

April 2022



THE SEISEN POST

Informing Seisen since 1974



FROM THE EDITORS



Hi everyone!

As we are nearing the end of our school year, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on a few prominent news stories, from the pandemic to LGBTQ+ representation, while sharing fun and light-hearted pieces that spread some positivity within our community. Whether you are looking for new book recommendations or hoping to gain insight from academic professionals, we believe that our articles will help uncover new perspectives on pressing issues.

Thank you to our wonderful mentors, Ms. Erika, Ms. Silvia, Mr. Brittain, the school administration, and last but not least, our hard-working writers who never fail to impress with their creative and inspirational stories.

Sincerely,

Ashita Gulati & Seoyoon Chang (Co-Editors-in-Chief)

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If you would like to include advertisements or have suggestions on what we can cover in our next issue, please reach out to 2022asgu@seisen.com or 2022chse@seisen.com

Special thanks to the
Seisen Administration!

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The Myth Of Meritocracy

Meritocracy Through the Lens of College Applications

As the university application submission season is upon us, the class of 2022 is currently navigating, what is in many cases, a nebulous and bewildering process. Alice, one of the Seisen seniors, has shared that it is a very stressful experience, especially when preparing personal essays that will be read by college admissions officers. However, as much as the seniors are putting their best effort into their college application, a question arises: is this arduous application process really fair when selecting the most appropriate candidate from the vast number of applicants? According to a study conducted by NYU, only 5-6% of the applicants get accepted into top-tier institutions. This leads us to a question: what kind of information do universities use to select the applicants? In this article, we will explore the pros and cons of this process and whether it fairly assesses the potential of students; the merit and demerit of having standardized tests; and the roles of affirmative action, legacy admissions, and socio-economic background in determining where students ultimately end up.



Illustration from Yale Insights

The Case For Meritocracy

The word "Meritocracy" itself comes from the Latin word "Merit," meaning to earn, and the Greek word "Kratos," meaning strength or power.

Meritocracy is a belief that society should be governed by people with talents and wisdom, not by their economic status. Just like the words define itself, meritocracy is present in our current society as a system where people acquire their economic status, or get accepted into a university based largely on their assumed skills and talents demonstrated in high stakes examinations. The most common methods to determine such social positions are the standardized tests such as the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) or ACT (American College Test), although they are gradually being phased out.

Why does the meritocracy get a bad rap?

In theory, we consider meritocracy to be an ideal that is supposed to fairly promote individuals to positions of influence and esteem based on their talents and abilities. However, in reality, many experts contend that it is the economic elite that perpetuates outsized control and membership in many liberal democracies, and not necessarily those who are best suited. This issue has become more acute in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement and in the push for more social justice accountability in many elite post-secondary institutions of higher learning – many of which will be considering applications from our Seisen seniors. Social justice activists contend that the college admission process is long overdue for reform, as it promotes economic elitism, white supremacy and systemic racism. Data

from the Teachers College Press suggest that the SAT favours students with high economic status, as more privileged students perform better than those with low-income backgrounds. In response, many school administrations agreed to deemphasize the SAT as an entrance ticket to universities. The San Francisco Board of Education took a step further, by replacing standardized tests with a lottery system. The reason for this phenomenon is that academic extracurriculars (cram schools, SAT/ACT camps, and private tutors) – are only accessible to wealthy families to train students for important examinations. Furthermore, these wealthy families predominantly consist of white families due to the racial wealth gap in the United States. The real challenge in meritocracy is ensuring all students have equal starting lines (Donovan, 2020) so that standardized tests will be "fair" considering the tests that take a "one size fits all" approach tend to ignore factors such as neurodiversity and socioeconomic advantages of some test takers.

What Meritocracy really is

With rising numbers of schools criticizing the current system of meritocracy and searching for an alternative system, we should question whether meritocracy really is just a "tool of White male privilege" (Adrian, 2021). In reality, meritocracy also gives some opportunities to marginalized identities and even economically disadvantaged students. For example, the number of Hispanic and Black children identified as talented increased in 2005 as a result of incorporating screening tests in elementary schools. This indicates

that standardized tests help society discover hidden talents that may have gone unnoticed without such assessments. Moreover, the notion of meritocracy also guides the country's economy. Bruno Pellegrino of the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business and Luigi Zingales of the Booth School conducted a study that ranks economically advanced countries. The data on the World Economic Survey displayed a strong, positive correlation between a country's economy and "meritocracy score" determined by the data from the World Economic Survey and the country's economy. The countries with higher meritocracy scores such as Sweden, the United States and Japan (the points are accumulated by the question such as "are managers rewarded and promoted according to productivity?") tend to have higher productivity and a more stable economy.

As seniors prepare for colleges, affirmative action will heavily impact how their applications are evaluated. Affirmative action refers to the policies that favor the underrepresented groups in workplaces or schools. Yet, this may not be working as its original intention has been. According to "Education researchers reveal why far more girls apply to college than boys: Schools prioritize organization and rule-following," US colleges accept more female students than male students. The article says that this phenomenon occurs because more female students apply for college, but the schools want to keep the proportions of sex even. Another article, "How elite US schools give preference to wealthy and white

"legacy" applicants" says that US universities discriminate against Asian American students. Harvard gives lower personal ratings to applicants of Asian ethnicity, restricting the number of Asian ethnic students in the school. Clearly, this affects the future of Seisen students, who are living in Asia and are female. One senior, Ashita, stated that affirmative action should be only used in certain situations, stating, "yes, I agree that affirmative action should be used to diversify the race represented in universities, however, I do not think it should be the only deciding factor." This would require college admissions officers to take a more nuanced approach to considering race or socio-economic background, and not merely see them as filling racial quotas, thereby undermining the notion of meritocratic fairness.

The Case Against Meritocracy

In 2019, 33 parents (including prominent Hollywood actresses and business figures) were accused of a college admissions bribery scandal. Albeit shocking, wealthy parents buying their children's way into elite universities is not a rare phenomena; alumni donors commonly donate large sums of money to colleges to increase the chance of their children's acceptance into the institution. US colleges' preferences of legacy students is also lucid, with Harvard's acceptance of legacy students being 33% compared to their overall acceptance of 6%. Recognizing the inequality, the majority of people were enraged and believed that these places should only be offered to bright students who supposedly deserve to study in elite universities. Their anger supports the throng's belief that the society should provide opportunities based on individual merit.

Many people deem that a meritocratic society is the final goal that our current society should look towards to achieve social equity and justice. The term "meritocracy" was first introduced in 1958 in *The Rise of the Meritocracy* by British sociologist Michael Young. It refers to a society that rewards people based on individual merits, notwithstanding uncontrollable factors such as personal background, race, and gender. Many politicians promote themselves by referring to the term

"meritocracy." Even former president Barack Obama referred to the pop lyric, "You can make it if you try" more than 140 times in his speeches; other politicians such as Tony Blair, Bill and Hillary Clinton, and Ronald Reagan also frequently used the term in their speeches as well. These examples, again, reinforce the prevalent belief and desire for a meritocratic society. In theory, meritocracy is efficient, offering opportunities for individuals to climb the ladder as high as their ability will take them. From its description, this sounds like a utopia, but is it really?

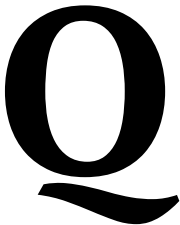
Some experts suggest that the notion of meritocracy is illusory. It rewards those who have wealth and time to invest in education, and blatantly ignores the existence of systematic discrimination prevailing in society. It blinds the successful to the idea that their prominent status is earned by their hard work, while the less fortunate are simply lazy. It also convinces society that the poor or those who are financially unstable somehow deserve their suffering. However, meritocracy should not justify people's unequal access to basic human needs such as healthcare, shelter, and food. Especially since meritocracy is a concept suggesting to reward the most industrious, which is heavily dependent on opportunities and privileges, a meritocratic society is certainly not a utopia.

Contemporary society considers to embrace this ideal, prominent political figures continue to espouse and perpetuate the myth of meritocracy, reinforcing the idea that their success is earned purely by their own agency. The elites, who promote the total withdrawal of systematic discrimination of people based on uncontrollable factors (e.g. race, gender, etc.), are naive or ignorant to the corrosive effects of educationism, which refers to the bias against the uneducated. Based on these ideas, political philosopher Michael Sandel criticizes meritocracy in his book *The Tyranny of Merit*. He highlights the consequences of the meritocratic hubris, explaining that the victory of Donald Trump in the presidential election and the BREXIT referendum was the result of the populist outbursts against the allegedly fair meritocracy. Sandel claims that these were the working class's revolt against the elites who constantly looked down on them. Clearly, the

people would not support a political notion that rewards the rich under the facade of being fair.

Modern society, although ostensibly meritocratic, is patently technocratic and credentialistic. The society offers lucrative jobs only to the highly educated, and the elites hegemonize the uneducated; 95% in the US House of Representatives and 100% in the US Senate owned a Bachelor's Degree or higher, while only 42% of US citizens aged 25 or above did. Even the Democratic Party, which represents the interests of the blue-collar, has only 9 members in the House without a college degree. People may think that this is rational, since the common perception is that the college graduates are more intelligent than the nongraduates. Nonetheless, some argue that college degree acquisition does not prove the intelligence of an individual. They say, for example, prominent political figures such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Harry Truman did not graduate from college. Yet, it should also be noted that these people were all born before the 20th century. Therefore, meritocracy certainly has flaws regardless of its intentions to create a fairer society.

Meritocracy has its fair share of benefits and disadvantages. Different people standing on the different zones of the political spectrum have different views on meritocracy and its fairness. Nonetheless, meritocracy will impact many of us students in the near future. To ask about meritocracy's role in college admissions, we interviewed Ms. Lui, Seisen's College Advisor. She stated that, "When discussing US admission, especially the higher-ranked universities, meritocracy still plays a role but not so much. This is because they have to consider many other factors such as diversity, interstate admissions, generation in their family attending college, and legacy. Therefore, in that sense, meritocracy doesn't play a significant role. But if we are talking about countries like the UK and Japan, which are outside of the US, they have a high emphasis on academic scores and achievement. They don't consider as many factors as the US." Our Seisen seniors should recognize this illusion of meritocracy and temper their expectations that the college application process is completely transparent and fair.



Seisen Seniors' Opinions on Meritocracy

To examine the direct impact meritocracy has on Seisen seniors' college admissions, we interviewed three 12th graders: Ashita, who is applying to universities other than U.S. and Seoyoon, who is only applying to the universities in U.S.

"Do you think the selective programs of the United States are fair compared to other countries?"

Ashita: There's one case where the Harvard admission documents were leaked, and from there, we saw that admission officers tend to review an application and give a score for each component like extracurriculars and academics/test scores. That's how they cut down applicants. Personally, I believe that numbers are the only way to cut down applicants even though we may feel like it's unfair. Those numbers are necessary to decide who to admit and the US takes a lot of different factors into account too.

Seoyoon: I've heard news about UC schools like UC Berkeley, they put a quota on how many international students can get in. Before, they used to accept people on a basis but now they only accept a small percentage of the international applicants. They've cut it down significantly. Then there's in-state applicants, and out-of-state applicants versus international applicants.

Ashita: Yeah, the standards could also be a

little different for international students versus domestic applicants.

Seoyoon: Or people who are applying for financial aid.

Ashita: Do you know a system called 'need-based' and 'need-aware' [asking Dahyun and Leina]? Need-based is when the university first accepts the student and then reviews the student's income information, to see if the student requires a certain amount of financial aid. Need-aware is when they review the applicant's application and income information at the same time. So, they could reject the applicant if they're asking for too much aid. For a lot of international applicants applying to private schools, it's usually need-aware. That's another obstacle for international applicants to get through.

What do you feel about legacy?

Seoyoon: Legacy-wise, I honestly have no opinion towards that. I understand why the universities want to have that kind of information. They take pride in their alumni, and that's why they're interested in seeing students who have a network. I think it just serves as additional information.

Ashita: I completely agree with you. Even though being a legacy might help you a little bit, I don't think colleges take it into consideration as much. If there's a better applicant in terms of extracurriculars and scores, they're probably going to take that applicant.

Seoyoon: Yes, it's definitely not a determining factor.

What do you feel about the section where you have to fill in your ethnicity or race on the college application?

Seoyoon: I think the whole debate surrounding ethnicity is why some people are able to get in while others don't. And they think it's because of their ethnicity. There's a lot of division about that, because I've heard tons and tons of Asians applying. All from Japan, China, Korea, etc. There's a whole division between Asians. There are definitely ways that colleges can handle it better.

Ashita: I think if you are a minority or a majority matters to an extent because if you're from a minority group, you might not have access to as many resources so the accomplishments are that much more impressive. It's probably difficult to decide who to admit because ultimately everyone works hard. Colleges want to see the diversity component though, so they look for representatives that are of different ethnicities or race. I think it's inevitable that colleges consider diversity in admissions, but I think that the work you do in HS matters more.



We also interviewed Ms. Lui, Seisen's College Advisor. She stated that, "When discussing US admission, especially the higher-ranked universities, meritocracy still plays a role but not so much. This is because they have to consider many other factors such as diversity, interstate admissions, generation in their family attending college, and legacy. Therefore, in that sense, meritocracy doesn't play a significant role. But if we are talking about countries like the UK and Japan, which are outside of the US, they have a high emphasis on academic scores and achievement. They don't consider as many factors as the US." From her quote, Seisen seniors and other students should recognize the illusion of meritocracy in the US, contrasting to the seemingly fairer college admission systems of the UK and Japan. Hopefully this article will broaden our view on today's meritocratic society in relation to their college application.

"Please note that the content of this article is about their experiences, and what they have previously heard, and are not what formally takes place in the Admissions office"

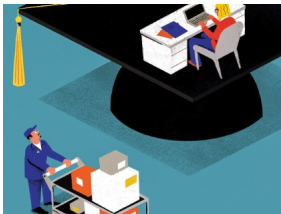


Illustration by Robert Samuel Hanson



The Ponytail that Sent Japanese Media into a Frenzy

A timeline of events and issues following the four-year saga of Komuro Mako and her husband, Kei Komuro.

**this article was written prior to their flight to New York*

Finally, after four years of engagement, Princess Mako – the eldest daughter of Crown Prince Fumihito and Princess Kiko – has married Kei Komuro. As of October 26th, she is officially named Mako Komuro after renouncing her royal status.

From Japanese TV crews following Kei's personal life in New York, to severe criticism on his new hairstyle, this remains to be one of the most discussed subjects in Japanese news coverage today.

The Not-so Fairytale Marriage of Princess Mako

The two became acquainted with each other while attending International Christian University in 2012. They announced their engagement in a press conference during September of 2017 and were planning their perfect wedding. At the conference, the Princess famously stated that Kei's smile was "as bright as the sunlight," while he expressed that she "watches over me as quietly as the moon."

However, things took a turn in February 2018 when a financial scandal concerning Kei's family was revealed: Kei's mother owed her former fiancé around 4 million yen, which was allegedly borrowed to cover Kei's university tuition fees.

The wedding was then delayed to 2018, as his mother's relationship with her ex-fiance still remained unresolved.

As the media coverage died down, Kei travelled to New York to attend Fordham Law School. Both Kei and the Imperial Household had stayed

silent on this issue until April this year, when Kei published a 28 page document, denying the allegations that he had used the money from the former partner to pay for his tuition fees at ICU. It was the first written statement from Kei in two years, and yet the document of such length had no mention of any apology, thus exacerbating the confusion of the public and media.

The Debate Over the Marriage

This leads us to last October when the Imperial Household Agency confirmed that the pair would marry by the end of the month.

However, the media frenzy had ramped up yet again.

One issue was that she would be the first female of the Imperial Household to have an 'unconventional' wedding – despite the traditional ceremonies that had been held through generations in the Imperial Household, Mako has turned this down. She is also planning to refuse the payment of 15.2 million yen usually given to all females of the Imperial Household upon marrying a commoner.

At this point, Mako and Kei planned on moving to New York after getting married. Therefore, there was a growing concern of how security would be ensured if Mako turns down the money. Although she is no longer a part of the Imperial family, Japan may ask the US government to provide security – payments which will most likely come from Japanese taxpayers. This is another complication, being that taxpayers' money is at stake, and that the public has the right to know where

their money is going to be spent – especially as they may expect it to be invested into mitigating issues caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

Most tabloids seem to be against the idea of this marriage – they state that the public is not happy with how this event has come to be and that Kei needs to be more apologetic concerning the whole affair.

Bungei Shunju, a Japanese monthly magazine, declared the wedding to be "the biggest crisis to strike the Imperial Family in 100 years," and some even hold the belief that this scandal is an embarrassing occurrence to Japan's national family.

The Ponytail that Drove the Media into a Panic

With all these new speculations rising, the media covers even the most mundane aspects of Kei – last month, the headline of Nikkan Sports stated, "Kei Komuro comes back with a ponytail." This flooded several tabloids, variety shows, and social media platforms with images,



while debates arose on whether the hairstyle reflected the delicate image of the Imperial House; some tabloids have defended Kei's hairstyle, stating that the media response reflects the conservative nature of Japanese society, and that it is very "Japan-like" to panic

simply over a ponytail. The severe criticism over how Kei chooses his hairstyle possibly mirrors the anti-diverse stance that is deeply rooted in the minds of the Japanese public, and reveals the nature of toxic masculinity in the country with social stigma around overly feminine men.

And yet to further fuel the discourse regarding the affair, the Imperial Household Agency announced on October 1st that Mako was diagnosed with complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD), due to facing years of public slander against her and her future husband. According to Psychiatrist Tsuyoshi Akiyama, Mako struggled to deal with the public slander written in the media, and felt that her dignity as a human being was being trampled upon. He explains that "People suffering from complex PTSD can feel worthless or have negative feelings," as a result of long-term abuse.

Further Problems Arise



The registration of their marriage on October 26th was followed by a press conference, held on the same day. Although people may have expected some form of further disclosure on certain matters such as their future plans, they only gave opening remarks and distributed five written answers to questions submitted prior to the conference.

Even on the day of their marriage, some still refused to agree on the matter. Shortly before the conference, a number of 130 people had gathered in a national park and proceeded to do a silent protest, holding posters with various messages that read "NO KOMURO"



or "Stop this press conference" (translated). This was not the first time people had held a protest, but in fact their 12th time since September 12th.

A mere three days after their marriage, the results for the New York bar exam were released – Kei's name was nowhere mentioned in the list of applicants who had passed. An anonymous journalist of the Imperial family stated, "If Kei had passed the bar examination, he would have most likely earned an income of 20 million yen annually. But with his current situation being an assistant at a law firm, his annual income is estimated to be around 6 million yen. To add on, he would have to study hard for the next February examination, which will make it increasingly difficult to balance his work and studying...The two have already secured a high-end mansion as their home, which is estimated to be around 800,000 yen a month. New York has relatively high costs of living in general, so it may be challenging for Mako to maintain a 'dignified' standard of living." (translated)

Is this True Closure?

On the 13th of November, it was also announced that Kei finally settled the money dispute between his mother and her ex-fiance, who accepted 4 million yen to put the debt issue to rest.

The public remains divided on the marriage; some ponder whether Mako really loves him, or question

if it is an act of freedom to break away from the boundaries of the Imperial family.

Some even say that the media's response to their relationship indicates the pressure women in Japan's Imperial family often face. Mako is not the only woman who has experienced issues concerning health due to the media. Her grandmother, former Empress Michiko, had lost her voice temporarily after receiving criticism of being "unfit" for the position of the emperor's wife. After receiving blame for failing to give birth to a male heir, Mako's aunt-in-law was diagnosed with depression.

Kei's famous favorite quote of "Let it Be" mentioned at a press conference nearly 4 years ago has been interpreted in several ways by the media and the public – but it may have been a subtle innuendo on this affair concerning the Imperial household.

「小室さんの「LET IT BE」と上皇さまの「恋風」ー 眞子さまと小室さんの結婚が国民に与り得る「希望」に与えかねない」(文芸春秋) - Yahoo! ニュース, Yahoo! ニュース, 2021, <https://news.yahoo.co.jp/articles/e732c65bbbfad27b675cd86f2186ed86272672?page=3>.

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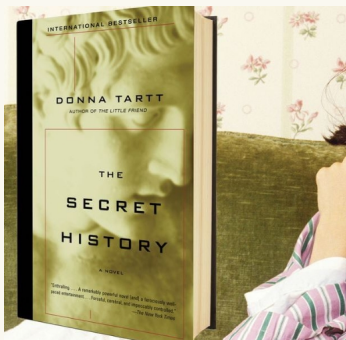
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How Pretentious is Too Pretentious?

THE SECRET HISTORY SAYS IT'S A LIFESTYLE

A Book Review by
Elizaveta Glushak

Donna Tartt's debut novel *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt, published in 1992, is widely considered to be one of the most influential and popular pieces of modern psychological fiction, having sold over 5 million copies since its release. Since my initial read on a family trip I have endeavored to practically coerce my friends and family into giving it a read and hopefully share the excitement and enthusiasm I felt after completing the five hundred and forty four pages within three days. To me, however, what stood out especially was the sheer pretentiousness of the main characters and the fatal flaws of their personalities that happened to make them so unexpectedly dear to me. That is what made this novel special, different from anything I have read before.



Now, onto their pretentiousness, onto really tearing apart their so-called "dark academia" characteristics. To start off, they fully disregard the university experience that their peers receive: the different professors and experimentation with subjects, the college parties, the casual going out. In the starting chapters of the book, Edmund "Bunny" Concoran, one of the main characters, takes out Richard Papen for a casual lunch, telling Richard that it is his treat. They order the most obnoxious, lavish meals and drinks, which Bunny ends up unable to pay for, and has to ask his friend Henry Winter to lend him the measly few hundred dollars. Henry is kind to pay, but we are left questioning whether it would have really been disastrous going to a regular diner. In terms of Henry Winter, he is a personal favorite of mine, and also perhaps the most pretentious character in the history of characters. He spends his free time translating Ancient Greek works, and judges very heavily those who don't understand Plato or Homer. This excerpt from the book summarizes him most accurately: "You're a Homeric scholar?" I might have said yes, but I had the feeling he'd be glad to catch me in a mistake and he would be able to do it easily. 'I like Homer' I said weakly. He regarded me with a chill distaste. 'I love Homer' He said." Both Ancient Greek and Latin texts play a chief role in the characterization of Tarrt's main characters, as their obsession with the Ancient world not only inspire them to take upon ancient philosophies and traditions, but also to segregate themselves from other and leave no desire in their hearts to open up to communities that aren't their own. Henry can be seen as difficult, and each member of their clique has troubles with understanding him or getting close to him; by the time one completes the reading of the novel, the question of whether he is a

pretentious university student or just a legitimate psychopath is unavoidable. The simple excerpt of Henry judging Richard upon his lack of passion regarding Homer's work is only a single step towards seeing his obsession with the ancient schools of thought, things that make him and his friends do the unimaginable, which suggests his pretentiousness is not only comedic, but deeply psychological. When the reader begins the novel, he might have mixed feelings about such characters who seem to view everyone as partially inferior, however their individual experiences, history and hidden emotions that are slowly elucidated make them unforgettable, they feel like real people.

The Secret History is not just a story of 6 young adults committing a seemingly casual murder, it's a highly engaging novel focusing on errors of human psychology and how modern morals are completely different from those of Ancient Greece. The characters are complex and unique, and readers have continued to be captivated by their ostentatious, yet thought provoking dialogue. The feeling of guilt, loneliness and finding of what's true in life are leading themes of the novel, and Tarrt makes it close to impossible to shut the book until you have completed all of the pages. To experience the depth of this love-hate relationship I personally developed with the characters, this book should be on everyone's list.



BookTok: "It Ends with Us" by Colleen Hoover

In my free time, I enjoy scrolling through TikTok, watching the latest cooking, dancing, and book trends. On TikTok, various communities follow specific hashtags created from these trends. One of which is "BookTok." You can probably infer that this distinct group consists of book-related content such as book reviews. Less than a month ago, I was on BookTok and stumbled upon a video recommendation for a book written by Colleen Hoover.

Colleen Hoover is a well-known author who has written 11 books and 5 novellas, many of which are on the #1 New York Times Best Sellers list. Hoover's first book "Slammed" was published in 2012, and since then, all of her full-length novels have become New York Times Best Sellers. One of her most popular books is "It Ends with Us," the book I came across on BookTok. I did a quick google search, read the blurb, and ordered the book on Amazon. I dove into the book expecting a light-hearted story about a love triangle. I was wrong.

This book follows the story of a protagonist, Lily Boom, who initially works at a marketing company and realizes she is not happy in her career. Following her father's death, she moves to Boston and follows her dream by opening a florist shop. While in Boston, she meets Ryle Kincaid, a neurosurgeon at one of the best hospitals in the city. Although Ryle is stubborn and assertive, he has a soft spot for Lily. She feels a spark with him and thinks her life is finally taking a positive turn. However, their relationship isn't all sunshine and flowers - the pressure and demands of their jobs begin to take a toll on them. Ryle cannot control his anger, and Lily cannot cope; thus, she begins to question their relationship. As she does so, her first love Atlas Corrigan suddenly reappears, and everything Lily has built with Ryle is threatened.

After Justin Baldoni, an actor, director, and filmmaker, read the heartbreaking story, he felt the story needed to be shared with the world. Thus, earlier this month, he posted a TikTok

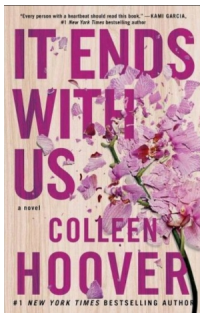


Image from goodreads

announcing that a script for 'It Ends with Us' has been completed for its upcoming film adaption. However, due to the pandemic, details regarding filming are yet to be announced. With over 200k likes on the video announcement, it is evident that thousands of fans are looking forward to the movie's release.

In other words, this novel delivers so much more than a simple story of a love triangle. Instead, it portrays a narrative of a domestic abuse survivor who struggles to find the strength to make the right choice when faced with immense challenges. "It stops here. With me and you. It ends with us" is the most powerful statement found at the end of this touching novel. While reading the book, it took me a long time to figure out what the title meant. However, when I got to the portion of the story where the title made sense, I finally understood the title's significance and association with Lily. I highly recommend this novel, it is worth your time, and by the end of it, you will be looking for a box of tissues.

The Secret Behind ‘The Wizard of Oz’ according to Henry Littlefield

Xiangyi Liu ('28)



Image from Alamy

“From the far north they heard a low wail of the wind, and Uncle Henry and Dorothy could see where the long grass bowed in waves before the coming storm.” This is a memorable line in L. Frank Baum’s renowned children’s book: *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (published in 1900). The story is about a young girl named Dorothy and is set in the magical Land of Oz where she and her pet dog Toto are swept away from their home by a tornado. She learns that she has to destroy the Wicked Witch of the West in order to go back home.

Henry Littlefield, an American author, educator, and historian, believes that the scenes in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* have a deeper meaning in contrast to the seemingly simple plot. In the novel, Dorothy walks to the emerald city wearing her silver shoes, which is different from the ruby red shoes depicted in the movie. Littlefield believes that this is connected to the Gilded age during the 1890s, when farmers wanted to add silver to gold so that it would be easier for farmers to borrow money.

Littlefield also claims that the characters in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* represent figures from the Gilded age. Munchkins are ordinary people oppressed by the witches of the East, banks, and monopolies. The Scarecrow is the farmer, and the Tin man is the industrial worker who has been dehumanized by factory labor. The cowardly lion is William Jennings Bryan, the leader of the Democratic Party, supported by the farmers and workers of the populist movements.

Though Littlefield’s theory seems acceptable, L. Frank Baum’s introduction claims that “*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was written solely to pleasure children today.” Moreover, doubts and other theories have arisen, questioning whether or not Baum was intentionally trying to convey a hidden truth. Still, regardless of Baum’s true intentions, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* remains as one of the world’s greatest children’s stories known all around the world.

Further Introduction to the New Teachers

How are they settling in?

At the beginning of the year, we warmly welcomed new faculty, staff, and students into our Seisen community. In this article, I will introduce our five new teachers (some fun facts!) at the MS/HS Department, Mr. Patrick, Mr. Emerson, Ms. Alatini, Mr. Lawton, and Ms. Jimenez, and cover their transition into Seisen, thus far.



**FRAIN
PATRICK**

MR. PATRICK
MS/HS LEARNING SUPPORT

Originally from England, Mr. Patrick has lived in Indonesia for three months, and in Malaysia for the past five years. His favorite hobbies include listening to music as well as playing the bass and guitar. Mr. Patrick has a wonderful family of three with his wife and daughter Lily. If he could travel anywhere in the world, he would like to return back to England where his extended family resides, so they could meet his daughter. What brought him to Seisen was its mission statement, and values, which he claimed were "very close to mine". He also found living and working in Japan to be a "great privilege", and that although moving here was "a bit crazy" due to quarantine, he has come to love Japan and Seisen. In the next few years, Mr. Patrick looks forward to running his own department and trying to adapt to the new culture. If he could describe himself in one word, it would be "passionate".



**AUSTIN
EMERSON**

MR. EMERSON
MS/HS RELIGION, TOK, SOCIAL
JUSTICE

Although originally from South Florida, USA, Mr. Emerson has resided in many different areas of the US such as San Francisco. One of his current hobbies include learning Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, a form of martial arts and combat sport. He has three younger sisters, and if given the opportunity to visit anywhere in the world, would travel to Turkey. When asked what his biggest fear was, he claimed to have "this really weird fear of pencils stabbing me and breaking off", describing how "uneasy" that makes him feel. Mr. Emerson was especially excited to work abroad, and teach social justice among many other classes. He has found settling into Japan "really easy" with it being "such a nice and safe country". He also claims to be having a great time at Seisen, expressing how welcoming everybody is. If Mr. Emerson could describe himself in one word, it would be "passionate – but more so than Mr. Patrick".



EMA ALATINI

Ms. Alatini
MS/HS SCIENCE

Born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii, Ms. Alatini spent her high school and university years in California, and has been living in Texas for the past four years. Her favorite hobbies include weightlifting, reading, and most recently, "getting lost on the train" in Tokyo. Ms. Alatini has an older sister and younger brother, and though she does not have any pets, would like to own a cat. She has many great fears including frogs for "their sliminess" and "the way they hop". Prior to moving to Japan, Ms. Alatini had been "looking for a change", as she had always wanted to teach abroad. Surprisingly, she had heard about this job opportunity from our very own Religion and EAL teacher, Ms. Alo. Since moving, she has been settling in "pretty well", claiming that "the students, teachers, and staff have all been super helpful and understanding". Ms. Alatini is looking forward to the TEDx event put together by the HS students, and the various Seisen sporting events. If she could describe herself in one word, it would be "loud" above anything else.



EMILY JIMENEZ

Ms. Jimenez
MS COUNSELOR

Ms. Jimenez grew up in Puerto Rico, and then moved to the Dominican Republic at the age of seven, later spending the majority of her career in Boston, Massachusetts. Her favorite hobbies include watching anime, traveling, and trying out new foods, "as long as it's not an insect". She has one younger and older sister, and one younger brother. One of Ms. Jimenez's biggest fears is heights, stating "I've done things with going high up but going down is always hard". As for her ideal travel destinations, she would like to visit Europe, the UK, or Portugal where her husband's family resides. Since coming to Japan, she claims to have felt that "everyone has been so welcoming and helpful not just with things related to school but even with things outside, like getting furniture for my apartment or where to go". Ms. Jimenez is most looking forward to learning more about the different cultures at Seisen. If she could describe herself in one word, she would consider herself "reliable".



PETE LAWTON

Mr. Lawton
MS/HS MATH

Mr. Lawton was born and raised in England, and has lived in several other countries including Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, and Oman. His favorite hobby is cooking, though he has found it difficult since moving to Japan, stating that "not all the ingredients that I usually use are easily available here". Mr. Lawton comes from a large family, being the youngest of seven children, and also owns one dog and three cats. His biggest fear is the fear of the unknown, claiming, "if I have experienced it, seen it, or somebody has explained it, no matter how dangerous it may be, that's not such a problem to me; but if I don't know what is going to happen, that's often the scary thing". Originally, Mr. Lawton was not planning to work at Seisen – in fact, his wife found an opportunity to work as a middle school principal at another international school, which led Ms. Rogers to contact him. So far, Mr. Lawton has been enjoying the atmosphere here at Seisen, remarking, "my colleagues and the students have made me feel very welcomed". He admits that moving in during a state of emergency has been challenging, but nevertheless looks forward to settling in more comfortably once the pandemic subsides. If he could describe himself in one word, it would be "bald".

'Bend. Snatch. And Get that Tea'

Things my seniors never told me

An interview with alumni Alexandra Street and Christina Ono (Class of '16)

What university did you want to go to during your IB years, and why?

Alex: I had always wanted to go to university in England since I had family there. My father is British so I wanted to explore that side of my identity as well. I also knew I wanted to study law, but going to university in the US meant that I had to do a general undergraduate degree first and then go to law school which would take up too much time.

Chris: I wanted to go to USC because of their renowned art history program and the beautiful campus. I was also interested in attending university in London because of the culture and history although I never had a particular university in mind.

Did you go to your dream school? And if so, did you enjoy your experience?

Alex: I went to Durham University for my undergraduate degree and studied Law (LLB). It became my dream school after I visited the university in my junior year. I liked how Durham was quaint yet lively with students. I didn't want to be in a city because I grew up in one and knew that I'd be working in a city in the future. I enjoyed going there because the town was mainly the university so I felt safe and comfortable. After graduating, I went to the University of Oxford for my Masters in Law and Finance. I would say that it was my top choice when I was applying because of its prestige and history. Despite the fact that I went during the pandemic, I really enjoyed having this opportunity to meet people of different ages and backgrounds.

Chris: In a way, I did attend my dream school in London. I really enjoyed my time there. I was able to meet so many different people and have valuable experiences that will forever stick to me. I especially enjoyed exploring London and seeing various parts of the city. There is still so much more I want to see and do.

How did you take care of your mental health when you were an IB student?

Alex: I made sure I got good sleep, which meant I was usually in bed by 10 or 11 pm. You really should not have to be pulling all-nighters as an IB or university student! But this means managing your time well. I also stayed active. In high

school, I played varsity basketball and I continued playing for the university teams. I still go for runs and do pilates (or yoga when I feel like I need to wind down and relax). It helps me clear my mind and manage my time well.

Chris: I liked reading fiction in my free time and immersing myself in a story. I also saw my friends a lot and those moments helped me forget about studying for the time-being. I still do read in my free time but now I spend more time exercising. It helps to have the endorphins running. I feel it's really important to carve out self-care time throughout the day for your mental health. It helps you reset and motivates you to get work done. You also do not want to end up burning out.

How have you changed from being an IB student to a university student? (The way you perceive society, people, your mindset, your values, etc.)

Alex: I have definitely become more commercially and politically aware. It's important to understand what is going on in the world so that you can have meaningful conversations with others and be in touch with your own values.

This may sound cliché, but I honestly think that everything happens for a reason and if something is meant to be, it will be. It took me many job rejections and subsequent acceptances to realize this and not compare myself to other people. I now know that my timeline for achieving goals does not have to be the same as that of my peers. I've learned to be grateful for the setbacks that I've gone through even though it was not a great feeling at the moment.

Chris: I became more open-minded throughout university. You realise that there are so many things you do not know. You meet so many different people and have new experiences. These moments taught me how vast the world is (as cheesy as that sounds) and it definitely shaped me to become more curious and open-minded.

What is something you wish someone had told you before going to law school?

Alex: In England or Wales, you don't have to study law to become a lawyer as you can convert your degree.

Chris: While I was aware of the workload, I did not realise how difficult it would be to manage my time. I would end up studying non-stop and take no time off. I realised that it is much more productive to have shorter periods of undisturbed studying and take breaks to reset.

Why did you go to law school?

Alex: I've always liked debating and making arguments. At school, I loved history because there was no one right answer to an event, and it was a field filled with many different perspectives. Law is very similar as it is not black or white (other than black letter law which are established rules that are not disputable). I was also curious to learn how legal frameworks shape society.

Chris: I went to law school because I realised during my undergraduate that I wanted to be a solicitor. Many of the skill sets I gained from studying history were applicable to being a solicitor. I also had prior legal experience before law school which I enjoyed very much.

Why did you choose history?

Chris: I chose history because I like learning about why things are the way they are. It is fascinating to be able to see current events and understand their past and origin, for example, the UK's role in the EU and how that shaped Brexit is an important one. I also wanted to learn more about my country and Asian culture in general because I wanted to see how certain customs and traditions came to be and how that affected me. I also feel studying history makes you more open-minded because you understand cultural differences and can empathise with different people.

Was law school just how you imagined it to be like or was it totally different?

Alex: I had to do a lot more reading than I imagined!

Chris: It was a bit different than I imagined. I thought I would be spending more time in the classroom, but it was very balanced between independent and in-person work. I think law school in the UK focuses more on independent work than in the US.

How are your relationships with your uni professors?

Alex: It's harder to build relationships with professors just because classes are bigger and you don't see them as often (maybe once a week at your lecture). But professors usually have office hours where you can drop by their office if you've got questions. For example, I used to see my Commercial Law professor a lot and she kindly wrote references for me because she knew me a lot by the end. My dissertation supervisor was also another professor that I got to know better.

Chris: It was a different relationship because you spend less time with them and they have so many other students to teach. Sometimes you would have a professor for only one semester, so you would have to make the effort to go see them after class. Nonetheless, I had professors that I maintained close relationships with.

How is Japan different from the UK? How did you deal with the change?

Japan is a very homogenous society. It's a lot safer than the UK, but I feel as though I am judged a lot more if I don't look or act a certain way. I rarely felt homesick because I was always quite busy studying, playing sports, and hanging out with friends.

Chris: Japan is different from the UK because it is more homogenous. I felt more free in the UK because I am able to speak English everywhere and people are more carefree. However, I do feel homesick from time to time because of my family, the food and the convenience as well as safety in Japan.

When you were in high school, did you get any pressure from your parents, guardians, etc? If so, how did you deal with it?

Alex: I didn't get pressured in terms of working - they actually pressured me to relax and take more time off. I put pressure on myself, which was counterproductive at times. I'm still trying to manage this by taking more time off and really thinking about the grand scheme of things instead of just being in the moment.



Alexander Street (14)



Christina Ono (Class of '16)

Everyone has undoubtedly been told at some point in their life about the importance of sleeping at least nine hours a day. While many say such things, they only perceive sleeping as a time to rest—without truly understanding the sciences behind it. As modern society continues to expand its scientific knowledge, understanding what happens during sleep and its significance is essential for our wellbeing and daily lives.

REM and non-REM sleep: the four stages of sleep

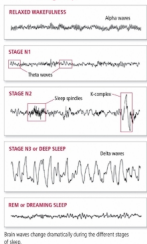
Sleep is commonly divided into two types: non-REM (rapid eye movement) sleep and REM sleep. With both types combined, there are a total of four stages, three from non-REM sleep and the last from REM sleep. These four stages sum up to one cycle that repeats several times a night, with each lasting around 90 to 120 minutes.

As its name suggests, non-REM sleep is when there is little rapid eye movement and when the body builds bone and muscle, repairs and regenerates tissues, and strengthens the immune system. As one ages, they tend to experience less non-REM sleep. The first stage of non-REM sleep lasts five to ten minutes and everything in one's body begins to slow down, including eye movement and muscle activity. Next is the second stage of non-REM sleep, where one's body prepares to enter deep sleep. In this stage, eye movements stop, heart rate slows, body temperature decreases, brain waves get slower, and there is a mixture between periods of muscle contraction and relaxation. The last stage of non-REM sleep is the deepest stage of sleep, where the brain produces delta (slow) waves and there is no muscle activity. This stage is said to be difficult to wake up from and if one does, they are likely to feel "groggy and disoriented."

REM sleep occurs after the third stage of non-REM sleep. REM sleep only consists of one stage that begins briefly (ten minutes) but gets longer each sleep cycle. In this last stage, brain activity increases again and one experiences faster breathing, increased heart rate and blood pressure, and rapid eye movement.

Moreover, major muscles are temporarily paralyzed in a condition called atonia, restraining the body from moving in response to dreams. People tend to have more intense dreams during this stage of sleep due to high brain activity similar to that of when one is awake.

Figure 1: EEG brain wave patterns during sleep



The Brain

From the REM and non-REM cycle of sleep, it is evident that the brain is one of the most active parts of the body during sleep. As a matter of fact, there are countless electrical activities that take place in the brain during sleep. Carl W. Bazil, MD, PhD, the Caitlin Tynan Doyle Professor of Neurology at Columbia University Medical Center, claims that the brain's nerve cells all rewrite themselves, retaining and processing the new information from the day. This process of the brain, which forms and breaks connections, also enables many critical cognitive abilities such as memory consolidation.

Furthermore, what is more interesting is the brain wave patterns during sleep that are proven by electroencephalogram (EEG) tests. As the image shows, during each stage of sleep (N representing non-REM), brain waves display a clear pattern which is caused by the neurons in brains communicating with each other. To be specific,

from normal wakefulness and consciousness to deep sleep, the brain waves shift through beta, alpha, theta, and delta, all representing different speeds and frequency levels or electrical pulses. These different brain waves are not only intriguing, but they also demonstrate the many natural processes of the body during sleep. From these various stages and brain activity during sleep, it can be understood that sleep is not merely a time for the body to rest, but is also a powerful and fascinating tool that helps to fuel basic human processes.

In recent years, there has been a global downward trend in sleeping time and quality. Sleeping disorders including chronic insomnia (the inability to sleep) are becoming increasingly common. Moreover, sleep deprivation has been scientifically proven by many to be the cause of countless conditions including anxiety, chronic diseases, mood changes, poor concentration, weakened immune system, weight gain, and insulin resistance. While there is still much to explore in regards to the science behind sleep, it is still undoubtedly a riveting concept behind the function of human beings.

So, why not take a break from studying or working? Why not take the time to appreciate and revel in the natural source of rest and amenity that our bodies have provided us with?

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ARE YOU USING THE RIGHT MASK?

Yun Suh Lee('23)



Image from Arax

While it is true that the Pitta masks are sleek and popular, there is little information available on how well they filter out minute particles and pathogenic viruses such as COVID-19, which are found to be approximately 125 nm (0.125 microns) in diameter.

To test how well Pitta masks can filter out tiny particles that are invisible to the eye, Smart Air engineer Kang Wei purchased a pack of Pitta masks and tested them against 3M N95 masks, which are guaranteed to provide reliable respiratory protection of at least 95% filtration. She used the Met One 531, a particle counter, to measure particles as small as 0.3 microns; hence, if a mask can capture particles 0.3 microns in diameter, then it is reliable in capturing smaller particles, such as those of 0.1-microns.

The results were bewildering. The Pitta mask captured an astounding 0% of 0.3-micron particles and only 64% of larger 2.5-micron particles. A similar result has been found in research conducted by AQ Blue, thus proving that Pitta masks are inefficient in capturing particles as small as 0.3 microns or less. Moreover, this strongly suggests that the Pitta mask does a poor job of capturing 0.1-micron particles, including COVID-19 particles. Meanwhile, the 3M N95 masks captured over 90% for both 0.3-micron and 2.5-micron particles.

In fact, data shows that a surgical mask can provide more protection from the coronavirus than the Pitta mask. Tests from researchers at the University of Massachusetts found that a surgical mask they bought on the streets of Nepal captured over 60% of 0.1-micron particles.

Based on the aforementioned findings, what would be the best choice when picking a mask? The following are several types recommended by professionals: cloth or paper masks, procedural and surgical masks, and professional respiratory masks. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, when using cloth masks, thick and densely woven cotton is one of the best materials to look for. Cloth or paper masks help slow the spread of the coronavirus and constrict the virus from being transmitted to others easily. Procedural and surgical masks are loose-fitting but are fluid resistant and provide protection from larger respiratory droplets from coughs and sneezes. They primarily help prevent the wearer from spreading infectious droplets to others. Lastly, professional respirators (also called the N95 respirators) are medical devices that help prevent exposure to tiny droplets that can be suspended in the air. Although they are best when it comes to protection, it is suggested that they should be reserved for health care

We wear masks on a daily basis to protect ourselves when there is pollen in spring and summer or influenza in the winter. With the spread of the novel Coronavirus, more people in Japan and countless other countries began wearing masks in public places.

One of the most used and popular masks is called the Pitta mask, which is made of stretch polyurethane and offered in different colors by ARAX, a medical company in Japan. Many claim that this mask is favorable because it is "extremely breathable and has a 99% filter rate". However, they are not as efficient as they seem to be.

providers, especially those who are frontline essential workers.

There are more alternatives to the Pitta mask, such as cloth masks, surgical masks, and N95 respirators that are a better and reliable choice when considering the efficiency of capturing and protecting ourselves against dangerous particles in the air. Pitta masks, as discussed above, barely work when it comes to small, 0.1-micron particles, like those of COVID-19. Therefore, during this pandemic, it is important to ask ourselves: Are we using the right mask?

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WHY ARTIFACTS IN MUSEUMS SHOULD BE REPATRIATED

Editor + Writer's Note:

This article is an opinion piece written on the argument supporting the repatriation of culturally and historically significant artifacts. There will be another article on the opposing argument soon, but for now, we invite you to consider, do you agree or disagree with this perspective?

Artifacts hold symbolic historical and cultural roots in their creations and must be repatriated in order to honor those roots and the people who have evolved from them. Repatriation is the act of returning someone or something to its country of origin, allegiance, or citizenship. It is about making right with the wrongs of the past, and showing respect to those who have been negatively impacted. Colonized communities have gone through great lengths in forming large collections of artifacts, whilst progressing with scientific discovery in western knowledge. Yet, the first parties from which these artifacts are taken give little to no input in the action of harboring and displacing the objects.

Many officials argue that there is no need nor necessity for artifacts to be returned to their countries of origin, mainly due to the lack of documented provenance and proper maintenance. For example, in May of 2013, the Archeological Institute of America estimated that nearly 85-90% of the artifacts in museums did not have documented provenance. This finding created a cloud of fear among most museums on the sudden rise in artifact ownership, and whether or not to accept countries' legitimate claims over the objects. It is also the case that museums of colonialist powers, in comparison to developing nations, have extensive resources to better preserve historically and culturally significant objects. If the return of these artifacts cannot guarantee their proper safety and preservation, many museum curators argue that they should not be returned. There is also the bigger concern of private companies and museums that would lose financial opportunities from the loss of artifacts. Bigger names such as the British Museum, for example, made an

estimate of about 4.3 million pounds just in 2019/2020, from their vast collections of artifacts during the colonial period. Hence, the majority of reasons for withholding the repatriation of artifacts do not fall under the category of disrespect or ignorance, but rather the risk of wrongful possessions, inefficient maintenance, and economic loss.

While such concerns are valid, however, it is the independent nations' right to have control over their own artifacts and how they take care of them. It is a portion of those countries' heritage and culture which are being stolen, and regardless of whether they can preserve it on their own, it is morally unjust to steal or harbor such artifacts. If preservation remains a concern, more financial support can be given to help such countries build or acquire more resources for their museums. According to a 2018 report by the French government, 90% of Africa's cultural heritage is located in the major museum collections of the West. Unproven ownerships and claims are of course a different situation to consider, but for those nations which have fought for those objects (which are for some, pillars of their culture) to be returned, it should be. Since colonialism was considered the norm in between the 15th to 20th century, colonialist powers cannot be punished for past crimes or violations as it is no longer relative to the world now as it was back then. However, this does not mean that those powers should unfairly and unlawfully reap the financial and social benefits resulting from the artifacts. Majority of the harbouring nations have wrongfully been benefiting from the culture of other nations. It is not their place to be doing so, and if a victim nation demands for the repatriation of their artifacts, there are no grounds upon which the solicitors should have a right to refuse.



Image from History.com

There has already been some progress, such as with the collection of the bronze statues from Benin at Paris' Quai Branly museum, which were returned to Nigeria in early November of last year, after they were looted from Abomey Palace by French forces in 1892. Another example is the 4,250-year-old gold ewer from Turkey that was on a long-term loan by a private collector at Victoria and Albert Museum. This object was returned to Ankara after numerous researchers' discovery of its illegal looting and smuggling out of the state. However, there are still cases of museums refusing to return artifacts, such as with the British Museum refusing to allow the two halves of the Elgin Marbles to be placed alongside one another in the new Acropolis Museum in Greece, the rightful home of both works.

Artifacts harbored by museums should be repatriated as a means for restorative justice. While they may simply be sources of education or entertainment to some, to many others, they are of historical, cultural, and personal significance. It is ultimately the latter's responsibility to decide how to preserve these objects and whether they would like their artifacts to be repatriated.

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QUEER REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA - 'CRUELLA' AND "DISNEY'S FIRST GAY CHARACTER"

In the past decade, the normative culture worldwide about queer representation and diversity in the media has shifted in a way that is now a crucial factor in many new releases of films and television shows. According to GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), the world's largest LGBTQ media advocacy organization, 18.6% of the 116 films released from major studios in 2019 included characters that were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ). Compared to the 2012-13 record, which reads that only 4.4% of all characters were LGBTQ characters, this is a significant improvement of about 14%. However, despite the increase in the number of queer representations in the media, the biggest problem lies in the depiction of them.

Poor depiction of queer characters in the media is often due to their stereotypical portrayals. Artie, played by John McCreary of the 2020 Disney movie 'Cruella', Disney's first-ever LGBTQ+ character, is an example of this framed stereotype. Artie fully embodies the typical gay stereotype in the movie: He runs a vintage clothing store in London. Even though it is never directly stated that Artie is queer, his appearance and scripted mannerisms make it clear that this was Disney's attempt at sculpting a gay character. His role in the film is also relatively small as he's only a sidekick to the protagonist, Cruella de Vil. He would help her with the fashion side of criminal acts – the newspaper clipping dress being an example – she performs throughout the film. In fact, fashion has long been seen as a stereotype of homosexuality. They are often based on the reciprocal relationship between men and fashion, as designers such as Dolce & Gabbana and Abercrombie & Fitch have often used homoerotic imagery in their advertising from the early 2000s, creating a sentiment that most gay men enjoy shopping. The body language and mannerisms of Artie are also debatable. Because many people associate femininity with male homosexuality, mannerisms such as limp wrists and frantic hand gestures are often embodied by actors in mainstream media to distinguish them from heterosexual characters.

What could be the possible outcomes of these stereotypical depictions of queer individuals in the media? Although gay

men being fashionable and having feminine traits are overly generalized stereotypes, some gay men do enjoy fashion and/or embrace femininity. However, when we look at queer representations that are based on these stereotypes, we also need to consider that there are many gay men who do not associate themselves with fashion or other creative fields – we shouldn't limit or categorize queerness based on how well they fit into our perceived view of how we believe they should be. Therefore, these standardized depictions of gay men as fashionable, flamboyant, and extravagant men who are also able to understand 'women's issues' (many are portrayed as relationship advisors for a female lead) in the media, influences the perception of gay men in real life. A Japanese cartoonist, Tomimurakota illustrates the consequence of this issue in her comic essay on sexual orientations. In this, her friend, who is gay, is held back from coming out to his colleagues despite them being openly supportive of the LGBTQ+ community as he feels pressured to fit their 'artistic' expectations of a gay man: instead, he was just a regular businessman.

The production of stereotypes surrounding the LGBTQ+ community, driven by the recent representation of queer people in the media, calls for improvements. Though this should apply to all forms of media and entertainment, this particular case is to be handled with a critical eye as a media with global influence like Disney,

whose works specifically target younger audiences, will hold greater responsibility for how queer people are to be perceived. Moreover, the rapid increase in inclusion of queer characters in films and TV raises a question of the purpose behind these actions, hinting at the issue of queer baiting where is "diversity" is implemented merely for commercial purposes. Judging from the poorly underdeveloped characters, Disney's idea of queer representation, along with many large media corporations, is a character whose main role is to simply exist on screen.

東京都営施設入居者 じんけんのとびら "東京都営施設入居者 じんけんのとびら" 東京都営施設入居者 じんけんのとびら, 31 Mar. 2021. Web. 19 Oct. 2021. <<https://www.soumu.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/10/jinken/>>

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Image from website Them.US

I believe that most of us have tried KFC's delicious, crispy golden-brown chicken that melts in our mouths – the chicken that is sold 400 pieces per minute. When we walk into the store, we are welcomed by the 'face of KFC': A white-suited grandpa, wearing a beaming smile on his face. Yet, many of us may not be aware of how this fast-food chain that we now love, came to be. This article will introduce the inspiring yet tragic story of KFC founder, Colonel Sanders.

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Colonel Sander's Message

Colonel Sanders was born in Henryville, Indiana in 1890. His father Wilbert Sanders passed away when he was only 5. At such a young age, Sanders had to become the breadwinner of the family by cooking, working regularly, and farming, in order to take care of everyone. In seventh grade, Sanders dropped out of school after getting into conflict with his step-father, and left home to stay at the farm. At the age of 16, he falsified his age to join the United States army as a wagoner in Cuba. Afterwards, he went back to work on numerous other jobs but was eventually fired for every single one of them. Then, he studied law for 3 years.

However, his legal career ended after he got into a courtroom brawl with his client and destroyed his reputation. He married at the age of 18 but 2 years later he ended up to divorce. His failures kept causing him pain and he couldn't figure out how to make ends meet. He had nothing: money, authority... not even a family.

Feeling like a total failure, he decided to commit suicide and

wrote his will. However, instead of venting about his failures, he decided to reflect on what he would want to accomplish, if he had the opportunity to start over. At that moment, he realized the happy days were when he was cooking. When he was responsible for the family. When food was scarce, he tried his best to cook for his siblings. He soon realized he's skilled at cooking, especially cooking the best chicken! At the age of 65, after his retirement, he borrowed \$87 from the bank to purchase a fryer and ingredients for his unique recipe. He traveled all over the US to sell his recipe to restaurants. Selling door to door, he got rejected 1009 times, but the 1010th restaurant accepted his offer. That's how KFC was born. Afterwards, many franchisees approached him, wanting to work under his successful business. At the age of 88, Colonel Sanders became a multi-billionaire, while KFC became the second largest food empire. Now, the fast-food chain has 25000 locations in 145 countries.

The story of Colonel Sanders shows us that the only way we can fail is by giving up. Also, his story reminds us that regardless of your age, whether you are in high school or even reaching 70, it is never too early or late to chase your dreams! When the time comes, you will succeed, just as Sanders had become immensely

successful at the age of 65-70. Reading his story, you will have noticed that he went through difficult times both as a child and as an adult or started off great but failures come afterwards. For example, even when he started off on his path to becoming a lawyer, he lost it. Yet, he made the failures into opportunities to succeed like failing in becoming a lawyer but succeeding in becoming a business-man. He came out of the dark tunnel and met the light!

No matter how much failure you have experienced, you can become stronger and have a future of great prosperity. Remember, your past does not determine your future. Never hesitate, and roll the dice again!

As Colonel Sanders himself claimed,

“One has to remember that every failure can be a stepping stone to something better.”



How Diamonds Became a Symbol of Marriage

In movies or dramas, you have frequently seen the scene of the man sticking out the ring on which the diamond is set, to his marriage partner, proposing and committing for the entire life. And the face of the woman would turn with surprise and extreme rejoice, covering her mouth with her trembling two hands. As like this, diamonds are nestled deep and well in everyone's mind as the most romantic purchase for the lover and representative factors in love. But actually, it hasn't been 100 years since diamonds became symbols of matrimony and eternal love.



In the middle age, the demand for diamonds was not as much as it is in the present day and the culture or concept of giving diamond rings in marriage was not formed. Besides, it was not normal and expected. However in 1867, after large-scale diamond mines were discovered in South Africa, the history of diamonds changed, as did the appearance of a mining company called "De Beers". De Beers purchased and occupied lots of diamond mines in various territories by the fund supported by the Rothschild, the financial family. And in the 1900's, the founder of De Beers, Cecil John Rhodes, came into his own on his marketing ability.

In 1947, De Beers launched the advertising campaign "A diamond is forever". De Beers invested a diamond with the symbol of indestructibility and eternity of love in an indestructible stone which represented the committing investment in the future; the promises to their soulmate of everlasting, devotion, care and pledge of the future

together. Accordingly, people started to purchase and utilize rings with diamonds to prove or convey their truth to their lover when they are proposing or engaging, gradually the diamond became familiar to people.

Prior to De Beers pushing the tagline, which was in 1940, only 10% of first time brides received diamond rings for engagement. While in 1990, the number soared up to 80%, which is 8 times more than in 1940. Between 1939 and 1979, their US retail diamond sales were on a rise from \$23 million to \$2.1 billion. And for a period of a year, the advertising budget increased from \$200,000 to \$10 million. As you can see, the changes in these numbers are exactly re-proving that this marketing slogan hit the jackpot worked extremely well.



Not only for the engagement, De Beers set up the second diamond ring, which is the wedding anniversary ring for the later marriage which is for reconfirming the pledge of love and celebrating the day. Afterwards, De Beers launched a bunch of other marketing advertisements. Though none of them were revolutionary as "A diamond is forever", they were all successful. Gradually, they expanded overseas and through various countries, have developed the recognition level.



Over the past 50 years after "A diamond is forever" was initiated, in the 20th century, Advertising Age named it "The slogan of century" and admitted it as the greatest advertising slogan. And even now we could see the effect that marketing strategy had on the world of jewels and stones.

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Welcoming the New StuCo Team



ZARAH MATTHEW

President



YUN SUH LEE

Vice President

"We want to optimize our ideas and abilities to unite the Seisen community!
Together, we hope to make this school year exciting and memorable!"



**MAYA
HEMMI**

Secretary

"We will be organized and dedicated to promoting all the positive changes you want to see in our school!"



**KOHKO
KAMIMURA**

Treasurer

"We will create a year of balance through fun and service while spending wisely!"



**AINA
SEKIDO**

Communications Officer

"We want to make communication with each other easier and more effective."



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AT SEISEN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL





April 2022