

## Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers,

In considering what to focus on in our last issue of the year, we bounced upon many topics. We wanted to end on a good note; a reflective note; an inspirational note. We did not want to shy away from the obvious gifts of holiday season and consumerism December gives us.

Lets face it: coming back from Thanksgiving Break to the three-week stretch of assignments is never fun. However, as we drive onto our campuses, engage in the wintry bliss, and see the holiday decorative lights, we feel somewhat uplifted. We cope with these stressful three weeks by eating holiday cookies or finding gifts for our secret Santas; we cram as much happiness into three weeks as possible—all with a Happy Holidays ring to it. Still, the holidays entail more than just snow and eye-candy. Maybe not always explicitly, but all of our schools have religious roots to their traditions.

Traditionally, three topics are taboo at boarding schools: socio-economic status, politics, and religion. As always, in *The Tavern* we want to be that interesting cousin who instigates real, meaningful conversations at the dinner table. So, we decided to tackle religion head on. Religion is a difficult and nuanced topic because it is not just ideology, it is a way of life. At our schools, students come from all different parts of the country and the world. Because they harbor students of so many different practices, independent schools can sometimes feel like melting pots of beliefs. At this age, when we are discovering ourselves, religion is part of that discovery.

This is not a Bible, the Quran, the Vedas, or the Midrash—this is *The Tavern*, home of a series of thoughtpieces to bring to light what people think about religion. Please note that throughout these pieces we do not intend to criticize any beliefs, we just want to demonstrate how religious practices affect us differently in our lives.

As you light your next Hanukkah candle, put ornaments on the Christmas tree, or pass the unity cup, we encourage you to pause and read about religion, or lack thereof, and converse with the greater community about a topic that is usually silenced.

Back in September, when we first launched *The Tavern*, as an Editorial Board we set forth with one mission at hand: fuel conversation and initiate new, important chains of dialogue. In order to better serve this purpose, we decided to bring a new column to *The Tavern*: the common room. At all boarding schools, common rooms serve as the heart and social hub of any dorm. It's a space to chat, study, sing, dance, watch SNL (Whitney shout-out!), have late-night conversations etc. In our common room, we intend to do the same. Anyone and everyone attending our ten schools is welcome to send posts to [editors@the-tavern.net](mailto:editors@the-tavern.net), which we will post to the common room in a rolling manner. Posts don't have to, but can, be related to the current issue's theme, so get creative and send us anything and everything you would like to share with the larger MA boarding school community. Examples include but aren't limited to personal anecdotes,

podcasts, trains of thought, responses to our past articles in the archives, humor pieces, etc. We are very hopeful that the common room will be instrumental in renovating *The Tavern* for the better.

It's been a long and eventful year for us all—whether it be personally, academically, politically, or globally—but, like all things, 2016 has finally come to a close. So spend these last few days of the year in the company of friends, family, and holiday tunes, letting go of the old and embracing possibility for the new. But, before you cross that last thing off your 2016 list, make sure to stop by *The Tavern* and have a chat with us. Have a little holiday drink, maybe? (don't worry, it's on the house) Happy holidays, and, as always, we hope you enjoy your stay.

Sincerely,  
*The Tavern's* 1st Editorial Board