

Felix

The Student Newspaper of Imperial College London

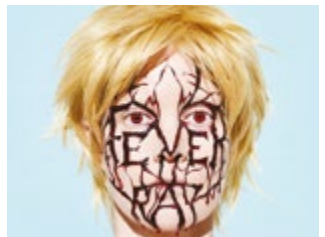
NEWS



Event cancelled after speaker accused of rape

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From this year onwards, the GSU President will earn £10,000 per year. // Stewart Oak

GSU President to become a paid role

NEWS

Fred Fyles

Editor-in-Chief

The Graduate Students Union President will be paid an annual stipend of £10,000, funded by the Graduate School.

The President of the Graduate Students' Union (GSU) is to be remunerated for undertaking the role, the Graduate School announced earlier this week.

The plans, which the College says were "made jointly by the Education Office, the Graduate School, and the Graduate

Students' Union", would see the GSU President receiving an annual stipend of £10,000. The money would be funded by Imperial's Education Office, and would not come from the Union itself. The position would be part-time, in contrast to the seven paid sabbatical positions the Union offers, which require students take a year out. The proposal was initially put forward by Ahmed Shamsó (the 2016/17 GSU President) and Luke McCrone (the incumbent GSU President) with support from the Union.

The move comes following concerns about the impact the role has on the President's studies. In a statement sent out by the Graduate School,

Shamsó spoke of the difficulties he had faced as a result of taking on the GSU President role: "Spending a large amount of my time on enriching the life of postgraduate students at Imperial has had a costly effect on the progression of my PhD research...I will most likely stay beyond the 3-year funding window, which will add extra pressure on my financial health as an individual." He said that the changes should "help alleviate these challenges for future Presidents."

McCrone, who undertook a full-time paid sabbatical role last year as Deputy President (Education), and is currently doing a PhD, said that the changes should help create a "sustainable model for

postgraduate representation at Imperial". He told Felix that the President is "placed under huge amounts of pressure, not only having to lead and motivate a committee of elected students, but also having to deliver the PG voice and opinion at many College committees, some of which are as senior as Senate."

He said that it was "absolutely imperative that [the GSU President] is not only incentivised to carry out their work to a respectable standard, but to also have the financial reassurance that they can take time out of their PG programme to fulfil their role."

The GSU President has a range of roles: as well as coordinating their

committee, the majority of whom were voted in last month, the President should "further student-related policy and influence decisions for the benefit of Imperial College's Postgraduate students", "ensure that decisions and achievements of the GSU are clearly communicated to the College", and "represent the interests of the Postgraduate students on decision-making committees within the faculties, the College and Imperial College Union". The result is a workload that occupies around two full-time days a week.

When asked about how this would affect competition for the role in the future, McCrone said "I am certain that the position

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EDITORIAL

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Printed by Illifee Print
Cambridge, Winship Road,
Cambridge
Registered Newspaper
ISSN 1040-0711
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Amazon, what's good?

Anyone who's interested in campus politics and changes to higher education will have seen phrases like 'safe spaces' bandied around in the media like there's no tomorrow. The general idea – and I'm paraphrasing here – is that the students of today are too soft, and too mollycoddled, they're 'special snowflakes' who don't understand the 'real world'. You know the line of argument I'm talking about.

While I generally think this is a bullshit portrayal of students, I do feel strongly that *Felix* has a vital role to play in any debate around free speech. A fundamental aspect of a democratic society is a free press – one in which people have the right to upset, or to make strong points on what the believe in. Just this past week, we've had a couple of articles in our Comment section that have prompted a very strong reaction. I think that this is a great thing – the reactions we get to our Comment pieces shows that the stereotype of apathetic Imperial students is not the case.

With that in mind, I want to make an appeal

to any students who are outraged or upset at things we publish: please get involved! Drop us an email, write a response article, start a conversation. *Felix* is only biased in one way, and that's towards those who actually write for us – we can't promote your views if you don't let us know what they are.

However, if you're a multinational tech giant, then please stay out of my inbox. Earlier this week, we published an online-only long-read by our Politics Editor Avi Banerjee, about the rise of the tech monopolies. In the piece, which is

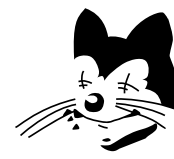
absolutely fantastic, Avi describes the rise of tech giants like Facebook and Google, and compares them to the monopolies that existed in America during the Gilded Age. Back then, the dangers of such powerful organisations was recognised, and they were broken up, but today we seem to be sleepwalking into exactly the same situation.

One of the companies he mentioned was Amazon. You know, the place you get all your worldly goods from, who pay a miniscule amount of tax in proportion to their size, and who – I would argue – have put extreme pressure on

independent booksellers and music stores. The article wasn't even up online for 12 hours before I got a voicemail and an email from someone in the Amazon press office, asking I get in touch with them as soon as possible. It seems they'd taken issue with some of the things we'd published, and asked for clarifications.

The guy I spoke to was perfectly nice, but the whole thing was extremely unsettling – if they can get in touch less than 12 hours after an article has gone online, from a small student paper (we'd like to big ourselves up, but hey, we're small fry), then I doubt they'd have any qualms about beginning litigation. The article has since been taken down, pending amendments, but it will be back up very soon, and I urge you all to check it out. In many ways, this just proves Avi's point that the tech giants could soon stifle anything that resembles criticism of their business practices.

In the meantime, I know where my Xmas presents are going to come from: my local independent shops, with nary a delivery drone in sight.



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NEWS

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College reaches out to White City community with Invention Rooms

NEWS

Fred Fyles
Editor-in-Chief

The centre is the latest part of Imperial's ambitious White City Campus to be opened to the public.

A new community space was opened at Imperial College's White City Campus last weekend.

The Invention Rooms, which the College describes as "a unique space for community innovation in White City", were opened during a free public event last Saturday, 28th October. The venue includes the 'Reach Out Makerspace', which allows young people to have access to equipment for design and manufacturing, and will host collaborative programmes with schools from the local area, teaching them how to develop and produce an idea.

The Invention Rooms will also play host to the Imperial College

Advanced Hackspace (ICAH). The ICAH, which was founded in 2014, provides access to manufacturing equipment for staff and students; one of their core aims is "to build a community of like-minded makers and experimenters." Professor Oscar Ces, a member of the ICAH board, said that the new space would "stimulate interaction and collaboration, not just across the College, but also with external partners, small and medium-sized enterprises, industry, and

"The space will also play host to the Imperial College Advanced Hackspace"

the local community."

Professor Maggie Dallman, Associate Provost (Academic Partnerships), who is the College's academic lead on Outreach Strategy, described the centre as



The architects' impression of what the White City campus will look like // Wadsworth 3D/PLP Architecture

"a beacon for community-driven innovation", and said that "The impact of this will be transformative, boosting opportunity, aspiration and innovation in White City and beyond for decades to come." She also highlighted the importance of working with the community: "This means listening to their needs, tapping into their talents, and – crucially – opening our doors."

On their website, the College say that they are "committed to making

a positive impact in the local area" around White City, and wish to "work together with White City residents, businesses, and organisations."

The Invention Rooms are the latest section of the Imperial College White City Campus. Imperial College first bought land in White City back in 2009; the northern half of the campus was granted planning permission in 2012, and construction has been progressing since then. The Molecular

Sciences Research Hub is set to open in 2018, and will provide a new home for the Department of Chemistry.

The campus is dominated by a 35-storey tower, which saw its topping out ceremony in September. The tower, whose £76.2 million contract was awarded to Laing O'Rourke, will provide 133 private housing units, and 59 units available to Imperial 'key workers'. The St Helens Residents Association in North Kensington

has been campaigning against the development for the last six years, accusing the College of acting like an "aggressive property developer when it comes to the planning and design of its buildings, and their impact on their neighbours."

The Invention Rooms will be expanded in spring 2018, with the addition of new venue space and a café.

GSU stipend raises funding questions for other CUs

NEWS

(cont.)

will be more hotly contested in future, hopefully helping to attract better quality candidates."

The College said that this decision was made "in recognition of the valued contribution that the GSU President makes to enrich the experiences of postgraduate students, as well as the responsibility and time-commitment that the role involves."

In a statement, a Union representative told *Felix*: "Imperial College Union

and the Graduate Students' Union work in partnership with the College's Graduate School to improve the experience of our postgraduate members. The value of this collaboration is demonstrated by the Graduate School's commitment to provide an annual stipend to the GSU President to enable them to work even more effectively on behalf of their members as well as continue on their research."

It is not clear what this development will mean for the Presidents of other Constituent Unions (CU).

Currently, the only paid positions are the GSU President, and the Imperial College School of Medicine Students Union (ICMSU) President, who is an elected sabbatical officer. *Felix* spoke to a number of CU Presidents, who said that they would be interested to see what it means for their roles: Claudia Caravello, President of the City and Guilds College Union (CGCU) said "I think it will be exciting to see how this goes. While the position is a voluntary role, it is very time demanding, regularly

exceeding the hours the Union expects of a volunteer, making it hard to hold down other part-time jobs. Being paid ensures that the GSU President can do their job to the best capacity without having to compromise their own personal life too much." Michael Edwards, President of Royal College of Science Union (RCSU), told *Felix* "I welcome this development and applaud the Union and Graduate School for this vital change identifying a significant student leader. I look forward to opening

discussions of my own with the Union and the Faculty of Natural Sciences to negotiate a similar arrangement."

However, a Union representative told *Felix* that "neither Imperial College Union or any College faculties has plans to make any other Constituent Union roles paid at this time. We are always working to support our Constituent Unions as part of our ongoing commitment to a strong democracy and are excited to see the conversations this may start with other

Faculties."

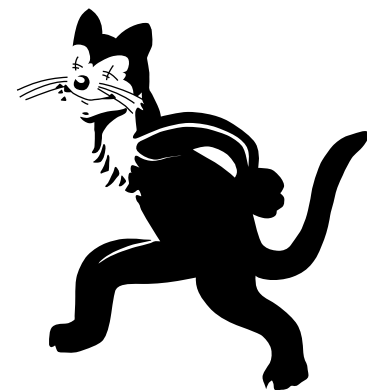
Imperial's Graduate School provides a number of professional skills courses and coaching. They say they aim to ensure "all postgraduate students are provided with excellent professional development training complementing their academic studies and providing opportunity to develop skills for a range of careers." They also undertake research projects in higher education studies, which guide College policy.

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Felix have teamed up with IC Radio to bring you a weekly round-up of all the news, plus interviews with contributors and editors.

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NEWS

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Imperial Charity Week event cancelled after speaker accused of rape

NEWS

Joanna Wormald
Deputy Editor

Professor Tariq Ramadan was scheduled to speak on the future of Islam, but multiple women have accused him of sexual assault and rape.

A lecture hosted as part of Imperial College's charity week has been postponed after the speaker was accused of rape.

Oxford Professor Tariq Ramadan was billed to appear in a talk entitled 'What could the future hold for Islam in Europe?' on Monday, 24th of October. However, it was indefinitely postponed

at the last minute after a Facebook post emerged accusing Ramadan of rape.

Henda Ayari, leader of the French feminist campaign group Les Libératrices, said that she had remained quiet after the alleged attack due to threats against her

"Henda Ayari said she had remained quiet due to threats against her and her children made by Ramadan"

and her children made by Ramadan. She added: "I can't keep this secret any

more. It's too heavy to wear. It's time for me to tell the truth." Two other women have since come forward, also accusing Ramadan of rape and sexual assault.

The event, run by Imperial College Charity Week and Imperial College Islamic Society was part of a fundraiser on behalf of the international aid and development charity Islamic Relief, which provides humanitarian aid around the world. The Facebook event had attracted the interest of more than 400 people before it was removed. The limited run of tickets went on sale two weeks before the event, and before the accusations surfaced. Those who managed to buy tickets online have been fully refunded, with the Union apologising for the inconvenience.

In a statement, a Union



Tariq Ramadan is a professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies at Oxford // Wikimedia

WHAT COULD THE FUTURE HOLD FOR ISLAM IN

OCT 24 What could the future hold for Islam in Europe? - with Prof Tariq Ramadan

Public · Hosted by Imperial College Charity Week and Imperial College Islamic Society

★ Interested ✉ Invite ...

🕒 24 October at 19:00–20:30 UTC+01

📍 Imperial College London
Kensington, London, SW72AZ London, United Kingdom Show map

The event was postponed following accusations of rape on Facebook // Facebook

representative told Felix: "We support the decision of the Islamic Society to cancel the event featuring Tariq Ramadan after these allegations were made against him. We will work with the society as it looks to offer alternative events for its members."

Ayari first reported the alleged rape in a book but did not identify Ramadan as her assailant. She claimed that Ramadan assaulted her in his hotel room in 2012 and "choked me so hard I thought I was going to die". Ayari further accused Ramadan of blaming the incident on her, as Ayari – then an adherent to the ultra-conservative Salafist branch of Sunni Islam – was not wearing a veil at the time of the attack.

Ramadan has dismissed the accusations as a "campaign of slander clearly orchestrated by my long-term adversaries."

Ramadan's lawyer, Yassine Bouzrou, told

BuzzFeedNews: "Mr Tariq Ramadan categorically rejects all these false allegations." A complaint for slander and defamation has been filed against Ayari.

The accusations against Ramadan have emerged against the background of

"Ramadan's lawyer said that 'Mr Tariq Ramadan categorically rejects all these false allegations'"

an outpouring of harassment and sexual assault allegations from Westminster and Hollywood, as well as the the #MeToo and #BalanceTonPorc ('reveal your pig') campaigns on

social media.

Ramadan was born in Geneva, and has been teaching at Oxford University since 2005. He is currently the Professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies in the Faculty of Oriental Studies of St. Anthony's College, Oxford.

Imperial College Islamic Society runs the Imperial component of Charity Week annually in the last week of October. Last year's campaign raised more than £1 million. Events this year included a discussion of the mental health and wellbeing of refugees and a 15km adventure trail, along with street collections and black tie dinner.

Neither Imperial College Charity Week nor Imperial College Islamic Society responded to requests for comment. Islamic Relief declined to comment, saying that it would be "inappropriate" to do so as it had not organised the event.

POLITICS

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The Balfour Declaration: a century on

100 years ago this week, the British government signed away land that was not theirs to pass on with the Balfour Declaration. The result of this poorly-worded document, which did not help Palestinians, nor those fleeing anti-Semitism? A century of conflict and misery.

POLITICS

Aida Manzano

Kharman

Politics Writer

When people hear about Palestine and Israel, they usually know ‘something’s going on there’ but few seem to understand what exactly is happening, and most importantly how the conflict originated. There are many factors, but it is widely agreed that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict can be traced back to the Balfour Declaration, which was signed 100 years ago this week. And so, with a century passing since the beginning of a long and tragically painful conflict, it might be about time to actually take a step back and understand the repercussions of this three-paragraph long document and what it meant for world history and settler colonialism.

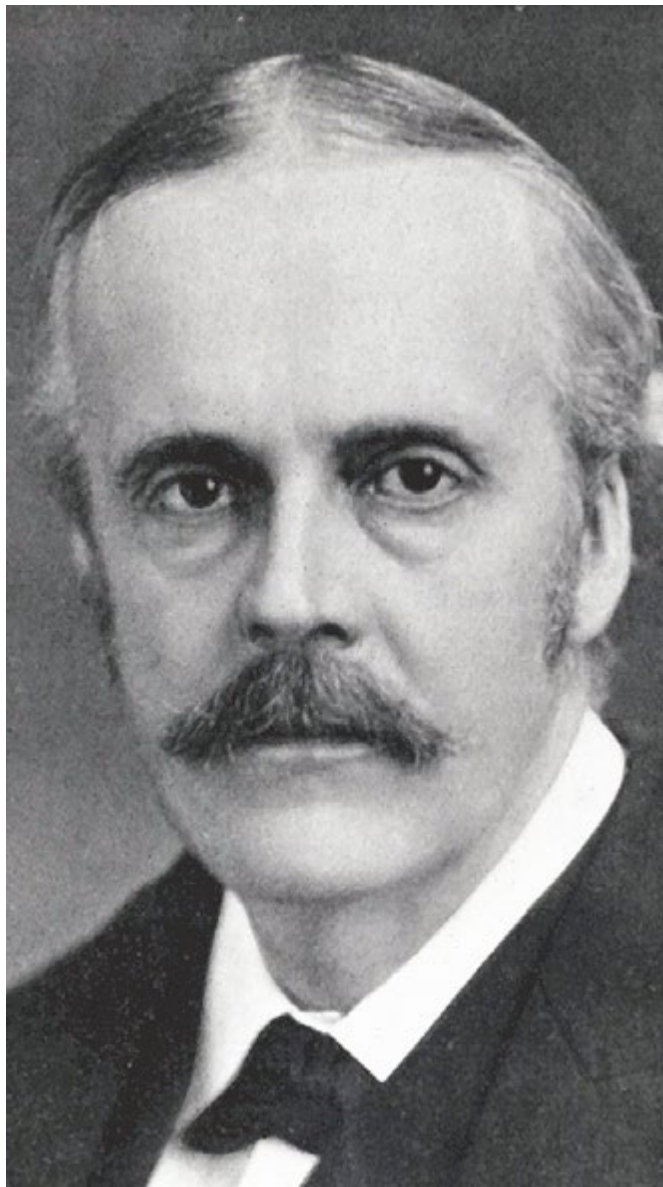
‘So what exactly is the Balfour declaration?’ you may be asking yourself. Well, it is quite literally a page-long document signed by the British Foreign Secretary at the time, Sir Arthur Balfour, in which he states that his government “expresses sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations” and “view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”, essentially signing off the land of Palestine to Jewish people fleeing anti-Semitism and persecution in Europe, despite Britain not owning this land in the first place. This was vital to the Zionist cause, which aims to establish a safe, Jewish homeland. And although

it is true that Zionism is a method through which the Jewish people may escape anti-Semitism, it does not take into account the fact that their homeland of choice was already inhabited by the Palestinians, and thus would require extensive ethnic cleansing were it to become a solely Jewish state.

However, even when they were giving away a land that was not theirs to give in the first place, the British government was still vague and inconclusive even in doing that: they also stated “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”. By taking

“With a century of conflict, it’s time to take a step back, and understand the repercussions of this document”

a look at the population distribution in Palestine, we can see that, even up until 1945, the Jewish population was clearly a minority, so the real question is: how did Britain intend to support those who wished for the ethnic cleansing of indigenous Palestinians, whilst also ensuring the Palestinians’ civil and human rights were not compromised, and that they were protected? Britain managed to support two conflicting and mutually exclusive movements in

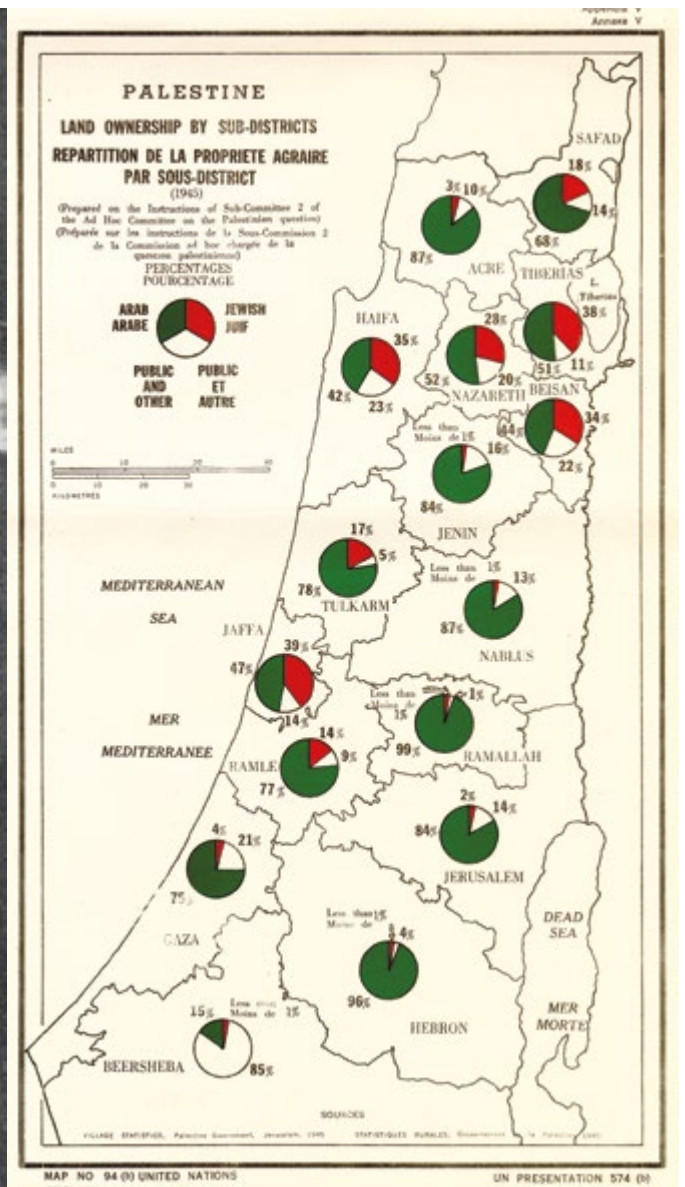


Balfour’s signature set off a chain of events, which are still causing anger today // Wikimedia

this document, and thus establishes precedent for both involved parties to argue that they are the ones that the imperialistic power is supporting.

Despite the lack of awareness with which this situation was handled, this declaration was not merely a careless mistake made by the British government. Supporting the Zionist cause and allowing the occupation of Palestine (and hence the development of an apartheid state in the Middle East that economically and politically depended on Britain) allowed them to maintain control the area, without

“We let down both Palestinians and the Jewish people fleeing persecution by failing to address anti-Semitism, and by partitioning Palestine in such a manner”



unjust persecution, and it is because of this that the Zionist ideology blossomed. However, this persecution does not justify the Israeli government’s occupation of Palestine, and the resulting ethnic cleansing and human rights violations that have been reported by the United Nations, as well as by Human Rights Watch. We let down both Palestinians and Jewish people fleeing persecution by failing to address the issue of anti-Semitism, and by partitioning Palestine in such an unaware manner. A century later, we have failed to carry

out any sort of meaningful reflection on the situation,

“100 years on, we have failed to carry out a meaningful reflection”

and the conflict remains in a painful status quo. How many more anniversaries will pass before we take action?

COMMENT

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Let's not politicise the modern pandemic of mental health

Jenny Eden argues that the rise in mental health problems amongst the young is nothing to do with politics and everything to do with the way we live our lives

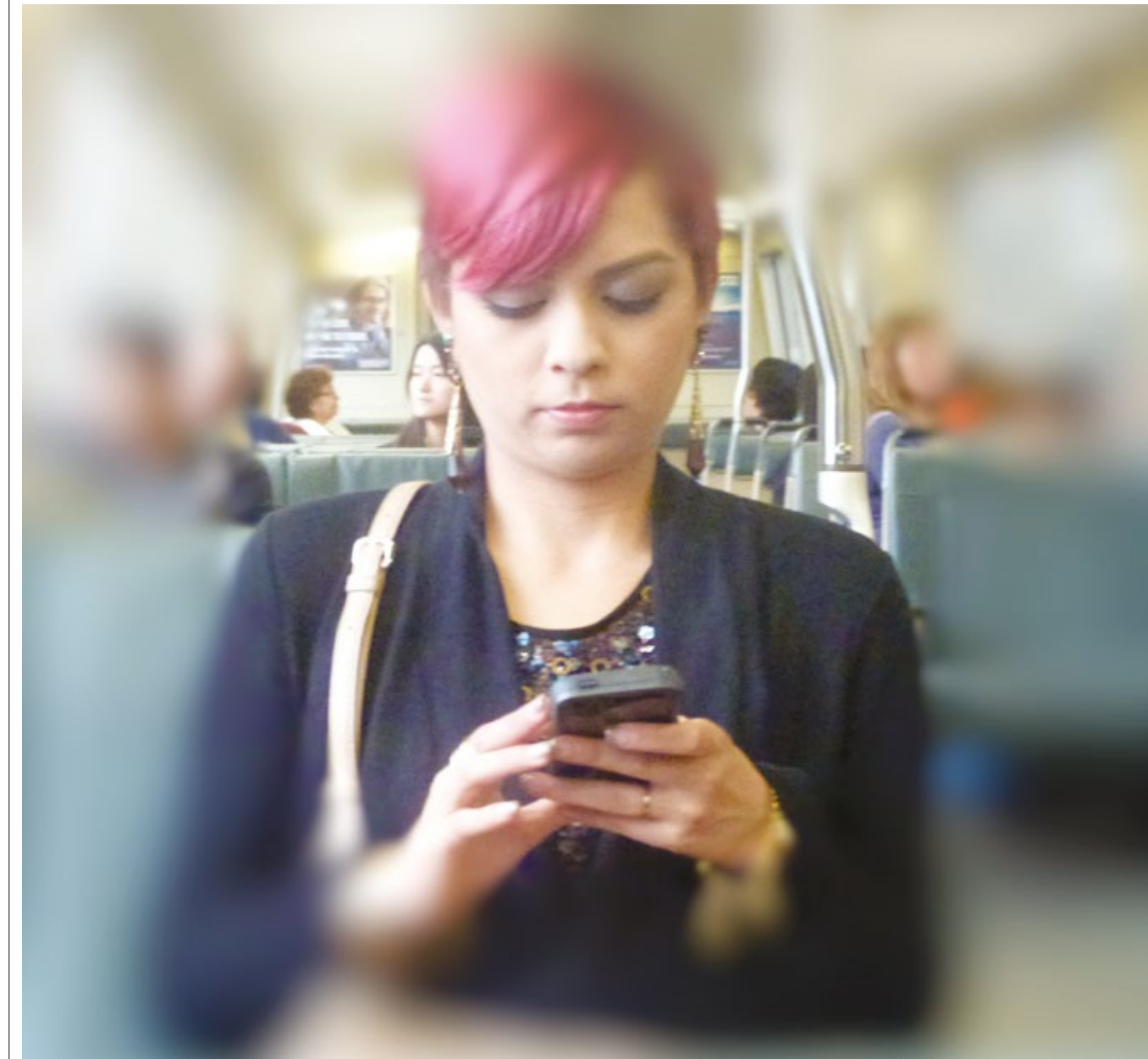
COMMENT

Jenny Eden
Comment Writer

During the Labour Party conference last month, sixteen year old Lauren Stocks delivered a speech on the state of mental health in pupils studying for their GCSE's. She was bold and passionate; she stirred the audience, received a standing ovation, and later the video of her speech went viral. She was certainly much braver than me aged sixteen: to stand up in front hundreds of people and communicate her views with such raw emotion is something that has to be commended. However, while her convictions are honest, she missed the point.

She described "seas of spaced out, stressed out, depressed kids" where a "good half, if not more" of them have a mental illness. This, she thought, is for the most part down to the new GCSE system, with numbered grades, tougher material, Ofsted, and of course – the government. The Tories are out to ruin children's lives for the many political gains that will come of doing so. She made a "call to arms" on the matter. Sharpen your pitch forks and burn an effigy of Theresa May, that kind of thing.

"The increase in mental health issues is a global phenomenon"



The inability to put down your phone can have a serious negative impact // Flickr/Donna Cleveland

What she completely bypassed is that the rise of mental health problems (that being a broad umbrella term for such a multitude of issues) is a global phenomenon, not just for children in formal education but across the entire demographic spectrum. Depression and anxiety in particular have seen the sharpest increase in recorded cases.

According to the World Health Organisation, between 1990 and 2013 the number of people suffering with anxiety or depression increased from

416 million to 615 million worldwide. That's 8.1% of the world's population burdened with one of these health issues in 2013. No doubt that figure is higher now, but perhaps most telling is the fact that many of the nations blighted with these particular illnesses are those which generally have high living standards. Those which should, theoretically, have the happiest populations. America is the ultimate example; the world's largest economy, yet 1 in 5 adults have mental health condition.

Japan faces suicide rates of 70 per day. In South Korea, a country which has fanatically adopted the western lifestyle, suicide is the leading cause of death for anyone between the ages of 10 to 30. European mental illness accounts for 20% of total health problems. This, therefore, is a pandemic and it is affecting the most developed, modernised nations first.

We all have a vague idea of the causes – social media, poor diet, 24 hour news to name a few. In the case of Lauren Stocks and

her fellow 21st century classmates, I would argue it's the internet, more specifically social media, making them miserable. No one finishes a day of staring at their phone with a sense of accomplishment. Satisfaction maybe, but certainly not happiness.

Stocks blames the government for her generation's unhappiness, when in fact this is something far beyond the scope of current policy. The rise of social media, social pressures, social anxiety, is not really Theresa May's

fault. Yes, more could be done by her government to mitigate the damaging impacts of modern life. But if there is to be a "call to arms" against anyone, surely it would be against the Silicon Valley giants?

Of course, Silicon Valley can't be held responsible for every case of depression or anxiety. Nobody could have anticipated the adverse effects technology and increased interconnectivity can have on a person. Equally, the governments of developed countries cannot be demonised for failing to grasp the full scale of the problem. This is a new global issue which needs to be tackled by politi-

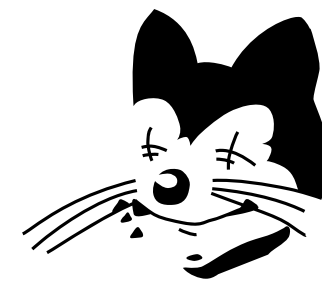
"Ultimately there need not be political polarisation over mental health"

cians, spanning all parties, who have a better working knowledge of modern mental health.

Ultimately there need not be political polarisation over the matter, no "call to arms" as Stocks would urge. We need to be cooperating – not just from left to right, but on an international level – to encourage more collaborative research into the detrimental impacts of the internet and the vessels through which it reaches people. We need to be helping those school pupils, as described by Lauren Stocks, to cope in the online world in which they have grown up.

COMMENT

comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Self-help books are absolutely terrible, and I'll fight them to the death

Even if self-help books are well-written, and their authors are people with good intentions, thinking you know the best way I should live my life is offensive

COMMENT

Anonymous
Comment Writer

In my three years at Imperial I have had many opportunities to be triggered by *Felix's* Comment section — Brexit, two general elections, and numerous terrorist attacks have produced articles that managed to properly rustle my jimmies. The piece in last week's issue, however, extolling the virtues of self-help books managed to push me over the edge, and I felt compelled to respond.

I must confess that the only self-help book I have read from cover to cover was Bertrand Russell's *The Conquest of Happiness*, arguably the first of its kind. Like all good self-help authors, Bertrand Russell struggled with depression for most of his life and decided that, having overcome it, he was qualified to tell other people how to live their

lives. This was the 50's so it's filled with lots of lovely Freudian bollocks that naturally passed as common-sense at the time.

All this is to say that while I would love to go on a rant about how all self-help books are written by sinister people who wish to make money from other people's misery, I

"If someone tells you they know how you should be living your life, they almost certainly don't"

don't know much about any of these authors. I wish I could froth with rage describing the pseudo-scientific bollocks that riddles the pages of these awful books, but I have only skimmed over a couple of them. I really

want to say that calling these books literature is misleading, since it implies that they're worth reading, but I have no doubt that some of them are well written.

I do however have one quite justified gripe with self-help books, and that is that they imply that you are not living your life correctly: 'are you depressed?' they ask, 'well that's because you're not doing it right, you should be meditating and trying to live in the moment. Read my book and I'll let you in on *THE* secret.'

This annoys me on one level because I dislike people who are too sure of themselves. If someone tells you they know how you should be living your life, they almost certainly don't and are, in all likelihood, a terrible person.

But more importantly, I dislike this because feeling like I should be living my life differently is the number one cause of me being unhappy. Whether I feel like I should be spending more



Don't you fucking tell me what to do books // Flickr/GoToVan

time with my family, reading, or doing sports, the feeling that I *should* be doing something inevitably makes me sad. Self-help books feed on this, creating a vicious cycle of making you feel bad about not doing something, and then selling you the cure to your unhappiness, which you inevitably don't do because not everyone has time to go to retreats in

"The feeling I should be living my life differently is the main cause of my unhappiness"

Tibetan monasteries. While I doubt the author was serious about making self-help books compulsory reading at Imperial, for the reasons outlined I would fight such a move to the death if needs be. Thankfully that won't happen, so I can continue reading *Private Eye* and being miserable.



The **PHOENIX** est. 1887



Phoenix is the arts magazine of Imperial, and we're looking for Editors! *Phoenix* is released every term, and displays the best in student poetry, prose, essay-writing, photography, and visual art. *Phoenix* Editors would need to gather contributions, select which will go in the magazine, and lay out the final product. This year, we also have the Blyth Gallery for 6 weeks, meaning you'd get the chance to curate an exhibition.

If you're interested, please email a short description of yourself (<250 words), detailing any previous experience, and any ideas you have for the magazine,

Applications close noon, Friday 10th November

COMMENT

comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Want to make the world a better place? Become an effective altruist

Effective altruism is an approach to doing good that will help you maximise your impact on your charitable goals

COMMENT

Louie Terrill

Comment Writer

Most of us want to make a difference and have a positive impact. Even the most selfish, money-and-status-seeking student has issues they care about. However, in such a complicated world it's hard to know where to start. You may have a good heart, but without direction you might end up donating to the first charity fundraiser who approaches you on the street. While this is definitely well-intended, it's not always the best option, as some charities can do far more good than others.

There are clearly other approaches to channelling your good intentions, and currently one of the most successful ones is effective altruism. Effective altruism is a movement that applies evidence and

reason to look for the best ways of helping others. In other words, if altruism is the idea that you should do good, effective altruism is the idea that you should do as much good as possible, based on the best information available to you.

Effective altruists consider a variety of things when trying to achieve this lofty goal. It seems trivial to point out, but high-impact causes that make a bigger difference, all else being equal, are obviously preferable. Similarly, causes in which progress is easier to achieve are better than ones where the same achievements will take longer and cost more. In general, causes which are more neglected may be better opportunities to do good, as they will be further from the point of reaching diminishing returns.

A key theme here is that in order to do the most good, one must first ask how much good can be done "on the margin", by adding another donation

or hour of work on top of what each cause already receives. This is much more useful to individuals deciding what to do with their own contributions. It can be easy to assume that any do-gooding is good enough, but by taking the time to consider the options you can achieve so much more.

For example, if you care about improving people's health, it's much easier to prevent well-understood

"Using scientific evidence to evaluate your donations can make a big difference"

conditions, and much cheaper to focus on doing so in the developing world where cheap medicine and health care aren't already



Next time someone corners you outside SK station, ask about effective altruism // Flickr/Gary Knight

widely available.

For these reasons, the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative (SCI) here at Imperial is considered by many charity evaluators to be one of the most cost-effective charities in the world – 1000s of times more cost-effective than the average charity. They provide deworming pills donated by pharmaceutical manufacturers to the regions that suffer the most from this neglected tropical disease. This intervention has been the subject of multiple studies, and the SCI are committed to rigorously evaluating its effectiveness.

That's not to say that donating to SCI is definitely the best way to do good: for example, the Against Malaria Foundation is also believed to have cost-effectiveness in the same order of magnitude, but it's challenging to make these estimates precise and reliable enough to tell which charity is definitively better.

Both of these char-

ities assume that our top priority should be the health and physical well-being of people alive today. Perhaps a key distinction between effective altruism and other social movements is that EA doesn't dictate the values you should hold. Instead, the focus is on helping you to further your own values, whatever they may be.

If you think animal lives are also worth preserving and improving, then you may find that the best way you can do good is by working to end factory farming, which causes suffering on an industrial scale. Beyond persuading people to go vegetarian, one promising option is to develop better meat substitutes that can be produced much more humanely and outcompete the farmed equivalent.

On the other hand, if you think the lives of people in the future are also worth considering, in addition to everyone alive today, a common conclusion is

that it is very important to preserve human civilisation. Depending on your evaluation of the different threats and your own talents, this could involve working with emerging technologies in order to guide their development, finding a job in government where you can improve prevention and responses to pandemics, or limiting catastrophic climate change through policy work.

In order to do the most good you possibly can, you must first decide on your goals. Once you've done that, using scientific evidence effectively to inform your decisions can make a big difference in how much good you do, whether it's by considering which career paths can have the most impact, or by comparing the charities that attempt to achieve your goals. The effective altruism movement can allow you to save more lives and help more people than you could ever have managed otherwise.



The Schistosomiasis Control Initiative (SCI) is one of the most effective charities // SCI

SCIENCE

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The darker side of human data

What are the implications of a near future in which humans will be rated on their behaviour and relationships?

SCIENCE

Henry Alman

Science Writer

In 2014, the State Council of China announced the development of a digital ‘citizen rating system’ to determine each citizen, company, and local government’s “trustworthiness”, with the intent of building social trust and crushing China’s rampant counterfeiting and fraud issues.

To Westerners it may sound like an Orwellian dystopia. For the Chinese, however, it is soon to be a reality, and participation will be compulsory by 2020. The idea is already being implemented by eight private Chinese companies, one of whom is the financial wing of Alibaba, China’s largest online shopping platform.

Although the form of the government system is uncertain, cues can be taken from Alibaba’s system, Sesame Credit (SC). Users are given a score based on five factors: credit history, fulfilment capacity, personal information, behaviour and preferences, and interpersonal relationships. The first three may sound familiar: they are similar to a credit score, and are based on financial information and basic personal details.

The last two are factors currently unaccounted for in western big data systems. They indicate that what you – or your friends – buy online or say on social media can and will affect your “trustworthiness rating”.

SC scores do not take content into account: using Alibaba’s services, or having friends who use SC, will increase your score, but what is actually bought or said has

no effect. It resembles a loyalty scheme more than a social credit system. The implication, however, is that it could consider these factors, and that the governmental system will.

Data is drawn from a variety of sources: China’s corporate giants are worlds apart from their western counterparts. SC alone draws information from all of Alibaba’s branches, from shopping to taxi services to Alipay, China’s ubiquitous online payment platform. Alipay is used for everything from bills to bus tickets, and so Sesame Credit always knows where you are and what you buy. Big data is simply a fact of Chinese life.

The government has access to all of this information, atop of that from

“Your personal score will have tangible consequences in reality”

other mega-corporations, due to the Chinese government’s long-standing history of demanding users’ personal data from private companies.

Your personal score will have tangible consequences in reality. Those with high SC scores can book hotels without a deposit, or even get fast-tracked for visas. The future government system would even incorporate punishment: a 2016 document says that low scores could result in ineligibility for certain jobs, lower internet speeds, and barring from certain restaurants.

China already severely punishes dissenters: 6.3 million people who defied court orders are on a public blacklist, banning them



Even Charlie Brooker might call the developments in China a bit trite // Creative Commons

from buying plane or train tickets and limiting the purchase of luxury goods. Internet access or social media accounts are often suspended for expressing dissent.

Amplified by their big-data rating system, the potential for absolute totalitarian control is real. Technological tampering is also a threat: if the security of the system is ever breached, the damage caused by hackers could ruin lives.

Despite this, the system is being welcomed by many Chinese citizens. China lacks the widespread credit score systems that are well-established elsewhere, making it difficult to obtain loans. Fraud and counterfeiting are daily grievances. The Chinese are sick of the absence of reliability in their society.

Furthermore, there are those that argue that the new system offers more

governmental transparency. China rewards loyal citizens, too: hundreds of thousands of honours and titles are given every year, along with other benefits. However, the criteria for these are arbitrarily decided by officials: at

“Amplified by their big-data rating system, the potential for absolute control is real”

least a rating system would rely on a supposedly-predictable algorithm with defined criteria.

Both points have their counterarguments. For the first, the new system undermines trust in other ways – there will be rewards for informing

on friends or family, and the fact that any dissenter will drag down the scores of those around them encourages ditching ‘risky’ friendships.

The issue with the second is that a human can apply context to a situation, whereas an algorithm cannot. Under China’s automatic digital rating system, missing a bill due to being in hospital and missing a bill due to unreliability are counted as exactly the same.

The technological limitations of such a system are important. Black market score manipulation, by buying different personal details, or the use of VPNs for undetected online activity, would tamper with the data. The data and analysis on which one’s score is based could be flawed: nobody knows whether the suggested system is really feasible.

The fact that the

Chinese government wish to try regardless is telling. They have many options to consider as remedies for social mistrust, an issue

“The technological limitations of such a system are important”

originally caused by the government’s intolerance of any external institution that might enforce accountability.

Rather than allow for independent watchdogs and increased transparency, they instead opt for greater control. As put by Foreign Policy, the government is “ensuring that the only monitor will, once and forever, be itself.”

ARTS

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Cézanne Portraits at the National Portrait Gallery

For the first time, the National Portrait Gallery presents an exhibition devoted entirely to the works of Paul Cézanne. But does the collection provide insight into a pioneering genius, or an overrated leftover of Impressionism?

ARTS

CÉZANNE PORTRAITS



Where? The National Portrait Gallery

When? Until 11th February 2018

How Much? £18; £16.50 students

Sandra Engardt
Arts Writer

To be honest, I've never really understood the greatness of Cézanne. Another big male artist, but with an Impressionist style not as fairy-like as Monet and a technique not as cubistic as Picasso. An in between – someone who never really dedicated himself to any specific style.

Without any expectations to have my mind changed I enter the National Portrait Gallery and the first thing I can't help but notice is the grandness of the museum. I find my way to the exhibition and walk in. Crisp white walls, high arches, and staff walking around in black uniforms, making sure that no one takes a photograph nor touches the art. The halls are not only filled with art, they are also filled with people. People of all ages, of different styles and nationalities. It did not take long for me to realize that it's not just any exhibition I'm entering – rather, it's an exhibition of one of the biggest artists of the 19th century.

We walk through Cézanne's life and artistic development. We meet more and less important people in his life through



Madame Cézanne in a Yellow Chair, 1888-90 by Paul Cézanne // Wilson L. Mead Fund, The Art Institute of Chicago

his portraits, people who have been there for longer and for shorter periods of

“In the exhibition, we meet an ever-changing Cézanne – from rough early portraits to playful paintings”

time. Most importantly, we meet an ever changing Cézanne – from rough portraits in earthy colors to paintings full of playfulness. The exhibition starts off with some of his earlier works, paintings that are characterized by fast strokes made with a palette knife. The technique that he developed during this phase of his life is often referred to as one of the major contributing factors to the Expressionist movement, characterized by magnified emotional expressions, often communicated through colors and shapes. At first glance

the paintings feel pretty brown and colorless, but as you step closer to the frame a palette full of color starts to reveal itself. Blue, green, and yellow, all perfectly clear and distinct at a near distance but from afar creating a unity. There is something wild in this way of painting; the movements of the knife are easily distinguished and create a storm of dull colors.

The color palette intensifies as we continue our tour to the next room. Portraits in bright turquoise, pink, and red show a distinct change in

style. The intense colors are weighed down by more gentle brush strokes than seen before. It creates a more impressionistic feeling which is not only by chance: during this period of his life Cézanne encountered several soon-to-be famous Impressionist painters such as Pissarro and Monet. Their influence on Cézanne's work is clear, with the brush strokes and colors going from earthy and harsh to light, graphic, and

“Beneath the technique and colours, Cézanne's portraits reveal people as their true selves”

flamboyant. The palette knife phase is over, but the geometrical shapes that he used to create with them live on as blocks of color. The playfulness and beauty in this part of the exhibition can easily be appreciated, even by those dragged here by their grandmothers.

Cézanne's later years were filled with hardships, as reflected in the last room, where portraits in dark colors and self-portraits of an elderly, gloomy version of his old self all contribute to a more obscure atmosphere.

Cézanne did not want to flatter people in his portraits, and he refused to paint anyone who expected an improved version of themselves. The people in his portraits are not exceptionally beautiful or interesting to look at. Beneath the technique and

colours they are normal people portrayed as their true selves. The wish to create a realistic interpretation of his models becomes clear in the portraits of Hortense Fiquet, more commonly known as Madame Cézanne. Several canvases are dedicated to her quite grumpy face. She is not being painted as a muse, not idolized or embellished. We can see Cézanne's objectivity in these portraits as they lack any tendency of facial expressions or emotions. This objectivity follows through in all of his work: unlike his colors and technique the faces remain plain. Cézanne is known for his still life paintings, and the way he has chosen to portray his models is more like how you would portray a bowl of fruit rather than a human being. Instead of focusing on the face, the emphasis is on the details around: a pipe, hat, or a not-fully-painted skirt are all details that attract the eye – the details that make the audience search and look around for more.

I have always believed that Cézanne's work is just plain and boring. This has been proved wrong. After visiting the National Portrait Gallery I have come to realize that he is much more than an in-between: he paved the way for the Cubist movement with his graphic and geometrical technique, inspired Expressionism with his palette knife phase, and is still considered an Impressionist. But there is also a curiosity, a playfulness, and a desire to keep trying new things in all of his paintings. It is the small details, the half painted skirt, the pipe, and the hat, that reveal the curious artist in search of expression.

MUSIC

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Krept & Konan abandon the London underground in their new mixtapes *7 Days* and *7 Nights*

The new work shows they're shifting towards the mainstream, but they haven't chosen the right direction.

MUSIC

7 DAYS
7 NIGHTS



Artist: Krept & Konan.
Label: Virgin EMI. **Top Tracks:** Last Night in LA; Robbery; Same Shit. **For Fans Of:** Cadet; Yungen; Nines. *78 minutes*

Alex Montgomerie-Corcoran

Music Writer

Krept and Konan, the established rap duo from South London, put out a pair of albums two weeks ago in their first major releases since their return to the London music scene. The albums are drastically different in style: *7 Days* feels more like a compilation of their attempts at different genres (with a few bangers thrown in), while *7 Nights* is a collection of R&B slow jams. These albums demonstrate a commitment to their departure from the underground scene to pursue mainstream success.

For background, the pair started out in the London rap scene – a couple of youngsters in polo shirts rapping about gang life in Thornton Heath. These early tracks and freestyles were angry and gritty; although not being heavily involved in gang activities, they shared experiences and stories of the people around them. And these raw lyrics (often set to an American hip-hop beat, or, very rarely, a grime instrumental) connected with some, and shocked others. The duo gained notoriety and eventually became one of the biggest names in the

underground London rap scene. Their lyrics were smart and the wordplay was clever, referencing more and more obscure parts of London culture, endearing them to people sympathetic to their struggle. They received a lot of attention through YouTube channels like SBTV, and through their early mixtapes, some of which attained notoriety in the mainstream.

What really helped them blow up was the track 'Don't Waste My Time', in particular the line "Excuse my French, I ain't worried 'bout nothin'", which brought on an all-star remix with Coke Boys. The song

"While some tracks mark a return to their original flow, the remainder of *7 Days* doesn't make sense"

brought them worldwide attention, with the likes of French Montana, YG, and Jeremih looking to collaborate. From there, they signed with Def Jam and did a heavily trap-inspired album, with features from loads of American rappers, slowing down their flow to appeal to their global fans. And this worked for them in terms of popularity: the track 'Freak of the Week' was blowing up everywhere, even if the signature Krept and Konan flow wasn't that prominent.

See, I thought after the previous album in the States, they were going

to return to London with their original flow, with the respect and weight of having made it globally. In fact, you get some impression of this on *7 Days*: the track 'Robbery', released last summer, felt a lot like their old tracks. The play on 'Jack in the Box' in the first verse and even the reference to their first mixtape were reminiscent of Krept's clever, cheeky wordplay. And when that came out, it felt like they had a sort of godfather status, putting this unknown rapper Abra Cadabra on, and surrounding themselves with the best in the scene. The penultimate track, 'Last Night In LA' (which is my favourite on the album, also released a year ago), had the sense that these legends had returned to their domain, equipped with better production and a taste of fame. Konan talks about their progression from the road to the stage, referencing the people he made it with and even the beef with Church Road.

Unfortunately, the rest of the album doesn't make sense. Krept starts rapping in a silly Vybiz Kartel style accent on the 'Controlla'-sounding dancehall track 'For Me', which I don't think he's ever done before, and is certainly not known for. And 'WoWoWo', which they are trying to push as one of the main bangers of the album, has such a dull, plain hook; even in the verses they keep repeating those three meaningless syllables. The whole album feels like they're just trying to create bangers in every genre possible: trap, drill, dancehall, afrobeat. Anything. Maybe they're trying to hedge their bets



The ting goes skrrrrrr... // Virgin EMI

on current trends, or just churning out generic tracks because it's easy,

"Maybe Krept & Konan are trying to hedge their bets on current trends, but it doesn't feel like they care for the quality of the music"

but it certainly doesn't feel like they care for the quality of the music. So in

this sense, it feels very lost and empty as an album – more like a top 11 UK music compilation.

7 Nights is more together: the PARTYNEX-TDOOR vibe combined with Nines-style vocals runs throughout. Actually, it does feel a lot like Nines' 'One Foot Out', even featuring the same vocalist Hudson East heavily on both albums (which feels like a betrayal to their area). And the topics of the tracks depart from the usual grimy gang stories to stories of ladies and their promiscuous relationships with them. None of the tracks particularly stand out, but the consistent theme and interesting features don't make it a terrible album.

I guess my main issue

with these albums is the fact that they have abandoned the London underground scene to pursue fame. It seems that they want to change directions as artists to something more suitable for mainstream, although they haven't really chosen the exact direction yet. It's a shame as they are amazing lyricists, and it's frustrating that they chose to limit their talent in a trade off for catchy hooks and palatable verses. They are definitely still in it for the hustle, which is admirable, and they have achieved a tremendous amount from humble beginnings. But hopefully we'll still see them on those Link Up TV features now and then.

MUSIC

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Felix Music recommends...October: our guide to all the hottest releases that dropped this month

MUSIC

Josh Lawrence
Music Writer

October has been full of fantastic releases: from synth pop to hip hop, from indie labels to industry juggernauts, from distinguished artists to new talent. Pay no mind to anyone who claims "there is no good music anymore". At *Felix* we unfortunately don't have the time to review everything good that comes out, so curated here are ten fantastic releases from the last month that you can judge for yourself.

TAKE ME APART

Artist: Kelela. **Label:** Warp. **For Fans Of:** Arca; FKA Twigs; Jessy Lanza. **Release Date:** October 6th. *54 minutes*

If you travelled back to the 90s and told a Warp fan that their favourite label would be releasing R&B they'd laugh you back to the present. Although, after one listen of *Take Me Apart* it's obvious the album is a perfect fit for the IDM powerhouse. Kelela's voice cuts through a rumble of drum machines and sub-bass to carry messages about sex, love, and the difficulties they create. *Take Me Apart* is a classic in the making.

THE KID

Artist: Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith. **Label:** Western Vinyl. **For Fans Of:** Suzanne Ciani; Animal Collective; Holly Herndon. **Release Date:** October 6th. *51 minutes*

Do you like analog synths? The correct answer is yes, and on her latest release composer Kaitlyn

Aurelia Smith proves they're not just instruments for chin-stroking academics. The accessibility of *The Kid* is impressive, particularly when Smith's weapon of choice remains her Buchla synthesiser. The machine's organic textures are melded into a psychedelic pop-opera tracing out a cycle of birth, life and death, all in the space of less than an hour.

LIL' PUMP

Artist: Lil' Pump. **Label:** Tha Lights Global/Warner Bros. **For Fans Of:** Lil' Yachty; Lil' Uzi Vert; Chief Keef. **Release Date:** October 6th. *36 minutes*

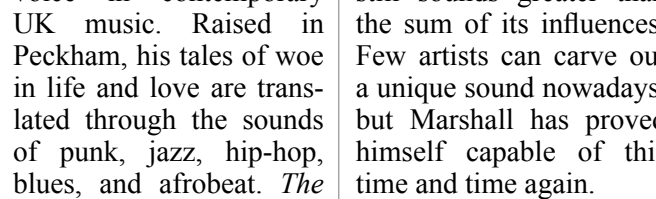
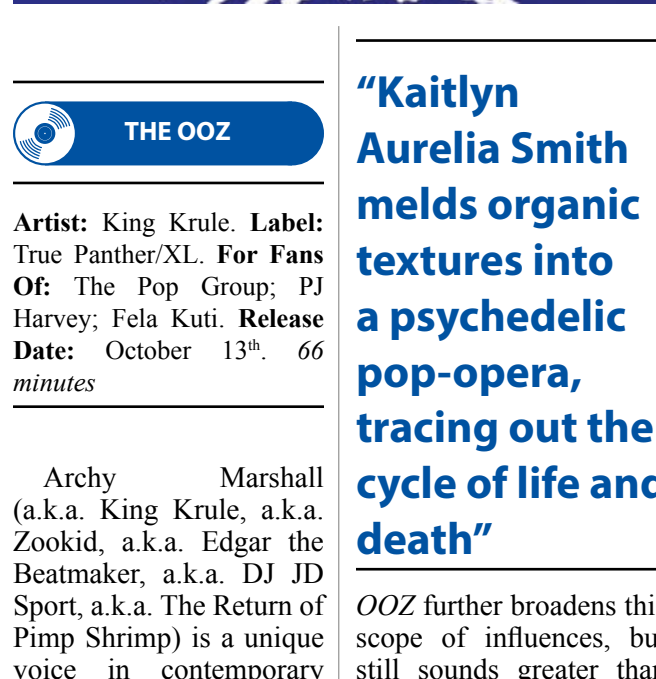
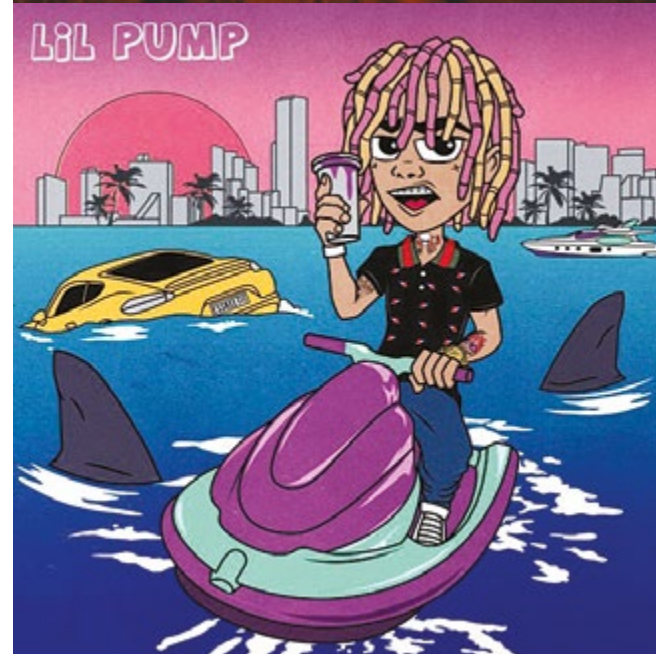
U FEEL ANYTHING?

Mumble/Cloud/Soundcloud rap may have a reputation for trashy bars and rushed beats... but that doesn't necessarily mean it's bad. *Lil' Pump* is crammed with guilty pleasures. *Gucci Gang* contains the lyric "My lean costs more than your rent". What more do you need to know?

THE OOOZ

Artist: Ziúr. **Label:** Planet Mu/Objects Ltd. **For Fans Of:** Ellen Allien; Ash Koosha; Steffi. **Release Date:** October 6th. *41 minutes*

Techno tends to stick to repetitive kick drums for a reason. Having a rigid skeleton means you can experiment with texture until your ears bleed, but you're always going to find someone willing to dance to it. Ziúr throws this mantra out the window, instead opting for cascades of sampled crashes, hisses and scratches. Guest vocalists sometimes coast atop this to add to the chaos, completing a release certain to shake-up the Berlin scene.



"Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith melds organic textures into a psychedelic pop-opera, tracing out the cycle of life and death"

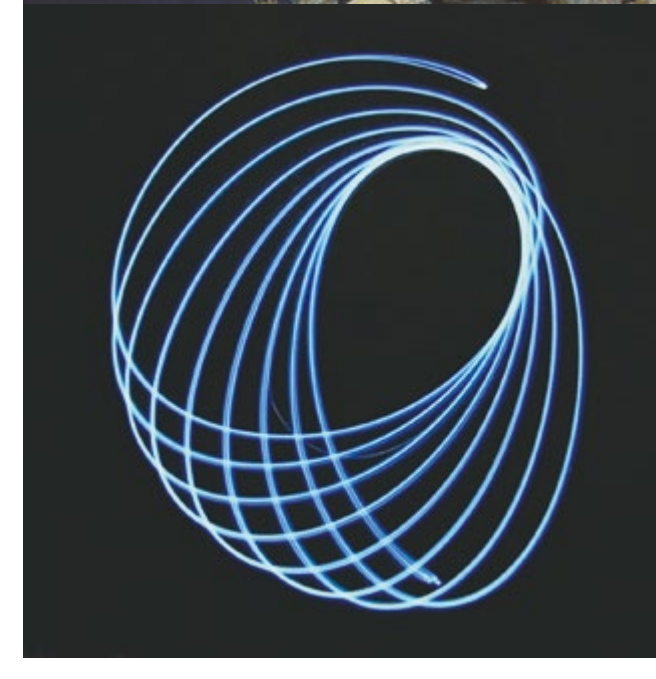
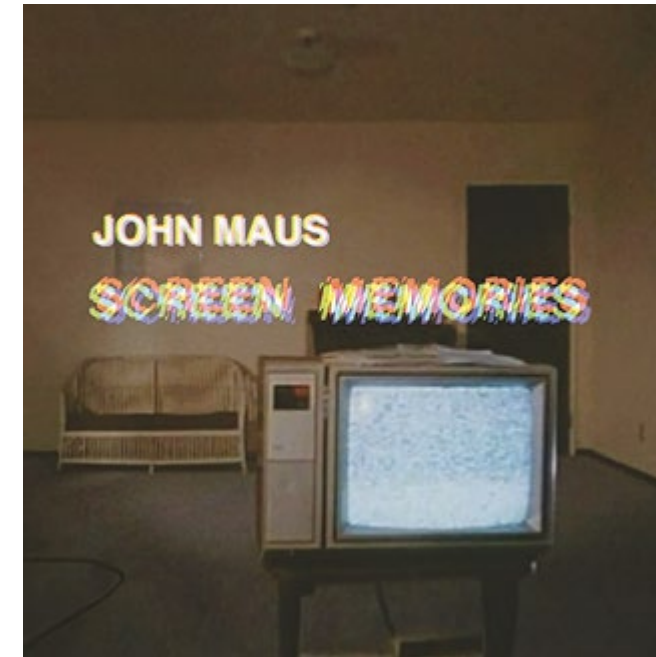
OOZ further broadens this scope of influences, but still sounds greater than the sum of its influences. Few artists can carve out a unique sound nowadays, but Marshall has proved himself capable of this time and time again.



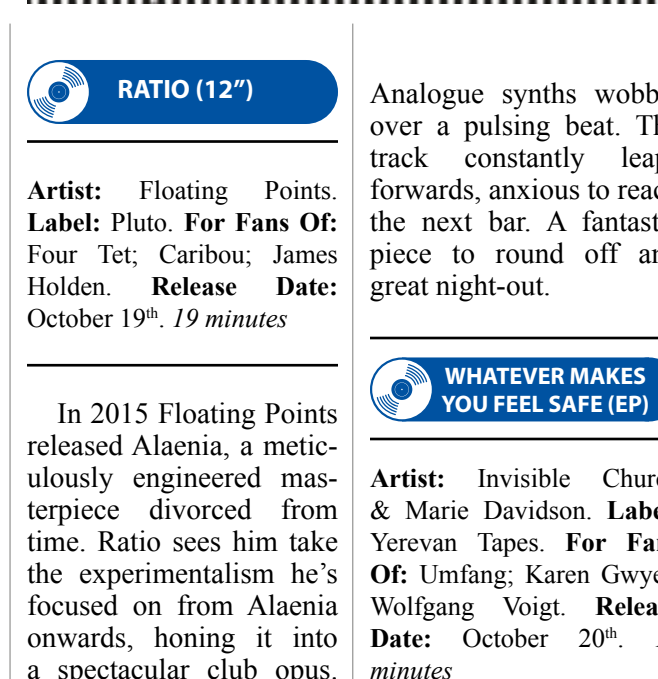
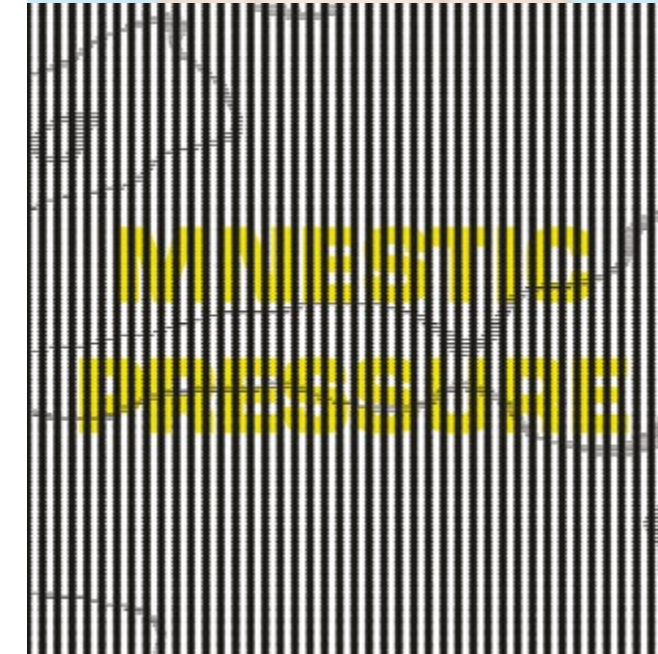
(Clockwise from top left) Kelela's *Take Me Apart*; Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith's *The Kid*; Ziúr's *U Feel Anything?*; King Krule's *The OOOZ*; Lil' Pump's eponymous release // *Warp*; *Western Vinyl*; *Tha Lights Global/Warner*; *Planet Mu/Objects Ltd.*; *True Panther/XL*

MUSIC

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(Clockwise from top right) Fever Ray's *Plunge*; Lee Gamble's *Mnemonic Pressure*; Floating Point's *Ratio*; Invisible Church and Marie Davidson's *Whatever Makes You Feel Safe*; John Maus' *Screen Memories*. // *Rabid/Mute*; *Hyperdub*; *Pluto*; *Yerevan Tapes*; *Ribbon Music*



Quebec native Marie Davidson takes a turn away from her starker EBM-revivalism on this

collaborative release with Invisible Church. Crisp drums and synths are replaced with liquid electronics and crackling percussion. Synths swell to give the impression of drowning. Davidson's vocals haunt the tracks, often being elongated or reversed, creating an ambient techno sound too unsettling to be relaxing.

MNESTIC PRESSURE

Artist: Lee Gamble. **Label:** Hyperdub. **For Fans Of:** Burial; Actress; Special Request. **Release Date:** October 26th. *43 minutes*

PLUNGE

Artist: Fever Ray. **Label:** Rabid Records. **For Fans Of:** Alice Glass; Björk; Röyksopp. **Release Date:** October 27th. *47 minutes*

Despite a disappointing live set (reviewed in last week's edition), Lee Gamble has put together a fantastic album, tying together over 30 years of the UK underground. The music flutters between a variety of bass-driven styles. Dark ambient melts into dub techno which accelerates into jungle. All of these elements are glued together by Gamble's peculiar approach to texture, increasing the accessibility of his album without damaging its experimentalism. 'Ghost', with its masterful chops, may stand as one of the greatest jungle tracks released in the last decade.

SCREEN MEMORIES

Artist: John Maus. **Label:** Ribbon Music. **For Fans Of:** Ariel Pink; Molly Nilsson; Tonstartssbandt. **Release Date:** October 27th. *38 minutes*

Six years on from his last album, John Maus has built his own modular synthesiser and completed a PhD in political philosophy. Both of these advances serve

"John Maus provides a retro-futuristic protest against hypercapitalism"

as a bedrock for *Screen Memories*. Maus' music often sounds like in-universe pop music from a trashy 80s cyberpunk TV serial. But he deftly uses this minimalist new-wave sound to provide a retro-futuristic protest against our own dystopian shade of hypercapitalism. Because is our reality really that different from 80s science-fiction at this point?

PLUNGE

Artist: Fever Ray. **Label:** Rabid Records. **For Fans Of:** Alice Glass; Björk; Röyksopp. **Release Date:** October 27th. *47 minutes*

Karin Dreijer's has dominated the sounds of 21st century pop simply by being herself. Her twisted electropop compositions, both as brother-sister duo The Knife and as solo act Fever Ray, have made pop weird again. *Plunge* serves as just another bullet point on an already impeccable CV. Moving away from the themes of isolationism and motherhood of her self-titled debut, Fever Ray's sophomore release is an exclaimed worship of all things kinky. Sex, flesh and leather are orchestrated as pitch-shifted layers of vocals, frantic arpeggiators, and bombastic percussion. Lyrics about the mundanities of life are replaced with expressions of carnal desire which Dreijer somehow makes sound deeply moving. If there's one album from this year worth hearing, *Plunge* is undoubtedly it.

MUSIC

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Future Hndrxx Tour: an enjoyable, if not all that memorable, performance

Following on from the surprise release of two albums within a week, Future heads to the O2 Arena, for a greatest hits set, whose energy levels sometimes slip.

MUSIC

Andy Djaba

Music Editor

In February, Atlanta rapper Future surprised fans by releasing his eponymous fifth studio album with little advance warning. *FUTURE* is a seventeen-track trap offering that went straight to number one in its first week. However, although Future's fans were satisfied, Future was not. A mere seven days later, Future went on to do the unheard of and dropped his sixth album, *HNDRXX*. Future shows his more sensitive side on *HNDRXX* and the album also debuted atop the Billboard charts. In having two different albums debut at number one in consecutive weeks, Future accomplished a feat that no other artist in music history has. He swiftly followed up this success



Future keeping the vibe alive at the O2 // Andy Djaba

by announcing the Future Hndrxx Tour, which concluded in London's O2 Arena last Monday.

Future had Zoey Dollaz, Rich The Kid, and Stefflon Don in support but all three acts failed to sufficiently raise the crowd's energy levels. The crowd was subsequently restless

by the time Future took to the stage (20 minutes late, I might add). However, Future turned things around with his strong opening performance of *FUTURE* album cut, 'Draco'. Future has built a reputation as an artist with a seemingly tireless work ethic, dropping

mixtapes and albums at an alarmingly rapid rate over the last 5 years. There was also a period when Future was hip-hop's go-to guy for a hook or feature and, as a result, the man simply has an insurmountable mass of music to perform. He had the whole arena rocking with fan favour-

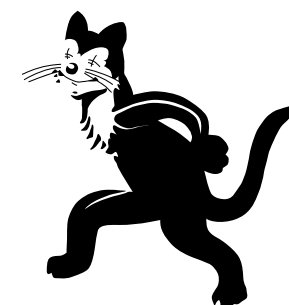
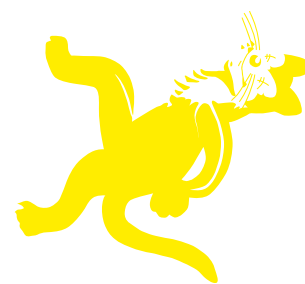
ites 'Thought It was a Drought', 'Stick Talk', and 'Sh!t'.

Although this show was supposedly in support of his two 2017 albums, Future effectively turned it into a showcase of his greatest hits, stretching all the way back to the start of his career. It was disappointing that he didn't

"There were times when Future appeared to be lacking energy, but he performed with dancers who hyped the crowd"

perform any of *HNDRXX* as this would have been a welcome switch of vibe

in the arena but, instead, Future bombarded us with high energy bangers all night. There were times when Future appeared to be lacking energy but he performed with four dancers who hyped the crowd during those periods when he was struggling to keep up. He also brought Rich The Kid, Stefflon Don, and Wizkid out during his set, with Wizkid in particular receiving a rapturous reception. Future returned to perform 'Mask Off', his viral smash hit off of *FUTURE* and ended his set with 'March Madness' (arguably the best song of all time). Overall, the show was fun but there were times when the energy felt a bit lifeless and it raises the question of whether it's worth seeing artists like Future, who have countless high energy bangers but whose music arguably lacks substance, in concert. In this case, I would have to say no – save your £55.



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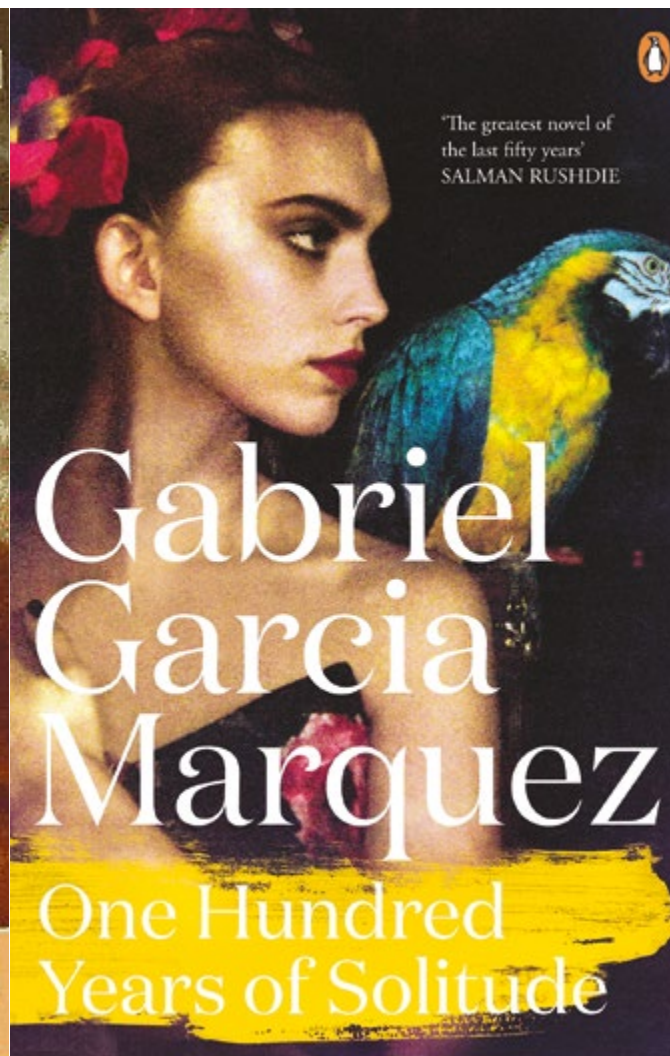
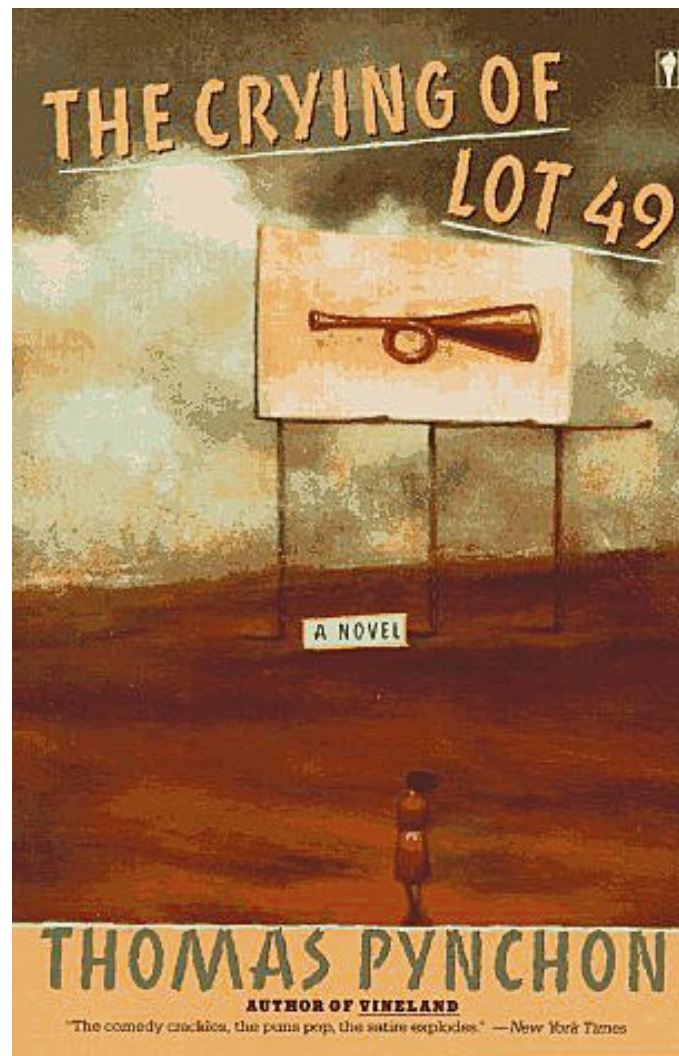
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BOOKS

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In defence of 'difficult' books

Is a book 'bad' because it is 'too difficult' to read? Felix writer Ned Summers thinks the issue is in our approach.



Even The Muppets can take on Dickens – why shouldn't you? // L. B. Lippincott Co.; Penguin Books; Disney

BOOKS

Ned Summers

Books Writer

There is no criticism more widely levelled against book and author than that of difficulty. I was prompted to write this article because of a one-star Goodreads review of Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*. It began:

"A classic English majors only book, aka people like talking about this book and that they 'get it' make you feel like their intellectual inferior."

Readers and non-readers alike may describe books as dull; some refuse to approach 'classics' since they are dated whilst others, like our reviewer, will not touch modern literature because it is overcomplicated and

self-congratulating. My hope is to show that often these are not bad books but they instead reveal fault in our way of reading them.

Each of these descriptions veil a common criticism: difficulty. To say a book is dull is to say that it is harder to absorb than in other media. Many old books are dated. Dickens' vocabulary is unusual, his settings Victorian, and his ghosts are far from frightening but his stories resonate today as they did one hundred and ninety years ago – *A Christmas Carol* was even adapted into a movie by The Muppets! So datedness is not in itself a criticism but instead hides the fear that it is too difficult to distill Dickens' stories from his language. Many modern classics are overcomplicated. Authors like Pynchon have written

books that stretch the definitions of a novel but these are often books where difficulty is necessary in their aims.

There are bad books but in many cases the difficult book is not written poorly. The fault often lies with us in our approach to reading these books. For this I return to my angry Pynchon review which ends with:

"If you enjoy art that makes a statement, try this book. If you enjoy books for the story they tell and the messages you can extract from that story, avoid this book. It's up to you."

Given the great diversity of authors and their books, the greatest determining factor for our enjoyment is how well our expectations match the book we end up reading. The books I've found most difficult have not been bad ones but

ones that were not right, at that time, for me. These books either challenge our expectations of writing or challenge our expectations of the world.

No one can read *Harry Potter* and *Oliver Twist* in the same way. To expect to breeze through Dickens at the pace you would read Rowling is to set yourself up for disappointment. He is not so hard when you read him, as originally intended, in an environment without other distractions, such as to pass the time on Sunday afternoons. The reviewer above likes to read other things and writes that Pynchon is a bad writer for writing differently. He may indeed be a bad writer, but it would not be because of the difficulties this reviewer had.

Finally, there are books that weren't written for you: books addressing

issues you do not care about, have overlooked or struggles you do not understand. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gabriel García Márquez grants us insight into the Colombian culture rarely discussed in the UK. He opens a door for insight, but that requires empathy from a reader too. Books dealing with issues of oppression, like institutional racism, are often written for those within the community. Those of us outside the situation who attempt to read them should be aware that these works are not always written for us. These can be the most difficult books to read. A book is not bad for challenging your base beliefs, nor for asking you to empathize with characters different to yourself. When read considerably, these books can be far more enlightening and memorable than any

'easy' novel.

The relationship between book and reader is deeply personal and difficult to deconstruct. Our fault, as readers, is in expecting books to conform to what we want them to be before opening them, instead of allowing them to suggest different approaches. The perfect relationship is that of compromise, where you allow a book to change your perspective and grow from it. Sometimes, however, as with relationships between people, compromise is difficult. It is important to remember that often compatibility isn't possible even when the other has few objective faults. Sometimes, the timing is just wrong.

Imperial Lacrosse



BOOKS

books.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Immerse yourself in the tumultuous sea of this 20th century historical drama

Books writer *Pavan Inguva* explains why Yukio Mishima's *Sea of Fertility* tetralogy is an exciting blend of history, personal experience and philosophy.

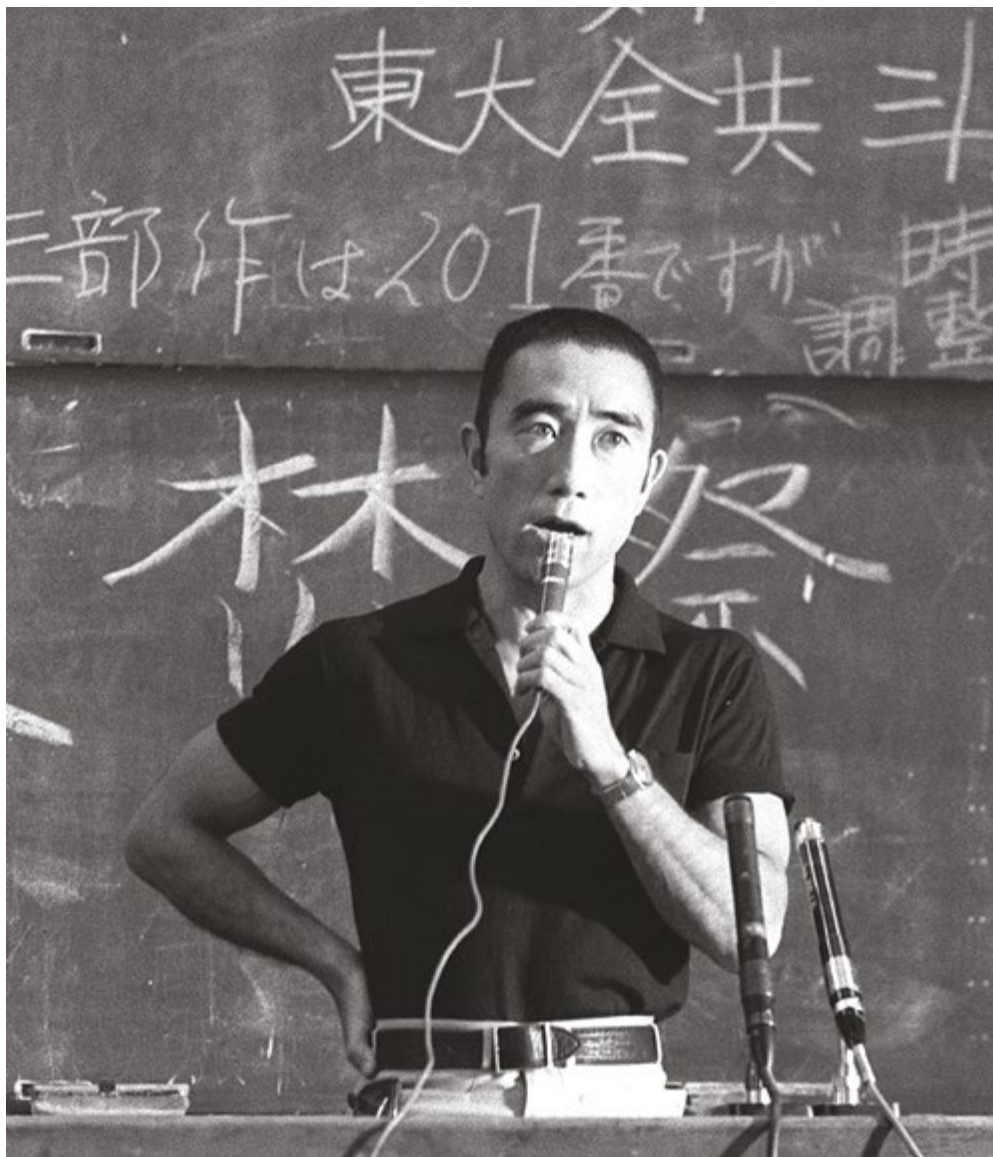
BOOKS

Pavan Inguva*Books Writer*

A lot of great literature has served as excellent snapshots into the culture and attitudes of the society that the author describes. Yukio Mishima's *Sea of Fertility* Tetralogy is a perfect example of that. The tetralogy consists of *Spring Snow*, *Runaway Horses*, *The Temple of Dawn*, and *The Decay of the Angel*, in that order, and while I have sadly only read two of the four thus far, that was enough to leave a profound impression on me.

Mishima constructs a narrative centred around the characters of Shigekuni Honda, an aspiring law student who becomes a respected lawyer then judge, and Kiyooki Matsugae, who appears in the first book as a fellow student born to an aristocratic family, but is reincarnated as various other characters in subsequent books. In constructing the story, what I found remarkable is how Mishima weaves both strands of his own personal life and the flavour of Japan throughout the 20th century into a sublime read. Mishima's prolific output of great works and standing have led to him being nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature twice and the Mishima award was named in his honour.

Spring Snow was set in 1912 – the beginning of the Taisho period, which followed on from the Meiji era, a time of



Mishima speaking at the University of Tokyo // KYODO

significant change to the fabric of Japanese society through modernisation and the increasing influence of Western thought. The details and broader analysis of the Meiji era are well explored and documented in various works, but any meaningful discussion of it would be beyond this review. However, I encourage interested readers to review 20th century Japanese history for their own pleasure and perhaps an enhanced appreciation of the series.

Mishima developed an ensemble of charac-

ters in the entire series besides Kiyooki and Honda, and these characters and their own attitudes and actions shed light on the spectrum of opinions held towards the zeitgeist of the series' setting (1912-1975). For instance, we can see how Kiyooki's father, Marquis Matsugae, initially a preeminent nobleman in *Spring Snow*, goes on to occupy a much humbler status in *Runaway Horses* and subsequently even loses his estate, demonstrating the changing fortunes of different characters and reflecting the state

of flux of 20th century Japan.

Mishima's own life is also quite fascinating, to say the least, and this translates into his writing. He was born into an upper middle-class family and had a strong footing in the samurai ethos. The setting for first book was in his own alma mater, the Peers School, and Kiyooki's proclivities to 'beauty' in existing are clear references to his own life. Mishima's romantic life was not so straightforward, having been temporarily involved with the current

empress of Japan and also being reported as bisexual. His sexuality was explored in his other work, *Confessions of a Mask*, though his wife consistently denied this charge. Within the *Sea of Fertility* tetralogy, elements of his own romantic experiences are quite evidently used in developing the plot of the first book where Kiyooki's romantic interest was betrothed to a prince in the royal family which then catalysed his own passion. As is with such fiery passions, it eventually consumed him, resulting in his death.

Mishima's own thoughts and ideologies more significantly shape the narrative of the second book. Mishima held strongly nationalistic views and firmly believed in the divinity of the Emperor of Japan. He also felt that modern developments of industry had pernicious effects on Japan.

After submitting the final chapters of the entire series to his publishers, Mishima proceeded to attempt a coup d'état to inspire restoration of power to the Emperor on the same day. Ostensibly the coup failed and Mishima proceeded to commit ritual suicide after giving a speech to troops in a Japanese military base that his militant group had occupied. In *Runaway Horses*, Kiyooki's reincarnate, Isao Inuma, also develops a similarly strong nationalistic fervour and plots to launch a campaign to 'purify Japan', failing which Isao also commits suicide in a dramatic

fashion. *Runaway Horses* was published in 1969, more than a year before Mishima's own suicide, giving the impression that Mishima had foreshadowed his own death.

The series also contains a strong philosophical bent, with Mishima exploring human nature through the characters and how they react to the events unfolding. Honda for example was initially characterised as a highly logical person, which manifested itself in his choice to pursue law. However, when confronted with Kiyooki's reincarnation, his person was profoundly altered and his thought process was well documented throughout. Aspects of Zen Buddhism and the philosophy of reincarnation, among other complex ideas, are explored, particularly in the third book – I am very excited to get started on that.

Admittedly, I am unable to do justice to the intellectual force of the series in this short review but I hope Mishima's own words will speak for themselves:

"If we look on idly, heaven and earth will never be joined. To join heaven and earth, some decisive deed of purity is necessary. To accomplish so resolute an action, you have to stake your life, giving no thought to personal gain or loss. You have to turn into a dragon and stir up a whirlwind, tear the dark, brooding clouds asunder and soar up into the azure-blue sky." –*Runaway Horses*

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FILM

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Wonder Women: who rules the silver screen?

Inspired by the discussion on who will succeed Sir Daniel Day-Lewis as the best actor in the world, we look at the greatest actresses on the planet. Our first part is this week – tune in next week to see who made it to number one!



From ravishing romance to unsettling intensity // Universal; BBC Films; Universal; Fox Searchlight; The Weinstein Company

FILM

Ashley Luckyrām
Film Editor

Following the release of the trailer for Sir Daniel Day-Lewis' final film, *Phantom Thread*, last week, I looked at who may attempt to fill his enormous boots as the finest actor in the world. There were a number of excellent candidates, and in the end Day-Lewis' fellow Paul Thomas Anderson collaborator Joaquin Phoenix came out on top. While thankfully there is no such retirement from our female thespians to spark a similar discussion, I have decided to pose the question nonetheless. We are in a golden age for actresses, with the number of elite female screen stars at the very least matching, and quite probably outnumbering the quantity of their male counterparts.

“We are in a golden age for actresses, with the number of elite female stars quite probably outnumbering their male counterparts”

tradition. It is interesting to consider what would have happened were there just one Academy Award for

It has been posited by some that awards for acting should not be divided by gender, in the same way that they are not for directing or writing, or any other category for that matter. The only reason the divide stills exists is

lead performance in years gone by. Take last year – the two best lead performances by some distance were Isabelle Huppert in *Elle* and Casey Affleck in *Manchester by the Sea* (if in this hypothetical situation there were still only five nominees then the rest of the field may well be made up by actresses considering the accomplishments of Natalie Portman in *Jackie*, Annette Bening in *20th Century Women*, Sonia Braga in *Aquarius* and Sandra Huller in *Toni Erdmann*, though Adam Driver was a delight in *Paterson*). An intriguing battle, and as devastatingly good Affleck is at communicating emotional turmoil in his stooped posture and mumbled speech, Huppert's performance was a tour de force that surely would have come out on top (although considering she lost the actual real-life Academy Award to Emma Stone for *La La Land*, she would probably be

unjustly beaten again – you can't escape fuck-ups by the Academy even in the hypothetical realm).

It is difficult to determine whether this prominence is down to a particular purple patch for women acting in film, in the sense that many have emerged together by chance, or whether there have always been vast quantities of great actresses, and that in the past we were only able to see a few due to limited opportunities in a historically sexist industry. It could be argued that were there more substantial roles written for women over the past fifty years, we could have seen twenty Hepburns instead of just two. Or more contemporaries to the likes of Taylor, Bergman and Leigh. Our pig-headed discrimination by gender has robbed us of great art. That is not to say that enough female characters are being scripted in the present day. Far too

many times we see these incredible talents have to play second fiddle to their male colleagues, often submissively portraying the object of love and lust, rather than a fully fleshed out human being with their own ideas, thoughts

“Far too many times, these incredible talents play second fiddle”

and feelings; their own story. I think this time of great actresses has arisen due to a combination of good fortune providing us with more talented artists than ever before, and meatier parts finally beginning to appear, allowing a platform for them to showcase their abilities. With so many phenomenal female per-

formers, the industry will soon be left with no choice but to bow down and give them the significant roles they deserve, and have deserved for a very long time.

(Note: This is a list of the best actresses working today. It was incredibly difficult to whittle it down to just ten, and the difference between some on this list is negligible. That is a testament to the astounding talent of the women on screen that we have the pleasure of watching work. Honourable mentions: Jessica Chastain, Viola Davis, Kate Winslet, Saoirse Ronan, Michelle Williams, Rooney Mara, Kristen Stewart, Juliette Binoche, Penelope Cruz, Meryl Streep, Charlize Theron, Judi Dench, Scarlett Johansson, Laura Linney, Laura Dern, Greta Gerwig, Rachel Weisz, Jacki Weaver, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Kirsten Dunst, Elle Fanning, and Annette Bening)

FILM

film.felix@imperial.ac.uk



10. Natalie Portman

Best Performances: *Black Swan, Jackie, Closer*

Bursting onto the scene aged 13 in Luc Besson's cult thriller *Léon: The Professional*, Portman is one of those few child actors who has managed to maintain a constant stream of work well into adulthood, and she has done so to great acclaim. She has worked with a number of notable filmmakers, including Besson, Michael Mann, Wong Kar Wai, George Lucas, Terrence Malick, Darren Aronofsky, Pablo Larrain, Wes Anderson, Woody Allen, Tim Burton, Anthony Minghella,

“Tilda Swinton is far more than a supporting character actress”

Mike Nichols and Miloš Forman. Her ability to mix powerful performances in the work of critical darlings with lighter roles in commercial blockbusters, including the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy and the first two *Thor* films, has made Portman a

completed performance artist, Tilda Swinton is a remarkable talent who will likely never gain the acclaim she deserves, but so long as she keeps making bold choices and delivering smolderingly intense performances, we'll keep tuning in to her recognisable face.

8. Maggie Cheung

Best Performances: *In the Mood for Love, Clean, Days of Being Wild, 2046, Hero*

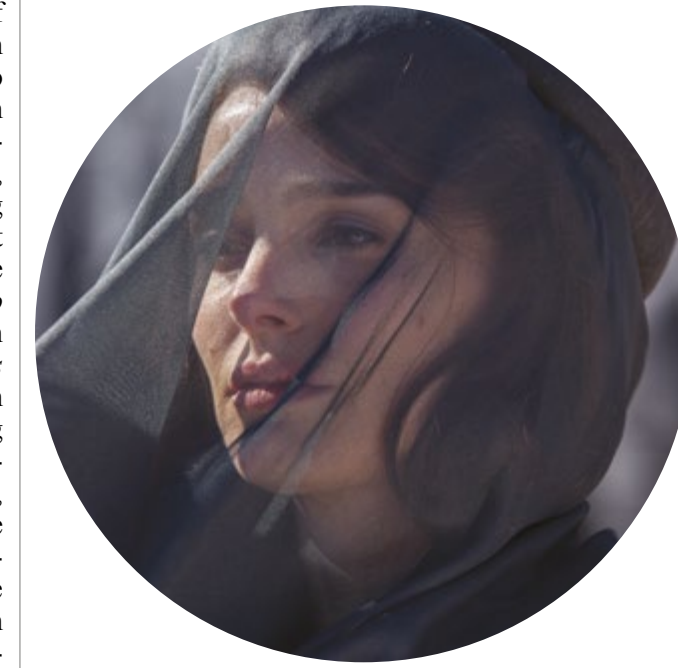
Raised in Britain and Hong Kong, Cheung's inclusion on this list is somewhat controversial considering that she has not acted in a film since 2010, and it is unclear if she will be returning. There are rumours that she will be returning for Wong Kar Wai's next project, *Blossoms*, and going off that, she is included. Anyone who has seen the best of Cheung, a woman renowned for her elegant portrayals of fierce women in simmering dramas, would be somewhat surprised that at the beginning of her career she was typecast in comedic roles as weak and clumsy women. That all changed when she was cast in Wong's *As Tears Go By*, a moment Cheung herself cites as the true beginning of her serious acting career. This would be the start of a fruitful collaboration, with the

household name and recognisable face. She is best known for her Academy Award-winning turn in *Black Swan*, but was equally as mesmerising in last year's *Jackie*.

9. Tilda Swinton

Best Performances: *We Need to Talk About Kevin, Michael Clayton, Orlando, Burn After Reading, Only Lovers Left Alive*

Though Brit actress Swinton's career spans back to the mid 80s, she has only really begun to be noticed in the 21st century when she began taking supporting roles in more mainstream films. Even then, she only truly came into the public eye with her Oscar-winning supporting role as a ruthless lawyer on the verge of a mental breakdown in *Michael Clayton*. Make no mistake though – Swinton is far more than a supporting character actress, well capable of seizing the reigns as a lead, best demonstrated in Lynne Ramsay's *We Need to Talk About Kevin* and Jim Jarmusch's *Only Lovers Left Alive*. A rock star, an unfulfilled wife searching for more, a vampire reconciling with her partner, a mother battling to love her strange child – Swinton's filmography is one of the most diverse in the industry. Also an ac-



two teaming up on *Days of Being Wild, Ashes of Time, In the Mood for Love*, and *2046*. Though she has worked very infrequently this century, she makes this list on the strength of the few projects she does take. Cheung acts with grace and fire in equal measures, and it is always spellbinding to watch her balance these elements in each one of her delicate performances.

7. Naomi Watts

Best Performances: *Mulholland Dr., 21 Grams, Eastern Promises, Funny Games, The Ring*

English Watts struggled to gain any traction in the entertainment industry until her thirties. Her early career consisted mainly of Australian television spots, including a recurring stint on *Home and Away*, and a number of near misses, including auditioning five times for the female lead in *Meet the Parents* before being told she was 'not sexy enough' (ugh). Then, at the turn of the century, the legendary David Lynch picked up Watts' headshot, and in a turn of events that eerily resembles a famous scene in his surrealist neo-noir psychological thriller masterpiece, cast Watts as the lead in *Mulholland Dr.* Watts is astonishing in what is an incredible film, and this dichotomous



performance alone is good enough to warrant a place on this list. Since then she has been best in her Oscar-nominated turns in *21 Grams* and *The Impossible*, as well as under the wing of great directors David Cronenberg and Michael Haneke in *Eastern Promises* and *Funny Games* respectively. Yet it is her character in *Mulholland Dr.* that will stick long in the memory, demonstrating a truly remarkable range, and making one think that Watts could convince in any role.

6. Amy Adams

Best Performances: *The Master, Junebug, Doubt, American Hustle, The Fighter, Arrival*

Born in Italy, American Amy Adams' entire filmography is from the 21st century, with her first major role coming in Spielberg's *Catch Me If You Can*. However, she became unemployed a year later, and her breakthrough role didn't arrive until 2005's *Junebug*, for which she garnered his first Oscar nomination. Since then, these nods have been a regular occurrence, and yet for some reason the Academy seems to hate the extremely likeable Adams. Five nominations and no wins. And she wasn't even nom-

inated for a terrific performance in *Arrival* last year while Meryl Streep was once again invited to the Dolby Theatre for singing badly in *Florence Foster Jenkins*, a film where she was heavily outshone by Hugh Grant. To be fair, she has always been up against solid opposition, losing to the likes of Cate Blanchett, Penelope Cruz, Rachel Weisz, and Melissa Leo. That being said, she should surely have won for her tremendously controlled performance in *The Master* ahead of Anne Hathaway in *Les Misérables*. Though Adams has dabbled in blockbuster fayre in her role as Lois Lane in the Superman films, she has largely stuck to working with artistic auteurs, such as Paul Thomas Anderson, David O. Russell, Spike Jonze, Mike Nichols, Denis Villeneuve, and Tom Ford. So long as she continues this career path, surely she will one day get up on stage to collect a golden statue. Her next opportunity will come in Adam McKay's 2018 Dick Cheney biopic *Backseat*, starring Christian Bale.

We will be concluding our countdown of the greatest actresses working today in next week's issue of Felix

FILM

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Luca Guadagnino serves us up a shimmering slice of young desire

Hotly-tipped for success at this year's Academy Awards, *Call Me by Your Name* is a heady tour-de-force of love and passion in the north of Italy.

FILM

CALL ME BY YOUR NAME



Dir: Luca Guadagnino.
Script: Luca Guadagnino; James Ivory; Walter Fasano. **Starring:** Timothée Chalamet; Armie Hammer; Michael Stuhlbarg; Amira Casar. 130 minutes

Fred Fyles
Editor-in-Chief

From Maggie Cheung slipping out onto the Hong Kong streets in her cheongsam, looking for some noodles to eat in *In the Mood for Love*, to the sparks illuminating the faces of the Danish ascetics in *Babette's Feast* as they are served the meal of a lifetime, cinema and food have always been a powerful combination. Food can serve as a process of mourning, as it does for Rooney Mara's character in *A Ghost Story*, who devours a pie in its entirety following the death of her husband before throwing it back up; it can be a source of independence and strength, as it is for Penélope Cruz's character in Almodóvar's *Volver*; and it can also be a source of sexual tension, as anyone who saw Adèle Exarchopoulos in *Blue is the Warmest Colour* can attest. As Fellini reportedly said: "Never trust a woman who doesn't like to eat. She is probably lousy in bed."

Luca Guadagnino is a filmmaker well versed in the erotic qualities of food and eating: his 2009 breakthrough *I Am Love* begins with an elaborate dinner being prepared

at the house of Emma Recchi, a Russian emigre to Milan who has married into a wealthy industrial family. The film then takes us through a technicolour whirlwind of delicate dishes, which serve both as drivers of the plot and as conveyors of sensuality, as Emma begins an affair with a chef, Antonio. Food took on lesser but still central role in his follow-up, *A Bigger Splash*, where Guadagnino swapped out the bustle of the city for sun-baked island of Pantelleria, located between Sicily and Tunisia. However, *A Bigger Splash*, which took its inspiration from Jacques Deray's thriller *La Piscine*, was a dry piece of filmmaking, as flat and sun-baked as its island setting.

"As in Guadagnino's previous work, food takes on a starring role"

In comparison, *Call Me by Your Name*, which is based on the novel by André Aciman and forms the final instalment of Guadagnino's 'Desire' trilogy, is near-obsessive in its fecund vibrancy. Taking as its setting a sumptuous villa in the northern Italian countryside during an early-80s summer, *Call Me by Your Name* tells of the growing attraction between Elio (Timothée Chalamet), a precocious 17-year-old with a talent for music, and Oliver (Armie Hammer), a graduate student in his mid-20s, who comes to his



"I saw Armie Hamer was wearing a Star of David pendant, so I bought a Star of David pendant" // Sony Pictures Classics

villa to assist Elio's father Lyle (Michael Stuhlbarg) in research.

Food again takes on a starring role, standing in for thwarted desires and tempestuous attraction, taking on a fetishistic-like quality: soft-boiled eggs spray bright orange yolk across starched tablecloths whilst mounds of ripe apricots pile up in bowls, to say nothing of a certain scene involving a peach, which set the internet chattering last month.

Music also plays a key element in *Call Me by Your Name*, as it did in his last two films: John Adams returns, evoking the marriage between his minimalist bombast and Guadagnino's well-tempered camera that caused great effect in *I Am Love*, but the soundtrack on the whole is softer, and more piano-led. Sufjan Stevens contributes with an alter-

nate take on his haunting track *Futile Devices*, adding to the affective atmosphere.

Hammer continues the indie run he has enjoyed with *Free Fire* and *Nocturnal Animals*, delivering a performance that is brimming with confidence and energy, yet conceals hidden depths. Even more engaging, however, is Chalamet's turn in the film; his Elio is sensitive and vulnerable, tentatively caught between adolescence and adulthood. Chalamet's features perfectly resemble those of Greek statuary, but any concerns that he might have been chosen for his looks rather than his skill are quickly dashed away, as he delivers an emotionally-rich performance. Both have been tipped for Academy Award success later in the year, and for good reason. The supporting

cast is small, but Michael Stuhlbarg is captivating as Elio's father, delivering an emotive speech at the end of the film that forms the heart of the two-hour-long work.

In a number of ways, *Call Me by Your Name*, with its sun-dappled, northern Italian location, and its air of insouciance and endless days, brings to mind Vittorio de Sica's *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, adapted from Giorgio Bassani's 1962 novel. While *Call Me by Your Name* doesn't have the ominous threat of Fascism in the background – which draws shadows across the life of the Jewish family in de Sica's film – there are similar themes centring around the loss of innocence: Guadagnino has spoken of the decision to transpose the events of the original novel from 1987 to 1983,

a year in which he argues "the '70s are killed, when everything that was great about the '70s is definitely shut down." And thus the summer of *Call Me by Your Name* must also inevitably come to an end, with a winter scene at the end of the film that is astonishing in its intensity. With *Call Me by Your Name*, Guadagnino returns to the northern Italian climate where his inspiration grows best. It's a coming-of-age tale that avoids all the trite clichés found in other films; an adaptation of a much-loved book that has managed to retain all the wonder that made Guadagnino one to watch when he released *I Am Love*. It's a postcard from an eternal summer, the kind that you only miss once it's gone – rich and heady and full of raw emotion.

FILM

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An exercise in unremitting tension and horror

Yorgos Lanthimos returns with *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, which cements his reputation as a master of unease

FILM

THE KILLING OF A SACRED DEER



Dir: Yorgos Lanthimos.
Script: Yorgos Lanthimos; Efthymis Filippou.
Starring: Colin Farrell; Nicole Kidman; Barry Keoghan; Raffey Cassidy. 121 minutes

Fred Fyles
Editor-in-Chief

It seems that for Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos, who directed *Dogtooth* and *The Alps* before making his move into English-language cinema with 2015's *The Lobster*, the term 'clinical' may be a compliment. Since his breakout feature back in 2009, Lanthimos has ploughed the same furrow, excelling in cold, flat affect and a uniquely-awkward dialogue he

creates with writer and frequent collaborator Efthymis Filippou. It may be described as detached, cerebral, or, perhaps, 'clinical'. In *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, Lanthimos picks up this descriptor and runs with it, opening the film with a direct shot into the chest cavity of a man undergoing open heart surgery; his ribs are cracked open, jacked apart with a retractor, revealing a grotesquely pumping heart, almost obscene in its perpetual motion. The whole scene, in classic Lanthimos fashion, is soundtracked to Schubert.

The bloody gowns and gloves are removed, revealing Colin Farrell, in a spotless button-down and fancy watch. But this is not the warm Farrell of *Winter's Tale*, nor the gruff and grizzled Farrell of *The Beguiled* or *In Bruges*, oh no. This is the quietly rational Farrell of *The Lobster*, a figure who only comes out under the

watchful eye of Lanthimos' camera. He is playing Steven, a cardiac surgeon, who lives in a beautiful detached house with his ophthalmologist wife Anna (Nicole Kidman), and their two children, Kim (Raffey Cassidy) and Bob (Sunny Suljic).

However, things are not all right in paradise, and soon Martin (Barry Keoghan) comes onto the scene – a strange and

"Kidman, who has perfected a glacial persona, comes into her own as Anna"

off-putting teenager, who crashes down on the family like a giant, menacing cuckoo. He is intimately linked to Steven, and

delivers a horrifying piece of news to him: either he must kill one of his family members, or they will all begin to wither away and die before his very eyes. The choice is his.

Kidman, who has for a number of years been perfecting an exacting, glacial persona (which she has the skill to turn off at any minute – see her performance in last year's *Lion* for proof), comes into her own in the role of Anna. Lanthimos pulls off a similar trick to what he achieved with Rachel Weisz in *The Lobster*, limiting an actor's emotional palette so they must go deep rather than broad. Keoghan is similarly affecting, delivering a performance with an uncanny sense of otherness and naturalism: he is here to disrupt simply because that is in his nature.

While *Dogtooth* and *The Lobster* were broadly comedies – jet-black comedies with a

nerve-wrenching intensity that set the teeth on edge perhaps, but comedies none the less – *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* veers much closer to horror. There may be comedic elements, most notably in Filippou's script, but at its heart the film is an exercise in relentless tension and body horror. This intensity is aided and abetted by the soundtrack, built heavily around the haunting works of Russian composer Sofia Gubaidulina, which are reliant on shrieking strings and ratcheting stabs of accordions.

In *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, Lanthimos is drawing on a deeper and darker wellspring of inspiration than ever before. The title refers to the Greek tragedy of King Agamemnon, who – upon killing a deer and angering the goddess Artemis – must kill his daughter if he wants his ships to sail to Troy. Lanthimos is telling

on the role of Artemis, in reality he is more akin to the Greek chorus, commenting on the action without influencing it. Steven may believe that bluster and brute force may allow his family to escape their curse, but in reality there is only one solution: an inescapable ethical decision whose endpoint is a bullet, lodged in the sternum of a family member.

In many ways, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* reminds me of Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin*, not only for the similarities in the score – although Gubaidulina's work is far more intense – but in the way both films reflect human behaviour back at the audience, in a way that causes a profound discomfort. In Lanthimos' work, the dialogue appears like a paranoiac's imitation of human speech; it's like a funhouse mirror projecting back a simulacrum of language.

If Greek drama can teach us anything, it is that violence rarely means the end of the story: in *The Oresteia*, Aeschylus' retelling of the story of Iphigenia, Agamemnon's actions result in his death at the hands of his wife Clytemnestra, who is killed in turn by their son Orestes. While Lanthimos does not end the film with more overt violence, it is clear that the events of the film will exact a form of psychic pain upon the family. Similar feelings will be evoked in the audience. *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* is not an enjoyable watch, but in the most interesting and – paradoxically – enjoyable way. It does what all great horror films do, and delivers a shock, one akin to being left in an icy bath: while the initial chill might fade, the cold remains in the marrow, deep inside the viewer.



Nicole Kidman is one BAMF // A24

TELEVISION

tv.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Mindhunter – true crime binge TV

Producer David Fincher's influences are enough to keep this gritty cross section of 70s police culture moving forward.



“Shit, did I leave the oven on?” // Netflix

TELEVISION

MINDHUNTER SEASON 1



Creator: Joe Penhall.
Starring: Jonathan Groff; Holt McCallany; Hannah Gross; Anna Torv.

James T. Smith
TV Writer

Mindhunter is a gritty 10 part Netflix crime drama set in 1977, based on John E. Douglas and Mark Olshaker's book of the same name. Listing Charlize Theron and David Fincher among its producers, the show takes tips from both stars' previous work, most notably the camera work and atmosphere, which

were perfect in Fincher's *Zodiac*. Jonathan Groff plays Holden Ford, an FBI agent who is motivated to understand why it is that criminals act the way they do, and the motivations of serial killers in particular. This leads to Ford joining up with the behavioural sciences solo unit at the FBI, run by Bill Tench (Holt McCallany). Agents Ford and Tench want to expand the unit from being just “profiling road school” to a scientific inquiry of what causes these random killings. There is constant internal scrutiny from the FBI about the worth of this unit from their boss, Shepard (Cotter Smith). The series then follows these characters try to learn why ‘spree killers’ exist, and to understand the psychology of their actions by interviewing them in prison. Subsequently, the team expands, with the unit hiring Wendy (Anna

Torv), a Boston University social sciences professor, and further characters appearing later in the series. There is an over-arching plot at the beginning of every episode showing an unknown serial killer (well, unknown to

“Mindhunter displays an ambition to have enough plot to last several seasons”

agent Ford and Tench), preparing to commit the murders, displaying the show's ambition to have enough plot to last several seasons.

What *Mindhunter* seems

to do well is the intense, intimate interview scenes with the serial killers the agents are studying. Most notably, the recurring character and real-life killer, Edmund Kemper, portrayed brilliantly by Cameron Britton. Britton's portrayal of the sociopathic killer is well executed and probably the stand out performance of the series, with the effects of his visceral explanations of his crimes causing psychological damage to the agents investigating him throughout the series. This is not to mention the striking resemblance that Britton holds to the man, proving that casting is a crucial element of a good biopic.

Tench is a highly masculinised agent, visiting local police departments to teach them techniques, but mainly socialising and having a laid-back approach to the job.

However, we see that these interviews detailing the heinous crimes have a large psychological toll on his character, leading his family life to be strained, and even causing him to take a break from the interviews. The idea that this seemingly granite

“The introduction of Holdon Ford's relationship with Debbie is clunkily implemented, and sometimes feels like a time filler”

character is ground down by these interviews is well executed over the course of the series and adds an extra dimension to the rough, military types we are used to watching in these scenarios.

On the other hand, Holden Ford seems to take an emotionless approach to the grisly world he has thrown himself into. He is reminiscent of a film noir detective, working his way through crimes coolly and calmly whilst he leads these interviews. Yet he seems to slowly pick up the characteristics of these characters and incorporates them into his own personality which climaxes in the season's final episode.

Early in the series he starts a relationship with a girl called Debbie (Hannah Gross) whom he meets in a cliché bar scene. She is seemingly put in the series to act purely as a

plot device allowing us to see how Groff's character changes from an upstanding member of the agency to somebody who has gotten in too deep with the psyche of the serial killer. However, this is clunkily implemented into the show and it sometimes felt that these scenes were just jammed in as time fillers. This is perhaps because the viewer just sees her as Ford's student girlfriend rather than a complex character of her own.

The show approaches its setting and time period quite well, giving an authentic feel of a time when there was much hostility towards the FBI in the USA. It also shows how the agency wanted to shed its image of ‘Hoover's boys’ to a world leading highly successful special police force. It deals with the stigma of homosexuality within government agencies at the time through Wendy's character as she is led to live a double life at home and at work. A lot of the scenes exhibit the film-making techniques perfected by Fincher in this genre in *Seven* and *Zodiac*, but at no point do they feel like a stale rehash of these works. The offices scenes, cold and dimly lit, are what Fincher does best, and *Mindhunter* is no different.

Mindhunter's first season promises to set in motion an interesting crime drama, which has great potential to go on to be one of Fincher's classics. However, some of the episodes were stale and focused too much on FBI bureaucracy rather than focusing on what is obviously the show's strongest asset: the thrilling interview scenes with psycho-killers.

TRAVEL

travel.felix@imperial.ac.uk

When in Rome: a weekend-getaway in the Eternal City

Travel Editor *Edita Pileckyte* takes us through her guide to a whirlwind tour of Rome



The Eternal City, as viewed from upon high // *Edita Pileckyte*

TRAVEL

Edita Pileckyte

Travel Editor

Among all the deadlines and stress, we deserve some time off, so we can recharge and stay happy, healthy, and productive. And travelling is one of the best ways to do that, am I right? I assume you agree since you're reading the Travel section. Well, lucky for us travellers, it's possible to visit most European cities in just one weekend, since the distances are relatively short and flights are affordable. Just earlier last week, Ryanair released tickets between the UK and some European destinations starting from just £5 one way. The offer was valid until midnight only, but Ryanair releases such deals from time to time, so it's possible to score cheap tickets if you keep an eye out.

There are plenty of interesting weekend-trip destinations, but this time let's talk about Rome – one of the most

fascinating cities I've visited. I went there on a cold weekend in early December last year. Well, it was cold in London, but Rome welcomed me with mild Mediterranean weather and unforgettable sights. What amazed me the most were the majestic remains of ancient buildings, distributed all across the modern city and responsible for its charm. Impossibly grand, they were built without any modern technology and managed to survive for centuries.

Since I arrived in Rome on a Saturday afternoon and had to leave Sunday night, I didn't have much time to explore the city. But I was determined to make the most of it and committed to a busy weekend. I wasn't going to miss out on anything – this might be my first and only time in Rome for all I know! The very first place I visited was the Vatican City – the smallest country in the world and home to the Pope. It boasts St. Peter's Basilica, the Sistine Chapel, and museums with famous works of art. Since the

place was closed for sightseeing on Sunday, I rushed to see everything on the short Saturday afternoon I had left. Unfortunately, being a still-inexperienced tourist, I managed to fall straight into a tourist trap. It was one of those guided walking tours, advertised on the street: I was told the lines to Vatican are very long and there was no way I could see everything by the closing time. So I

“I arrived in Rome on Saturday, and left on Sunday, so I was determined to make the most of a busy weekend”

gave in and bought a €40 tour instead, which was supposed to let me cut the line and give me enough time to look around properly. However, the

tour wasn't really worth it (or at least I was unlucky). The guide would just mumble something, which was impossible to hear most of the time, and still didn't manage to show us everything in the museums. So coming in late and without a guide might have been the same experience, only much cheaper! Regardless, the Vatican was very pretty and well worth seeing, especially if you're into art. You can also participate in Sunday Mass with the Pope in St. Peter's Basilica or Square. The tickets are free but need to be collected at the ticket office in advance. However, the museums are closed on Sundays, except for the last Sunday of every month, when the entry is also free.

But my Sunday was dedicated to sightseeing in Rome. Coincidentally, I was there on the first weekend of the month, when entry to Coliseum is free. The queue was very long but moved quite swiftly. The Coliseum was worth the wait anyway, especially given the free entry, which also included

entry to the Roman Forum and Palatine Hill. I also visited the Museum of the Risorgimento that offers a mesmerising panorama of the city. Since I had some time left, I walked the lively streets in the city centre, and visited the famous Trevi fountain and the Pantheon on my way.

However, the visit

“I completed my trip by taking a walk along the river Tiber after a slice of pizza, and back to the Coliseum, which was beautifully lit up”

to Italy wouldn't be complete without feasting on pasta and pizza. I was recommended a bakery called Antico Forno Roscioli that offers a

variety of delicious pizzas. It's more popular amongst the locals than tourists and is therefore cheaper. Since this place was close to the River Tiber, I completed my trip by taking a walk along the river and back to the Coliseum, which was beautifully lit up for the evening.

BEWARE: tourist traps! I cannot stress this enough. Street sellers are very persistent and will do anything to get your money. During my visit, many were pestering the tourists in the queue to the Coliseum, offering the overpriced 'jump-the-line' tickets, when the entry was free that day anyway. Though the tours were real, it's still a huge rip-off. But the most infamous example is the people aggressively trying to sell flowers, souvenirs, toys, and whatnot to anyone passing by. If you touch any of that, you'll be pressured to pay. Some might even start a friendly conversation with you, try to shake your hand and slip something in it, and then demand money. So be vigilant and stay safe!



St. Peter's Basilica, in the Vatican // *Edita Pileckyte*

FOOD

food.felix@imperial.ac.uk

Grub's up! *Felix* Food's guide to campus food

It's just gone midday, campus is heaving, and you've got a fiver burning a hole in your pocket. Let our Food Editors Alice Davage and Chun Yuan Hii take you on a culinary tour of where to get some decent food.

1. JCR



The canteen with blue tables has a standard deli selling fancy baguettes and a canteen with all the normal lunch grub (boxed sandwiches, crisps, etc.).

Pieminster sells gourmet pie and mash. A little pricey but sometimes they do discounts so look out for those. They offer a range of gravy, including vegetarian and red wine flavoured. Apparently, "the mash is lit" – not my words.

I pretty much survived off the steamed buns that Far East sold for £1.80ish during first year. Cheap, filling, and healthy. So popular that it always had a ridiculously long queue at lunchtime filled with loyal customers. I am sad to say that Tanpopo has now replaced it, which is good in its own right, but just not the same. The snacks, such as Gyoza (Japanese dumplings), will set you back about £2.50. For a more filling lunch you can pick up some Katsu curry or teriyaki salmon, which of course is more pricey than the snacks, but perhaps worth it if you're a big Katsu fan. Tanpopo also display their menu on TV screens: how high-tech of them.

2. LIBRARY CAFÉ

One of the few locations on campus that actually serves barista coffee. Perfect for those all night study sessions when the instant (well, automatic-machine produced) coffee that is most commonly found on campus just doesn't satisfy the needs of the caffeine addicts. They are easily spotted in a crowd: look out for the people that walk around campus like zombies if denied their daily fix. Thank God the Library Café is open until 23:00 on weekdays. Lots of last minute lab reports and group work would suffer were it not.



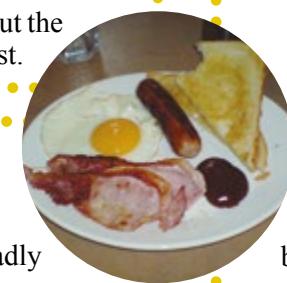
Their range of sugary treats is also surprisingly good. My personal favourite is the red velvet cheesecake. It is, however, deceptively named: it is in fact a (delicious) red velvet cake with the buttery biscuit base of a cheesecake (subtle throwback to that vintage meme). Admittedly, the name 'red velvet cake:cheesecake hybrid' may be too long to fit on a label, so I'll forgive the mislabelling on this occasion and praise the culinary creativity instead. The triangular chocolatey, nutty, fruity, caramelly things are also yummy.

If you find yourself staying back unexpectedly late on campus (poor you), you may be heading to the Library Café to fill a hole in your rumbling stomach. For best value for money, opt for a jacket potato. Warming, filling, and cheaper than buying a sandwich if you choose to only have butter with it (costing just over £1). The full meals are far more expensive, costing in excess of £4.

Shout-out to the staff who make an effort to decorate the place for special occasions. This week you will find a real Halloween pumpkin on top of the dessert glass cabinet and spider web paper chains hanging up. Cheers for that.

3. SCR

People are still bitter about the removal of cooked breakfast.



4. H-BAR

Just for postgrads, so sadly I have never eaten here. Apparently, the lecturers eat here to avoid bumping into their students over lunch. Fair enough.

5. SAF CAFÉ

A popular lunch venue for students of all disciplines, not just the medics and life scientists (yes, it is their building too). Although, this is mainly due to the lack of needing an ID card to enter the building and the comfy sofas hidden behind the staircase. Its popularity has led to massive queues at lunchtime. So a word of advice, buy your food before the stampede of medic freshers descend the front staircase at 12 o'clock and please, oh please, have your ID card ready at the till.

The coffee machines have had an upgrade since last year and with it comes an upgrade in prices too. Personally, I think the fancier machines are worth the slight added cost. The coffee tastes better and the cappuccinos have better foam. Plus, the hot chocolate, weirdly named 'dark chocolate', is very rich and therefore better than most machine hot chocolates, which can be tasteless/taste of powder, if powder can have a taste.

For the healthier amongst you, the SAF Café also sells a range of smoothies. One of them features kale. No surprises there really.

A friend of mine made the following bold claim, "the cheese Cornish pasty is better than Greggs."

FOOD

food.felix@imperial.ac.uk

11. BEIT: 568/UNION BAR

They sell a large range of food from curries to burritos. The cheesy curly fries have a cult following. Members of arts societies that rehearse in Beit practically live off them. It was actually suggested that I write "An Ode to Curly Fries" to accompany this article; not this week I'm afraid, but watch this space. The nachos come covered in a mountain of dip and cheese. I am rarely able to finish the nachos-for-one myself, and usually end up sharing it with friends who eagerly reach for the bowl when I admit defeat, so I can't imagine how big the nachos-for-two is. How do they fit it in a bowl?

Remember your table number when you go to the bar to order and bring your ID card. They will ask to see it and it is no fun pushing back through groups of people in order to fetch it from your bag, just to dive back through the throngs to return to the bar.



10. COLLEGE CAFÉ

The overflow café for business school students when they want to branch out from their underground Business School Café next to the metal cylinder. It has outside seating on Dalby Court, which is well-used when the sun is shining and therefore not very often. Good barista coffee.

9. FUSION 54

What's that queue for? You might have never heard of it before, but I bet you've seen the long queue snaking out of a little outlet right opposite the Union shop, squeezed between JCR and SCR. Aptly called Fusion, this shop sells a variety of Western and Eastern food with a heavy Indian note. Meal options include pasta, fried rice, and biryani rice. If you're a vegetarian, fret not: vegetarian dishes are served every day, varying from arrabbiata penne to pilau rice with lentil curry. The menu changes every day so you'll never get bored! A box costs £3.95 and you can mix and match whichever dishes tickle your fancy, even if it's pouring a spoonful of chicken curry over the creamy pasta. No judgement at all. Sandwiches and wraps are also available and will be toasted on order. Favourites include beef pasta bake, coconut rice, and shashlik wraps.

8. QUEENS TOWER ROOMS

2-course meal for £6?

Queens Tower Room is famed for its value for money – where else could you get a main, a side, a drink and a dessert/soup for under a tenner? There are several counters: Wok, Main, and Copper Pots, where they sell differently themed food. Quick review: Wok is edible but meh, rice from Copper is disgusting, criss cross fries are amazing. The desserts are the best part – all the cakes and fruit bowls you can choose from. QTR's daily menus are posted on Imperial's website and a great way to try to stay awake in a boring lecture is browsing through them. Thinking about lunch will keep you awake. Wait, maybe that's not such a good idea...

6. FARMER'S MARKET

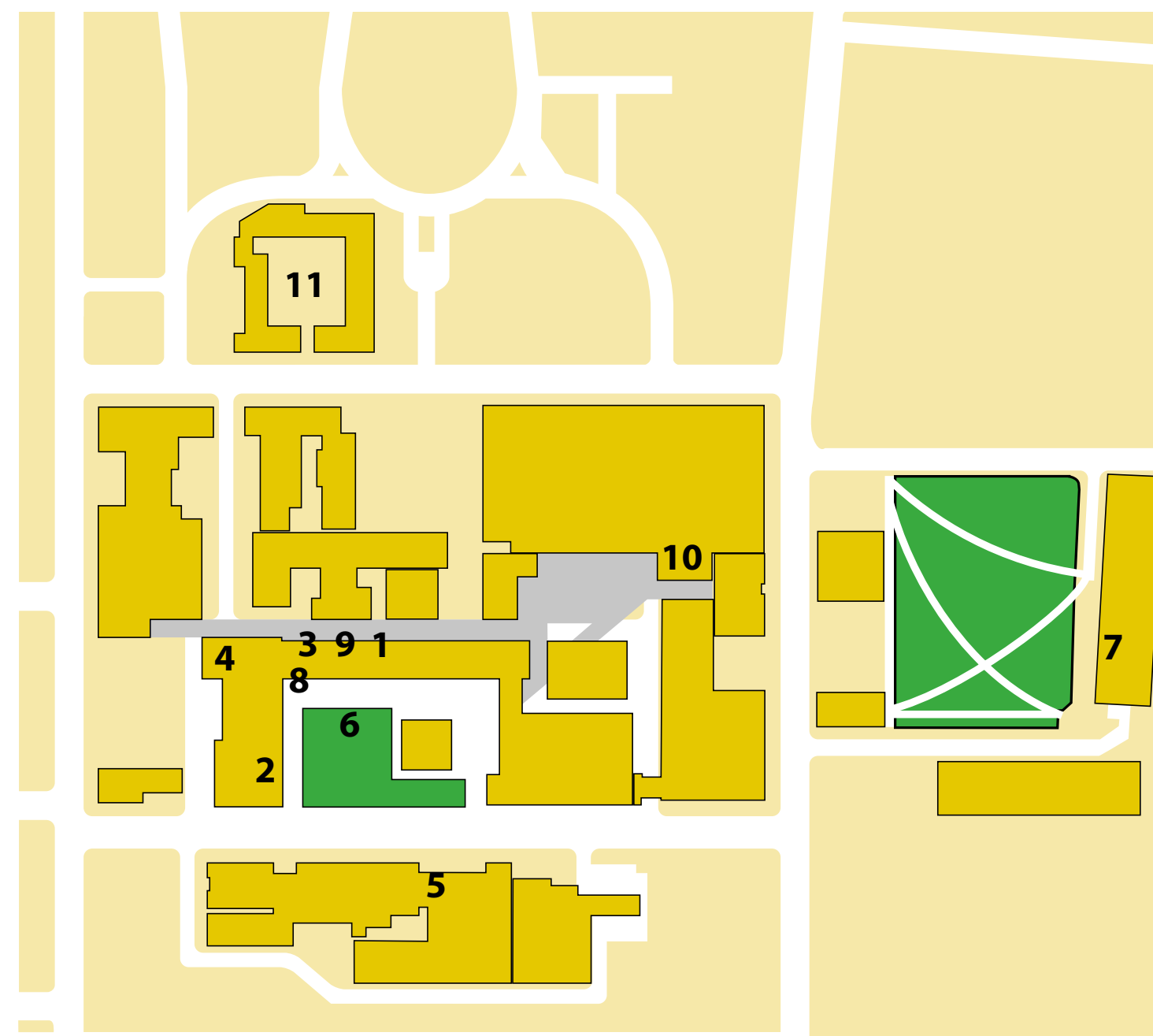
Unfortunately, the farmer's market only takes over the area around the Queen's Tower on Tuesdays, but I thought it deserved a mention regardless. Calling it a "farmer's" market is a bit of a stretch as it doesn't sell very much fresh farm produce i.e. fruit and veg. Instead, it sells fancy lunch street food (similar to the food markets found at Camden Lock and by the live music venue on Portobello Road), which we all probably prefer anyway, so no harm done. Like most trendy markets, there is a bias towards organic, vegan, and gluten free food.

It can at first seem a bit expensive, but most of the portion sizes for meals are big, particularly for the curries, paella, and other foods cooked in a wok. So either go hungry or share with a friend is my advice. It also offers seasonal food, for instance the autumnal pumpkin lasagne, which has an oddly sweet edge but is balanced with savoury parmesan cheese which somehow works. The pizza is tasty but messy, so get a paper plate and sit down; otherwise, you are going to end up with toppings all over your t-shirt.



7. EASTSIDE

Similar to the union but with a classier vibe and a bit more expensive. If you fancy a break from the chaos of the union and have the urge to eat somewhere with a more defined restaurant-like ordering system, then Eastside may just be the place for you.



Documentary screening: The Refugee Diaries



MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2017 | 18:15 - 19:30

Blackett/Physics LT2

We are screening the BBC documentary series The Refugee Diaries with FREE BEN AND JERRY'S ice cream!!!

After his home was bombed, Thair fled civil war in Syria searching for a safer life. After a terrifying journey across Europe, and months in the Calais Jungle, he eventually made it to the UK. BBC Three follows Thair and his dream to restart his studies that were cut off by the war.



what's on

Don't forget to keep an eye on our page to keep yourself updated with all the stuff that's happening! We have amazing things coming up. Have a look on our website, here:

imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on

Club, Society & Project Accreditation Scheme Focus Group



WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2017 | 17:00 - 18:30

Meeting Room 4, Union Building, Beit Quad

Introducing Student Activities' pilot scheme for 2017/18 - the Club, Society & Project Accreditation Scheme!

Due to be launched in the Autumn term we are looking for volunteers to provide feedback and input on the scheme including:

- Criteria
- Branding
- Rewards
- Promotion
- Timescales

Please sign up here: <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on/event/5388> if you wish to attend. Refreshments will be provided.

Please note: sign ups close Tuesday 07 November, 12.00 PM

advice centre

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Stressed? Talk to someone. We're here for you, get in touch!

advice@imperial.ac.uk

020 7594 8060

imperialcollegeunion.org/advice

CLUBS & SOCIETIES

felix.clubsandsocieties@imperial.ac.uk



IC Gospel Choir feeling the spirit at My Old Dutch // IC Gospel Choir

BAKING SOCIETY

Imagination, enthusiasm, and happiness are at the heart of Bake Soc. We are a friendly, social society welcoming students of all abilities – from those who have never used the oven to those who are ready to enter the *Great British Bake Off!* We host fortnightly, themed potlucks where you can meet new people, share recipes, and eat an assortment of tasty treats, as well as monthly outings to bakeries around London. There will also be exciting workshops from gelato production to cookie chaos!

We always welcome ideas from members so whether you want to go to a chocolate factory or go on a bakery crawl, just speak to us and we'll see what we can whip up!

And last but not least, 'Creative, Spontaneous Baking' (CSB) is also encouraged – ever thought of just making up your own recipe from scratch? 130g flour or 200g? 4 eggs or 5? Now's the time to experiment! The best original recipes by members of the club will be featured in the official Bake Soc recipe book at the end of the year. Join us and get baking! And if you have any questions, feel free to contact us at baking-society@imperial.ac.uk!

DANCE IMPERIAL WORKSHOP WEEKEND

Dance Imperial's (DI) Workshop Weekend is back. This year EIGHT different societies have come together to provide

you with a weekend full of amazing classes.

In addition to normal classes taught by Imperial students, we're lucky enough to have professional instructors for Beginners Belly Dance, K-Pop, Charleston, and West Coast Swing. This is a great chance to attend professionally taught classes at a bargain price.

Come to as many classes as you like, you can drop in and out, go to your regular classes and try out new styles.

Plus if all that dancing wasn't enough, on the Saturday we have a social with FREE PIZZA from 8pm and drinks at the union after that. You must have attended at least one class to be eligible for the free food, but with the classes being such good value for money it is definitely worth it!

More information for the social can be found on the event page (<https://goo.gl/BeNbfq>).

Classes can be bought online in advance from the Union website as well as on the door! DI members get reduced rates, and best of all membership to DI is free, so join to take advantage of cheaper classes. The pricing for the workshop is as follows:

Student taught class: £3 (DI member) / £4 (non-member)

Student taught 5 class pass: £12 (DI member) / £16 (non-member)

Professional taught class: £5 (DI member) / £7 (non-member)

Professional pass: £16 (DI member) / £20 (non-member) - covers ALL classes taught by professionals

The Facebook event

(<https://goo.gl/vAV4TN>) has all the most up to date information so definitely check it out. Let's get Imperial dancing!

§

IC GOSPEL CHOIR

Imperial College Gospel Choir is an energetic and fun-loving family. We are a non-auditioned choir and no formal singing experience is necessary. All we ask is that you bring your passion and enthusiasm – we can help with the rest. We are also looking for band members, so if you play an instrument and want to accompany a choir, we'd love to have you.

Rehearsals are on Monday evenings from 18:30 – 20:30 (venue included in weekly emails)

and you are free to join at any point in term. We have our own Christmas concert in December and perform at other Christmas concerts inside and outside of Imperial. Later in the year, we take part in the annual University Gospel Choir of the Year competition, have our Easter concert, and also perform at culture society shows. So, if you are keen to challenge yourself and perform, you are welcome, but if you just want the community and to build up your confidence singing, you are also welcome.

You can email gospelchoir@imperial.ac.uk to join our mailing list or if you have any questions. You can also like our Facebook page (Imperial College Gospel Choir) and follow us on Instagram (@[icgospelchoir](https://www.instagram.com/icgospelchoir)).



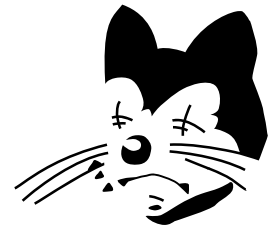
Watch out for them on the next series of GBBO! // IC Bake Soc

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

Nothing planned other than writing up lab reports and shovelling curly fries into your mouth?

Then why not check out some of the cool stuff that's on this week!

	MONDAY 6 TH NOVEMBER	TUESDAY 7 TH NOVEMBER	WEDNESDAY 8 TH NOVEMBER	THURSDAY 9 TH NOVEMBER	FRIDAY 10 TH NOVEMBER
	<p>DOCUMENTARY: THE REFUGEE DIARIES</p> <p><i>Student Action for Refugees</i></p> <p>18.15-19.30 Blackett LT2</p> <p>Student Action for Refugees is screening the BBC documentary series <i>The Refugee Diaries</i>, which documents one man's journey to the UK. Free Ben and Jerry's ice cream.</p>	<p>SEMINAR: DR. PATRIK JONES</p> <p><i>Synthetic Biology Society</i></p> <p>18.00-20.00, CAGB LT300</p> <p>Dr. Patrik Jones will be giving a fascinating talk on the development of advanced biofuels. Beer and pizza will be served!</p>	<p>CHORAL EVENSONG</p> <p><i>IC Chamber Choir</i></p> <p>17.30-18.30, Holy Trinity Church (Prince Consort Road)</p> <p>IC Chamber Choir will be partaking in a choral evensong at Holy Trinity Church. Come along for an evening of quiet reflection – admission is free, and all are welcome.</p>	<p>IMPERIAL COLLEGE SPEAKERS MEETING</p> <p><i>IC Speakers Club</i></p> <p>18.15-20.15, Huxley 140</p> <p>Imperial College Speakers Toastmasters Club helps undergraduate and post-graduate students improve their public speaking, critical listening, and interpersonal skills! Free for guests!</p>	<p>H-BAR BIRTHDAY</p> <p><i>ICU</i></p> <p>18.00-01.00, h-bar (naturally)</p> <p>Your favourite place to go when you've had enough of undergrads turns 4 this week! Come and celebrate with a silent disco and birthday cake!</p>



Hangman



Crowds at the lecture were shouting "give me das Nichts, or give me death" before being removed // Flickr

Existential Dread Society event evacuated after overcrowding

HANGMAN

NegaFelix

Editor-in-Chief

With lab reports and deadlines looming, students are turning to the void for emotional support.

Campus security had to be called to the Union Dining Hall last night, after a huge number of people attended Existential Dread Society's first event of the term.

The event, a lecture from Dr Michael Chalet, Professor of Continental Philosophy at UCL,

entitled "Why your life has no meaning, and nobody will really remember your name", proved so popular that precautions had to be taken to prevent injuries. Eye-witnesses report

"As people are beginning to get snowed under with lab reports, they want to hear an hour-long explanation of why nothing we do matters"

that around 500 students turned up to the event, resulting in overcrowding; two students required medical assistance after overheating and/or having an existential crisis. We spoke to Timothée Lyons, Chair of Existential Dread Soc, who thought the large attendance was a reflection of mounting pressures this term: "We didn't have a massive amount of interest during Freshers' Fair - people looked at our name and presumed we were just another consulting company. However, as people are beginning to get snowed under with lab reports and coursework, it's understandable that so many people would want to hear an hour-long explanation of why nothing

we do ever really matters." One attendant Felix spoke to said that the lecture had inspired her to change her working habits: "before I was taking everything very seriously," she said, "but now I've been reading lots of Heidegger, and I've realised: my degree is only part of the everyday chatter, the gerede, which keeps me from being able to see the void that exists at the centre of life. So I've stopped going to lectures. I'm now much more content about my insignificance in the universe, which puts the 2:2s I'm getting into perspective." A fresher who spoke to us said, "I bought my membership in the first week because I thought it sounded cool, but I didn't

really get it. Now that I've handed in my first lab report though, I can see the endless abyss stretching out before me, extending to the horizon." Existential Dread Soc was formed early last academic year, and has spent the past 12 months in the Union's New Activities Incubator - Lyons described the wait to be an independent club as "an excruciating torment of nothingness." The society are capitalising on this renewed interest by reaching out to other student societies across campus: DramSoc have already started rehearsals on a season of Sartre and Beckett, while Fashion and Design Society have begun work on a capsule collection

inspired by Simone de Beauvoir's headwear. Not everyone was happy with the society's success, however: we spoke to one member of Union Council, who was deeply distressed by the events. "Everyone is putting forward papers about how democracy is a shallow facade, designed to hide the futile scratching at life's surface we all engage in on a daily basis," he said, "but nobody will take the time to review my update to the Mascoty Policy." Existential Dread Society will be running a 'Kierkegaardians on tour' trip to Denmark early next year. Activities include discussions about what pain can teach us, meditations on the meaning of angst, and paddle-boating.

HANGMAN

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College to cut down on hours of sunlight at campus

HANGMAN

NegaFelix

Editor-in-Chief

With lab reports and deadlines looming, students are turning to the void for emotional support.

Earlier this week, Imperial College announced wide-ranging changes to their Campus Sunlight policy, which will come into play at the end of this month.

As well as ending British Summer Time, which reset the clocks to Greenwich Mean Time



An artist's impression of what Imperial's sun-disk would look like // Flickr

last Sunday, a number of changes are being made to sunlight hours and micro-climates across Imperial campuses. Sunlight Services - the branch of College that deals with

artificially manipulating the weather - reported that Imperial has finished construction on its sun-disk: a large circular solar panel, measuring 1.2 km in diameter, which will

perpetually hover above the South Kensington campus.

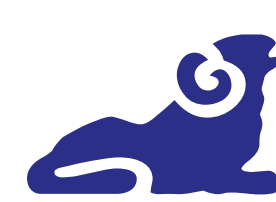
As a result of the sun-disk, the College will be cutting the available sunlight hours down to

three: sunlight will be available between 10-11am and 2-4pm each day. In a statement accompanying details of the changes, the College made it clear that "since our inception, Imperial has not made any direct money out of the sun, so we are excited for this new development." They also stated that the new solar panel would "provide all the energy needed to power our world-class research, while also allowing us to divest from fossil fuels."

Felix spoke to Harry Thibault, Vice Provost (Cloud-Seeding and Sunshine), who explained that the reduction in daylight hours would be a benefit to students:

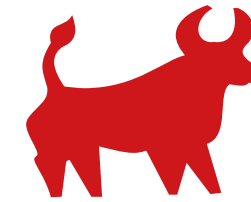
"numerous studies have found that students will innately seek warmth and comfort. By reducing both the levels of sunlight and the temperature across campus, students will be driven by instinct towards the warmest place on campus: Imperial Central Library, which will be floodlit at all times. We predict that these changes will result in a sharp improvement in exam results."

The Deputy President (Welfare) will be distributing vitamin D tablets to all Constituent Union Presidents later this week, to avoid another outbreak of rickets across campus.



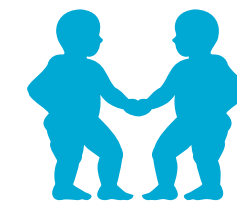
ARIES

This week you are a Constituent Union mascot, and you just want to be left in peace to slowly rust in a corner. Please.



TAURUS

This week the barista in the library cafe shows off his latte art skills and draws you a little love heart. Enjoy it, it's as close to intimacy as you'll get.



GEMINI

This week you are the horoscope writer, and a joke made last week about the library cafe closing leads to countless panicked emails. You revel in your power.



CANCER

This week you attempt to use what you've picked up in the first month of a chemistry degree to make your own fireworks. You're only slightly singed, but it'll take a while for your eyebrows to grow back.



LEO

This week interest rates go up, so you phone your friend in the Business School to explain what this means for prices in SAF Café. Big mistake, you can't get them to shut up.



VIRGO

This week you hear everyone talking excitedly about a new hack-space in White City. You wonder why they changed the venue of Union Council.



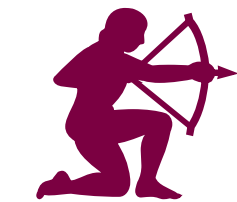
LIBRA

This week you hear about the plans to pay the GSU President, and try to make your own claim for remuneration, citing 'an invaluable contribution to student life'. The Union tell you your meme pages don't count.



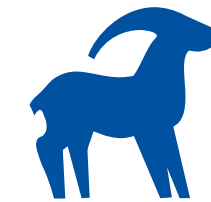
SCORPIO

This week you decide to relive your fresher experience and move back into halls. The student hub lose your application, so you spend a week sleeping in the library. Still a better commute than Woodward.



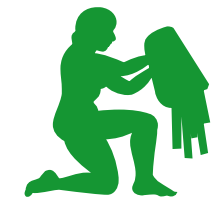
SAGITTARIUS

This week you find out that your Constituent Union mascot is a giant thermometer, and you feel deeply, deeply ashamed.



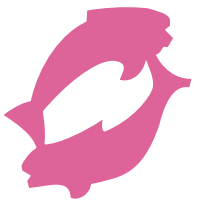
CAPRICORN

This week you hear about the Alumni Visitor Centre, and how you can get free Rubicon, but then you find out you don't count as an alumnus if you were kicked out.



AQUARIUS

This week you decide to start taking divestment seriously, beginning by not turning up for your 9am lectures. These buses aren't good for the environment, ya'know.



PISCES

This week you're a multinational organisation, and you get upset that an article a student paper has published might hurt your reputation. Don't worry, we already all think you're evil.

