General Paper Bulletin Oct 2019 (JC 2)

Welcome to the final issue of TMJC's GP Bulletin for 2019! Here are a few more essays written by your peers during the recent Preliminary Examination. Once again, thanks to the students who have contributed their essays, who have proven that good writing is very possible despite the exam conditions.

Do take note again that these essays are not perfect or model essays, and while reading these essays, you may find some of the examples and points useful for application to other questions. Please exercise judgment and discretion in using such information in a manner that is relevant to the question you are answering.

Lastly, you should not attempt to copy and hand them in as your own!

All the best for the upcoming A-Level Exam!

Editorial Team

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Q2. 'Winning at all costs ruins the spirit of sports.' What is your view? (TMJCJ2PE2019)

Throughout the history of humankind, sport has always been a vehicle of unity and character. From the ancient Olympic Games, where athletes from Greek states congregated in Athens to compete for state pride, to the varied sporting events we have now, with professionals training for months and years to bring glory to their home, we see time and time again how sport is used as a vehicle for good. In modern times, however, we see increasing stakes attached to victory in such competitions, leading to a win-at-all-costs philosophy among athletes. Many argue that this thinking kicks the spirit of sport to the wayside, as it ignores all the virtues and values that sport imparts. I agree with this view.

The win-at-all-costs mentality ruins the spirit of sport as it leads to unethical behaviour among sportsmen. Sport is often regarded as the best way to teach the values of honesty and respect. However, due to the idea of victory above all else, these values are forgotten, leading to a toxic culture of cheating and disrespect. A famous incident illustrating this is the Sandpaper Gate incident. The Australian cricket team, while playing against South Africa, was found to have cheated when one member, Cameron Bancroft, was caught using sandpaper to rough up the ball, which would allow it to swing more and thus, harder to play. This incident shocked the cricket world, and the larger sporting world, as it brought to light the disregard sportsmen had for the rules of the game, and sparked a discussion on the rotten win-at-all-costs culture that had replaced what cricket stood for. While Bancroft and his captains were banned for a year following the incident, the damage had been done to the sport, and cricket, long referred to as the gentleman's game due to its respectful and gracious spirit, was thrown into disrepute. Thus, we can see how such a mentality could ruin the spirit of sports through a disregard for moral values.

Another way this mentality ruins the spirit of sports is the unsavoury behaviour it teaches children. Athletes are often role models, ideally of sportsmanship. The concern here is that impressionable young children often copy their favourite athletes' mannerisms and actions; and this will be disastrous if the athletes display unsportsmanlike behaviour, a key tenet of the sporting spirit. Such unsportsmanlike behaviour include especially the disregard for fair play. It is a well-known fact in several countries like Spain and Brazil: children are taught by their coaches how to dive and waste time. These children, who often grow up to become professionals or high level amateurs, continue this behaviour and pass it on to the next generation, further diluting the idea of fair competition and ruining the spirit of the sport further, continuing the vicious and destructive cycle. A look into any football match; be it at school or professional level, often exhibits such unsportsmanlike behaviour. Sadly, this is not limited to football, showing the rot wrought on by the win-at-all-costs mentality that ruins the spirit of any sport.

Some may argue that winning at all costs does not ruin the spirit of sport due to the fact that it is merely entertainment that increases the accessibility of sports to the wider public. They argue that the primary purpose of sports is to entertain, and when athletes view victory above all, it provides for highly watchable entertainment. They would point to Tiger Woods, the mercurial golfer who dominated professional golf for years. While he was not the most sportsmanlike person, he made golf cool and made the once elitist-seeming sport of golf accessible to the masses. This influenced many people, particularly the youth, into taking up the sport. Thus, even with Woods' unsavory win-at-all-costs mindset, it boosted the idea that sports was for all, thereby even enhancing the spirit of the sport. However, this is a flawed argument as many sportsmen with this mindset have harmed more than improved the spirit of sports. Professional Cyclist Lance Armstrong influenced many people into cycling, but his win-at-all-costs attitude lead to him using performance-enhancing substances and he even bullied his teammates into doing the same. When his deeds were made public, he was disgraced and many were disgusted that an athlete of Armstrong's

stature did such a thing. This led to a sharp decrease in cycling fans, and as a whole, the 'cycling spirit' of pushing the limit of human endurance was ruined. Thus, while the win-at-all-costs mindset could be argued to bring good, it more often than not brings harm in the long run.

The health of athletes themselves could also be ruined with the single-minded focus on winning at all costs. This mentality leads to sportsmen and women undertaking punishing training regimes that affects their health in the long run. Some may even be fed hormones and steroids to boost performance. These factors severely harm the health of athletes, leading to a lifetime of suffering. Cyclist Tanguy Turgis, once regarded as one of the most promising French riders in the professional peloton, had to retire at 21 due to heart abnormalities exacerbated by the long and arduous training he had to undertake. The East German swimmers, especially the females, had faced long lasting health problems due to hormone treatments administered by the East Germany regime. Many female swimmers had such high testosterone levels that they became infertile and could no longer give birth. The mental health of athletes have also been damaged due to such a mindset. English goalkeeper, Fraser Forster, had taken an extended break due to depression-attributed stress levels of the need to win in football matches. These all show that the win-at-all-costs mentality ruins the idea that sport is meant to be healthy for the body and mind. Thus, the failing health of many sports people illustrates why the win-at-all-cost mentality ruins the sporting spirit.

In conclusion, the attitude that victory is more important than all else ruins the spirit of sports, and it can be seen through the actions and life outcomes of athletes all over the world. It is not just limited to the actions of Bancroft, Woods, Spanish football coach or the East German government. This is not to say the will to win is bad, however. It is just that every self-respecting sports person, professional or otherwise, needs to know how to find the fine balance between competitiveness and sportsmanlike values to achieve good results and gain respect from all. After all, sporting heroes like Roger Federer and Usain Bolt are remembered for their gracious behaviour and their sporting achievements, making them good role models for all to follow.

Ashok Sujith Kannan 18S501

Remarks: Scope and depth are present in essay. Good range of examples cited and generally well developed. First two points are somewhat repetitive.

Q4. Evaluate the claim that the regulation of technology is a desirable, but unrealistic, goal. (TMJCJ2PE2019)

It is without a doubt that advancements in technology have benefitted society as a whole, regardless of one's class, race or wealth. However, the rate at which it has improved has grown exponentially over the past few decades, leading some to cry afoul. To limit the negative impacts such technology may have, governments worldwide have put in place certain restrictions, at the expense of the firms developing them. In light of these perspectives, I stand for the side that calls for the regulation of technology, while agreeing that it is unrealistic.

The regulation of technology is a desirable goal as it protects the interests of society. As technology is so widespread, relative to its nature, there always stands a group of individuals who tend to be exploited the most. During the twentieth century, advancements in weapons production have led to the inevitable usage of chemical weapons. Without restraint, such were used against other humans, with lasting impact. During the Vietnam War, the infamous Agent Orange chemical

was used against the locals of Vietnam, leading to birth deformities and serious medical conditions even up to this day. Facial recognition technology, originally seen as a pathway to better integrate with one's devices, is used as a government surveillance method in China, forgoing the concept of privacy in public. Regulation of technology is thus essential in protecting society as a whole.

On the other side of the fence, people have argued that regulation of technology hinders the advancement of humanity, condemning the thought of such a notion. The limits as to how they can be utilized are cited, preventing further innovation and dialing the time back on the technology clock by years. However I disagree with such a perspective. Many of the advancements developed are advancements only to those who can afford them, and those who actually have a means to use them. Such growth cannot be considered growth of the human race as a whole, seeing as they benefit a select group of individuals. In the medical industry, where improvements are undoubtedly important, high-end effective treatments are enjoyed only by those who have sufficient wealth. Cheaper alternatives are thus more commonly used, which brings about risks of exploitation. The Opioid crisis in the United stated is a result of a lax regulation, as pharmaceutical firms readily released the cheaper pain-killers to turn a greater profit, causing widespread addiction to the drug. The poorer people suffer to fund the development of treatments for the rich. Hence I firmly advocate for the regulation of technology.

Despite the multitude of benefits the regulation of technology may bring, it is a daunting task. A reason I contest that effective control cannot be put in place, is due to the difficulty of examining the impacts of technology. Such is the case with self-driving cars, which is currently a reality in the testing labs of automobile manufacturers. The immediate argument to banish its usage is the concern of safety. Without a human to actively pull the brakes in front of pedestrians, the risk of a bug causing an accident runs high. However when looking from a wider angle, the implementation of such cars may very well reduce the incredibly high rates of traffic accidents stemming from human error. The impacts of its utilization are uncertain upon a closer look, causing complications when deciding how it should be regulated. Such a parallel can be drawn to other advancements in technology. Genetic modifying CRISPR shines a light in eliminating medical conditions in infants, but it also comes with the risk of discrimination against those who cheated the birth lottery. Therefore, as the impacts of technology are hard to determine, I argue that effective regulation is hardly within the realms of reality.

Another reason that regulation of technology is difficult, stems from the nature of such regulations. The fact is that most regulations are bound solely to a country. Development of a technology can be regulated, yes. But the firms - the source of the technology - are at their own liberty to transfer their research capabilities to a nation without such laws, causing economic detriments including unemployment and lower investment levels. Governments have to anticipate the negative implications of an effective regulation, which may lead to it not being implemented at all. For example, a person in Singapore who wished to start a firm producing marijuana to harvest its medical benefits can just migrate to the Netherlands where it is legal. Many of these regulations hold no weight across borders, even more so when the firm in question has millions of dollars at its disposal. Therefore, the regulation of technology is unrealistic given how easy it can be bypassed geographically.

Some people instead debate in favor of regulation being realistic. Given the significance of the consumer culture in the modern world, companies place great emphasis on maintaining a public image. Regulations are easily weaved into the workings of such technologies by the firms, the source themselves, to appease the public and curry their favor when concerns are raised and when there are outcries. Time is bought for the government to properly examine the impacts of

said technology, before working it into a law. However, I reject the aforementioned view as it is based on two idealistic assumptions; that the outcry stems for the majority in the public, and the government is effective enough to evaluate all impacts in the consideration of their regulations. It took years before action was taken against piracy and the biggest piracy site, Piratebay, and such actions have been ineffective due to how ingrained it is in the internet culture, and the majority of its users supporting its existence. One such copyright law, the much debated 'Article 13' of the European Union has also failed for defying the two assumptions. By the time it was brought forth for review, thousands had already built careers as content creators and streamers, which the bill eventually forbade the existence of. The carrying out of such regulation, as demanded by the lawmakers, was also unrealistic in the state of current technologies. Therefore, I stand by the notion that effective regulation is extremely idealistic.

All in all, technology is advancing at such a rate that it is impossible to effective regulate them all. As a human, and a member of society, it is more than ever vital to be kept up to date on such innovations that can bring about big change, in order to properly recognize its potential impacts, and who it may affect.

Tan Yi Xin 18S101

Remarks: This essay offers a good balance between scope and depth, with clear evidence of knowledge of the subject matter. However, some of the examples and opposing points could have been better substantiated. Language is clear and written in a confident and persuasive personal voice.

Q5. To what extent does formal education guarantee success today? (TMJCJ2PE2019)

"Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime." This phrase tells us the importance of education in helping one survive and be successful. Education gives one hope and promise for the future. It is seen as the key to entering the working world and is a must for one to succeed, especially in today's increasingly knowledgeable and competitive society. Success is defined by each person in their own way and what is success to one man might not be that to another. Therefore, formal education is able to bring success to everyone, but the extent to which it guarantees success, in my opinion, is limited.

Firstly, due to the extremely competitive nature of today's society, formal education alone might be insufficient in guaranteeing one's success. The job market today is becoming increasingly saturated. As global populations increase and countries importing foreign talent are becoming a frequent occurrence, it is getting more difficult to get a good paying job. This is because companies today are looking for cheap and efficient labor. Meaning to say, they expect more from employees for less wage. Since everyone is becoming increasingly educated and knowledgeable, employers look for qualities that make a likely candidate stand out. This can come in the form of work experience or ability to work for lower pay. This is evident in countries like China and Russia. In China, job markets have become so saturated that many have left the country in search for jobs in other countries. This is evident by China being the number one country that exports foreign talent. The Chinese workers in most cases are more willing to accept lower wages than locals and are at times more educated and experienced than local workers. This makes it more difficult for local workers to be successful in their society. Russia on the other hand faces what is known as search unemployment, in which graduates are unable to look for a job that satisfies their desires. This could be due to the low average wage in Russia and the lack of proper skills provided by formal education in Russia. This makes it hard for the Russian people to be successful with

formal education alone. Therefore, the extent at which formal education guarantees success is limited.

Secondly, formal education is limited in guaranteeing success because education alone would only get you so far, but the ability to innovate and create can be said to be more important for success today. In today's world where many countries are facing a brain drain, innovation and creativity are more important than ever, to be successful. In the market for smart phones, where producers are looking to get the slightest edge over the competitors, it is innovation that helps them stand out from the crowd. There are so many phones that offer the same functions at different price points, therefore, consumers are looking for a product that gives them the greatest value for money. Hence, this forces companies to innovate and use new ideas to keep consumers interested. Failure to do so would result in the fall of sales figures which a company would deem undesirable and some might even say unsuccessful. This is evident in the company, Apple, in which consumers have showed their dissatisfaction with lackluster products by turning to other brands, resulting in a decline in Apple's profits. This is due to the unsuccessful launch of products that lack innovation for a price that is too high. This shows that even though Apple had studied the market and made the adjustments to ensure success, their lack of innovation has resulted in the failure of their product. Another example showing that innovation is more important than formal education in guaranteeing success is Jack Ma. Jack Ma did not even graduate school with a complete education. Instead, it was his ideas and innovation that made him the successful person he is today. He was able to take advantage of advancements in technology and build up the business he has today. Hence formal education can be limited in guaranteeing success.

However, it is true that education opens the door for one to be successful and in certain cases guarantees success. Education equips one with knowledge required to be successful. In the past, education was the key to success. Giving a man a proper education would have allowed him to get a job and get his family out of poverty. Assuming he does the same for his children, eventually they would be out of poverty and succeed in life. Even though that might seem like history for many in developed countries, developing nations like Nigeria and Cambodia still see that formal education guarantees success. This is because many of the country's population live in poverty. And the answer the government has provided is formal education. With a good education, many doors are opened for their people to eventually succeed. Since resources and labor are underemployed in these developing countries, formal education gives people enough of an advantage to be successful in their society. Therefore, formal education guarantees success in these societies.

Furthermore, if your idea of success is that you are able to get a job that supports you for the rest of your life, then formal education guarantees your success, especially if your society offers a very high level of education. This is because, with that level of education, you should be able to apply for a job with a decent enough pay for you to support yourself. In Singapore, where the education has been shaped to ensure that Singaporeans can be successful, formal education alone would be able to help you to attain a diploma, allowing you to get a job. Coupled with internships that institutions provide during the period of formal education, Singaporeans would be more than equipped enough to get a job and be successful. This is a similar case in the United States of America (USA). In the USA, a formal education provides one with sufficient tools to succeed. This is because in the USA, there are many policies that help small business start-ups. Since the USA is a unique country in which people are driven to start their own business, formal education alone would be able to help them to be successful. Hence, formal education guarantees success in such scenarios.

In conclusion, given the rate of development and advancement in the modern world, I for one believe that formal education is limited in guaranteeing success. As the whole world starts to get more knowledgeable and educated, it would become increasingly difficult to be successful by relying solely on formal education. This is due to increased competitiveness, and the ever changing global market. As the world moves towards an increasingly technologically integrated future, if our formal education system fail to evolve alongside it, then formal education would continue to be limited in its ability to guarantee success.

Jaydon Kow Aik Suan 18S302

Remarks: Effective and cogent use of language, competent use of personal voice. Relevant and consistently substantiated. Further nuancing of arguments and expressions will elevate your arguments.

Q9: Assess the view that poverty is the result of poor governance. (TMJCJ2PE2019)

In the world today and in the past, many people worldwide are facing poverty. The United Nations has even shifted the poverty line to people who are living on under USD$1.50 a day. For years and decades, countries and even activists have been trying to reduce and eradicate poverty in the world. Even in countries like India, they have seen a decrease in the number of citizens living under the poverty line and this is an improvement. Yet in countries like Myanmar, poverty results in their jade rush where people risk their lives to try and dig up jade. How then is the government responsible for poverty in their countries? I agree that poverty is the result of poor governance, because, they are either corrupt, they do not enforce their laws, or that they place little emphasis on education.

I agree that poverty is the result of poor governance because of corruption. Corrupt leaders usually pocket much money from the state funds, and hence leave their country to be underdeveloped and poor. In 2016, the President of Zimbabwe was arrested for corruption and pocketing millions of dollars from the state fund into his own bank accounts. This left its citizens to be in extreme poverty and struggling to survive each day. Even in Malaysia, ex-Prime Minister Najib has also been caught for corruption, pocketing millions of dollars from the state. While he and his wife experience and enjoy good lives, many of their citizens are living in poverty. This shows that when governments are corrupt, they would pocket the state money that could be used to combat poverty like providing subsidies, implementing welfare policies, and even providing clean access to water for its citizens, which many people living in poverty do not get to enjoy. As the government pockets more and more money, its citizens continue to be poorer and poorer, and little if at all is done to help lift these citizens out of poverty. Hence I agree that poverty is the result of poor governance because of corruption.

Secondly, I also agree that poverty is the result of poor governance because the laws made by the government are not being enforced, hence resulting in poverty. In India, many women are living in poverty due to the illegal sex slave trade. The sex trade in India accounts for about 10 million USD of the yearly Indian GDP growth, which is not a small sum. However, the women are forced into this slavery, where it is against their own will and they are not even paid properly. This is a result of poor governance. The police in India often turn a blind eye to these cases as the government does not place much importance on it. Many of these women in this illegal trade are very poor. The government also does not enforce their laws and try to catch the culprits running this trade. Another example is in the Central African Republic, where countless people are living

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in poverty, and where many are involved in the illegal 'blood diamond' trade. This results in many different groups of people fighting over territories to gain control of lands that might have the 'blood diamonds'. Each day many people die but nothing is done by the government to stop these acts. This puts many people in poverty as these people do not seek proper jobs but instead fight for the illegal trade of such diamonds since the government does not enforce their laws, leaving the people to abuse the system and worsen the poverty in the country. If the government had enforced the laws, many of the affected Indian women could have learned skills and work and earn a proper income. Similarly, the people in the Central African Republic could apply for legal mining of the 'blood diamonds', which could be done in a humane and orderly fashion or even work in other jobs. The failure of the government to even enforce such basic rules has resulted in worsening the poverty situation. Hence I agree that poverty is the result of poor governance.

Thirdly, I agree that poverty is the result of poor governance due to the lack of emphasis on education by the government for their citizens. Education has been said to be the way out of poverty. However, in countries like the Philippines or even Cambodia, the government does not emphasise the importance of education. Instead many of the children and teenagers are left to work at a young age to bring in extra income which is very little for the family as the parents do not see the importance of their child receiving education. In Cambodia, it is even worse as teenage pregnancy rates are very high. The young lack sexual education from the government. In turn they become mothers at a young age, causing them to be unable to receive education and continue to live in a cycle of poverty. Education allows one to be empowered and to be able to be employed in jobs that actually pay well. If the government had placed emphasis on the importance of education, the citizens of these countries would get to work in jobs that require higher skill levels and that would pay them well. When this happens, many of the citizens would be able to be out of poverty and with the multiplier effect of the economy, help to reduce or eradicate poverty in their country. Hence I agree that poverty is the result of poor governance as the government does not emphasise the importance of education.

However, critics may say that poverty may not be a result of poor governance, but rather governments' lack of funds. Many third world countries simply do not have the means to develop policies and even give subsidies to help the poor people in their country. Governments may want to make changes, such as the president of the Philippines where the war on drugs is taking a toll on the government budget as it is very costly, leaving little to combat poverty. Thus, despite the noble intention of tackling poverty, many of these governments in poorer countries are simply too poor to even implement adequate measures to tackle the poverty situation. However, I beg to differ as I think that most of the time, it is just poor budget planning by the government that results in poverty. In the 2014 Brazil World Cup, the government spent a huge sum of money of 300 million USD on the construction of their football stadiums and other facilities. However after the world cup, the stadiums and facilities were left unused and instead the government was left with a bigger budget deficit. Yet many citizens in Brazil were left homeless, living in slums and squatter settlements. This shows that poor budget planning by the government would result in poverty.

Some other critics may say that national disasters such as earthquakes or tsunamis could be the cause of the people's poverty. In Mumbai, India, the farmers in the region would be hit by monsoon floods each year, leaving their crops washed away and hence leading them to have nothing left, resulting in poverty. Moreover in Indonesia, earthquakes and tsunamis usually hit them hard, resulting in loss of homes, buildings and offices, leaving them jobless and in poverty. Even in farming, other than monsoon floods, farms may get attacked by locust flies where these flies eat and ruin the harvest, leaving farmers with no crops to sell and hence leaving them in poverty. I have to concede to this opposing view. Natural disasters and other natural phenomenon are something that we humans cannot control. The only part that we can control is the after effects of

these natural disasters. Governments would then have to implement welfare measures and build new homes for these people that are affected by the natural disasters. Governments also have to spend a lot of their government budget to repair buildings and rebuild infrastructure, which would be a huge burden to the government. The government would then lack the budget in other areas, causing them to leave out some other policies such as enforcement of other laws and education that would cause poverty again but in other ways. Government plans to develop the country in other sectors would also be put on hold. Hence I have to concede that natural disasters can cause poverty rather than poor governance.

In conclusion, I agree that poverty is the result of poor governance as they are corrupt, they do not enforce their laws, and the governments place little emphasis on the importance of education. Governments should seek to put the welfare of the citizens first before theirs. They should always ensure that their laws are enforced and ensure that everyone has the right to education. Singapore has very low levels of poverty and even the poor in Singapore have decent living standards due to the education that they receive. Governments should also never use their lack of budget as an excuse to not help reduce poverty. They should instead seek slow and steady progress in economic growth in order to reduce poverty in their countries. Countries that get hit by natural disasters can only pray that other countries who are well off will help them.

Ng Xuan Le Jerial 18S205

Remarks: Adequate understanding of the topic. Wide range of examples provided. The SVs are rather narrow, so there is a need to widen the scope. Generally fluent and clear language usage, with apt signposting.

Q11. How far do you agree that social media empower people to make a change? (TMJCJ2PE2019)

There exists, on the Internet, a website called "change.org", a website to garner petitions for a wide variety of issues, ranging from video games to politics. There is an often-told joke that such platforms serve no purpose, as no one in their right mind would pay attention to a numerical count on a screen. This extends into social media, where this question is asked: Can social media provide a platform to change things in society? For context, social media refers to any mode of communication on the Internet, be it with an individual or a group of people. Doubters of the idea that social media can empower the masses claim that it is but a surface-level method of expression, that one's voice is insignificant in the sea of Internet denizens. But is this true? I do not think so, since social media can grant courage, give the ability to find like-minded individuals, and provide a platform for organisation, to name a few methods as to how social media can, indeed, empower people to make a change.

Naysayers of the idea that social media can empower others claim that social media is too superficial. Due to the very method by which people communicate using social media, it is very difficult, near impossible even, to convey one's thoughts succinctly and accurately, and so one would not be able to properly push for the change in one's society. An often quoted example would be Twitter. Through its structure, where a very limited number of characters can be used in a single post, and thus by its nature, complex ideals and thoughts cannot properly be expressed. Consequently, social media would be unable to empower others to make a change. What these doubters fail to understand is the far-reaching ability of social media. While it may seem superficial or 'surface level', it is no doubt wide in its reach. Due to the interconnectivity of

the world today, most people around the world have access to some form of social media. As a result, even the smallest and simplest of ideas can be broadcast for many to see. While nowhere near the apex of kindness and compassion, an example of the wide-reaching ability of social media would be ISIS. It used social media to radicalise people from all around the world, reaching far-off places like Australia or America. Of course, as any sane person would agree, the acts of ISIS are deplorable. However, it does give insight to the ability of social media to reach the entire world.

Another common argument held by those who oppose this idea is that, due to the way social media function, one's opinions are but an insignificant drop in the bucket that is the Internet. They claim that because everyone is given the opportunity to broadcast their thoughts and opinions, the value of said opinions drops, since each opinion is de-valued. An example of this would be Facebook. It boasts millions of monthly users, and so the question comes to mind: Who would see that one post which one particular person says about that one person wanting to make a change? With many people's opinions being thrown to the wayside, their argument is clear: social media is an inadequate method to empower others to make a change.

Unfortunately, I must concede this point. The insignificance of an individual on the Internet is undoubtedly an issue which makes it difficult to convey one's thoughts. However, social media can still empower an individual with courage, to find others in a similar plight, to allow them to band together to make a change in the world. When an incident is posted on social media which catches the attention of many, it would naturally be brought up into the cultural zeitgeist. Consequently, this encourages others with a similar mindset to stand up for their beliefs, granting them the courage to make a change in the world. An example of this in action would be the #MeToo movement, where the poor treatment of women in the workplace was brought into the cultural spotlight through social media. This consequently led to other women, who were previously afraid to express their thoughts for fear of backlash, to stand up for themselves, and thus making the workplace not only a safer but also a better place for women around the world. From this it is clear: social media can indeed empower people to make a change.

Social media are appropriate tools to empower the masses as they allow for the realisation of issues within a country or society. Certain beliefs within a society are often held as facts - no one would dare challenge them, or others just find it a way of life. Social media allow one to question these beliefs, to realise whether these should be ideal within a society, as with the often held Internet adage, "Wake up, Sheeple". An example of this "waking up" in action would be Hong Kong. What started off as a protest against the Extradition Bill quickly led to the youths of the nation fighting for their rights and future. One of the main methods to bring awareness of this issue would be through social media. Users were quickly made aware of the issues in Hong Kong, and took arms to fight for what they believed in. This clearly had a marked effect, as seen in mainland China, where, on their own social media sites, discussion of Hong Kong is banned, showing that China is aware of the effect social media has on informing the masses. From this it is undoubtedly certain that social media can indeed empower the masses.

Social media also provide a platform for like-minded individuals to gather so as to make a change. Because social media is able to gather people from all around the world, it is able to separate people into groups such that they would be more organised in working together to make a change. An example of this would be Facebook, which allows for organisation events easily through its system, allowing like-minded individuals to sign up for said events and hence be organised in making their mark on the world. Or take Reddit, with its separation into subreddits, such that people can pick and choose to be in places which they support, and hence allow them to make the changes they desire in the world.

Another perk social media has in enabling the empowerment of others is the relatable nature of social media. Unlike big media outlets which are run by corporations and to some, feel emotionless or unreachable, social media is often not as such. Save for corporate accounts on social media, words said by an individual on social media are often more moving or relatable, because they feel more genuine, and so spur others to act if the individual made a call to action. A survey conducted by the Oxford University concluded that an individual is 40% more likely to believe the same message if it were said by a social media user as opposed to someone working in a corporate organisation. Due to the personal feeling evoked by social media, it is undoubtedly a tool to empower others to make a change.

In a modern, globalised world, there are undoubtedly issues to be resolved or corrected. Social media, despite its flaws, is undoubtedly the best method to empower others to make these changes. While social media does have its destructive and undesirable elements, it has significant positives which allow any individual on Earth to express their thoughts and bring about change they desire in the world. This ability used to be limited to the elite who had this voice. But now, everyone has this voice, to rally others to a cause. As such, in summary, social media empower not just some people, but everyone, to make a change for the betterment of society or the world as a whole.

Goh Wee Liang Aidan 18S204

Remarks: Some valid points raised which are quite well-argued. Apt use of examples, quite well-illustrated points. Some possibly repeated points. Some points are lacking in explicitly stating the attributes of social media. Language: very fluently written with felicitous expressions.