



THE

SUMMER 2019

ROAR

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EDITION

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Brought to you by AES HS students

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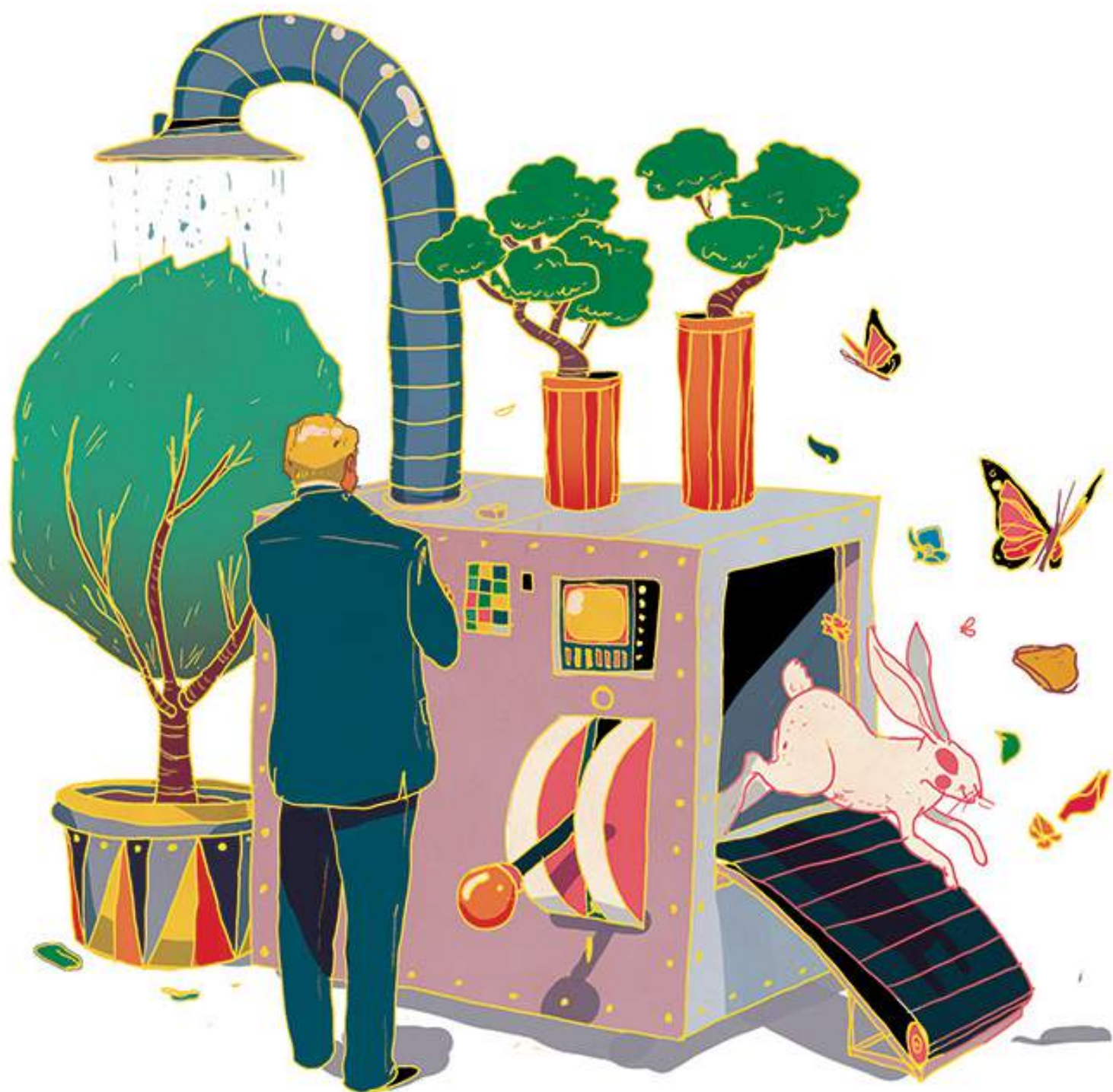
The Well-Governed Houseplant

They say that democracy is the worst possible method of government, except for all the other ones. The current state of global affairs certainly does little to disprove this truism. But as deliciously cynical as this statement is as a sound-bite, it, unfortunately, fails to solve the problem that some form of government is necessary (to be a teenager writing in favor of anarchy in their high school's newspaper would be depressingly clichéd, even by my standards), and if no form thus far invented is acceptable, some novel form must be invented. To this end, I have devised a theoretical scheme of government that, given sufficient technology, ought to surpass all others in the welfare and happiness engendered to its citizens. The guiding premise of this new system is an exemplary form of government found across the globe: the garden.

Consider a devoted gardener. Every day she wakes up, eats breakfast and waters her plants. Coming home in the evening, she might spend a half hour pruning and checking over the more delicate of her collection before the sun goes down. This is, to my thinking, the ideal government: there is no want, no strife and no brutality. The gardener's plants are lovingly tended and allowed to grow to their fullest potential. Contrast this, if you will, with our current society of poverty, starvation and ongoing warfare. The gardener's lawn is a utopia that requires three

ingredients. One, that her intentions be generally benevolent to the plants she raises: she grows them with pride, and would be unhappy to see them come to harm. Two, that she has nothing to gain from her plants save aesthetic appreciation: no fruit is expected here, and all the resources the small plants could provide (leaves, perhaps?) are easily available from other sources. And three, an insurmountable power differential. Her plants are at no point in a position to stage a coup for control of the garden.

Now, imagine a gardener of humans who satisfies these three requirements. No check or balance on their power would be necessary, as this gardener has no motivation to injure their plants. No matter how well constructed, no system of government will ever solve the fundamental problem produced by humans governing other humans: that any given leader has a personal agenda or ideology that may run counter to the good of their people. A leader may wish to gain power, popularity, wealth, or even personal comfort, goals which all, given the right circumstance, may lead to them "sacrificing" the welfare of their people for their own desires. Democracy attempts to solve this problem by tying the success of a leader to the contentment of the people but fails to take into account two things. Firstly, democracy fails to address the problem that neither voters nor leaders are actually rational beings: all are governed





by emotion, and thus may act to ultimately injure themselves, due to emotional impetus. For example, the current dominant government in the United States fails to act on global warming, despite the fact that both voters and leaders would presumably be injured by the oncoming global catastrophe they gleefully ignore. This is not the action of rational beings, but of humans who are too close to their own emotions to act for their long-term benefit. Consider conversely the dispassionate gardener, noticing that a particular potted plant is wilting from receiving too much sun. There need be no debate or struggle in calmly acting to move the plant, which can itself remain oblivious to the favors being done for it. The second problem with democracy is that it may not be in a leader's best interest to retain the love of the people if they can trade it for personal gain. A democratically elected leader may be perfectly willing to do harm to their constituents and incite their anger in exchange for sufficient material gain. Our theoretical gardener, however, possesses such an enormity of power relative to her charges that she has nothing to gain by injuring them, and thus no incentive to do so. While she could, if she wished, uproot and poison every blade of grass she's nurtured, there is no conceivable reason for her to do so. Thus, the gardening system of government solves the two main flaws that face the form of government currently in vogue.

How this theoretical system of government could actually develop is a more uncertain field. The simplest path to this form of absolute dictatorship is the sudden appearance of more advanced intelligence, either alien or artificial. Such an intelligence, wielding technology beyond our ability to imagine, could conceivably fill the role of the benevolent gardener so long as the intelligence was advanced enough to regard humans as totally foreign (as humans regard plants), as well as valuable for aesthetic reasons exclusively. A self-improving machine intelligence, for example, rapidly developing technology far beyond the limits of its creators, would be a possible candidate for the ideal dictator, so long as it considered human life aesthetically pleasing. One could also imagine an individual developing a singularly powerful breed of technology, (a

universal replicator, perhaps) that itself facilitates further development. At a point, the power of this individual would be sufficiently beyond that of the rest of humanity to allow them to rise to fill the role of gardener if they were so inclined. This may be a more promising path to this form of ideal government, so long as the inventor is stable and generally benevolent towards the rest of humanity.

The call for freedom presents itself as the main objection to this model. In response to this objection, I counter that when no one starves to death, that is the time to talk about freedom. Not before. The current scientific consensus is that the behavior of all things in the universe (humans included) are deterministic at large scales and probabilistically random at small scales. In this view, "free will" is a mirage, human actions being a deterministic game defined by random inputs (as an analogy, consider the role of "freedom" in a complex but rigidly ordered game determined entirely by dice rolls). The very best model of the world now available to us is one in which free will does not exist, and without free will what possible meaning does "freedom" have? One might argue that the illusion of freedom is necessary for psychological well-being, but the real circumstances of human life refute this. For ninety-five percent of human history, people have lived and died in small, sealed communities, performing the same repetitive tasks over and over on pain of death (hunting and gathering). In modern life, our horizons have broadened but our actions remain fully constrained by the demands of society, and at a more fundamental the deterministic nature of reality. I consider myself happy, despite understanding that I have no free will (indeed that free will is a logically empty idea), a state I share with a number of happy empiricists. This alone is disproof that "freedom" is strictly necessary from human happiness. Even if it were, it is entirely possible our prospective gardener would have to power to restructure human preferences, removing any craving for the illusion of freedom to allow for a peaceful and contented life.

What Makes Clubs at Our School Special?

The foundation in which multinational schools excel depends on our heterogeneous notions. By implementing clubs of all miscellaneous forms at the American Embassy School, not only are we encouraging creativity, but unleashing untapped potential. Presently, throughout my expat experience, AES has surpassed all my previously attended schools on the basis of the quality and quantity of clubs provided. In such an austere society, sparks of innovation are scarce. Nonetheless, schools who have enough willpower to make a change adopt extracurricular activities. Whether it's writing articles for The ROAR, signing petitions on behalf of Amnesty International, engaging in active service for Reach Out, or generating solutions for the sake of our environment in Eco Club, as disparate as they might seem, they all share one thing in common: success.

Students are given a wide platform to express themselves due to the availability of various clubs. Through the high participation of students, success in these clubs has proliferated. What makes a club successful relies on a determined goal, visionary leadership, and motivated members. Without one or all of these components, the club itself may fall apart. For example, the fallacy that even I am conscious of is how students believe that they must participate in as many clubs as possible to the extent that they do not have any interest in that discipline. Students merely go above and beyond the requirements to prove something to college admission officers

which is a dangerous misconception. Since this trend is still progressing, we must further educate students on the dangers of being sophisticated and enlighten them on what truly catches the attention of universities.

Even though imperfections lie within the student's mentality, our clubs aren't ideal either. There is always room for improvement. Generally, I believe that we should go beyond our school boundaries to promote the mission of each individual club. For service clubs, instead of spreading awareness in our community, we could globally connect with other international schools. This would create a collaborative network that exchanges ideas, promotes solutions to combat worldwide issues, and organize campaigns at a national and more inclusive level. Additionally, we could attempt to invite professionals who have expertise on what our clubs publicize to speak during meetings or even more publically, at assemblies. As for The ROAR, we must incorporate several other sections in order for the writers to publish more personalized articles and not feel restricted and pressured with how far they can take their imagination. In terms of our online publication, we should try to associate with official websites that publish articles so The ROAR can prosper and become something greater than just an issued magazine at school. If these concepts are taken into consideration, not only will the clubs that our school hosts will improve, but also the greater AES community could undoubtedly reach new heights.

Leaving Teachers

As we enter the last few weeks of the school year, freedom seems more attainable; still, it is impossible to escape the underlying sadness across the student body because with summer break comes the inevitable goodbyes. This year, AES says goodbye to a few of its most beloved teachers. To show these teachers our appreciation, we have compiled a few student quotes for the leaving teachers.

Mr. Peter

First, there is Mr. Peter who has been here for 6 years total (he taught for 3, left, then came back for 3 more). He teaches 9th-grade science and IB physics. Here are some of the words students had to share for him:

"Mr. Peter was enthusiastic about his teachings and simultaneously taught his students in a very center-focused way." – Nathan Friesen (10th grade)

"He was really funny, and made physics interesting to learn about." – Ria Mitra (10th grade)

"Before I was in Mr. Peter's class, I never thought myself good or interested in science (especially physics). However, through his friendly and interactive teaching as well as all those fun labs and challenges, I have found a new appreciation for the subject (yes, even physics)." – Tess McCartney (10th grade)

"Mr. Peter is one of the most engaging teachers I've ever been taught by. He makes our science classes so fun, but also teaches the content in a way that we won't forget." – Tanush Soni (9th grade)

Mr. Guggisberg

Mr. Guggisberg is another teacher AES will miss next year. He has been here for 4 years and teaches several English classes.

"When I came back to AES this year, everyone understood annotations thoroughly, but I had no idea what they were. Mr. Guggisberg has really helped throughout the year and now I understand them and also have a deeper understanding of English in general." – Nilay Solanki (10th grade)

"Mr. Guggisberg is one of the best teachers I've had in my life. He's energetic, funny, and clearly loves teaching." – Mihir Dhawan (10th grade)



Ms. Macuzak

Next, this is sadly Ms. Macuzak's last year: she has been here for 3 years and teaches IB biology.

"Ms. Macuzak is one of the best teachers I have ever had. She makes a difficult class like biology fun, and she made me a more diligent and hardworking science student. Thank you for everything!" – Catherine Kish (11th grade)

"I like that after we finish our work we can go." – MinSeo Jung (9th Grade)

"She knows her stuff; she has extensive knowledge of the subject." – Yoon Sung Rho (11th grade)

Mr. Zhang

Mr. Zhang has been here briefly, but, regardless, his impact was huge. He has been at AES for 2 years and teaches all the Mandarin classes.

"He's genuinely best friends with every student; it's basically impossible to feel unhappy in his class. I definitely would not have taken IB Chinese if it weren't for him and his ability to make lessons so enjoyable." – Ria Mitra (10th grade)

"Mandarin was one of the subjects I was really scared of. I only had one year of preparation before IB; however, Mr. Zhang made that the smoothest transition ever. He would always talk to me personally... to make sure I understood everything and wasn't overwhelmed. He is one of the nicest and most caring teachers." – Tanush Soni (9th grade)

Ms. Jain

Ms. Jain has been a part of the AES community for an impressive number of years, but her time here has sadly come to an end. She has been here for 22 years and teaches several computer science classes.

"Ms. Jain's method of teaching made her classes very enjoyable; she let us work at our own paces and was extremely passionate about her subject. She is also a huge proponent of females entering the computer science world because she feels they are underrepresented." Harshita Jain (10th grade)

"Ms. Jain's passion for teaching sparked my love for technology and computing getting me to where I am today." Tanmay Solanki (Class of 2013)

"I thank Ms. Jain for helping me with all my questions and queries about computer science." – Ines Belkhodja (10th grade)

Mr. Kehe

Mr. Kehe has been at AES for 11 years! Sadly, he is leaving this year. He teaches health and PE. Here are some of the words students had to share about him:

“Mr. Kehe is the teacher who not only makes health class fun, but he also is a coach who makes swimming the best sport.” – Ines Belkhodja (10th grade)

“Mr. Kehe never fails to make you laugh; he is just so funny. He always has just such a radiant and positive vibe though he insults all of us.” – Mehr Dewan (10th grade)

Ms. Johnson

Ms. Johnson has been at AES for 5 years; she teaches art classes. Her time at AES, unfortunately, comes to an end this year.

“Ms. Johnson is the most compassionate teacher that I have ever had the pleasure of being taught by.” – Driena Muca (10th grade)

“Ms. Johnson is clearly very passionate about her subject and that passion transfers to the students.” – Aarya Banthia (10th grade)

“Ms. Johnson is really helpful and is always there for me when I need help.” – Suhani Kumar (10th grade)

“She is very passionate about her students work and she always goes out of her way to support her students and their art pieces.” – Bella Pacheco (10th grade)

Ms. Boyadzhieva

Ms. Boyadzhieva has been a beloved music teacher for the past 11 years. This year, however, is her last year at AES.

“Ms. B is an amazing teacher who puts all her effort into everything she does.” – Kira de Oliveira (10th grade)

“She’s a really fun teacher which is the reason loads of kids repeatedly come back; I learned a lot in her class.” – Tess McCartney (10th grade)

“I love her. She’s a really patient and cheerful teacher, even when we mess up. She is always supportive of each of the choir members, and she brightens the class with her cheerful attitude!” – Suhani Kaul (9th grade)

Changes in the IB

10th Grade course selection is perhaps the most exhilarating time for many high school students, marking the first time students are able to choose their courses based on their interests. There are many decisions to be made here: full IB or mixed diploma? Higher Level or Standard Level? Science or Art? The process is complicated enough, yet the process has become more complicated following the release of curriculum changes to various IB subjects this year. To understand some of these changes, the ROAR analyzes two of the big curriculum changes that are the hallmark of the coming academic year.

The mathematics courses have gone through a radical transformation after the release of many changes. Further Mathematics HL and Mathematical Studies SL have been removed from the options in the course; instead, two broad categories have been created to better meet students' needs based on the paths they will take in university. Both categories offer courses in Higher Level and Standard Level. "Analysis and Approaches" is the first category students can choose from, placing a strong emphasis on developing mathematical skills to strengthen mathematical thinking and problem-solving skills. The IB states that the HL version of this course is most similar to the current HL Mathematics curriculum. "Applications and Interpretation" is the second category, and it focuses on appreciating mathematics in real-world situations and practical contexts through mathematical models and technology. The IB compares the HL version of this course to the current SL Mathematics curriculum, and the SL version of this course to the current Mathematical Studies SL curriculum. Either way, the new categories

enable students to better choose the mathematical level at which they would like to study to fit subject requirements for college.

The English courses are also considerably different following the curriculum changes. In an attempt to bring the two kinds of English classes at a similar level, English Literature (Lit) has lost many components such as the Individual Oral Presentation and the Interactive Oral. Both Language and Literature (LangLit) and Lit have replaced the Individual Oral Commentary with an Individual Oral. LangLit students will continue emphasizing a greater connection between English studies and global issues. The purposes of these changes are not just to bring the two classes together, but also to foster collaboration among students and teachers. This new curriculum also relies heavily on self-assessment, serving as "an instance of formative assessment that can both inform teaching and learning." Similar to the changes in the mathematical curriculum, these new changes offer students classes more applicable to universities. The World Language courses are also expected to change, but this information has not officially been released from the IB.

Many students are fearful of these course changes, however, with a few stating they are the "guinea pigs" in this sea of change. Even though judgment cannot be passed until instruction next year, many teachers are excited to teach the new courses. Regardless of curriculum change, students will still be expected to study rigorously, and the ROAR looks forward to seeing how students will adapt to this new curriculum as the next year approaches.



**NO TO
RACISM**



**WE
ARE THE
SAME**

**WE
AND
TOGETHER**






FEATURE ARTICLE VANSHIKA PURI

Empathy in the World Today

Empathy is one of the most popular buzzwords of all time. It is often said that if heterosexual people were more understanding of what it means to be gay, there would be less of a stigma attached to the LGBTQ community. The same argument applies to wealth disparities; if the rich were more appreciative of what it means to suffer through poverty, we would have greater social justice. However, in a world as polarized and unjust as the one we live in today, it has become increasingly difficult to identify when empathy is needed, and how to use that powerful emotion as a means to bettering our world.

Defined as an approach to understanding the emotions of others, empathy is, after all, not sympathy. Sympathy requires feeling *for* someone, while empathy means feeling *with*



someone. While the distinction may not be evident to some, it is clear that empathy is something that has to be nurtured, not taught.

Let me articulate my thoughts through an example. Consider the recent, brutal attacks in Sri Lanka, which were broadcast around the world for their execution and location. Statistics of those who had passed away and those who were severely injured blazed the screens of all news outlets. As a result of the extensive reporting, millions of people around the world were forced to take a break from their lives and feel for the nation as a whole and reflect on the current climate of terror attacks. Whether by grieving on social media with the trending hashtags or gasp while watching a news channel, we try to cultivate a sense of sorrow because it seems to be the natural way. We try to become united by such devastations. If you don't feel that pull to feel for these victims, then you're indeed inhumane.

This process subconsciously results in two outcomes. For one, when we vilify someone else for perhaps not feeling empathetic for such attacks, we risk making that same person immune to expressing empathy about other things they may feel more closely connected to. Thus, people begin closeting their emotions. Secondly, this cyclical process of momentary and periodic grieving numbs the impact that each attack has. We're wrapped in our own lives, I get that, but turning each casualty into a statistic voids us of any sustained empathy to be built which will lead to any kind of "corrective" action by us.

Consider what the past five months have entailed. In 2019, we have had countless attacks that many of us aren't even aware of. These attacks span continents and affect children, adults, and the elderly. The same process of mourning for those affected by the attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand was an international phenomenon. Heads of states Tweeted

their condolences and ordinary citizens posted messages of hope on their Facebook accounts. Subsequently, the international community stopped reporting or recording the stories from New Zealand, and then the attack flew out of our conscious.

It's events like these that shape how we develop empathy. But beyond this, these tragedies are responsible for channeling our feelings into action. The most apparent example of this is Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's prime minister, who swiftly amended her nation's gun laws to prohibit semiautomatic weapons from being sold. This was the result of days of mourning with, not for, the Muslim community which was the focal point of the attack. She cemented the idea that the world is changed by our actions, not just our opinions.

What I'm trying to say here is this: with the tumultuous climate we live in, empathizing with others has become common, but it is how we transform our feelings into action that will change the world. We can't let the brutality of attacks morph into statistics that slowly fade away. There are many dimensions to empathy but what we need to be able to attach ourselves to even the most basic in order to enact a positive change. Watching or reading the news limits the scope of which dimension we can reach, so yes, we take a moment out of our hectic day to lament the lives that have been lost, but that's not fueling our drive to be empathetic. Rather, it's developing our sympathy quotient. The fine line between the two is necessary to cross because it will nurture our society and the world we create for future generations. It's a matter of going beyond observing a moment of silence during assembly for the tragedies that bombard us; we need corrective change, and that change begins with you and your actions.



CURRENT EVENTS RAHIL PATEL

A Setback in Time

“It's part of the landscape. It's part of the scenography. We wouldn't imagine Paris without Notre Dame. It's just clearly impossible for us.” – Margot Haddad

It was a symbol of community, perseverance, and longevity as it attracted millions of people from around the globe to view its awe-inspiring nature. It survived through centuries of renovations and modernization, only to vanish overnight as the fire consumed it. The Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France, was a global historic treasure, the loss of which has been felt around the world.

During the evening of April 15th, reports began coming in of a fire in the top floors near the roof. All had been evacuated due to the fire alarms and an ongoing Mass, and fire checks began immediately after. 500 firefighters were deployed to contain the fire, but various conditions such as the immense height and requirement of preserving as many of the relics as possible lead to complications during these attempts. The fire was officially put out 12 hours after it began with no casualties and 3 firefighter injuries.

Its construction began in 1163 under King Louis

VII and took almost 200 years until its completion in 1345. The scale and intricacy of the building were unprecedented, making it a relic of medieval gothic architecture. Its design was improved and the structure amended as time passed, but it faced challenges such as the destruction of relics during the French revolutions in the 1790s. As of the fire, it contained relics such as the Crown of Thorns and the Tunic of Saint Louis among others, some dating back to the days of Jesus Christ.

The damages as of now are extensive. A myriad of irreplaceable relics, such as wooden sculptures, paintings, and more was lost. Structural damages were immense, with 2/3 of the roof





being destroyed. However, there is still some hope: reports claim that the overall structure is still intact, although there are some vulnerabilities. Firefighters had previously been trained for this scenario, so at least 100 out of the 500 art pieces in the Cathedral had been removed. And while the famed spire burned down, great exhibits of stained glass have remained intact among other art pieces.

Although it is a dire day for the people of France and many throughout the world, immediate action has been taken by the French president Emmanuel Macron and other French cooperation to rebuild Notre Dame. During a speech on April 16th, Macron stated, "The fire at Notre Dame re-

minds us that our history never stops and we will always have challenges to overcome. We will rebuild Notre Dame, more beautiful than before." He claims that Notre Dame will be rebuilt in the next 5 years as \$675 million have been pledged by companies including Total, L'Oreal, and the Bettencourt-Schueller Foundation. The owners of Louis Vuitton have all also pledged 100 million euros each. However, experts concerned with the delicate process required to renovate such an ancient structure disagree with this estimate and say it may take up to three times as long. Either way, the symbol of Notre Dame is by no means destroyed, and its destruction has only served as a reaffirmation to upholding the values it stood for.

Madame President?

THE FEMALE CANDIDATES OF THE 2020 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Is 2020 the year that the glass ceiling will be shattered in the United States?

After almost four years under President Trump, the 2020 presidential election race has begun. Many candidates have dashed out of the starting gate – joining the political horse race.

We are faced with a historically groundbreaking number of female candidates vying for the presidential nomination. All of the six female candidates running for the presidential nomination are from the Democratic party. A female challenger to President Trump for the Republican party nomination is unlikely.

The long-serving prime minister of Britain, Margaret Thatcher, was known as the Iron Lady. Which of these female candidates has enough steel in their spine to take the "iron throne" that is the Democratic nomination?



Kamala Harris

For the people. Tough. Principled. Fearless.

Ranked the number 2 frontrunner by *Rolling Stone*, Kamala Harris is running on a platform of social justice. Harris' signature policy proposal, the LIFT (Livable Incomes for Families Today) Act, will provide a tax credit of up to \$500 per month for working-class families.

Justice is a major theme for Harris, who served as California Attorney General (2011–2017), District Attorney in San Francisco (2004–2011), and a federal prosecutor. Harris has also served as junior Senator for California since 2017. She has signed onto proposals

including Medicare for all, the Green New Deal, and the legalization of marijuana.

Harris is a multiracial candidate whose mother is Tamil Indian from Chennai and father is Jamaican. She presents herself as a "determined fighter on behalf of the people." Sounds like she has some steel in her spine and is ready to fight for the "iron throne."



Elizabeth Warren

Persist. Together we can save our democracy.

Elizabeth Warren (a.k.a. Pocahontas to President Trump), is the current senator of Massachusetts. She announced her campaign for presidency early this year, running on the platform of ending corruption in Washington D.C. and rebuilding the middle class.

Senator Warren also has several specific proposals to address the wealth gap and income disparity, including a new Ultra-Millionaire Tax, universal healthcare, and investments in housing to bring down rents. She was a champion for the new Consumer Financial

Protection Bureau established by President Obama after the financial crisis when she served as a special advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury.

Before going into politics, Warren taught law as a professor at the University of Houston, University of Pennsylvania, Harvard University, and other universities for over 30 years. Warren has brainpower and policy expertise – will she be the one to outsmart President Trump?



Tulsi Gabbard

Lead with love. Fighting for the people.

Tulsi Gabbard, a Samoan American and the first Hindu to be elected to Congress, has served as the U.S. Representative from Hawaii since 2013. She was an Iraq war veteran and served in the medical unit of the Hawaii Army National Guard.

One key element of her platform that differentiates her from other candidates is her strong opposition to regime change wars, which she says are bankrupting America and its moral authority.



Amy Klobuchar

Amy for America.

Amy Klobuchar has been a senator for Minnesota since 2007 and has recently announced her plans to run for president. Her platform focuses on jobs, the economy, and rural communities. Klobuchar does not seem to have many ambitious policy proposals or programs at this point. However, as a successful politician from the upper midwest, she might have a shot.



Kirsten Gillibrand

Brave wins.

New York Senator since 2009, Kirsten Gillibrand (a.k.a. the "Light-weight Senator," according to President Trump's twitter feed) is a leading voice of the #MeToo movement and has called for reforming sexual assault policies in the U.S. military.



Marianne Williamson

Join the evolution.

New York Times bestselling author and self-help guru, Marianne Williamson calls for a "moral and spiritual awakening" in America. She believes that the government facilitates a "sociopathic economic system," and calls for Medicare for all, free college, and the Green New Deal. Williamson told CNN that she is in favor of \$100 billion reparations to African American families for the past historical injustices of slavery.

2020 – a High Stakes Race

The U.S. presidential election of 2020 will be momentous. History has already been made by these women, the largest number of female presidential candidates ever, who have thrown their hat in the ring and are running for the Democratic nomination.

Will the United States see a continued reign of Trump? Or, perhaps someone from this group of female candidates will finally break the glass ceiling and help lead the United States in a new direction.

Iran's Oppression of Women's Rights

One of the most passionate movements currently taking place is arguably women's rights advocacy. Following the spark of the "Me Too" movement, there has been visible change within our society. More women are occupying political jobs, more women are gaining anatomy such as the right to drive in the middle east, and more women are breaking the silence that has been expected of them. This revolution is, no doubt, something that we must praise and be proud of, especially when considering how quickly this change has taken place in regards to the wide timeline of human development.

However, we must simultaneously be aware that there are numerous aspects of our society that still need modification and direct our attention to those facets. Unfortunately, not all governments are willing to bring the necessary equality. While it is not fair to point out and criticize a certain nation as being the most oppressive or unethical, it is necessary that we focus on each nation at a time and address the issues within them.

This is why this article is centered around the Iranian government's violation of women rights. Iran is infamous for its crackdown on women's rights protesters, especially those that protest the mandatory wearing of hijabs. In the Islamic faith, women often cover their hair with hijabs mainly due to religious reasons. The strictness of this practice varies from country to country, but in Iran, this is a requirement that all female citizens must follow.

Numerous Iranians, however, desire the freedom to reveal their hair in public. Brave wom-

en went out in the public to protest this law by hanging their hijabs on a long stick and waving them in the air.

This peaceful protest, however, resulted in the Iranian government punishing these protesters with arbitrary imprisonment, violence, torture, and other ill-treatments. One instance reported by Amnesty International details the punishments received by a women's rights advocate, Nasrin Sotoudeh. Due to participating in this protest, she was arrested in her house on 13 June, 2018 and subjected to incarceration. Only last month was she told of her charges, which yielded 33 years in prison and 148 backlashes. This is the harshest punishment Amnesty International has recently seen in Iran: in essence, the repression in Iran has dramatically increased.

The Iranian government commented on this case by accusing Nasrin Sotoudeh of a national crime, including the "gathering and colluding to commit crimes against national security" and "insulting the Supreme Leader." No evidence was provided to back this claim.

Amnesty International's demand is the following: "Nasrin Sotoudeh must be released immediately and unconditionally and this obscene sentence quashed without delay."

It is true that every nation has the right to have its own policies and definition of right and wrong, but the violation of human rights through arbitrary imprisonment and torture is globally inexcusable. It is our hope that Iran stops oppressing its citizens to promote freedom of expression and women's rights.

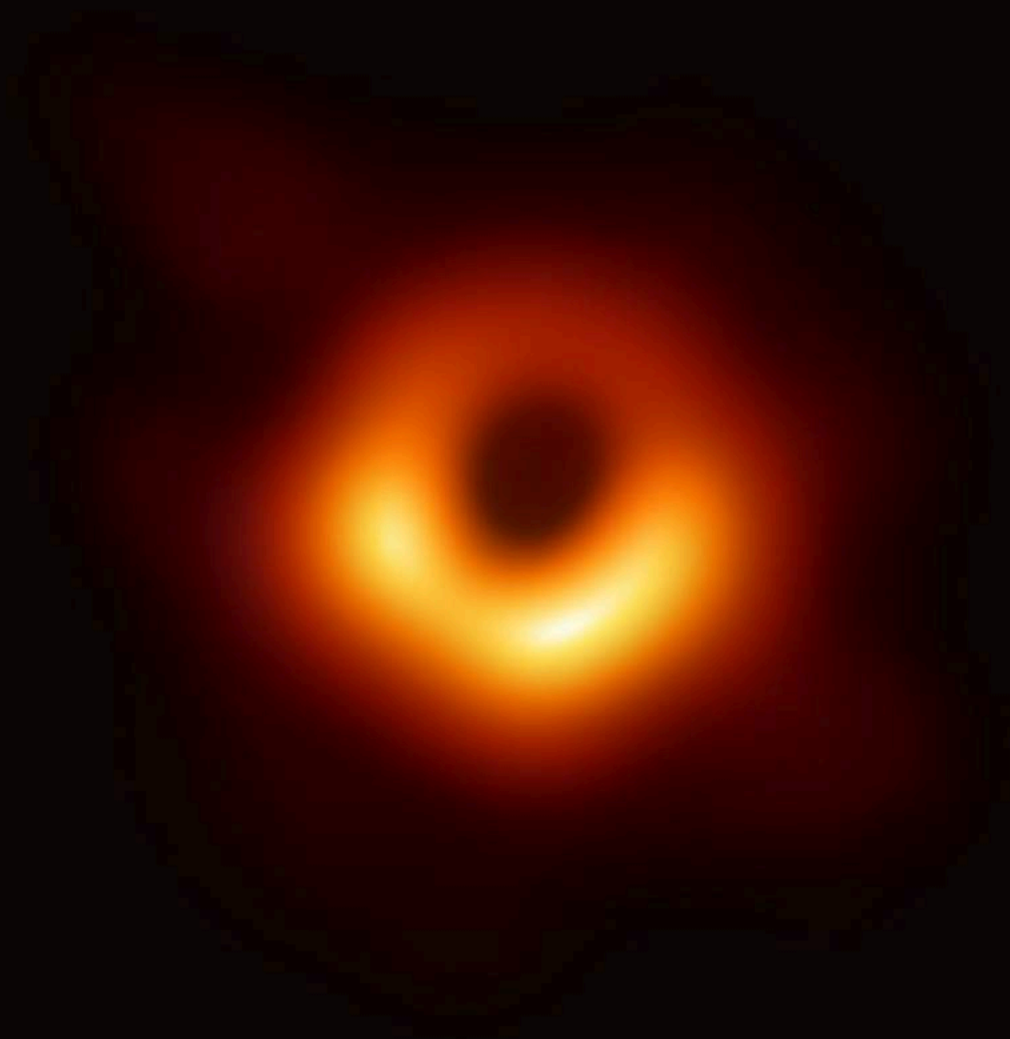
Mystery Becomes A Reality: Astronomers Take A Picture of A Black Hole

On Wednesday, April 10th, astronomers under the leadership of Katie Bouman, a 29-year-old assistant professor at the California Institute of Technology, took a picture of a black hole. For the past two years, she has been working on a computer algorithm that has allowed researchers in the Event Horizon telescope team to take a picture of a black hole. But, why is this significant? The photograph was taken of a black hole that is 53 million light years away at the core of the galaxy called Messier 87. Many raised the question as to why the "black" hole appears to be bright orange. And if light cannot escape a black hole, how was this photograph achieved? This black hole was identifiable because of the bright surroundings it was enclosed within and hence it was photographed in this way. A black hole itself does not emit any light, and the bright orange color we see outside the black hole is what scientists call the event horizon and is where all kinds of radiations are emitted, including gas, clouds, and plasma. Scientists knew that the very vast distance from the earth to this black hole required an antenna as long as the Earth itself. As it turns out, the black hole in question has a diameter of 40 billion kilometers and is said to be six times the earth's size. This discovery matters because scientists for multiple years have been using computer simulated images of a black hole and for the first time, they have an actual image. This would not only allow them to compare the images, but also see how and why the differences between the images exist. The image has tested existing theories and has paved the way for a

better understanding of black holes and nature in the universe.

There are multiple fascinating implications of taking a picture of a black hole, especially one that is as far as 53 million light years and has a mass six billion times than that of our sun. The most important effect is that it proved Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Scientists claimed that there are objects in space with immense masses and densities that even light, the fastest speed known to man, is sucked in. Einstein added on by stating that all energy gets sucked into the event horizon (the black hole in the center of the orange circle) because this center is where density reaches an infinite value that creates a gravitational pull nothing can resist – depicting Einstein's theory on energy, $E=MC^2$. Now, scientists can physically see the object they had been theorising upon for decades. Additionally, people who hold by the adage "seeing is believing" now accept the black hole's existence. However, this isn't all. The feat that has been achieved by scientists – capturing a black hole so far away by connecting multiple telescopes to transform our planet into one gigantic telescope – holds into account that our technology is evolving and that we are on the verge of another technological revolution.

The ROAR has presented you with the facts. Now, what are you going to do with it? Are you going to be inspired into initiating the next technological revolution? Or will you continue with your studies as if nothing has occurred?



EDITORIAL MRINALINI SISODIA WADHWA

The Veganism Debate, Continued

The last year has seen two ROAR articles attempting to grapple with the question of veganism. First, there was last edition's "Hard to Swallow Pills: Veganism Edition," discussing how "vegans place themselves atop a golden pedestal... ignoring the reasons... disagreements occur." There was also the year before's "Meat and Solipsism," which made a striking argument critiquing the foundation for veganism, vegetarianism, or any of its variants, stating that if you are never truly certain that an animal feels pain, then you need not care about whether or not you are causing them pain.

I should give a disclaimer before I begin commenting on both: I have been vegan for six years and obviously carry my own biases. As a vegan, though, I found both articles to be compelling reads; it helped me explain how many of us are perceived, and how our choices and diet are both vindicated and criticized. Reading





"Hard to Swallow Pills" and "Meat and Solipsism" has also caused me to reflect upon questions which I do not regularly consider each time I drink almond-milk hot chocolate or pass on the cheese at a restaurant. While you are living a particular lifestyle – whether it is your religion, your diet, or another aspect of your life – you fall into a routine; the lifestyle becomes second-nature to you. Consequently, you find that you can go on for months, or even years, before questioning its merits and its disadvantages, or reasoning why you chose it in the first place. I certainly found that to be the case in how I had begun to approach veganism. Both articles begot a dialogue in my mind more intellectual than it was personal. I knew already that I had no intention of changing my diet, but I also knew that I would not be satisfied until I could address the arguments raised by both authors. This Roar article is my attempt to do so; it is an attempt to justify what to me has become second-nature and to discuss why vegans are called to justify their diet at all.

First, perhaps we should consider the argument raised in the first article: "many vegans" hold the "baseless" "attitude" "that they're somehow better than everyone else." The author continues to note that "not every single vegan maintains this opinion, but enough do for them to have gained this reputation." While this has not been my personal experience of this community, I can understand that a lot of the media frenzy has depicted veganism as a trend, "a tiresome parade of hashtags and aesthetics perpetuated by a generally condescending crowd of 'influencers,'" as the article described it. Reading this was painful, perhaps because I fear that the media image of veganism replaced a genuine appreciation for the situation of many vegans. Instagram may glorify the

diet, but in the cafeteria, there are two, maybe three of us here. In my school in the United States, there were maybe just one or two more. The community is such a minority that apothecizing yourself in the way this article describes is *not* an option if you would like to coexist with the people around you. Even bringing up the fact that you are a vegan may bring about a series of half-joking remarks about how you cannot appreciate the finer delicacies of life, or must be crazy, or are simply confused about your morals. I say half-jokes because I, like many of the other vegans I know, have laughed along half-heartedly, shaking our heads. In reality, I dread these moments; I dread the fact that I need to laugh at a moral decision I made six years ago so that I don't come off as too serious or too sensitive. Perhaps the author of this article, a vegetarian herself, has faced similar incidents at school; perhaps not. I ask, however, for their empathy. The more the lie is propagated that vegans glorify themselves and think they are superior, the more likely it is that they will be mocked when they describe their diet in a real-life setting. We encourage thoughtlessness by promoting the image on Instagram of "influencers" instead of considering the lives, morals, and choices of real people.

My concern with the second article, in a practical sense, is that we often don't make decisions because we are *certain* that what we are doing is "correct" and its alternatives are wrong. It prompted me to consider why I chose to be vegan. Can you be certain that the human beings around you experience emotion just as you do? As that author pointed out, you can't, because you can't prove (or disprove) this to yourself. But even if you can never be certain about other people's emotions, you probably still try to be more considerate of the emotions of some people (friends, family, etc.) than of those of others. You have drawn a distinction between how you treat these two groups of people that is *not* grounded in truth or certainty. It's grounded, instead, in your personal interests: having the

support of friends and family, getting along with the people you see on a daily basis, and so on. Here, the second author may have favored his interest in being certain of his actions over the interest in preventing the pain of other beings. But that can't mean that he has never considered the second interest. I would imagine that in interacting with friends and family, he would try to avoid causing them pain, or to reduce their existing pain – *even if* he cannot be *certain* of their pain. On principle, he may view all that is not himself as the same: something with a questionable existence that is not a viable entity in his system of morality. Yet in practice, he has likely drawn a distinction between kinds of beings it "pleases [him]" to ignore the pain of, and the beings whose pain concerns him and prevents him from being happy. The only substantial difference between him, a staunch non-vegetarian, and me, a vegan, is that we have drawn that distinction differently.

In closing, I would also like to observe that the two articles the Roar has published in the past year have been focused on a vegan diet. I do not say this to encourage the editors to shut down publications on the varying moral choices high school students in this community make; I think that begets a critical and engaging dialogue. I understood and rationalized my choices better because these two editorial writers questioned, challenged, and explored them. However, I would like to point out something: we have never discussed the morals of eating meat in this magazine. Why? I have considered taking a stab at it once or twice, but I shied away from the topic because I realized it may make readers feel uncomfortable or threatened. What I have realized, however, is that perhaps this is, in its own way, a "tyranny of the majority," that we can question the minority's ideas without a backlash but remain silent on moral questions that a large portion of this community faces. Today I hope my article, just like the past two, is one step closer to ending that silence.

Fear In The World Today

We all know fear. We have all felt fear. Fear is a primal instinct meant to protect us from danger. It puts us in a fight or flight mode so that we can survive – in a zombie apocalypse for instance. But fear also debilitates us. It was Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd president of the United States, who instilled the courage in our hearts when he said: "we have nothing to fear, but fear itself." But as we go through the twenty-first century, are we conquering fear or are we overcome with new fears? I believe that fear today presents itself in three ways: fear of being powerless, fear of change, and fear of imperfection.

When I look at power today, I think that it's connected to the idea that there is always something more to achieve and without it you are nothing; you are just not worth it. After watching a documentary titled *Generation Wealth* on Amazon Prime, I began to realize just how detrimental the consequences of this way of living are. As the title implies, the documentary is about society's obsession with wealth and power to a ruinous end. One of the stories in the documentary follows the life of a billionaire whose only goal is to accumulate more wealth and gain more power. While he steadily reaches the pinnacle of his professional life, it is evident that his personal life is at an all-time low. He ends up ignoring his wife's simple request to shut off his phone during their anniversary dinner that when she ends up passing away shortly after, he realizes how much of his life he wasted on unimportant things that he ended up valuing over important things such as

family and love.

Perhaps we have become so paralyzed with the fear of not achieving this superficial idea of power, that we can no longer enjoy what we already have. It might not be as present in our daily lives, but the concept does exist, even if it's on a minute scale. Think about how many times you've fought for something you don't truly believe in because you felt like you needed it for college applications, or how many times you've become so stressed that you can't even have a proper night's sleep – all because you want more, you want something better, and you want to prove yourself. In this scenario, and many like it, "better" is often qualified by a communal perception. However, you shouldn't have to prove yourself to anyone; you should just work to become a better version of yourself in whichever way you deem fit. If you think you can achieve true happiness through some form of power, then you're looking at it wrong. Happiness isn't an equation.

But it's not just the fear of lack of power that's driving us today – it's fear of change. Particularly, social change. Look around you – look at the news. Racial diversity has now resulted in the rise of far-right extremist groups who are creating new laws to target diversity; anti-immigration and pro-xenophobia stances are becoming more popular. Unfortunately, as well, religious sites have been the target for terrorism – as seen through the recent Christchurch mosque shootings in New Zealand or the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting. Change as we see it today no

longer embodies revolution and empowerment. Instead, it has resulted in fixed mindsets and devastating consequences. As Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, once said, "ignorance is always afraid of change."

And lastly, there is the fear of imperfection, which is also known as atelophobia. In my mind, I think one of the catalysts behind this is social media. It's become a platform where, for many people, they are no longer living their own lives. For example, they continue to follow trends that promote and often set unrealistic beauty and societal standards simply to gain popularity and a following. It's like when you take a picture just for the sake of it; your only motive is to somehow have a memory of the moment to share with everyone else rather than actually live in the moment. This has resulted in the majority of people suffering from depression and anxiety. As the rise in smartphone use dramatically increased, a 2017 study of over half a million 8th–12th graders found that the number of people exhibiting high levels of depressive symptoms increased by 33 per cent between 2010 and 2015. In the same period, the suicide rate for girls in that age group increased by 65 per cent. Our culture today is obsessively focused on trying to achieve unrealistic standards that have resulted in fear that is not needed and can be detrimental to our physical and mental health. The truth is, no matter what you do, it'll never be perfect...because the idea of perfection itself is simply something in our subconscious.

Acceptance of what you're going through or what you're feeling, and then following the necessary steps to improve on it, is what's needed – not denial. I'm not asking you to be indifferent towards your feelings and hide away your fear – I'm asking you to look at the source from where it's coming from and understand why and how it is affecting you. Only then can you form and build upon your own identity.



Avengers: Endgame

A *vengeurs: Endgame* is one of the most anticipated movies of this year, and if you don't go the first day it comes out... you should go on the second day because you wouldn't want to miss this!

Avengers: Endgame takes place after the events of *Avengers: Infinity War*; let me provide a recap of the plot thus far. Thanos has obtained all six infinity stones and disintegrated half of the population including fan favorites such as Black Panther, Spider-Man, Groot, Star-Lord and the Winter Soldier. Now, there are many fan theories surrounding this secretive movie. The Russo brothers, who are the directors, lie to us constantly so we can't trust them. This section of this article was written before the movie came out, so all of these theories are pure and probably wrong. Let's see how they compare to the actual plot of the movie that we will discuss in the review. Let's delve in!

Theory 1: The Other Stone Theory

This theory revolves around another infinity stone called the "Ego Gem". This stone is in the comics and is referred to as the seventh infinity stone. In the comics, Nemesis, an omnipotent, willed her existence to shatter into six infinity stones. Her consciousness was kept in the Ego Gem. The Avengers may kill Thanos with this stone because it is more powerful than all the other six stones combined and when near them, Nemesis will be reborn. It is said that Captain Marvel will bring this stone to the Avengers from the Ultraverse (a different dimension).

Theory 2: Time Travel Theory

This theory is largely connected to the Quantum Realm and Ant-Man. It is speculated that the Avengers split off into groups to find and bring back the six infinity stones from the past by traveling through time vortexes in the Quantum Realm (as mentioned in *Ant-Man and the Wasp*). It is said that Tony Stark will create a gauntlet to harness the power of the stones and defeat Thanos as well as bring back the fallen Avengers.

Theory 3: The Second Universe Theory

Avengers: Endgame might also explore other universes or dimensions. This theory says that there is another universe in which the obliterated reside. It is believed that the Quantum Realm is the gateway to this universe and the Avengers use it to return everyone to the "normal" universe. The multiverse is a viable prospect in the comics so they could be a strong explanation for the events of *Endgame*.

Bonus Theory: The Ant-Man and Thanos Theory

Yes. We're doing this. This theory is probably one of the most popular and unorthodox out of all the theories so far. Where do I even begin? Basically, numerous fans have said that Ant-Man could enter Thanos' colon area and expand there, thereby killing Thanos. I wish I was kidding.

Okay, now for what actually happened. Let us see how wrong we are.

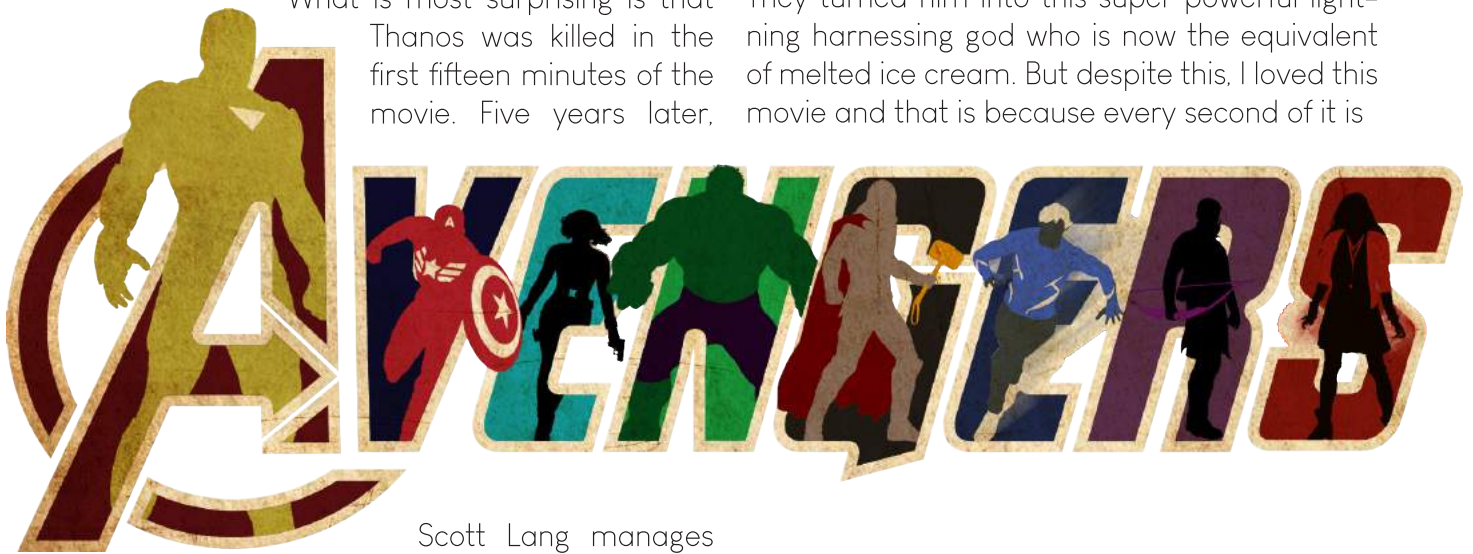
SPOILERS AHEAD!

I love the MCU 3000 because no movie has ever disappointed me— and *Endgame* is no exception. *Avengers: Endgame* is one of the greatest superhero films ever made. This movie was a joyous ride with flawless action, powerful emotion and a satisfying conclusion. The movie deals with the aftermath of the Snap. Tony and Steve still have bittersweet feelings for each other after the events of *Captain America: Civil War*, and end up fighting everything and everyone they lost.

What is most surprising is that Thanos was killed in the first fifteen minutes of the movie. Five years later,

gauntlet and he snaps Thanos and his army into dust; however, Tony Stark cannot handle the power and dies. Captain America returns all the stones to their previous locations and returns to the 1940s where he is reunited with Peggy Carter. In the future, Captain America passes on his shield to Sam Wilson aka the Falcon.

The only critique I would have of *Avengers: Endgame* is what they did with Thor's character. They turned him into this super powerful lightning harnessing god who is now the equivalent of melted ice cream. But despite this, I loved this movie and that is because every second of it is



Scott Lang manages to return from the Quantum Realm, Bruce Banner and the Hulk combine into one being, Thor is fat, Hawkeye has become Ronin (a darker version of Hawkeye) and Tony Stark now has a daughter named Morgan. Scott has this crazy idea to travel back in time and collect the stones to snap the decimated characters back to life. They assemble three different teams to do so, and they manage to collect all the stones but with a price: Black Widow had to sacrifice herself in order for Hawkeye to obtain the soul stone.

Nebula is captured in the past by Thanos who uses her time traveling technology to attack the Avengers in the present day. Tony Stark and the Hulk create a gauntlet to harness the stones and Hulk snaps which brings everyone back. Then, there is a huge battle between the Avengers, Thanos and his army. The previously fallen heroes are now all back, and Captain America wields Mjolnir. Tony manages to get ahold of the

fan service. Fans have been rooting for Cap to wield Mjolnir and for Tony Stark to create his own gauntlet. I certainly wasn't prepared for Tony's death. Tony began our journey into the MCU way back in *Iron Man*, in a cave, with a box of scraps. No one expected Iron Man to be as successful as it was. As a result of this success, we have been blessed with twenty-two fantastic movies!

The MCU has underlying themes of sacrifice and hope. These themes have been sprinkled all throughout the 22 movies by Kevin Feige. Captain America, Gamora, Groot, Black Widow, Quicksilver, Vision, Hawkeye and now Tony have either tried sacrificing themselves or have done so. We are all excited for the next chapter for the MCU, to begin with, *Spider-Man: Far From Home* coming out this summer. I certainly hope that Phase 4 is as good if not better than the previous three phases of the series.

Email Etiquette

Do you remember the days when email wasn't important? When the only emails you would get were from IXL and only once a week? Do you remember the days when an email from anyone else made you feel like the most special fifth grader in the whole wide world? I guess that feeling has vanished over the years- and it explains why emails now sound lazy, cavalier and are riddled with grammatical errors. Unfortunately, emails are important in our world, and it's important that the emails you send are the best they can be. Follow these simple suggestions, and soon, you'll be able to send better emails than even the master himself, Mr. Syed.

- 1: Please, *please* enable Grammarly. You know, the grammar-checking service that many people around you rely on? For the sake of everyone around you, just do it. The world has enough misplaced commas, and yours don't need to join them!
- 2: If the email is going to be long, make it into several paragraphs instead of a single chunk of text. Teenagers like us with the attention spans of moths won't be able to focus for more than three sentences at a time. So, important information could be lost. Do yourself a favor by breaking your email up into paragraphs if it's long.
- 3: Don't respond to longer emails with one word. The person writing the email probably put a lot of effort into it, and it could seem indolent if you sent a one-word response.
- 4: Make sure to read your audience and to know the tone you should be taking- an email to a teacher should be different from an email to a classmate.
- 5: ALWAYS double check an email. It hurts to learn this the hard way so please make sure to scan the email to ensure that it makes sense and that all the information is accurate.

Go forth, good people- write the emails that The ROAR knows you're capable of writing. Good luck, and make sure not to email the wrong people!

Saying Goodbye

It's nearly the end of the semester and much of our attention is revolving around final IB exams, AP exams, or if you're a Freshie, the NBA playoffs. The stress levels are rising and many hours are being spent understanding two years worth of class material (or watching the Warriors win again). The exams end, the senior's graduate, the 10th graders end the easy part of High School, parties begin, and the freshies still don't earn any respect. Am I forgetting something? Oh my goodness, all the goodbyes that this time of year brings! Many may have close friends departing, while others have siblings who are graduating. The transient nature of an international schools means this time of year will always come, whether we like it or not. Even if you're the sort who wants to "stay strong" because you don't like publicly displaying emotion, the inevitable goodbyes are coming. What you may eventually realize is that your friend/sibling/departing close one had an impact on your life. It's actually good to be emotional about such events, showing your appreciation for everything others have offered you over their time with you at AES. Being able to honor the thought of your close one moving on while you're here is too difficult to think about, there are ways in which you can make these sad thoughts into positive ones.

1: Photos

With everyone having fancy phones, every moment is now a click away. To relive your best memories, look back at all the photos you took with that special person. It will bring smiles and take you back to that moment. Plus, there are probably hundreds of photos that you'll be able to admire!



2: Online Games

One of the ways I've been able to connect with friends is to continue activities with them that will allow you to connect without having to talk about your emotions. Playing online games together is a perfect example of this. You'll be able to have fun with each other while being thousands of miles apart.



3: Calls

More often than not, checking in with your close one is an easy way to ease the situation. Calling in once a week will make "settling in" much easier and this way, you'll still be a part of your friends/siblings new life.

Cake Corner

THE QUEST FOR THE PERFECT CHOCOLATE-CHIP COOKIE

This is a journey that every baker must take. It is a noble search into the world of cooking and recipes: finding the perfect chocolate chip cookie recipe. The ideal cookie is simple and varies often by personal preference. However, there are six main components to any good chocolate-chip cookie: flour, sugar, eggs, fat, raising agent, and mix-ins. Below is a summary of your main options for each of these factors, as well as some variations.

1) Flour: There's not much room for variation here. All-purpose flour works about as well as anything else; however, if you're bored you can try using bread flour or cake flour, which will change the texture of the cookie.

2) Sugar: This is where you can start to personalize. There is, of course, white sugar, but for a more complex (and delicious) caramel-rich flavor, you can use light or dark brown sugar. By using these sugars to create your own mixture, you can personalize the taste of your cookies until they match your ultimate personal preferences.

3) Eggs: They help to bind your cookies together and are important to have in your cookie. If you can't eat eggs, you can always use an egg substitute. This can be purchased or made from scratch in your kitchen.

4) Fat: Fats are essential in creating the perfect cookie. The two main options we have are butter and oil. Oil is often faster and can be considered easier, but it tends to leave a bit of an oily taste in your final cookies. Note, however, that the after taste will vary based on the type of oil used. Butter tends to taste best, and, if you have time, you can try browning some butter (cooking it until it turns brown to develop a deeper flavor).

5) Raising Agent: Baking powder or baking soda are the two most viable options. They both have the same active ingredient – bicarbonate soda.

However, baking powder also has the cream of tartar which results in a fluffier, better-risen cookie. A raising agent isn't entirely necessary for a good cookie, but it creates a texture that most people find preferable.

6) Mix-ins: Chocolate of some form is, of course, the first thing that comes to mind. The classic chocolate chip is an excellent option; however, chopped up chocolate would be even better. The variation in size is good for texture, and some of the chocolate melts into the cookie dough – which is never a bad thing. Keep in mind that cookies can be diversified beyond chocolate. Dried fruits and candy are great substitutes. In other words, be creative! The world of cookies is vast, and it's yours to explore as you see fit.

Here's a basic recipe that you can use with your newfound inspiration to create the ultimate cookie.

Ingredients:

1 ¹/₄ cups brown sugar, packed (265 g)
1/2 cup butter (115g)
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 ¹/₄ cups all-purpose flour (155 g)
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 ¹/₄ chocolate (220g)
Salt (for topping the cookies)

1) In a large bowl, melt the butter, and continue cooking until it begins to turn brown.

2) While the butter is cooking, chop up the chocolate.

3) Add the sugar to the browned butter and whisk until a paste forms with no lumps.

4) Whisk in the egg and vanilla, beating until light ribbons fall off the whisk and remain for a short while before falling back into the mixture.

5) Sift in the flour and baking powder, then gently fold the mixture with a spatula. Be careful not to overmix, which would cause the gluten in the flour to toughen resulting in cakier cookies.

6) Fold in the chocolate chunks, then refrigerate the dough for at least 30 minutes. The longer the dough rests, the more complex its flavor will be.

7) Preheat your oven to 180°C (350°F).

8) Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

9) Scoop the dough onto the parchment paper-lined baking sheet with an ice-cream scoop, leaving at least 4 inches (10 cm) of space between cookies and 2 inches (5 cm) of space from the edges of the pan so that the cookies can spread evenly. Sprinkle each cookie with a little salt.

10) Bake for 12–15 minutes, or until the edges have started to brown.

11) Cool completely before serving.

12) Enjoy!



EDITORIAL RIA MITRA

Talent Vs Hard Work

Talent is defined as a natural aptitude for a certain skill – emphasis on *natural*. The supposedly innate value of a person's expertise in something makes it all too easy to dismiss their accomplishments as something they don't need to work hard for. Yes, it is true that possessing a natural talent at something is a great advantage and bolsters a person's ability, but talent must go hand in hand with hard work in order to be truly successful, whereas hard work alone is enough to garner that same success.

Have you ever heard someone being told how lucky they are to be good at something, such as drawing or singing? The notion that someone's skill is just a result of the talent they were fortunate enough to be born with is not entirely untrue. One benefit of having natural talent is that it makes you more prone to quick learning and cultivating your skill in a short time. Cognitive psychologist Elizabeth Meinz conducted a study in which a group of people who had already spent time developing certain skills was measured against a group of people with higher IQ's, who had never practised these skills before. Before long, the second group of people progressed to a skill level near to that of the people who were well-practised, proving that being 'smart' is, in fact, a very useful thing to inherit and boosts one's capacity to improve. Obviously, mental intelligence is only one form of talent, and not being naturally 'smart' in no way limits

the possibilities of what one can achieve, but talent does provide a foundation on which to further refine skills. Moreover, talent is an extreme motivator which then leads to hard work, because if someone is successful at something the first time they do it, they are likely to continue. For instance, the amount of musical instruments I have picked up in my life only to soon put them down again after making no improvement and realising that I simply am not gifted when it comes to music, is proof in itself that talent is a driving force behind ambition. Had I noticed any immediate indication that I was at all musically talented, I may have been encouraged to keep going. Likewise, if somebody stumbles upon a skill which they have talent at, the fear of 'wasting' said skill will push them to expand upon it, fueled by the knowledge that their talent provides a head-start above those who are relying solely on hard work.

Moving on, it's impossible to deny that though talent is nice to have, in almost all cases it can be trumped by hard work and dedication. The classic story of the tortoise beating the hare is an analogy for a very commonplace issue, in which excessive talent leads to complacency. Those who feel the need to compensate for their lack of talent by working day and night, with will-power and tenacity, are more likely to win the race due to their desire for improvement. Talent can only take someone so far, and if someone has talent but fails to work hard, they will not

advance beyond a certain limit. What's more, hard work is generally a sign of passion and enjoyment of what one is doing, meaning the individual is willing to stop at nothing to improve, and their drive will not dwindle due to something as simple as boredom or apathy. Passion leads to a good attitude, and a good attitude is not something to be undervalued. All it takes is one look at people at the top of their field, such as Serena Williams or Bill Gates who, despite being talented, had to amass years of persistence before making it to where they are today, to see the power of hard work.

So, yes, I believe that talent plays a large part in success, but ultimately it means nothing when

no work is put in. Not that success is as simple as just talent and hard work – a person's environment and upbringing play just as big a role. Although it's a depressing thought, there are so many people out there who have both the talent and the work ethic, but they lack the wealth and resources, supportive home, or social status that would allow them to live up to their full potential. But for those of us fortunate to have the resources, we need to put maximum effort into everything we do to set in place a culture of ambition and perseverance.



Shazam! A Review

Shazam! is trying to "bring its sexy back" with a movie that defies the darkness of the Snyder DC Cinematic Universe. It's no surprise that boring CGI driven films have become increasingly mainstream. In emphasizing the CGI over the plot, the audience has nothing to look forward to but a set run of the mill Hollywood action scenes. However, *Shazam!* brings back the old superhero movies values that give us comfort – family, friends, and hope in spite of it all. *Shazam!* also adds Marvel-like iconic sarcastic humor to a DC story. So, when watching this DC side-flick, you can count on the hope for a good laugh and a family friendly plot arc.

Instead of making half the universe vanish with a snap, our antagonist is more of a disappointed man with serious daddy issues who was baited by biblical allusions, i.e. the seven deadly sins. Plus, we have the classic age-old wizard ready to distribute powers to an individual that has a pure heart. I'll concede, it isn't overly much with respect to scientific accuracy or the serious effects of steroids – no one gets that buff that fast naturally – but it's certainly the sort of movie that you can watch with friends to relieve some of that imminent exam stress. It's entertaining.

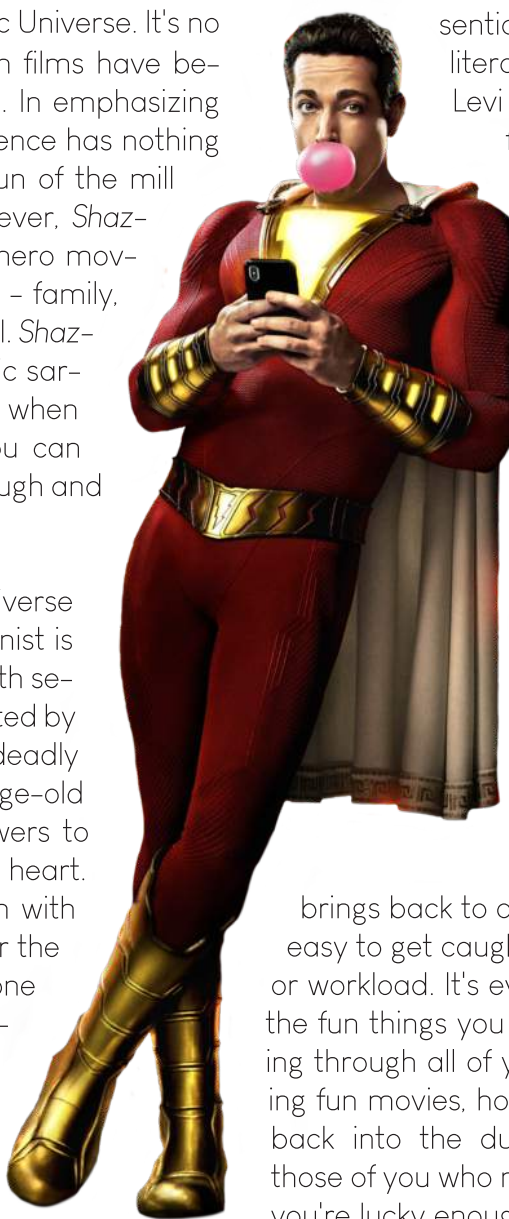
On a separate note, I have to acknowledge the geeky, adorable perfection of the cast. The villain is also Merlin from the *Kingsman* movies

aka Mark Strong. One should note his almost British accent paired with quintessential villainous dryness and the literal evil eye. Watching Zachary Levi (the lead) act like a student fooling about in a science lab

while complaining about the proportion of adult hands was the height of comedic genius. Also, ten-year-old Faithe Herman shines as the innocent and adorable Darla. For those of you that haven't seen *Shazam!* yet, I recommend that you do – even Rotten Tomatoes gave it a score of ninety-one percent. Unsurprisingly, it also grossed an international total of over \$200 million.

It's important to reiterate the fun that *Shazam!*

brings back to a depressing DC universe. It's easy to get caught up in the pre-exam stress or workload. It's even easier to lose sight of all the fun things you could do while you're working through all of your commitments. Watching fun movies, however, can always bring fun back into the dull moments. Moreover, for those of you who may feel like you don't fit in, if you're lucky enough to be dragged into a portal that takes you to an old wizard with powers, you may also be blessed with a flamboyant suit.



THE ROAR EDITION 8

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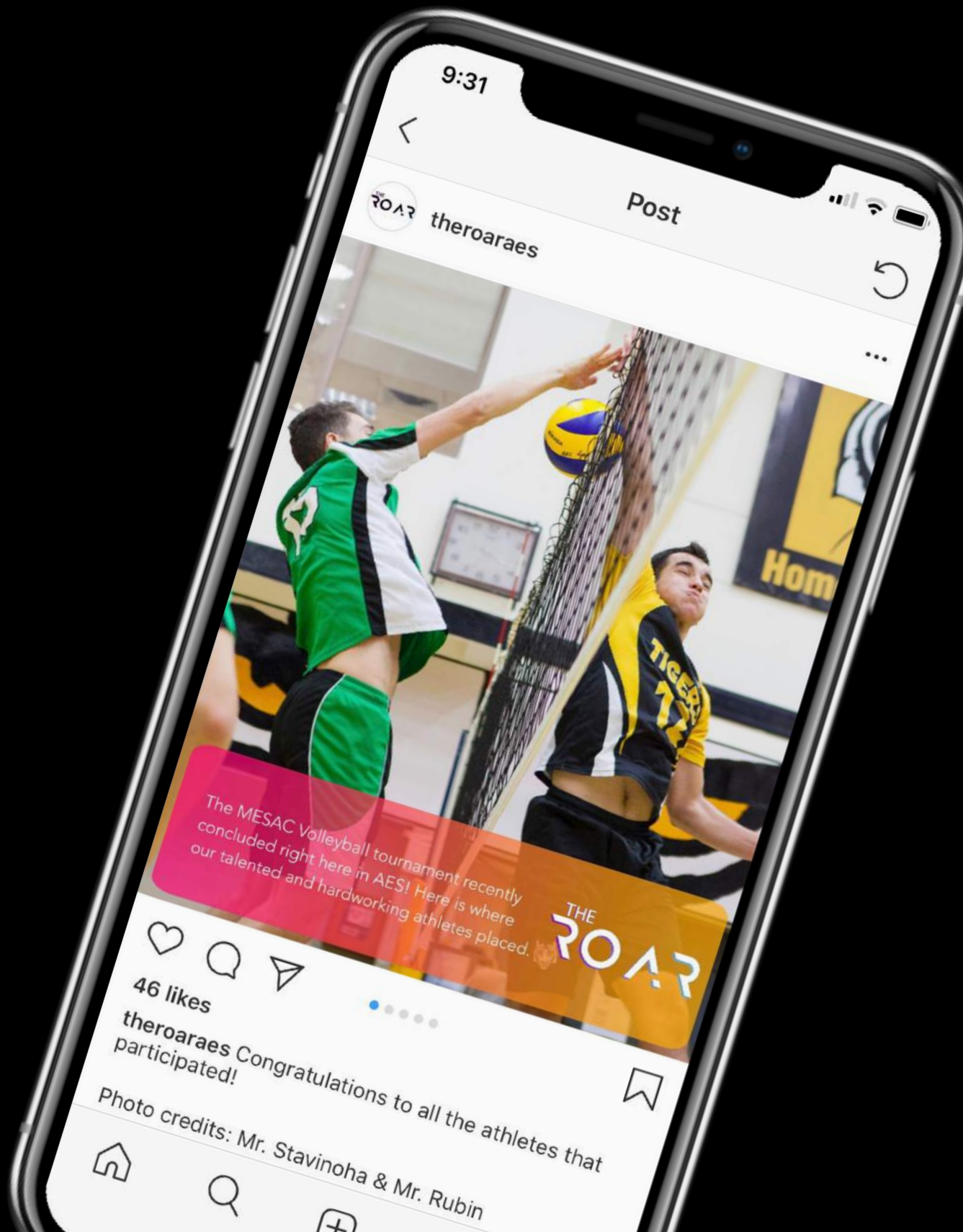
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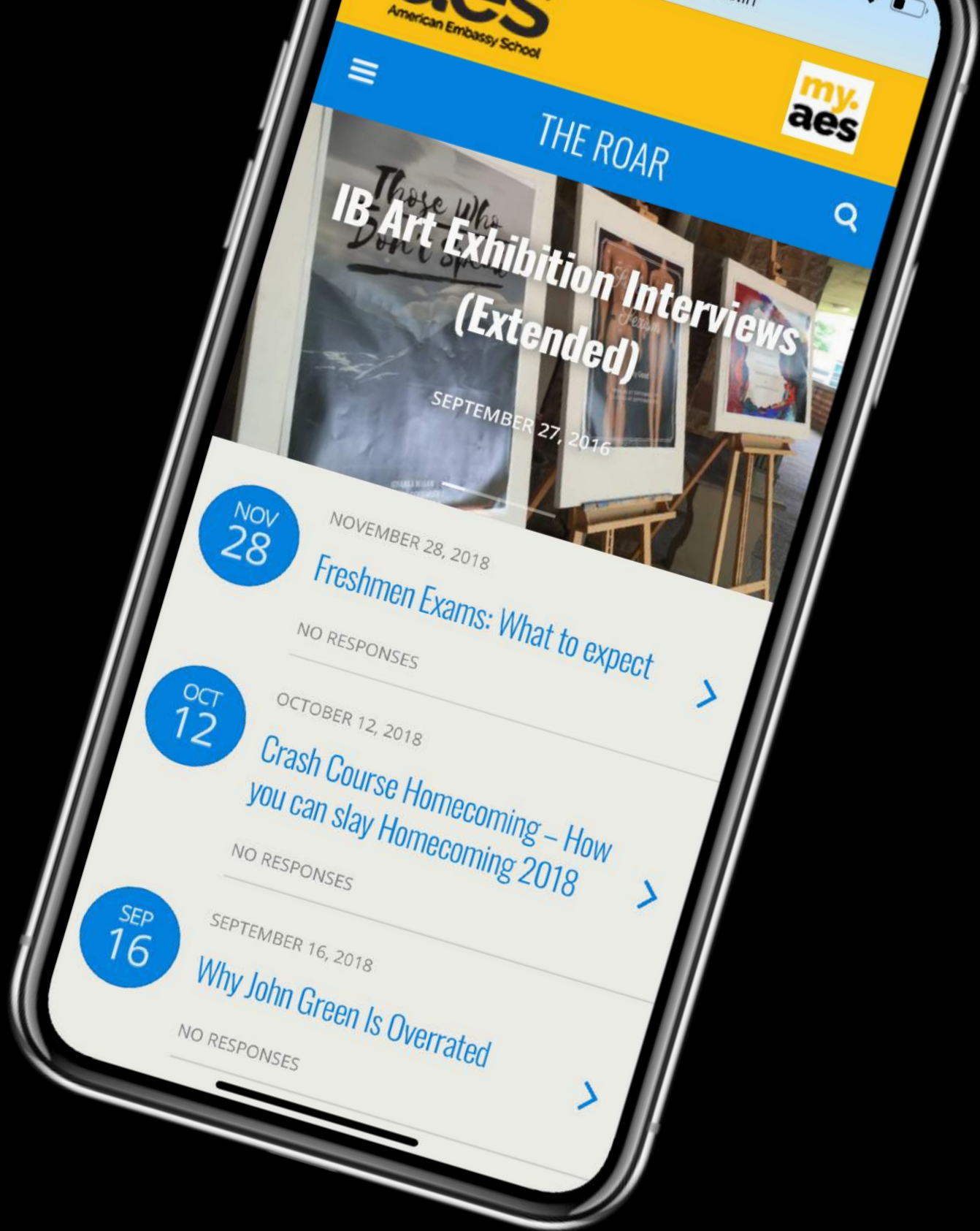
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