Widespread reports of the scandal will make people feel sympathetic towards the victim, and thus seeking justice for him or her. Very often, many victims of scandals suffer silently, probably due to fear of public scrutiny or retaliation by the culprit. With the propagation of the issue by the media in the form of scandals, the public will be aware of the situation, and will often side with the victim. The culprit will be brought to shame and rendered helpless to the combined powers of online citizens, such as the unscrupulous owner of a shop at Sim Lim Square, Jover Chew, who made the headlines for fleecing foreign tourists. If the culprit actually violated any laws, the jurisdiction

will be aware of his crimes and deal with him accordingly. One famous example would be Justin Lee from Taiwan, who was involved in a sex scandal involving numerous victims. Through media reports of the atrocities that he committed, the public felt outraged by his crimes and called for his immediate arrest. Through public pressure and scrutiny, surrendered himself to the police. Another example would be that of the media reports on the Bernard Madoff scandal where he committed investment fraud amonast other financial crimes decades before being convicted. Through the coverage of this scandal, the victims who fell prey to his Ponzi scheme were able to obtain some justice, closure and worldwide sympathy for their plight. It also helped in ensuring that they have hope in regaining their investment as their cases would not just be swept under the rug and forgotten due to the extensive media coverage of the scandal. As media reports on scandals have the ability to redress the wrong suffered by victims, I strongly believe that they do more good than harm.

Lastly, media reports on scandals can raise awareness on important concerns around the world. Through media reports on small issues in the form of scandals, it can often raise awareness of the major issue at hand. While it can be argued that many small scandals have no direct link to the main issue, it is true that if small scandals were left unreported, they can escalate into a catastrophe. For example, the scandal of tainted milk powder in China in 2008 brought to light the lack of food safety in China. The issue of contaminated baby milk powder may seem irrelevant, but without media reports, the severity of the issue might worsen, leading to more firms producing more poisoned food items due to the lack of media attention. Media attention on scandals, in this case led to more stringent checks on food quality. In addition, public anger forces firms to conduct more ethical practices. Another example would be in the form of the worldwide media coverage on the Foxconn scandal where employees, of what was the world's largest electronics manufacturing company

linked with multinational companies such as Apple and HP, committed suicide, bringing to light their extremely poor working conditions. These reports garnered the attention of several human rights watchdogs and effectively raised awareness of labour conditions to the world. Hence, as scandals led to increased awareness on issues that plague society and the world at large, media report on scandals do more good than harm.

Critics might argue that media reports on scandals might leave a permanent psychological scar on the victim, thus media reports on scandals do more harm than good. While I concede that victims may be psychologically traumatised by the attention they get from media reports, I would like to bring up the point that the victim would have been worse off should the media not have reported these scandals. Without anyone knowing the issue, the victim will have to suffer alone. In the case of scandals such as human rights violation and abuse, the victim could have faced more harm by the perpetrators involved. While it is true that media reports can emotionally scar the victim, it is also true that the media and the law can shield the victim from further physical harm. This is especially true for the case of child trafficking. Children kidnapped in Malaysia are often sent to Thailand or Vietnam to work as child beggars. Separated thousands of miles apart from their parents, these children can only suffer with many of them having their limbs amoutated to gain sympathy. Through media reports on these scandalous acts by ruthless criminals, international police have the means to crack down on this transnational crime due to increased public awareness. Thus, even though media reports on scandals can emotionally scar the victims in the short run, it can end the suffering of the victims in the long run. Therefore media reports on scandals do more good than harm.

Some critics against the propagation of scandals might argue that the media, being profit-motivated will fabricate scandals to gain profit, shaming innocent parties involved. While I agree with the fact that the media is indeed profit-motivated, I disagree that they will

fabricate scandals merely to sensationalise certain issues. First of all, the parties involved in the scandal can engage in legal actions against the media for tarnishing their reputation. Fear of legal repercussions will deter the media from coming up with scandals. Also, fabricating scandals will affect the reputation of the media as well. If the media is constantly reporting fabrications just to increase viewership and readership, in the long run nobody will bother reading their articles as it will be very dubious. One example would be the Singapore Press Holdings. Publishing many forms of new media, such as magazines and newspapers, Singapore Press Holdings ensured that their publications are accurate and true. Even though they do publish scandals in some of their magazines, they remain trustworthy they want to secure long term readership. Therefore, media report on scandals do not do more harm than good. as the media fears legal actions and loss of readership should they fabricate stories.

In conclusion, the list of pros and cons of media reports on scandals are nonexhaustive. While there are viewpoints that can be contested as to whether media reports on scandals do more harm than good, I am of the viewpoint that media report on scandals do more good than harm, and it is in fact relatively harmless. Even though there are downsides to media report on scandals, such as leaving emotional scars on victims, I believe that the good outweighs the bad. Hopefully in the near future, scandals can be reported with minimum damage to the victim yet effectively exposing the culprit at the same time.

Chua Ru Xin 14S101



The essay was fluently written with salient arguments. The examples used were relevant and well explained to support the arguments made.

'The best thing that schools can give to their students is self-confidence.' Do you agree? [MJCJ2MBT15Q8]



s British writer Samuel Johnson said, "Self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings." This would explain why one would associate schools with being the primary institution to impart a feeling of trust in one's abilities, qualities and judgement, so as to prepare the young person for his or her future. While building up students' self-confidence may be one of the objectives of schools today, it may not be best thing that schools can give to their students. After all, formal education seeks to equip students with relevant skills for their future, from which they can gain a true confidence founded upon true abilities.

While self-confidence can be said to be central to a child's success in future. without substantial knowledge backing an individual, self-esteem could misplaced, or worse, be misconstrued as arrogance. Granted, being able to express one's opinion naturally opens up more opportunities. **Panels** interviewing applicants look out for someone that stands out from the crowd, which translates to self-assurance influencina one's career. This is even supported by the University of Melbourne's The Minority Report, which found a strong correlation between confidence and occupational success. Nevertheless, it is imperative to note that employers are not trying to hire individuals who appear confident, but



"First they build up your confidence with simple addition and subtraction, then they slam you with algebra and calculus. It's quite a clever scheme."

individuals whose confidence representative of their ability. Self-assured individuals may merely be putting up a false, baseless facade of confidence that inevitably be eroded incompetence. In juxtaposition, this only highlights the importance of the primary objective of formal education being, first and foremost, to allow students to obtain knowledge and hone skills that would complement the faith in their abilities, and be applicable in the future. To be able to apply for a job, in the first place, one would need qualifications in the form of degrees and the like. From the very beginning of a child's schooling years, they are not only acquainted with solid foundations in core subjects Mathematics and Science, but also the essential skills of reading and writing. As students progress with each level of education, their syllabus narrows down the number and broadens the scope of their subjects. Ultimately, these all serve as a basis and groundwork for the vocation people take up in future. While selfconfidence is central to a child's future success, it would be worthless if it were not arounded on a solid foundation of vocation-related knowledge and skills.

Though self-confidence is important for one to assert oneself in social settings, merely possessing self-confidence is not sufficient to establish lastina and aenuine relationships. One also needs to have the appropriate skills to get along with one's peers. An inability to interact with others would undeniably hinder one's working and personal relationships. A stilted conversation only serves to make the parties involved uncomfortable and seeking an excuse to escape the exchange. Moreover, an absence of emotional intelligence coupled with ianorant self-confidence would cause one to appear off-putting or arrogant in social situations. This is exactly why schools play such an important role in a child's development. Schools provide a nurturing and comfortable environment for students to learn to interact with their peers. Without the complexities of office politics, students can gain essential people skills such as cooperation and teamwork, which are not only relevant in the workplace, but in life

as well. From the start of a child's schooling social hierarchy is inevitably years, established as part and parcel of social These experiences situations. interactions would give students the chance to familiarize themselves with such situations and allow them to develop the confidence to navigate future social situations with skillful ease. Schools provide the advantage for students to gain such knowledge during their school lives, as opposed to them lunging into an unforgiving workplace environment. Emotional intelligence is of central importance to the dvnamics interpersonal relationships. Self-confidence may instead inadvertently be detrimental to one's success in the workplace if one lacks the emotional intelligence to read people and situations well, or work in teams effectively. Schools thus have the obligation to provide the avenue for students to cultivate these attributes that would be invaluable in future.

For schools and education boards, a belief that self-confidence is the best thing that formal education can develop in students may also lead to an emphasis on programmes with a high "feel good" factor, or policies that seek to be overly nurturing to students. Grade inflation or lax discipline policies may have the wellmeaning intention to build student morale, they are but unrealistic depictions of a student's abilities. To do so would only be coddling students and shortchanging them of the awareness of their own abilities. In the long term, this is extremely damaging to a student's welfare and development. The new normal of grades detracts from the accomplishment of earnina good grades acknowledgement of one's capabilities and efforts and would only have disincentive effect on students. Weakwilled or just plain lazy students would not apply themselves as much to schoolwork as it would now be relatively easier to obtain distinctions. Misbehaving students would also disrupt the learning of their peers since the lenient discipline system would allow them to escape punishment.

In fact, self-confidence is just one of the many puzzle pieces in the jigsaw puzzle of education. One last role of formal education, even more important than selfconfidence, is the impartation of values. One's confidence, practiced without a sound moral compass and judgment, would breed deviance, or worse, the undertaking of criminal actions without ianorant remorse. In **Amos** Yee's confidence in articulating his personal opinions, his gross disregard and disrespect towards Christianity and Mr Lee Kuan Yew caused a public uproar. His posting of a vulgar video publicly criticizing Mr Lee Kuan Yew's legacy as well as Christianity violated the Penal Code and he was subsequently arrested. Not only did he not express remorse for his actions, he continually flouted his bail conditions by posting more online content. His overt confidence in exercising his freedom of expression was irresponsible and only reiterated the importance of the very laws that he violated. Clearly, having a sense of unbridled self-assurance by accompanying values is not desirable if we are to maintain a harmonious and safe society. Creating the narcissistic adults that lack regard of a society's value systems would have an adverse and damaging impact on society.

In conclusion, although self-confidence could be a favourable and advantageous quality to possess, there should always be other traits that serve as its foundation. Confidence should not be a weapon to wield only at job interviews, but the poise one constantly carries oneself with, that stems from the vast bank of experiences and opportunities one has been blessed with.

Rachel Ng Jie Ying 148111



The writer possesses a good command of the English language and writes very fluently. The essay is a good demonstration of how the attribute of self-confidence is weighed vis-a-vis the other attributes schools should impart, addressing the evaluative requirement of this question well.



To what extent do medical advancements complicate our lives?

[MJCJ2MBT15Q6]

he advent of modern medicine has greatly transformed the way many humans live. Minor illnesses like influenza no longer pose a major problem for us we simply take our medicines to avoid complications, and rest. However, things may not be as straightforward as it seems with medical advancements. There are those who criticise doctors for further complicating our lives with ever more procedures complex medical routines, some of which come with further medical issues. Granted that the progress of medicine might have complicated our lives a little, my personal opinion is that the benefits it has brought thus far, far outweigh the complications it might have caused.

It is undeniable that modern medicine has brought us countless benefits, and has made our lives, overall, less complicated. Recent developments have let us find out about our possible health problems in future long before the problems actually start affecting us. While most common medicines we use in our day-to-day lives symptoms, curing focus on paracetamol as an analgesic antipyretic, some aspects of medicine also look into the early detection of problems as many major or serious illnesses are much easier to treat (and are more likely to be successfully treated) when treatment starts early. Alternatively, some conditions like allergies can be detected even before the person experiences an alleraic reaction due to allergic triggers. In both cases, it can mitigate discomfort and reduce the time spent resting in bed or in the hospital, which no doubt makes our lives easier just think of all the catching up one has to do after one returns to work or school after a few days of sick leave. Examples of this include genetic sequencing to find out, for example, which illnesses - like Alzheimer's or allergies a person might have, by looking at key genes (or their absence) and seeing if the person has a specific

allele of the gene that is faulty or is otherwise known to cause illness. If potential issues are found, then action can be taken to prevent the issue from actually affecting the issue in future. Another example is nuclear magnetic resonance imaging (nMRI) - commonly known without the first word in the name - and positron emission tomography (PET) scans, which use certain properties of substances in our body to see what is inside us – like an X-ray, but more specific - and detect things like cancer early, before they are even visible through other means. All this helps us prevent issues in future, ensuring that we never have to face serious illness, greatly simplifying our lives.

Medical advancements have also allowed us to, when we do fall sick, overcome the illnesses quickly and with less discomfort. Most of the drugs we take for granted today, including paracetamol, mentioned earlier, and other common ones like pseudoephedrine, used to remedy runny or blocked noses, or guaifenesin, used to remedy coughs, were discovered only in the late 20th century. More recent developments include Tamiflu, which is an antiviral drug used in serious cases of influenza. These medicines all help us recover from diseases by either aiding the immune system in removing pathogens antibiotics and antiviruses - or remedying our symptoms to reduce our discomfort. Being able to recover from illness faster means we spend less time sick at home and more time working or doing what we want, bringing ease and convenience the same as before, but that is the ultimate aim of medicines used to treat sickness after all. There are also vaccines, which help our immune system create antibodies against pathogens before they even affect the body and cause illness. This may seem similar to nMRI and PET scans mentioned earlier, but they are very different - nMRI and PET scans detect problems that already exist, and genetic sequencing looks at potential problems; vaccines, however, are preventative measures that do not aim to detect but simply prevent. Either way, however, they ultimately make our lives less complicated by ensuring we rarely, if ever, need to have our lives disrupted by sudden illness.



Not all medicine is used to treat illness, of course. Some medical advancements help us to alter or modify our bodies to get what we want - a questionable thing to do, but at least the option is there. In researching and discovering more about the human body to aid in recovery from injuries and illness, we have also inadvertently or not - discovered how to change our body surgically, to for example alter our facial features or physique. This is known as plastic surgery, of course, and while it can be controversial, by at least giving us the option to attain a physique or appearance that we are otherwise unable to, it allows us to fulfil desires that would otherwise be impossible to fulfil. Another more reasonable use of medicine in a similar fashion is the creation of prosthetic limbs to replace lost limbs. This reduces the inconvenience that those who have lost a limb have to go through. and allows them to lead a normal life – or as close to one as possible - making their lives easier as they do not have to go through the pains of living with only one arm or one leg.

The greatest benefit of modern medicine definitely has to be the improvement in our health due to all the other things it brings. With less illness and less disability, we are generally healthier and this leads to some improvement in our happiness and our quality of life as we are able to go about our daily lives not having to worry about being killed by the next plague or major disease. This is exemplified by the great in our average lifespans. increase especially in developed countries with advanced medical systems – just look at Japan, where the average lifespan of a human at birth is well over 80 years. Compare this to an average human just a few centuries ago, who might have lived for only 40 to 50 years. Living longer means we get to experience more in our lifetimes, and be more fulfilled by the time we have to leave. More importantly, it means the people around us do not have to worry that we may pass away at any moment; we can make plans far into the future knowing that the people involved will still be around then. Our lives are simplified as we can focus on enjoying life rather than ensuring life.

Detractors to my view will argue that medical advancements have complicated our lives through introducing an increasing number of ethical concerns that arise with the development and use of new medical technologies. As a case in point, gene editing holds the promise of curing serious genetic disorders such as cystic fibrosis, thalassaemia, Huntington's Disease, and some forms of Alzheimer's disease. Unfortunately, many, including the world's most prestigious scientific journals, argue that it is unethical because it will have unpredictable effects on future generations and may lead us on a slippery slope toward designer babies. These are ethical implications which complicate our consideration on what is acceptable and what is not. Nevertheless, ethical debates arise with every new discovery and technology and it is futile to criticise the rise of a new technology for its ability to raise ethical issues concerning its use. Should we go down this path, no scientist nor technologist would dare to embark on new discoveries and inventions for fear of further 'complicating our lives'.

Another trivial comment oft heard is that for everything medicine has brought us medicines, checkups, and the like - our lives have been made inconvenient as we now actually need to pay attention to our health and go for annual checkups at the dentist, deal with ancillary things like finding medical insurance, and even taking whatever medicine we prescribed daily. There is no way to argue against this - it has to be conceded to, for it is true. If modern medicine did not exist, we would not have to do any of that at all. Yet, which rational human being would gladly sacrifice a longer and healthier life in exchange for not having to care about when our last dose of drug was, or whether our medical appointment in future will clash with something else? One cannot fail to see that all of the above petty inconveniences are but a slight price to pay for good health.

Medicine undoubtedly has made our lives simpler. Of course, it has also brought drawbacks and controversies that, although may not affect most of us directly, can complicate the future



progress of medicine. Let us not tie the hands of medical researchers and doctors; instead, let us give them the credit due to them for making our existence a much easier one.

Tee Hao Wei 14S101



An excellent essay which makes a concerted effort to address the PoC of the question 'complicate'. Many good examples were given, demonstrating how well-read the writer is. Keep it up!

The world would be a better place if everyone had the same opinion. Discuss. [MJCJ2MBT15Q5]

he opening of the Odyssey, which describes the war between the Greeks and the Trojans, lends itself to a discussion on when one is allowed to go to war and when at war, what one is justified to do. Different people with different beliefs, in this case, will then argue for what they believe in. At the same time, this is when some will argue that the world would be a better place if everyone had the same opinion for it could mean lesser conflicts and more cordial relationships between countries and people alike. I, for one, acknowledge this point of view but to a greater extent, take the opposing stand that the world might not be a better place if everyone had the same opinion due to the benefits brought about by our inherent differences.

The world would not be a better place if everyone had the same opinion for progress will be hindered. Opposing views or contradictory beliefs are often the very driving force for progress as it pressurizes the other party to work harder in order to refute any doubts cast on itself, to prove its credibility and worth. To buttress my point, the example of improving legislation and introducing new policies by governments can be used. The different voices in Parliament have spurred the Singaporean government to improve on its welfare policies and develop more social safety

nets for the minority segments of society. This was the very reason for the implementation of Silver Schemes for the elderly and higher taxes on high income earners as seen in the Budget 2015. Likewise, with the constant questioning from individuals with differing opinions, Science has been able to make progress and tremendous constantly innovate. We only need to consider the very buildings that we inhabit, for their designs are based on engineers' understanding of gravitational field forces and atomic properties of steel rods and cement which stems from scientific research that has gone through different rounds of cross-examination from different opinions. To continue our search for new solutions to ever-evolving problems such as climate change, scientists constantly need fresh perspectives and novel ideas. Hence it is this difference in opinions that has led to the plugging of gaps in one's initial project to bring improvement in our lives, making the world a better place to live in.

The world would also not be a better place if everyone had the exact opinion because certain contradictory views might be imperative in giving more insights and greater considerations for issues. Different opinions allow unconsidered angles that the majority might fail to see as a result of their reluctance or negligence of the issue to be analyzed. In the same regard, the same opinion that everyone has might not be the most beneficial or the best opinion that there could be, not least because it could in fact lead to detriments. Just as how predators attacked their prey with all the deliberateness and ruthlessness in Nature, Hitler killed millions of Jews during



his time in power, not with tooth and claw but with brute force, chemicals and most importantly, a large following of complicit people who shared his twisted vision. Had someone with a differing opinion from Hitler stood up and fought for what he believed in, the Holocaust could have been prevented and precious lives could have been saved. Similar opinions are not necessarily symbolic of collective wisdom that will bring benefits, not least when those very opinions are bad ones for that matter.

The world will end up being mundane due to a lack of diversity if everyone held on to the same opinions. In a way, the world today is interesting because of its diversity of thinking and colorful cultural beliefs and practices that contribute to our nonmaterial well-being. If that ceases to happen with everyone adopting the same opinion, the world will become nothing more than a dull place and its people being mere living zombies. From the extravagant diamond-encrusted skull with the name of "For the Love of God" to portraits such as Rembrandt's "Self portrait with two circles" and Leonardo da Vinci's world renowned "Mona Lisa" and to Renaissance art pieces, these various art forms are testament to the fact that diversity enriches our lives. We are also able to enjoy the plethora of cuisines in different corners of the globe as chefs and cooks seek diverse ways to tantalise our palates. Different opinions enabled such creations which in turn make the world a better place by opening up minds, challenging perspectives and stretching boundaries.

However, some critics are for the opinion that the world would be a better place if everyone had the same opinion because it would spare the world much conflict and fighting due to differing opinions. The world today is rife with riots and wars as different groups of people fight on the basis of clashing ideologies. However, this is but a specious line of argument. Granted, while such disagreements could have been avoided should everyone have the same opinion, these critics have failed to see that there is more than one cause of conflict and differing opinions is but one of the many other causes of conflicts such as

competition for resources, historical grievances and greed. Thus to conclude that people having the same opinion will make the world a better place is but a mere sweeping statement. Moreover, some conflicts could perhaps even be inevitable for the greater good. Just as with the war between United States and the infamous Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, though there are lives lost in the war, it is for the greater good that the world does not fall into the hands of ISIS and adopt their extreme ideology which can only be described as sadistic and distorted. Therefore, if everyone had the same opinion, the world will become a worse place or simply remain the same, but definitely not become a better one. As Albert Einstein once said, "The world is a dangerous place to live in, not because of the people who are evil, but because of people who do not do anything about it." It is therefore evident that the world should not have everyone with the same opinion for it could risk the world falling into the hands of the evil and thus becoming worse, much less better.

In conclusion, although the world might experience some benefits if we do all share the same opinion, overall it would be for the worse. We would not be able to flourish in our ever-changing environments, neither would we be able to invent nor innovate. The human race would become stagnant and life would be boring. The fact remains that we need diversity and variety in order to thrive. In the words of Maya Angelou, "It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity, there is beauty and there is strength."

Yap Yu Tong 14\$111



This is a beautifully expressed essay with a very logical style of evaluation. The writer evidently reads widely and pulls all her knowledge together to write a cogent piece. Excellent work!



ZENITH Brush Up!

Ways to Refute/Rebut Criticism

Ever came across questions with extreme propositions containing **insults**, **criticism** or **harsh judgements**?

Some examples of such questions are:

1. The criticism, insult or harsh judgement is **untrue**:

- A. 'Unprepared for the modern world.' How true is this of the young people in your society?

 (DHSJ2PE11Q7)
- B. 'Contemporary music has no artistic value.' Is this a fair comment? [2008 A levels Q10]
- C. 'Statistics measure everything but prove nothing.' Discuss. [2003 A levels Q10]
- ✓ Such questions usually invite disagreement with the proposition, and therefore a defence of the subject that has been insulted, criticized or unfairly judged.
- ✓ An OV/R approach is highly useful as the writer would have to consider why the subject is being criticized [OV], before rebutting these criticisms [R] one by one.



Here are some useful tips for how you can brainstorm rebuttals to defend a subject against criticism, insults and harsh judgements!

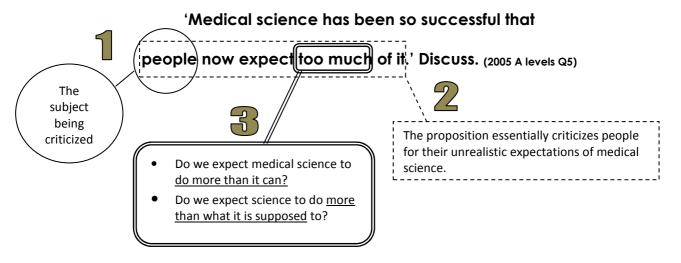
	not always true / not true throughout all time (in history) not true for all people not true for all situations assumptions made are wrong that was just an isolated example the definition is too narrow other factors have been ignored or forgotten	
2.	ne criticism, insult or harsh judgement is <u>unfair</u> : I We have no other option / this is what we do / even if this is bad, there is nothing w can do about it / I There is no basis of comparison (comparing gorillas to apples) / don't judge me by a unfair set of criteria that shouldn't apply to me since I am different.	
3.	omething is already being done about the situation, so the criticism is excessively harsh.	
4.	ne criticism is akin to the pot calling the kettle black. I Don't judge me harshly when you are no better I I'm not the only one guilty of this; there are many others/almost everyone is guilty of this too. I My is still better than any other alternative out there	of
5.	ven if the criticism has some validity to it, so what? I There aren't any real detriments or impacts, so why stop? I The impacts are not all that detrimental and/or can be reversed. I There could even be resultant benefits (which may outweigh the detriments).	



Do apply the above tips wisely though.

- ✓ Not all questions with absolute propositions are questions with criticisms/insults/judgments.
- ✓ Not all 5 points above can be applied to all questions with criticisms; only some criteria are used for certain questions.
- ✓ Point 1 is the strongest way of rebutting a criticism and should always been applied.

Let's try this out!



Using the tips on the previous page, try brainstorming rebuttals to the criticism of people's unrealistic expectations of medical science:

Tip 1: The criticism is UNTRUE

• It is not entirely true that everyone looks to medical science for miracles. Many of us are in full knowledge of the limits of medical science in reality.

Tip 2: The criticism is UNFAIR

Medical science is meant to bring cures – it's expected for us to expect much of medical science. What else would we expect to cure us or prolong our lives or resolve our medical woes?

Tip 5: So What?

- There are hardly any detriments from expecting so much out of medical science.
- In fact, the resultant benefit of expecting so much from medical science is what drives it forward, always finding new discoveries and cures.

Here are some further questions with insults, criticisms and harsh judgements. Try using the 5 tips above to mount a defence to them!

- 1. 'The family has suffered at the expense of career in Singaporean society.' Is this a fair comment? $_{(2003\,Q12)}$
- 2. 'Too much attention is given to criminals; not enough to their victims.' Is this true? (2005 Q11)
- 3. 'Entrepreneurship is just another name for personal greed.' How far do you agree with this statement?
- 4. 'Mass production inevitably means a loss of craftsmanship and quality.' Is this true in your society? (2007 OS)
- 5. Discuss the view that too much faith is placed in statistics. (2008 Q9)
- 6. 'Science is unreliable, being based as much on theory as on fact.' Is this a fair comment? (2011 Q12)
- 7. 'Unlike the Arts, such as writing or music, Mathematics lacks the capacity for creativity.' How far do you agree with this statement? (2013-Q2)
- 8. Discuss the view that the young in your society are apathetic. (DHSYr6PE12Q11)



Zenith Highlights

MJC Library's Print and Screen Competition.

WINNING ENTRY

The Hobbit's Lament; There and Never Again

The Hobbit by Tolkien vs The Hobbit by Peter Jackson

There was a fellow by the name of Peter, Who adapted a story 'bout a minute critter. It was a tale made for tweens, Specifically of Tolkien's, But really the book was much better.

The silver screen took a much varied portrayal, With many changes seen as a betrayal, For not only did they distract, They really actually detract, And disappointed fans deemed too loyal.

An unexpected journey soon to be forgotten, Due to sequels misbegotten. A disappointing battle, Where five armies might as well prattle, Making the films in contrast really rotten.

A love story shoehorned and unnecessary, Further constructing a plot more desultory. And a couple more lines For the dwarves would be fine, Since their development could be much less binary.

Lord of The Rings is Tolkien's nonpareil,
And to a certain extent even Jackson's Holy Grail,
But The Hobbit's too ambitious,
Despite however propitious,
With the word count and pages already to curtail.
The visual medium discredited its worth,
But still it provided some mirth,
For it's the final farewell,
Until time will foretell,
The Last Goodbye to Middle-Earth.

Iskandar Dzulkarnain 145207





1ST RUNNER UP

The Harry Potter books, in its seven-part glory, trumps the movies with its lavish generosity with words. Much solace can be found in how the books are fully open to interpretation, and this truly encapsulates the wonder of the story; "Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?" The immersive nature of the extensive text fosters a lurid imagination and critical thinking that really complements the astonishing sorcery and subtexts in Harry Potter in a way the film cannot engage the audience.

J.K. Rowling recounts, "I met a really clever reader the other day, and this is what's wonderful about books; she said to me, 'I really know what Neville looks like.' And I said, `Describe Neville for me.' And she said, 'Well, he's short and he's black, and he's got dreadlocks.' Now, to me, Neville's short and plump and blond, but that's what's great about books. You know, she's just seeing something different. People bring their own imagination to it. They have to collaborate with the author on creating the world." And indeed, there is something magical about breathing life into the words yourself.

Wong Cai Jie 15A301

2ND RUNNER UP

How Peter Jackson possibly outdid Tolkien

There are little criticisms of The Lord of the Rings, whether it is for the original J.R.R. Tolkien books or for Peter Jackson's adapted movies, and I do feel that both are tremendous achievements in their own ways. However, I also feel that Peter Jackson managed to perfect an already great story by Tolkien, and also set the standard for movies in general. When The Fellowship of the Ring was released in 2001, it provided moviegoers with an experience that had never been seen before. The wonderful score, the revolutionary make-up and visual effects, the breath-taking cinematography and the inspired acting performances all complemented one another in near-perfect fashion. Better yet, Jackson managed to top his own performances over the next two years when the second and final portions of the trilogy were released.

One fault of Tolkien is that he was occasionally too long winded, with certain sequences spanning over a few chapters but having no effect on the overall story. Jackson realised this, added his own flair to the story and crafted some of best movies ever. Nevertheless, Tolkien and Jackson have etched their names in history and will be remembered indefinitely.

Nawfal Marican 14S207



ZENITH Notices

Call for Contributions 2015

The ZENITH series is always looking out for interested writers to contribute their writing and reflections on issues and topics of relevance. The editorial team is calling for contributions for 2015:

Meridians Write

Both seniors and freshmen are welcome to submit entries on topics of current relevance, issues that interest you or even creative pieces of work, such as book reviews, poems, short stories or even cartoons or other illustrations relevant to GP or Literature. You may also select from your best pieces of writing from the work you engage in, both in and out of class. You can submit your writing through your GP tutors or directly to the editor.

Please submit all completed works to the Editor any time throughout the year. (NB: ZENITH is published in semester I & II yearly.)

Editor

Mrs Janice Lok

Department of English Language

