

First published in 1949, Felix is released weekly during term time and is distributed around Imperial's London campuses. All students, staff, and alumni are welcome to contribute to the paper.



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Imperial raised record £97.5 million in philanthropic donations

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Above: Imperial's South Kensington campus. Below: petri dish as part of research through the Fleming Initiative. Thomas Angus for Imperial College London

DECLARATION

At *Felix*, we believe that it is always in the interest of the students to be in the know. Transparency in the workings of the College and the work of your student representatives is key. Therefore we, the *Felix* Editors, on behalf of the team promise that:

We will, to the best of our ability, tell you the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

We recognise the endless possibilities of AI in aiding journalism in matters such as finding sources or brainstorming, but we stand by the power of humans using their own voices. All our articles are AI-checked by the latest softwares available.

We will keep your confidence and will only publish something you say to us if you have explicitly said that we can.

We will work to expose unfairness and discrimination in all forms that it takes at the College. We will treat fairly any article sent to us, regardless of point of view, and do our best to work with you to prepare it for publication.

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EDITORIAL

You're the voice, try and understand it

Editor-in-Chief

CRISTINA CARRILLO

Nowadays, to share an opinion is easier than ever before. But to understand why we hold it, and if it is truly our own, has never been harder. In this effort lies the power, and responsibility, of having a voice and using it: our willingness to question what we believe, to listen to those who disagree, and to not let this effort stop us from speaking out on what we think deserves attention.

Social media encourages us to have something to say about everything. Its tendency to reward polarisation feeds us the rhetoric that hiding behind a screen means our words don't have consequences. What could be thought of as an antithesis to this is *Felix*.

As a student publication, the newspaper's voice is an amalgamation of all those who have, and will, write articles to express their thoughts on what happens around us. While these individual voices often echo and harmonise with each other as a result of our shared Imperial student identity, by no means do they always align. This is the beauty of applying critical and independent thought to our natural desire to join a conversation.

Journalism, in itself, implies this learning, thinking, disagreeing, and rewriting, without the unhealthy urge to have the final word in conversations on thorny topics where this is so often impossible (an idea lost to people's aggressiveness in TikTok comment sections and X threads).

To think *for* yourself doesn't mean to think *by* yourself, though.

Historian and philosopher Hannah Arendt argues in her essay "Truth and Politics" that independent judgement depends, in part, on our willingness to encounter different perspectives. Retreating from difficult conversations in the name of neutrality, or interpreting impartiality as the absence of competing perspectives, risks jeopardising the very environment in which independent judgement becomes possible. In simpler words – no argument is perfect, but expressing it and actively learning from those who disagree

makes it stronger. The space for this to happen within our community is what we hope *Felix* to be.

Social media, too, has demonstrated the power of giving people a platform by bringing communities together and drawing attention to events that might otherwise not result in as many productive conversations. *Felix* endorses this: whether on your *for you page* or in our weekly issues, the value of having a voice depends on the respect with which you approach phrasing your thoughts and your readiness to put effort into voicing what you think is right.

You do not need to have all the answers before you contribute to *Felix*, nor should the effort to understand everything become a reason to remain silent. If you have been on social media the last few weeks, you can probably guess the several events that have prompted us to reflect on the relationship between facts, opinions, and platforms.

The title of this editorial is a lyric from the John Farnham song "You're the Voice", an 80s anthem for personal agency and expression against social injustice and violence:

"We're all someone's daughter
We're all someone's son
How long can we look at each other
Down the barrel of a gun?"

- The Felix Team

VACANCIES

We are looking for new contributors! Felix is a volunteer-run newspaper open to all Imperial students. Its survival depends on your enthusiasm!

If you're interested in one of the roles below, or want to contribute in any other way, email us at felix@ic.ac.uk.

Copyeditors

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- Comment
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- Science & Technology
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- Film & TV
- Food & Travel
- Sports



NEWS

Imperial to launch 40-hour professional certificate in AI for staff and students

Editor-in-Chief
CRISTINA CARRILLO

The College will launch a new AI in the Workplace Professional Certificate on 26 October, designed to help staff and students apply AI tools in professional settings. The AI Strategy Committee announced the launch at the In Conversation with the President event on Wednesday. The flexible, stackable 40-hour certificate will comprise of four courses, the first of which launching this month and the following scheduled to be rolled out during the first quarter of 2027.

Course one, “AI Foundations for Professional Contexts”, aims to explain key AI concepts, define appropriate uses and recognise AI’s limitations and risks. The second course, Responsible AI for

Professional Practice, is scheduled for January 2027, followed by Applied AI & Agentic Workflows in February and AI in Practice Project in April.

Sustainability is said to form an “essential” part of the second course, addressing environmental implications of AI use.

Imperial is developing a feature for its dAIsy AI platform that will allow users to compare the environmental impact of different large language models (LLMs) through a impact-measuring leaf icon.

The announcement comes alongside efforts to expand the AI tools available across the university. The College is working on incorporating a Gemini model into dAIsy and is reviewing Google NotebookLM for its use with Canvas course materials, with a Business School pilot scheduled for the start of term. Microsoft



President Hugh Brady speaking in New York for the showcase of the Global Biosecurity Network. Imperial College London

Copilot remains the fully managed, default option, while Claude models remain in case-by-case use, awaiting due diligence.

During the discussion, Imperial addressed concerns about dependence on large commercial AI providers, as audience members expressed risks that

these models could become prohibitively expensive or unavailable. The university responded its investment in its HX3 data centre in Woking forms part of its strategy to develop greater in-house AI capability, including its own core large language models.

Global Biosecurity Network presented by Imperial experts in New York alongside UN General Assembly



Biosecurity in the Age of Engineering Biology session in New York. Imperial College London

Editor-in-Chief
CRISTINA CARRILLO

Members of the Network and Imperial leaders such as President Hugh Brady gathered in New York and Boston for international discussions on how the world should prepare for future biological threats in matters of policy, biosecurity, tech, and research.

The Global Biosecurity Network launched in June, bringing together researchers working across areas including infectious diseases, synthetic biology, artificial intelligence and food security.

The initiative aims to provide a

space for multidisciplinary research to collectively focus on biosecurity threats, surveillance, and response.

The Network was showcased ahead of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), which included a roundtable ahead of the High-Level meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response.

At the roundtable, Imperial’s leading Biosecurity experts weighed in on emerging risks and threats.

“Biosecurity is a multi-faceted problem, with a wide range of stakeholders. Getting all these together in a single conversation needs to happen more often,” commented Imperial Professor Karen Polizzi from the Department of Chemical Engineering.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

Editor-in-Chief
CRISTINA CARRILLO

The university has raised £97.5 million in philanthropic donations between August 2025 – July 2026, the most ever in a single financial year. It marks a 26% increase from the previous year’s £77.5 million in donations as the university continues to attract private funding for research and student support.

In the previous financial year, philanthropic donations totalled £77.5 million, equivalent to approximately 5.2% of Imperial’s £1.49 billion institutional income. The university reported a £98 million surplus in 2024-25.

More than 80% of donors were Imperial alumni, donating a total of £9 million (~9% of total).

Donations have been put towards a wide variety of initiatives with the goal of fostering “an environment where scientific imagination and discovery can flourish,” says Professor Hugh Brady, President of Imperial College.

More than £44 million have been donated to advance research initiatives, representing 45% of the total donations. Some projects that will benefit from these donations include the new Professorship

in Health Emergencies at the Fleming Initiative, due to open in 2028. The Centre was founded as a partnership between Imperial College London and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust to build solutions to antibiotic resistance, where laboratory research is combined with co-designing solutions with patients and policymakers.

Mental health research is also being supported. The Imperial Centre for Interventional Psychiatry and Psychedelic Research has received a donation from The Cadogan Charity that can support the next decade of research at the Centre by financing early career researchers.

Silwood Park Campus received £11.34 million in November 2025 from the Michael Uren Foundation to build a new controlled environment research facility, allowing research on how impacts such as climate change affect organisms in models of their natural habitat.

Over £15 million were donated toward scholarships and student support. Global investment manager Qube Research & Technologies provided a donation that will finance 20 full PhD scholarships and the new Imperial x QRT Labs, a research center founded in collaboration with Oxford and Cambridge that launched earlier this year.

Autumn Elections Open

What are the Autumn Elections?

The Autumn Elections are the first of three election cycles that take place each academic year, run by Imperial College Union. These elections elect all undergraduate year representatives, constituent union officers, liberation and community network committees, CSP committee members, PGT Representation Committee, and Union Council representatives.

Autumn Elections Timeline

- Nominations Open: Monday 5th October (12 pm)
- Nominations Close: Tuesday 13h October (12 pm)
- Candidate Briefing: Wednesday 14th October (12 pm)
- Manifestos Due: Thursday 15th October (12 pm)
- Campaigning Begins: Friday 16th October (12 pm)
- Voting Opens: Monday 19th October (12 pm)
- Voting Closes: Thursday 22nd October (2 pm)
- Complaints Deadline: Thursday 22nd October (5 pm)
- Results: Friday 23rd October (5 pm)

How do I nominate myself?

You can nominate yourself on EVoting online. To find out more information about the Autumn Elections, including the Candidate Handbook, drop-in information, and so much more, check out the ICU’s website:



World University Rankings 2027

Imperial retained eighth place, Asian universities surpass mainland Europe for the first time.



Editor-in-Chief
CRISTINA CARRILLO

Imperial has retained eighth place in the 2027 *Times Higher Education* (THE) World University Rankings, remaining among the world’s top 10 universities since 2023.

The ranking places Imperial behind the Oxford (first for a record of 11 years in a row), MIT, Princeton, Stanford, Cambridge, Harvard, and Caltech. The College also remains the UK’s third-highest ranked institution.

The wider rankings point to a shifting global higher education landscape, as 2,297 universities across 118 countries and territories were included in this year’s rankings.

Asian universities surpassed mainland European institutions for the first time: China’s Tsinghua University rose to 11th, overtaking Switzerland’s ETH Zurich. Peking University placed 13th, and the National University of Singapore 15th, marking the first time three Asian universities have appeared in the global top 15.

Turnitin user agreement changes postponed after Higher Education sector backlash

Turnitin postpones user licence agreement changes until at least September 2027 amid pushback on their proposed use of student submissions to develop AI tools.

Editor-in-Chief
CRISTINA CARRILLO

From coursework to final year theses, most students and instructors know the similarity (and recently, AI) detector Turnitin. Heavily integrated into the global education system, it serves more than 71 million students worldwide, and according to Uni Compare, it is used by 98% of UK universities.

The Turnitin end user licence agreement (EULA) is the legal contract approved by students and instructors that describes how assignments are submitted, stored, and processed.

The platform announced changes to the agreement in July, now confirmed to not be updated before 1 September 2027.

Proposed updates allowed the possibility of Turnitin using student submissions to improve or develop AI tools. This raised a fear amongst several Student Unions and student communities that their work would be used to build models that could be commercialised, or used

without specific consent over whether their work can be used to train models or not, as Turnitin is often required as a submission portal by universities.

Following these concerns, Turnitin released a statement confirming it does not, and has no plans to, use student submissions to train generative AI/large language models (LLMs), like their Clarity AI assistant.

Turnitin have also stated that it may use anonymised submissions to improve its detection and assessment tools, which are themselves AI models, but that do not generate content based on student submissions. While any changes have been currently postponed, Turnitin has confirmed they intend to revisit implementing these updates next year.

Higher Education institutions and Student Unions have expressed concerns and taken action to different extents.

Despite Turnitin postponing any changes, University of Southampton are moving away from the platform completely, choosing not to renew their contract after the 2026/27 academic year and “will begin phasing out the use of this service immediately”. They are

also considering alternative options, with current instructions suggesting the Originality check option on the BlackBoard Assignment tool.

University of Aberystwyth lobbied alongside professional body and charity UCISA against the proposed changes. They remain contractually tied to Turnitin until July 2027 as they continue to evaluate if BlackBoard Assignment could be a viable alternative.

University of Loughborough welcomed Turnitin’s assurances and reaffirms their commitment to data transparency and academic integrity a statement on similar notes than Imperial’s: “There are no changes to how Turnitin is used at Imperial during the current academic year (2026-27), but we use this year to continue to engage with Turnitin regarding any changes they are planning to understand the implications for our community”.

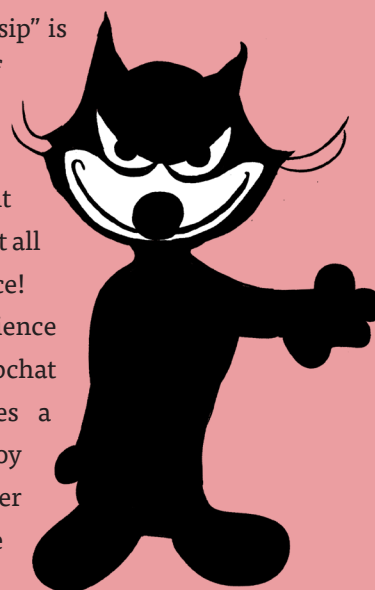
There is no mention in Imperial’s statement of alternatives to Turnitin that could be used in case any unwanted EULA changes come into place.

Wanna be the first one to know what’s up around here?

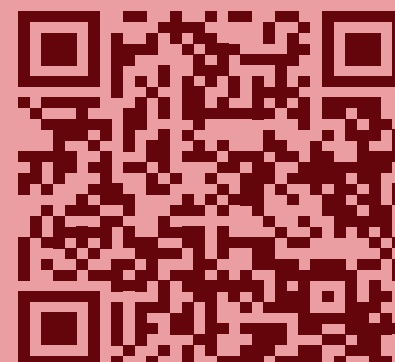
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When it comes to campus news journalism, “organised gossip” is actually not that far off! If you love taking the pub chat about recent events a bit too seriously, and want to investigate the “why” of it all at Imperial, this is your place!

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SCIENCE

Problem Solved?

OpenAI publishes a solution to the Navier-Stokes equations.

Science Editor
HANNA IRZYK

On the 8th September, OpenAI published a pre-print on their website, claiming to found a solution to the Navier-Stokes existence and smoothness problem. While the validity of their solution is yet to be confirmed officially, some experts are hopeful.

What is the Navier-Stokes existence and smoothness problem?

The Navier-Stokes equations are a set of partial differential equations which describe how fluids move. Fluids are substances which take the shape of the container they are in and cannot resist external forces applied to them, unlike solids, which can respond by compressing or springing back. Fluids include air, blood, and water and a lot of modern technology rests on being able to predict how they will behave.

$$\frac{\partial \mathbf{u}}{\partial t} + (\mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{u} = -\frac{\nabla P}{\rho} + \nu \nabla^2 \mathbf{u} + \mathbf{f},$$

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{u} = 0.$$

The Navier-Stokes Equations.

Slight problem, though: the equations we use to do predict fluid's behaviour are not solved. In fact, they are such a challenge that solving them for certain cases is one of the Millennium Problems. These are a set of foundational, incredibly difficult and complex mathematical problems, set out by the Clay Mathematics Institute, who offer a million-dollar prize to the first person to solve them.

The engineering and mathematical approaches to solving the equations are different, as engineers can continue to build and design products that work without knowing a complete solution. The mathematical approach is to prove whether solutions exist.

The existence and smoothness problem is the question of whether the equations can produce a 'singularity' where the fluids speed up infinitely within a finite amount of time. This is obviously physically impossible and therefore is a point at which the equations stop modeling fluids.

How does OpenAI claim to have solved it?

OpenAI claims that their system produced a proof that an initially smooth fluid can develop a singularity, producing a vortex where the center speeds up while narrowing. According to their statement, they created this proof using an internal model trained on mathematics problems. They began work on all the Millennium problems and reoriented to solving the Navier-Stokes problem when a set of agents solved an easier version of the problem where a term had been removed. Then, they formalised it in Lean and verified it using their GPT-6 agent.

Are they correct?

The OpenAI proof has not been peer-reviewed. The Clay Mathematics Institute released a statement declaring they "[share] in the excitement of the global mathematical community as we contemplate the announcement that the Navier-Stokes problem has apparently been settled" and that they are completing

a slow, rigorous and careful verification process. The Millenium Prizes are only awarded two years after a proof has been published.

Imperial's Professor Kevin Buzzard, a mathematician who works on formalizing mathematical theorems in Lean, a program for verifying theorems, says that he is "confident that the argument is correct even though [his] area of specialty is not fluid dynamics and so [he] cannot check the details of the technical argument [himself]". Further confirmation by experts will take time, as the material is complex.

Controversies

In an update to their original statement, OpenAI claimed to have started working on the Millenium problems on September 1st in part due to a rumour that they were being solved by two mathematicians, Tristan Buckmaster and Levent Alpöge. Buckmaster works at NYU, while Alpöge works for Anthropic.

12 hours before OpenAI published their pre-print, Buckmaster and Alpöge printed their proofs for three related problems, including an alternative version of the simplified problem OpenAI claims their agents first solved. Buckmaster published an accompanying text.

In it, he apologised for the quality of the proofs, claiming they were rushed by undue pressure from OpenAI. Alpöge is an employee of Anthropic, a rival company, but their attempts to solve the problem were a personal project, without any financial backing from Anthropic.

Buckmaster alleges that OpenAI presented him with an ultimatum, telling him he could either post his



AI possibly solving the Navier-Stokes problem will lead to revolutionary changes in the way mathematics is done.



Left:
Tristan Buckmaster.
CC NYU



Right:
Levent Alpöge.
CC Wikimedia
Marlene Ruff

Open AI logo.
Open AI



A vortex in water.



results in advance followed by OpenAI publishing their Navier-Stokes pre-print. Alternatively, he could write a paper explaining the Navier-Stokes solution, crediting an internal OpenAI model and not Alpöge.

Buckmaster alleges that OpenAI prompted their agents after finding out about the work that he and Alpöge were doing. He also states that OpenAI told him that the model did not ‘look up user data’ but did not receive an answer regarding whether the model had access to the sessions he and Alpöge had in Codex, an OpenAI software where they went through most of their work.

He claims that it “‘raised red flags” that OpenAI had prompted their agents to take an unconventional approach which the mathematicians had chosen to focus on.

He points out that credit for progress on the problem should go to Diego Córdoba and Luis Martínez-Zoroa, whose work he and Alpöge had used as a starting point.

OpenAI insists that no user data was used in the training of the internal model.

The future

AI and mathematics have coexisted for a very long time. Especially in the past decade, extensive progress has been made in helping computers parse human-made mathematical proofs. If the OpenAI proof is verified, it would be the first time a program has produced a proof that solves a problem of this magnitude. Undoubtedly, AI possibly solving the Navier-Stokes problem will

lead to revolutionary changes in the way mathematics is done.

This has led to discourse among experts and some are upset: 28 Field medalists signed a statement arguing that AI companies use AI simply to produce solutions, without creating an understanding of how those solutions are achieved and failing to publish the exploration of the problem in the field. The statement alleges that by simply spitting out the final product, the AI companies fail to “develop understanding and the ability to formulate new questions and ideas”, which they say is the spirit of mathematics.

The statement is explicitly not against the use of AI in mathematics, stating that AI has the potential to enhance and accelerate interesting study, and that mathematics needs to adapt to the changes it brings.

This is an opinion shared by more AI-supportive voices. Professor Buzzard “[suspects] that several of the reactions we are seeing from the [mathematics] community are people going through the five stages of grief” and that the challenges brought up by critics, including the incomprehensibility of the proof and that it might not develop human understanding, will be addressed by future AI models.

Currently, AI models remain trained by proofs created by human mathematicians. These models would not exist without a clear, shared understanding of mathematical and computational concepts.

WE Innovate team awarded the Julia Higgins Medal

The medal recognises the teams' contributions in supporting women entrepreneurs at Imperial.

Science Editor

ISABELLA DUCHOVNY

The WE Innovate Team was awarded a Julia Higgins Medal for their contributions in supporting women at Imperial, via their pre-accelerator programme targeted towards female entrepreneurs. The Julia Higgins Medal “recognises individuals, groups, and departments that have made a significant contribution to the support of women in academia at Imperial,” per the Imperial website.

According to the 2019 Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship, only 1 in 3 UK entrepreneurs are women. Female-only businesses receive less than 2% of all UK venture capital investment, per the 2025 Invest in Women Taskforce Annual Report.

The programme aims to address the gender gap in entrepreneurship by offering female-led ventures early-stage support, mentoring, funding, and networks.

“As a pre-accelerator, [WE Innovate] empowers women before their ventures are revenue-ready – where they’re most likely to opt out,” reads the WE Innovate website. “WE Innovate challenges outdated stereotypes, redefines who leads in innovation, and has become a national model for inclusive entrepreneurship.”

The programme runs from January to June, beginning with 25 teams in the first phase. At the end of the programme, the top five teams compete in the final pitch competition for a share of a £30,000

prize. The programme has supported over 550 women, who have raised over £88 million in funding after the programme’s end.

“It’s about encouraging female

Imperial in 2014, has been successfully adapted and delivered by university partners across the UK. As the consortium continues to grow, the WE Innovate team hopes to create opportunities for

and there you go,” said Allen-Turner. “There’s a continued follow-up and opportunities that come through after the programme.”

The programme is part of the Enterprise Lab, and Allen-Turner emphasises the support available for students within the larger Enterprise Lab ecosystem. They have a co-working space, as well as hosting standalone ‘How To’ masterclasses, Entrepreneurship Cafes, and community colliders. Students can also book an Idea Surgery, to discuss an idea and receive suggestions about what to do next.

“We really want to encourage even just interest or conversations with people who maybe aren’t quite sure they’re ready,” said Allen-Turner.

Applications for the upcoming WE Innovate cohort are currently open on their website and close on 16 November, 2026. Students can expect to hear back 16 December, and the program begins on 21 January, 2027.

The application is very straightforward: “I’ve thought about this problem. This is a solution I want to create to solve it,” said Allen-Turner. “We are looking for people who are genuinely excited to start that kind of journey.”

The WE Innovate team is offering sessions in October for students to learn about the programme and how to make their application stand out.

Allen-Turner is looking forward to seeing the teams’ growth: “It’s going to be really lovely to see how everyone develops and what they gain from it.”



Asha Bakhai pitching Snitch, an accountability-based screen time app, at the WE Innovate Grand Final in June 2026. Simon Jarratt for Imperial College London

founders to root that idea and run with it,” said Samantha Allen-Turner, the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Coordinator for the WE Innovate programme.

The programme also gives female founders an opportunity to build a network of people in the founder space. “You understand the power of networks and the power of being in a space of people who are going through the same thing as you,” Allen-Turner said.

The programme, which started at

founders from across the network to connect, collaborate, and support one another.

Students attend biweekly training sessions and receive one-on-one business coaching. The programme gives them access to masterclasses, workshops, and guidance to develop their ideas, both during the programme and after. In phase 2 of the programme, teams receive a £500 equity free grant to further support this idea development.

“It’s not just, ‘Here’s the programme

BUSINESS

Why is Monzo considering anything but a London listing?

Monzo considering Nubank as a buyer over listing in London is more of a verdict on the stock exchange than the company.

Business Editor
PIERSON CHU

Monzo, one of the United Kingdom's most successful fintech companies, is reportedly in talks with Nubank for an £8bn-£10bn buyout as an alternative to a round of funding as they look to expand further into Europe. This is a company that may seem like a prime candidate for an IPO: it has seen revenue rise by 40% year over year in addition to a third consecutive year of profitability. Yet, they are teetering further away from a listing on the London Stock Exchange and are choosing to take on private capital instead. Although the FTSE is up roughly 10% this year, the LSE has been losing ground as an exit venue for companies for multiple years. According to Morningstar Pitchbook, London fell out of the top 20 global IPO venues in September 2025, and domestic listing of UK companies has fallen to 46% as of 2025, down 35% since 2019. The latest reports about Monzo are just the newest reflection of the structural issues existing in UK markets.

For a bank to grow, one of the most important things regulators look at is the capital held against its balance sheet. This capital acts as a safety net for when the loans a bank makes to generate its profits go bad. The core profit driver of a traditional bank is the net interest margin: banks pay depositors at one interest rate and lend to borrowers at a higher one, pocketing the difference.

To avoid putting depositors at risk, regulators require a bank to hold a minimum amount of its own capital for every pound it puts at risk through lending. More specifically, in Monzo's case, it lends out only about 10p of every £1 deposited. This is in comparison to roughly 95p at Lloyds while at Nubank, lending alone generates 41% of gross profit. Closing the gap means lending out far more of its deposit base, meaning they need more money to back the lending. To bring in that money, there are typically three main routes: a private funding round, a sale, or an IPO. The choice often comes down to which route values the company highest while aligning with the board's other priorities, such as independence, certainty and liquidity.

Of the factors mentioned, the LSE may be the least desirable. Goldman Sachs found that not only does the UK trade at an extreme discount to the US but that this is also true for every single listed sector. Additionally, UK pension funds have also reduced their allocation to UK equities from 53% to just 6%. This discount and falloff in demand may deter Monzo from listing in the LSE as they may not be able to raise the amount of capital needed. Additionally, Nubank presents a unique synergy with Monzo. After an acquisition, Nubank's comparatively larger balance sheet can aid in Monzo growing its lending business while Nubank can break into the European market through Monzo's UK and European banking license.

Beyond Wise and Flutter's recent moves to delist or move their primary listings away from the LSE, Monzo showcases two more angles to look at the decline. Firstly, this was a company that many thought to be a guaranteed win: home-grown, profitable, openly preparing for an IPO, and championed by the city. So, if the LSE ends up losing out on Monzo, what does that spell for the future listings that are harder to win? Additionally, the IPO drought is being compounded by a mergers and acquisitions (M&A) wave. "At the current rate of M&A, there will be no UK stock market left in 10 years" says Clive Beagles, fund manager of the JOHCM UK Equity Income Fund. This highlights a recent trend where private companies are increasingly choosing to rely on private capital or a sale as the exit for founders and investors. PitchBook

reports that the number of European venture-backed companies with a high probability of listing has fallen by more than 40% since the start of 2025, even as IPO markets recover globally. Additionally, soaring venture debt has led to much higher valuations that limit the IPO window of private companies. Therefore, over 85% of recent venture-backed exits have been through M&As rather than listing, according to J.P. Morgan.

The deserting of domestic equities by pension funds and insurance coupled with the growth of private market funding presents a loop that will continue to pressure the LSE. Although the FTSE is up 10% this year, if the LSE is unable to revitalise demand from investors, it will continue to lose out to its peers for listings.



London Stock Exchange
Kaihsu CC BY-SA 3.0

COMMENT

P(doom): Does Silicon Valley think

The TESCREAL ideologies and shaping the substrate of AI safety

TESCREAL, as defined by its creators

Transhumanism

The belief we should develop and use “human enhancement” – genetic modification, prosthesis/cybernetic augmentation, bioengineering new senses and adaptations – to lengthen lifespan, improve cognition, and enable productive leaps.

Extropianism and Cosmism

Sub-movements of transhumanism prioritising space colonisation and expanding the types of human mind. Cosmism derives from Soviet communalism but has been utterly individualised by AI thought leaders.

Singularitarianism

Not a philosophy but a position; that there will be a self-improving intelligence that approaches or achieves singularity, the all-consumption of data.

Rationalism

A revival of 17th century philosophy centring the primacy of deductive reason; prominently endorsed and discussed by Eliezer Yudkowsky and his forum LessWrong to develop “coherent extrapolated volition” – aligning AI to what wiser, smarter, and more reflective humans would do.

Effective altruism (EA)

Using reason and influence to improve the world, founded by Will MacAskill and Toby Ord of Oxford. Spawned **e/acc**, or **effective accelerationism**, as an opposing reaction from developers and investors like Marc Andreessen.

Longtermism

A philosophical standpoint spun out of MacAskill’s community that uses strict mathematical utilitarianism to prioritise many future lives at the expense of some inconvenience in the present.

Comment Writer

DHRUV MATHUR

On 16th September 2026, an X account linked to the Department of War posted a photo of US President Donald Trump with a fist raised and overlaid onto the Pentagon captioned, “the United States will NEVER be an effective altruist country.” How did we get here?

Effective altruism et al.: inventing the future

Silicon Valley’s technocrat circles have been radically propelled to new ideologies after the past few years pressed against breakthroughs in Artificial Intelligence. A few voices, including Nick Bostrom, Eliezer Yudkowsky, Peter Thiel and Sam Altman have become mainstays of the philosophy, business, and political world with almost no forewarning.

In 2023, philosopher Émile P. Torres and computer scientist Timnit Gebru coined “TESCREAL” (transhumanism, extropianism, singularitarianism, cosmism, rationalism, effective altruism, longtermism) to label the chronological sequence of philosophies materialising from these spaces, laying out an underlying and overlapping set of subcultures that developed out of the same traditions and assumptions. Moreover, Torres and Gebru warn that these assumptions have been rendered invisible to the public by the nature of the tech industry and its internal circulation, and invisible to TESCREAL’s own proponents by way of complete and unquestioned immersion. The genealogy traces the views taken almost for granted in the present-day among technocrats: transhumanism, extropianism, cosmism, and most worryingly singularitarianism as driving factors for business decisions and government policy alignment.

The Rationalist community seeded a great deal of the movement’s present form with Yudkowsky’s forum *LessWrong*, which spawned dozens of thought-provoking and hotly-debated thought experiments and utilitarian manifestos, from the concept of infohazards (see Roko’s basilisk) and Pascal’s mugging to *there’s no such thing as a tree* (phylogenetically) and Yudkowsky’s own *Sequences* (a blog series spanning cognitive biases,

Bayesian statistics etc.). Nick Bostrom, progenitor of ideas such as anthropic bias and existential risk (X-risk), co-authored a landmark paper with Yudowsky titled “The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence.” The pair have become the outspoken basis of how Silicon Valley sees the brain, AI safety, and libertarian interpretations of “maximal good”.

Money where your mouth is

Praise has been showered onto the rationalist community by some of the world’s foremost intellectuals, business magnates, investors and world leaders: Stephen Hawking, Bill Gates, Elon Musk, Peter Thiel, Peter Singer, and – until just last week, apparently – Donald Trump and JD Vance. Effective altruism’s more active spinoff, longtermism, has further led to the creation of various organisations by Will MacAskill and his collaborators. Most notable among these is his venture 80,000 Hours, founded to help high-skilled and socially conscious graduates find high-impact careers to match. The organisation’s work is commendable, but it is also due diligence to note that it declares itself in receipt of over £45 million in donations from private (and sometimes anonymous) donors. One of their most public collaborators was Sam Bankman-Fried of FTX, another EA proponent who was revealed to have committed massive fraud by redirecting close to \$8 billion in cryptocurrency to his own trading fund and various ostensibly charitable organisations.

Moreover, there has emerged a powerful countercurrent to the cautious and regulatory approach of EA in the form of e/acc (effective accelerationism), propelled in August and September of 2026 to the forefront of AI safety discussions as companies with trillion-dollar combined market caps elevate this philosophical debate to the stage of international business. Jensen Huang of NVIDIA and Trump have called for rapid AI growth, in lockstep with Attorney General Todd Blanche, who rejects the regulatory role of the Department of Justice. Marc Andreessen, Silicon Valley veteran and Trump advisor, together with Canadian physicist and ex-Google engineer Guillian Verdon, launched the e/acc movement as a direct rejection of “doomer” effective altruists, arguing that long-term growth will follow singularity.

it's in a death spiral?

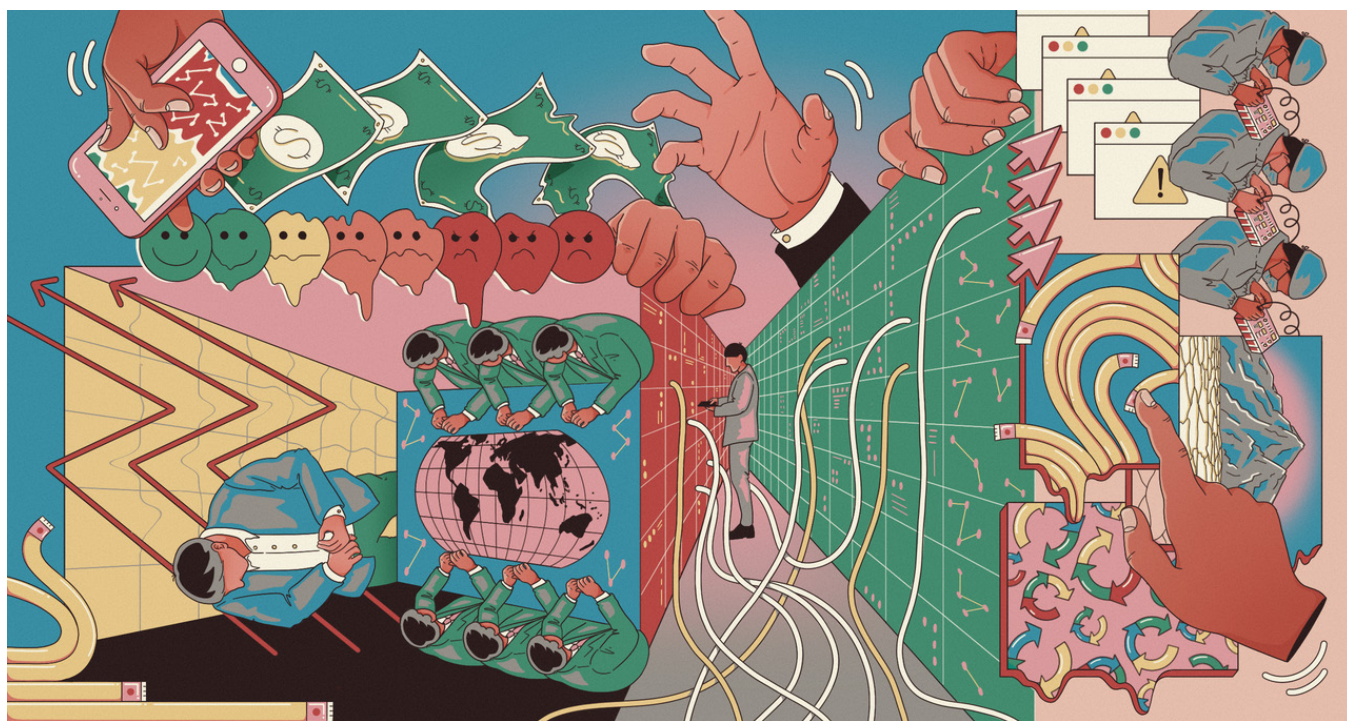
When the magician waves his left hand, look at the Right

Let's go back to 80,000 Hours and the EA spokespeople (namely, those at Anthropic). Jaan Tallinn, with a stake in both, has spent the past week at the UN General Assembly saying he was "completely terrified" of the direction of the industry. He stands to make potentially billions of US dollars from Anthropic's expected Initial Public Offering, whenever it comes. He defends the holding: "I'm not investing to profit from LLMs – I'm investing because I'm terrified AI will kill us all." I am tempted to believe this isn't untrue. Tallinn is one of hundreds of senior experts in Silicon Valley worried about X-risk, and playing dice with the future – the probability of doom, or P(doom), to put it in odiously Bayesian terms.

Whatever his motives, it is easy to question what game the bulk of the pro-regulation AI camp has been playing on the policy and corporate stage. It is likely that in supporting the creation of a regulatory body, the EA camp will land themselves a seat at the table and accordingly coordinate their own strategic development. Another motivation – as Sam Altman and Trump have both alluded to from opposite camps – is one that concerns National Security. The pro-regulation AI camp seeks to limit Chinese market share, which critics warn could also simultaneously (a) deal a deathblow to open and small-scale models by excluding them from data centre infrastructure and (b) create a critical and highly incorporated network of surviving AI companies that become Too Big to Fail (i.e. having to be being bailed out of unprofitable or predatory pricing strategies in the short term).

No questions asked

Beyond the game of chicken being played by both camps is an underlying layer of mutual understanding – an understanding the general public is neither privy to nor shares in its entirety. All of these massively empowered players (with a few exceptions) are Right-of-Centre Americans whose strategic thinking greatly hinges on the assumption that AI will become powerful enough to control and improve arms systems, management, surveillance, and will dictate scientific progress. Almost all the privileged voices are – interestingly but not surprisingly – physicists, computer scientists, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists,



An artist's interpretation of AI leaders influencing the world. Clarote & AI4Media

and philosophers of the analytic variety. The most common criticism of all of these groups is their egoism and obsession with efficiency, often based on abstract or unjustified metrics.

Verdon, Bostrom, Elon Musk, and MacAskill's cofounder Benjamin Todd (as well as other quiet leaders in AI like Jeff Bezos) often loudly mention their training in physics as a signifier of their ability to question from first principles the very foundations of Silicon Valley. One major first principle the movement has never quite been able to shake is an inextricable link to eugenics amplified by the institutional chauvinism of their respective departments. Bostrom infamously claimed on his mailing list that "blacks are stupider than whites" and invoked racial slurs – although he has denounced this past, now 30 years ago. Still, the very foundations of modern transhumanism are derived from social Darwinism; longtermism in particular (as espoused by Musk and MacAskill) always and proudly prioritises abstract future lives and future production over "present-day inconveniences". The contradiction of this noble thinking is that by-and-large its most visible proponents are bound to deliver quarter-over-quarter returns, another unquestionable first principle in the Silicon Valley paradigm.

The development of these technologies, including the massively promising concepts of brain-machine interfaces and extended healthspans, has been marked by an undercurrent of negligence and poor harm consideration. Musk's Neuralink tests have had their

successes marred by alleged abuses in animal testing; and the most visible 'healthspan' engineer Bryan Johnson is a billionaire who has gained notoriety for spending millions on a private team of doctors, drawing his family into biohacking, and having confirmed (if quickly terminated) links to Jeffrey Epstein.

So, does Silicon Valley think it's in a death spiral? The more pertinent question might be whether it needs the rest of us to believe it is. Sincerity and self-interest aren't mutually exclusive, but the AI alignment sphere is plagued by a massive conflict of interest among key voices. SNL recently parodied Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei and his brand of 'cautionary' development: "AI is not a weapon. It's a tool... a tool for building weapons. And I urge you to urge me to stop." With this increasingly visible and contradictory framing, regulation becomes less a question of neutral oversight and more clearly a battle to set the dynamics of entry and existence. Trump's crusade against effective altruism is yet another manifestation of the public and the market being asked to weigh acceleration against annihilation, with no room to question the consolidation of power in the process. Whether or not an AGI, superintelligence, singularity or strong AI (matching, exceeding, recursively improving beyond, or becoming conscious at the level of human understanding) comes to be, the intellectualised and virulent debate on AI safety currently serves mostly as a smokescreen for down-to-earth conditions and actual, ongoing decay in the fallout of reckless development.

Adding fuel to the fire

Burnham blunders into a war in which the UK should not get entangled

Comment Editor
JUSTIN KU

Last Tuesday, the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) announced that the RAF would deploy a single Voyager air-to-air refuelling aircraft to “support Saudi defensive activity” in Yemen. Specifically, they will be refuelling Saudi Arabian combat aircraft that are shooting down missiles and drones fired by the Houthis, a rebel group in Yemen backed by Iran. This will be Prime Minister Burnham’s first military deployment.

The justification

The Houthis have recently made major gains, wresting control of much of the Red Sea coast from Yemeni government forces. This allows them to fire on ships passing through the Bab al-Mandeb strait, a maritime chokepoint that handles nearly 10% of global trade. They have since declared a blockade on Saudi shipping, causing global oil prices to rise above \$100 a barrel.

Some weeks ago, drones struck a pumping station on a key Saudi oil pipeline, putting it out of commission. Before the strike, about 4% of the global supply of oil was routed through this pipeline. The MOD states, “It is in the UK’s interest to protect regional stability, protecting vital trade and energy supplies.” To do so, the RAF Voyager aircraft will refuel Royal Saudi Air Force combat aircraft, allowing them to stay in the air for longer and thereby intercept more Houthi attacks.

There is no doubt that further spikes in oil prices will be felt here in Europe, but it is hard not to notice the irony of refuelling Saudi warplanes to secure fuel for the UK. Effectively, Burnham appears to be trying to clean up the spillover from the war with Iran that the US is unable to extricate itself from.

It seems unlikely that British military intervention, especially at such a small scale of just one aircraft, will have any meaningful impact on the global price of oil. However, it comes at a massive cost.

A humanitarian tragedy

Saudi Arabia has been at war in Yemen since 2015, intervening in the Yemeni civil war that has since become a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. In the first five years, the Saudi-led coalition killed 8,672 civilians



A map of the Middle East showing the Bab el-Mandeb and Strait of Hormuz. US Energy Information Administration

and injured 9,741, according to the Yemen Data Project. Per the United Nations, at least 377,000 died overall due to direct or indirect causes between 2014 and 2021. To contextualise this number, that is approximately five times the death toll Gaza has suffered since 2023.

In 2022, the Saudi-backed government and Iran-backed Houthis agreed to a shaky ceasefire. However, since war began between the US and Iran, the Houthis have attacked many American allies, including Saudi Arabia. This has reignited the Yemeni civil war, and the World Health Organisation reports that 838 people have died in the past two months alone.

The Saudi-led coalition, including the United Arab Emirates, has been accused of numerous war crimes. In 2015, the coalition began to impose a blockade that plunged millions of people into famine and contributed to a devastating outbreak of cholera. Somehow, the entire Saada Governorate was declared a “military target”, and Saudi airstrikes have hit hospitals, camps for internally displaced people, and apartment buildings. Medical facilities run by Doctors Without Borders were struck four times in three months.

One of the most egregious examples is the 2016 bombing of a funeral that killed 140 people and wounded 600. After initially denying fault, Saudi forces

confirmed their responsibility and blamed “wrong information.” Even the US government, the world’s foremost expert in ignoring civilians killed by airstrikes, was “deeply disturbed” and stated that their support for Saudi Arabia was not a “blank cheque.”

Despite the international condemnation, Saudi Arabia has not changed its ways. On Sunday, the Royal Saudi Air Force reportedly struck a market in the city of Taiz, killing seven and wounding 40.



Even the US government, the world’s foremost expert in ignoring civilians killed by airstrikes, was “deeply disturbed.”

Saudi Arabia’s domestic track record on human rights is just as bleak. In 2025, it executed 347 people, more than any other country except China and Iran. Historically, these executions have been conducted by mass public beheadings. Saudi Arabia is also one of the



A Royal Air Force Voyager KC3 refuels two RAF Tornado GR4 over Iraq in 2015. Staff Sergeant Perry Aston for the United States Air Force

world's most repressive countries in terms of gender equality and consistently ranks at the bottom of the world in terms of religious, political, press freedom.

It refused to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, claiming it contradicted Sharia, the Islamic law that all Muslims and non-Muslims in the country must adhere to. Additionally, the kafala system that restricts migrant workers' right to leave has been linked to modern slavery. In 2018, dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi was brutally murdered in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, dismembered by a bone saw.



An official review found that there had only been “isolated incidents,” and arms sales resumed the following year.

In 2019 a British Court of Appeal found that the UK government's decision to continue licensing exports of military equipment to Saudi Arabia was unlawful, as ministers had “made no attempt” to consider alleged Saudi violations of international humanitarian law. An official review found that there had only been “isolated incidents,” and arms sales resumed the following year.

This is not to defend the Houthis, who have a penchant for firing rockets indiscriminately at population centres. It goes without saying that they too are repressive and should not be allowed to hold the global economy hostage. That said, it is a travesty that the UK is

continuing to ramp up support for the Saudi regime and its war. Even deploying the RAF to intercept the missiles themselves would be preferable to signalling support of Saudi Arabia and tacitly accepting its flagrant disregard for human rights.

A pointless voyage

Burnham's decision to deploy a single aircraft is pointless. The military effect of a single Voyager aircraft is likely insignificant, the economic impact even more so. Clearly, it is an attempt to signal support for Saudi

Arabia without committing significant resources. Despite sanctioning Israel over its illegal settlements in the West Bank, Burnham does not extend the same logic to trade with Saudi Arabia. Aside from the kingdom's immense oil production, this is also likely due to the expected lack of a domestic reaction: the UK populace is much less aware about the war in Yemen.



Burnham's decision amounts to nothing more than a token of support for one of the world's most despotic regimes, accused of regularly committing war crimes.

However, the stakes are high: in the unlikely scenario that the Voyager is downed, the UK will be dragged into a war it can ill afford to fight. If Burnham is intent on bringing down prices at home, he would be better off attempting to negotiate a ceasefire – or launching an air campaign on his own terms. As it stands, Burnham's decision amounts to nothing more than a token of support for one of the world's most despotic regimes, accused of regularly committing war crimes. It is militarily useless, politically treacherous, and economically inconsequential.



Victims of Saudi-led airstrikes in 2019, which killed over 60 people in a university that had been used as a detention center by the Houthis. Mohamed Al-Sayaghi

FILM & TV

L'homme Bourgeois

“I have doubts about her fidelity, I want you to check, that’s all.”

Film Editor
GRACE MURRAY

Chabrol's *La Femme Infidèle*, or *The Unfaithful Wife*, tells a bourgeois cautionary tale set in sixties France. The methodical thriller depicts the misdeeds of a husband, Charles (Michel Bouquet), after he discovers his wife, Hélène (Stéphane Audran), is having an affair. The passionless marriage between the alluring yet bored housewife and the older, jealous husband is held together only by their son, Michel (Stéphane Di Napoli), whom they “could not live without”. Chabrol's emotional language is spoken through subtleties: the spare dialogue, the icy glances, the clandestine relations.

The film is rigorously crafted with

absolutely stunning visuals, every movement calculated, and every piece of dialogue essential. Beautiful framing is its lifeblood – one particularly striking shot is that of the family eating breakfast in the garden after Hélène was ‘stood up’ by her lover. The family are symmetrical against the backdrop of the Versailles countryside, and the shot is lined with the cerulean blue of the bench along the bottom and canopy along the top. The contrast between the palpable tension and the lush colours is crucial. The shots linger, allowing the audience to sink into the emotional load the characters are bearing.

The tense exchanges, the stoic Hélène, the play of mutually assured deceit are reminiscent of Hitchcock's lesser-known ‘relationship’ works – for all its intellect, there is the frustrating refusal to grant

so much as a glimpse of the characters’ reasoning for their bad behaviour. Obsession must be answer enough. The lack of psychological comprehension could translate into narrative hysteria and a sloppy plot, but Chabrol achieves the opposite. Hélène is so stoic that it leaves the audience begging for even a minor mental breakdown: any sort of indication of how she feels and thinks.

The defining moment of Hélène's character is after she finds a photo in her husband's jacket pocket. The police have been over, her husband's acting strange and she doesn't know why, and now she finds a picture of her secret lover whom she hasn't seen in days. She knows what this means. In, probably, the central shot of the film, the camera follows her as she takes the photo outside and sets it on fire. She drops it on the ground

and the camera swings round with her as she leaves it to become ash. The shot feels so modern and the act portrayed speaks volumes – not only about Hélène's character, but also her relationship with Charles.

The discombobulated yet tense score of disjointed pianos could so easily have marred the uneasy atmosphere, but it augmented it. It gave the long scenes, such as when Charles commits a crime and must immediately deal with the consequences, an injection of energy where they could have felt drawn out for the sake of it. The film is perfectly measured, the relaxed pace never faltering. This pacing is deliberately used to allow the implications of the story to settle over the two central characters – so much of what makes this film thrilling is in the interplay between them: what one knows and the other doesn't. At the close of the film, it seems husband and wife are finally on the same page – the police have come to the Versailles château for the third time, interrupting the first moment the family are truly connected. The closing shot of Hélène and Michel from Charles's point of view as he is being led down the long, winding drive by the officers is beautiful. We see wife and son through Charles's eyes, his gaze never faltering as the camera zooms in on them through the trees and moves with him so that he never loses sight. This shot undeniably makes the film.

For an idea that may seem trite, the film miraculously presents a perfectly realised image that Chabrol sets and then leaves to crack under its own weight, with the violent gesture at its centre the only active rupture. It is so resolutely defiant in its coldness – it nearly freezes out the viewer entirely, yet manages to leave them wanting more.



Stéphane Audran (R) and Michel Bouquet (L) in *La Femme Infidèle* (1969)
Tamasa Distribution

BOOKS

The Vegetarian

A short exploration into Han Kang's 2024 Nobel Prize winning fiction.

Books Editor
DARIGA ATAYEVA

The *Vegetarian* is a short Korean novel by Han Kang translated by Deborah Smith which, described bluntly, follows the self-destructive consequences of a woman's new-born vegetarian lifestyle with the conviction that she will turn into a tree. It's tough to describe in few words and doesn't make much logical sense, and yet, that is what made it captivating for me. It was haunting, even if at times the plot got psychologically disturbing.

We never get to see the story from Yeong-Hye's perspective, the woman in question. Instead, we learn about Yeong-Hye through her husband's voice, Mr. Cheong, then her sister's, In-hye, and her brother-in-law (whose name is not given).

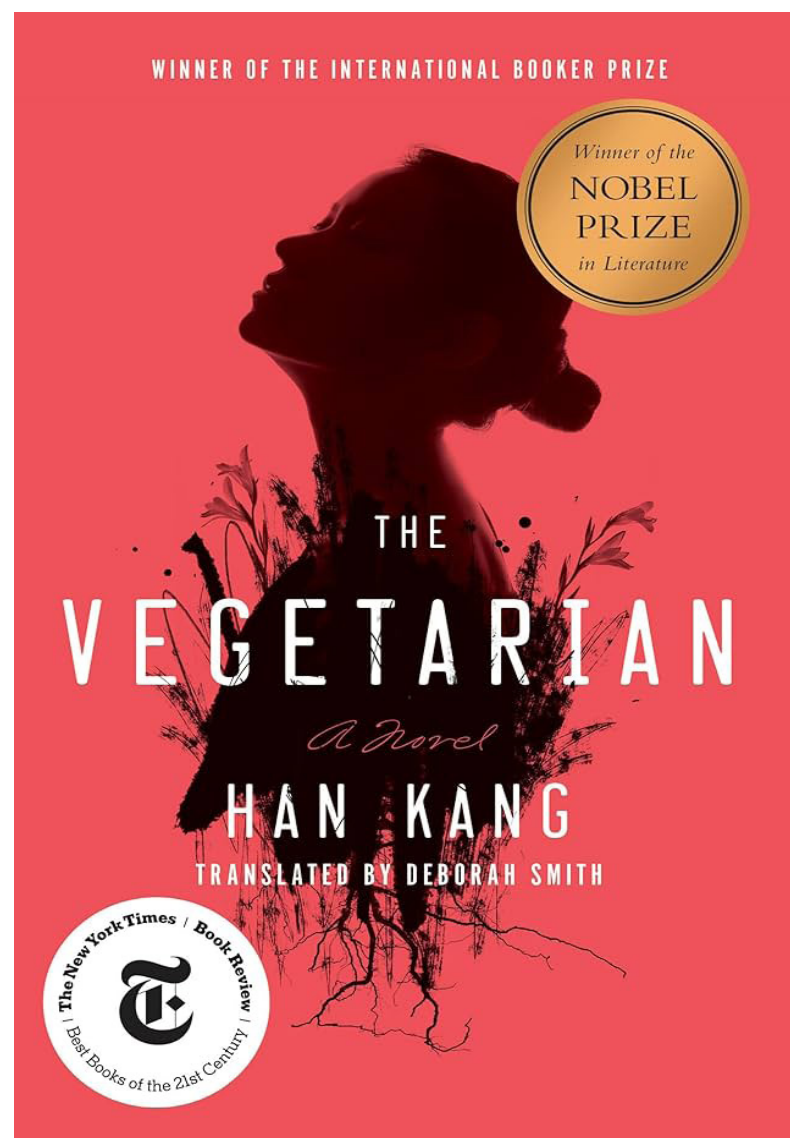
Yeong-Hye lives under her husband's patriarchal expectations, compliant without restraint. However, one night and one dream changes all of that. Yeong-Hye awakes vegetarian. This disrupts the whole context, bothering her husband whose diet inevitably changes as well when Yeong-Hye throws away all animal produce from their fridge. Despite his complains, Yeong-Hye surprisingly refuses to change. She no longer plays her life around what is expected of her and thus breaks every foundation around her. Her family, her husband's sanity, and above all herself. Even at a family dinner and her father's persistent tries, and to the shock of the company, she revolts by stabbing herself.

Her husband, instead of worrying most about Yeong-Hye's wellbeing, worries about how her image will impact his own. Invited by his boss to dinner, Mr. Cheong's main concern is what his colleagues will think about him. This creates a great contrast between the violence of one's inner monologue (in this case Yeong-Hye's view on meat) and the cruel indifference of external expectations.

In other words, your responsibilities towards society are never excused.

Thus, in a way, becoming a tree for Yeong-Hye means becoming reliant only on natural resources, away from societal contact. Mr. Cheong is just one element that showed us from the beginning how acts of violence become cyclical once disguised as expectations.

The Vegetarian is Han Kang's first internationally recognized novel. Han Kang has a particular visual and sensual style that makes the plot themes provocative and captivating. Far from focusing on vegetarianism itself, I found it impressive how she



She no longer plays her life around what is expected of her and thus breaks every foundation around her.



Han Kang of South Korea, 2024 Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature, at the 2024 Nobel Prize week in Stockholm, Sweden. Credits: Dianne Lee

wrote the novel in a way that forces you to look deeper into the “why” instead of the surface level “what”.

With these extreme cases, Han Kang highlights what usually goes unnoticed, that being domestic violence against women and their long-term effects. Deciding vegetarianism, Yeong-hye chooses the only way she believes able to rebel and takes agency for her own life for the first time.

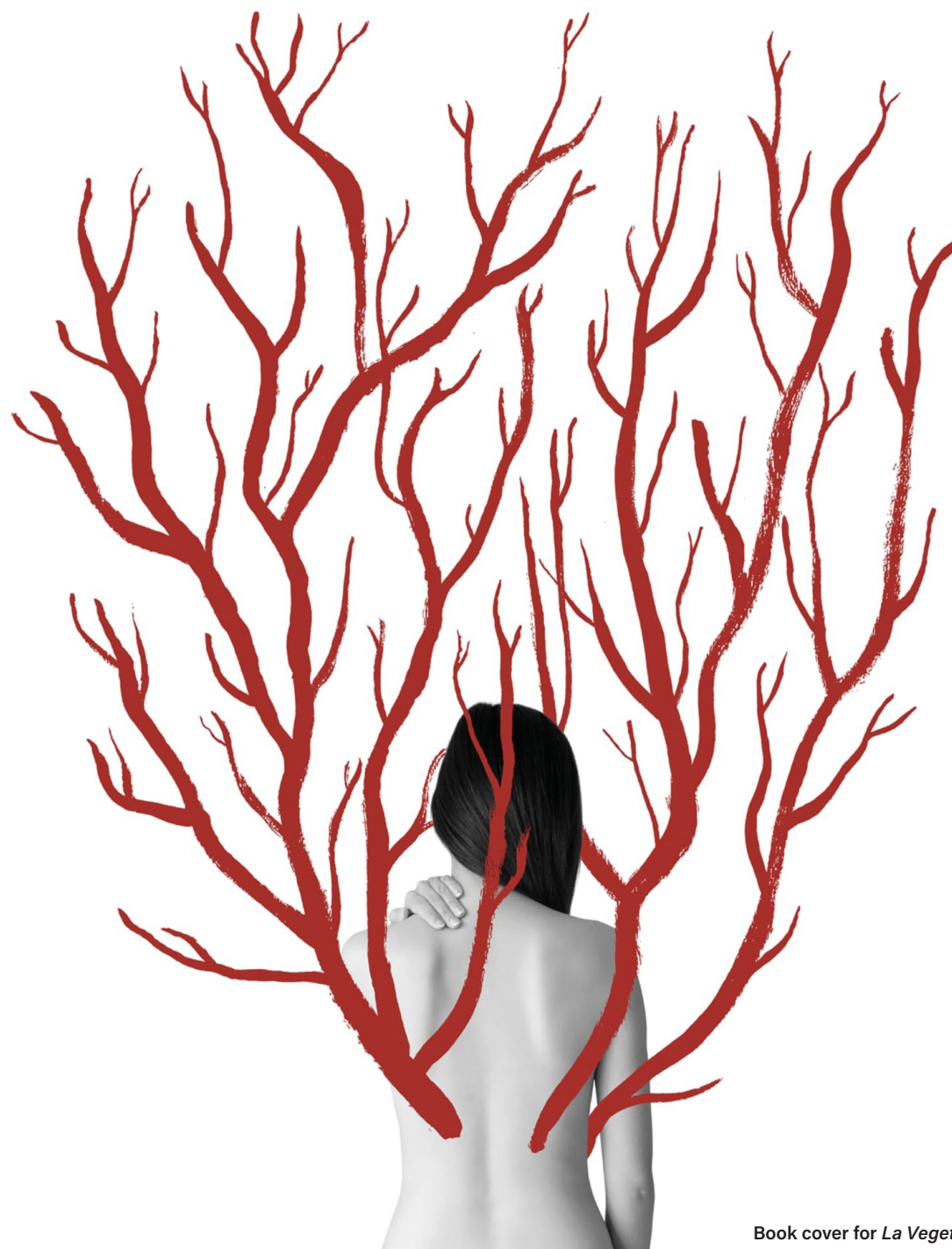
So far, we omitted mentioning two important characters in the novel: Yeong-Hye’s brother-in-law and her sister In-hye. Yeong-Hye’s brother-in-law becomes obsessed with Yeong-Hye’s body and sexualizes her to the point of impelling her to sleep with him on camera, backfiring when In-hye discovers the photos. In-hye then sends her sister to a mental hospital,



Han Kang wrote the novel in a way that forces you to look deeper into the “why” instead of the surface level “what”.

partly from anger but mostly from genuine concern. Among all other family members, In-hye is the one to keep pushing for Yeong-Hye’s recovery, even if everyone else have already given up. But Yeong-Hye’s self-starvation and conviction she’ll turn into a tree persist, and In-hye’s attempts to control this self-destruction, even if stemming from a place of love, highlight the exact issue which led to it in the first place- the lack of personal autonomy in Yeong-Hye’s life.

Ultimately, *The Vegetarian* is a small yet intensive novel that encourages readers to think critically about concepts of control and their limits when it comes to relationships and their own outlook of societal expectations.



Book cover for *La Vegetariana*, Spanish translation for the novel. Credits: Amazon Media

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LIFESTYLE

Pretty Sick: Consuming the Maiden

The romanticisation of tuberculosis, from Byron to my Halloween costume – and the beauty standards that have us in a vice.

Lifestyle Writer
ISSY DANG

On a random, inconsequential day whilst I was zoned out, brushing my teeth with the vigour of someone seeking a sticker from her dentist, I found the perfect answer to a very important question: what will my Halloween costume be this year?

As much as I'd love to crown myself Queen of Halloween, I never quite got over the lack of recognition for my stint as Envy Adams during Freshers. I will be going as... a sickly Victorian maiden, reclining on crisp white linens, wasting away from consumption. Of course, not tuberculosis. I admit it's a specific look, but I only want the full works: ghostly pallor, dark circles, flushed cheeks, and large, haunted eyes.

Huh. Now where have I seen that before?

And herein lies the problem. I said "consumption" rather than "tuberculosis" almost instinctively. It might seem trivial, but it's actually a rather important distinction. Consumption is a pretty word for a horrible disease. Say "tuberculosis" instead, and suddenly I'm back in a respiratory medicine lecture, hunched over my laptop, trying desperately not to let my mind – and hands – wander into a session of online mahjong. The power of "consumption" lies in its romanticisation: disease and

disrepair repackaged as tragic beauty. Consumption is just tuberculosis with better PR.

The irony is that consumption was tuberculosis, long before tuberculosis had a name of its own. "Consumption" came from the way the disease seemed to consume the body, causing severe weight loss and physical decline. It wasn't until 1882 that Robert Koch (of Koch's postulates fame – shout out to every medic reading this) identified *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* as the culprit, handing the disease its modern, far less romantic name. Before germ theory, tuberculosis was blamed on everything from inherited weakness and poor constitution to an almost vampiric slow possession – death wearing a nightgown. It also acquired a hefty dose of stigma along the way: excessive drink, sexual immorality and, naturally, staying up too late. Well, by 18th-century standards, I'm already a third of the way to my costume.

Tuberculosis has haunted us for thousands of years – Egyptian mummies show the tell-tale signs, bones eaten away and left looking like coral – but the disease really peaked in 19th- and early 20th-century Europe. It's a very special boy: for most of history, it appeared to take rich and poor alike. That "appeared" is doing a lot of heavy lifting. The Industrial Revolution brought rapid urbanisation, and as people flocked to the cities, streets and houses grew overcrowded. Combined with poor ventilation and

poverty, this created the perfect stomping ground for bacteria. Funnily enough, *M. tuberculosis* didn't care whether you lived in a tenement or attended high-society balls. What mattered was proximity – far less Millais's Ophelia, far more Central line at rush hour.

Clearly I need consumption's PR agent, because in spite of everything, the poets of the Romantic era were captivated by its... charm? The literature of the time is littered with tragic heroines: beautiful and, crucially, dying. Our fascination with doomed maidens transcends time: a sorrow at the loss of youth, like a withering flower. The Greeks had Iphigenia; the Brontës had consumptive heroines, and consumption itself; we have Effy Stonem, smoking moodily in the corner.



Consumption made women beautiful. It made men interesting.

Consumption apparently came with its own silver lining: *spes phthisica*, or the "consumptive spirit" – the idea that as the body wasted away, the mind grew more sensitive, creative and artistically

inclined. Physical deterioration was the price of admission for genius. Being told you had mere months to live, it was believed, granted a deeper understanding of life's beauty and fragility. A rather pathetic consolation prize for impending death.

Women were the preferred subjects of consumptive writing, but the conversation about consumption and genius stayed squarely focused on the men. Consumptive women waste away to be beautiful – their pain reduced to a spectacle to be looked at and admired. The sick woman becomes almost a figure in a painting: pale, thin, silent, her physical decline recast as the ideal of femininity and its associated frailty. Her suffering is only as valuable as her attractiveness. It strips her of what little agency she had – physically confined to the bed, she is valued almost entirely through her appearance, fading into the background so that her eventual death can serve as an emotional climax for the devastated male lead: a tragedy of youth and loveliness. What is our ongoing obsession with dying women?

The consumptive man, by contrast, is artistically liberated – he is the tormented genius. His suffering has purpose: it transforms art, culture, insight. Consumption completes the Romantic male persona – pale, passionate, artistic, doomed. Lord Byron is the original poster boy for the tortured heartthrob, his real-life persona inconveniently similar to his

own heroes: brooding good looks, sexual scandal, emotional torment. As Lady Blessington recorded him: "I should like, I think, to die of consumption... because then the women would all say, 'See that poor Byron – how interesting he looks in dying!'" Between the bankruptcy, the exile and the half-sister he treated like a plot twist, consumption was arguably the least scandalous thing he ever contracted. Edward Cullen could never – actually, no, he definitely could.

Consumption made women beautiful. It made men interesting.

And yet, somehow, it was a privilege to be consumptive. Well done. Here's your medal. Society policed who was allowed to have consumption – which is funny, because we've had TB since long before we had a word for it. Consumption was

reserved for the white and wealthy, to shore up its status as an artistic affliction. In the 19th century, European and American doctors believed that phthisis could only be inherited by sensitive, intelligent minds – and therefore, obviously, only white people could get it. Some white physicians argued that consumption was a disease of "civilisation", meaning it could not be contracted by the "uncivilised", thereby deepening its racialisation. The supposed logic was circular: consumption was a disease of the refined because the refined were the ones imagined as susceptible to it. Many colonists even believed that communities in South Asia and Africa must have contracted a different disease altogether. I guess everyone else just had TB. Talk about gatekeeping.

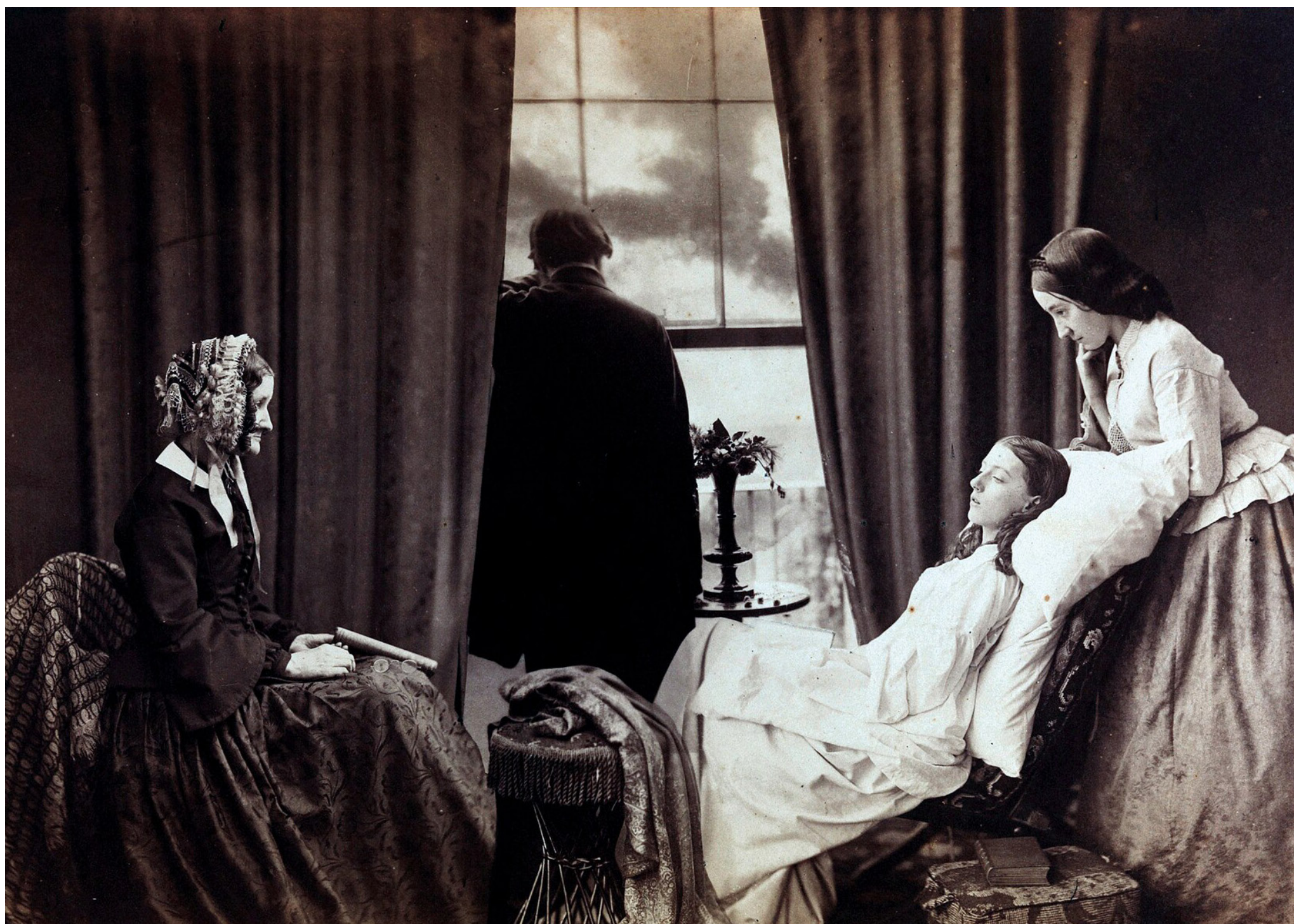
Before consumption got its rebrand,

beauty ideals were very different – wider hips with some meat on your bones to put it crudely, because that meant you could afford to eat. Then Henry Peach Robinson's *Fading Away* came along in 1858: a photograph assembled from five negatives, depicting a waifish young woman fading from consumption. It went the Victorian version of viral – Prince Albert even bought a print. Around this time, some women began dropping belladonna into their eyes, just enough to achieve that wide-eyed consumptive stare. Circle lenses, but riskier, check. Magazines offered beauty advice on how to apply red paint to the lips and cheeks to achieve the sought-after feverish flush. Lipstick and blush, double check. And to complete the holy trinity of consumption essentials: GLP-1s. Why subject yourself

to a bacterial infection when you can simply suppress your appetite? Not to mention TB vaccinations rather scupper the old-fashioned approach. Ozempic, meet heroin chic. Heroin chic, meet consumption-core.

My initial smugness at my own cleverness for the perfect costume feels in bad taste now. The concept feels heavier than an outfit that hits the sweet spot of niche, recognisable and culturally relevant with just the right level of intellectualism. Maybe it's the injustice at the root of it all: how consumption embodies and realises social inequalities, even as we still idolise the standards built upon it – rosy cheeks, thin pale frames, wide eyes. It feels like standing at a funeral complimenting the coffin.

That is, if the coffin is pretty enough.



Fading Away, a combination print by Henry Peach Robinson.

MUSIC

Charli XCX: redefining identity

Music, Fashion, Film is Charli XCX's response to *brat*'s success.

Music Editor
MIGUEL CARREIRA

We're only halfway through the decade, but Charli XCX's *brat* has undoubtedly become one of the defining albums of the 2020s. Less so because of its music, but more due to the cultural phenomenon that ensued. Whether or not you listen to Charli XCX, we all remember 'brat summer' and the unapologetic

hedonism and carefree attitude that defined it. Given the album's huge commercial and cultural impact, the lime green 365 partygirl aesthetic of *brat* might have come to define Charli XCX. Her most recent album, however, sees Charli try to redefine herself away from that image.

The dance floor is dead

In *Music, Fashion, Film* (MFF), Charli shifts away from the dance-pop, rave-inspired music of *brat* towards a more rock-influenced electronic soundscape. If there's one thing that stands out, it's the guitars: distorted on "Rock Music", jangly on "Camera", acoustic on "I'm Afraid". Catchy riffs and rock drum beats permeate the album, often overlaid by shifting electronic textures.

In the opening track and lead single "Rock Music", Charli proclaims that "the dance floor is dead". This doesn't read as an attack on dance music as a whole, but rather as a personal reflection on her relationship with the genre. Dance music may be far from dead, but it is dead for *her* — it's a first indication that this is not going to be a dance album and that she is distancing herself from

an identity that has trapped her for the past two years.

All I know is how it makes me feel (and it makes me feel how it makes me feel)

Amid this identity struggle, it is no surprise to see that this is one of Charli's most personal and introspective albums. Lyrically, the whole album is a reflection on fame and the consequences of success. "Camera" explores the appeal and pressures of the spotlight, and "how it makes [her] feel". "I'm Afraid" is a reflection on the strain that fame may come to have on her marriage. In "Wink, wink", she facetiously rejects her 'bad girl' persona, acknowledging that while she may still follow that lifestyle, she also wishes to shed the image that has been imprinted on her since *brat*.

brat had also been a highly personal project for Charli. It's similar to *MFF* in its confessional tone, with Charli exploring some deep-seated insecurities: the pressures of public opinion, social anxiety, the prospect of motherhood against a career and lifestyle that hinder it. The difference is that while *brat* explores these themes under a polished dance-pop background, *MFF* exposes them over a rawer, grittier sound. In *brat*, we see an intentional dichotomy between her hedonistic lifestyle and its potentially destructive effects. But in *MFF*, we see Charli dealing with these effects and toning down the flashy, partygirl aesthetic of dance-pop debauchery. If *brat* is the party, *MFF* is the hangover.

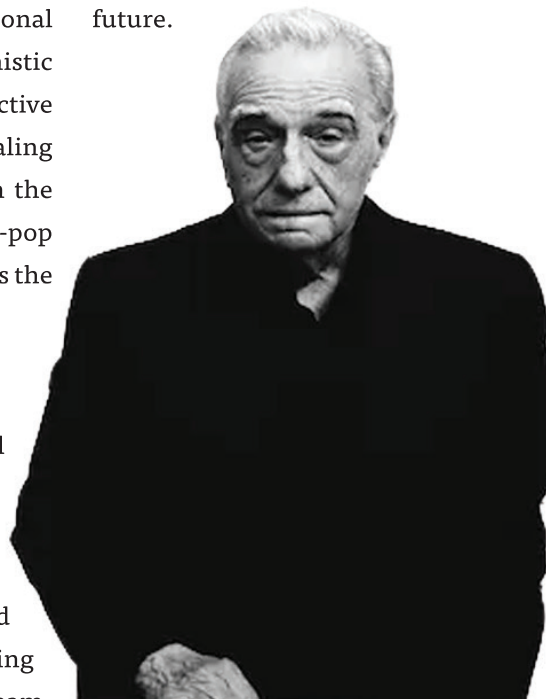
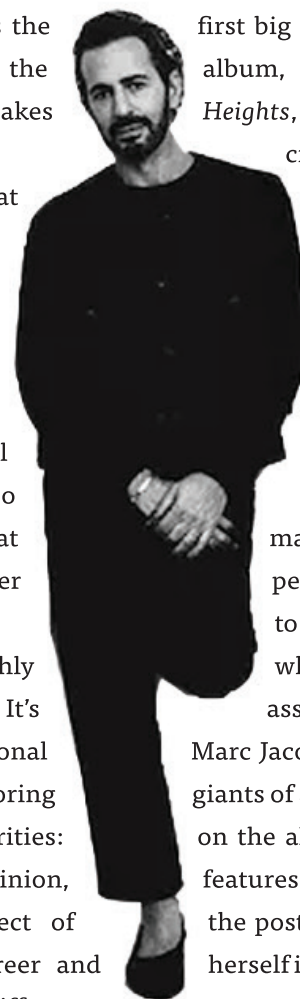
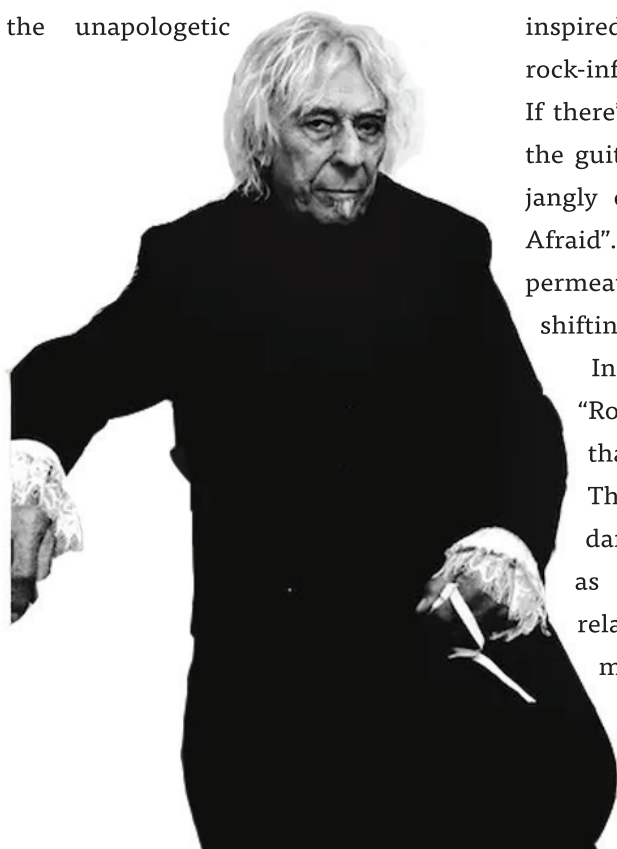
No one lasts forever

After first breaking into commercial success in the early 2010s, Charli XCX spent the better part of a decade as a midstream pop star with a mostly cult following. With *brat* and the preceding album *Crash* catapulting her back into the cultural mainstream, *MFF* is Charli's reckoning with this

second wave of fame and the ephemeral nature of success. If "nothing's gonna last forever", as explored in the album's final track, Charli might as well shed the creative cage that *brat* has become. In her own words, "it's cooler to just leave it all behind".

MFF comes from a place of having to answer to public expectations to top an album as iconic as *brat*. And Charli handles this perfectly. By making her first big project since *brat* a soundtrack album, Emerald Fennell's *Wuthering Heights*, she manages to steer away from creative scrutiny with something that is more low-stakes than a full studio album. And now comes *MFF*, a relatively short, spanning just over 30 minutes, somewhat undercooked album that is clearly not meant to top *brat*.

MFF is not a project aimed at mainstream cultural impact: it's a personal project where Charli tries to redefine herself as an auteur, which she accomplishes by associating herself with John Cale, Marc Jacobs, and Martin Scorsese, three giants of auteur music, fashion, and film, on the album's cover. In an album that features Charli struggling for identity in the post-*brat* era, she ends up defining herself in the most freeing way possible: as an artist, making art for the sake of art, with little regard for public expectations, thus leaving the possibilities wide open for whatever she may want to do in the future.



Music, Fashion, Film Cover Art. Charli XCX

ARTS&CULTURE

More than an *Obsession*: A guide

From popular biennial films and the classic jumpscare to uneasy video games and online miniseries weaponising nostalgia, this horror

Arts&Culture Writer
PALLAV BAGCHI

Recently, whilst on my never-ending doomscroll-fest, I came across a video where researchers placed toddlers of ages one to two in a room with some snakes, and my first thought was ‘that’s terrifying! How could the parents let this happen?’ However, upon further inspection, the kids weren’t scared at all, only the parents watching on in horror. The psychological explanation is that we only develop fears or phobias with age and experience; inherently, we cannot perceive a fear before it has happened to us or around us. This isn’t the whole story though. There are two fears that we are born with, two fears pre-installed before we even have a chance to experience anything: a fear of heights and a fear of the dark. While it is important to discuss conquering these fears, it is more interesting, and dare I say far more fun, to discuss how these fears, and many others, can be and have been exploited in modern media. As a massive fan of the horror genre, let me take you on a journey through some of my favourite pieces of horror media and which fears they prey on most...

Contemporary Movies

Of course, I have to talk about this at some point, so let’s get it out of the way as soon as possible. I think *Obsession* does what it sets out to do incredibly well. From the blocking of scenes (the diner phone call scene is the one that stands out to me the most) and the overall themes explored (who’s really the villain? etc), it’s clear that Curry Barker knows what he’s doing,

and he made an excellent low-budget horror movie. It succeeds in the fear that it wants to draw out of the audience, in my opinion, probably the fear of trust and connection. Barker shows us comparisons throughout the movie between pre-wish Nikki, post-wish Nikki and Sarah, all with varying degrees of romantic connection with Bear. Post-wish Nikki is seen as the villain (obviously, we as the viewer can tell how messed up her mind-set is), but in reality, it’s Bear and his wish to be closer to Nikki that causes the most harm to people; everyone around them is affected (and, spoilers, most of them killed).

In comparison, I think that *Backrooms* definitely succeeds at the message it’s trying to send, but in its *obsession* (haha) to convey that message, it drops behind *Obsession* in trying to put forth a specific fear. Watching the movie, it’s clear that the sentiment of Kane Parsons is ‘America’s over-capitalised and it’s going to doom us all’ which of course is an incredibly important message and I’m definitely doing it a disservice by dismissing it so casually, but the movie almost feels oversaturated with its capitalist metaphor. The backrooms in the lore of the movie is an effectively infinite space of winding pathways, dimly lit yellow rooms and frustrating hums in the background. Clark’s dissatisfaction with his life the way it is now and the way he uses the backrooms as an ‘escape’ of sorts from his reality is relatable, but not exactly preying on the fear I assumed the movie would go into it. Looking at the source material, both Kane’s original series on YouTube and the creepypasta post first describing the backrooms, I assumed the movie would

focus more on the fear of being alone or schizophrenia, not about finding/being denied a purpose. The uneasy feeling of nothingness that the backrooms is supposed to represent isn’t as prevalent in the movie as it is in Kane’s series, and it might be due to the freedom that YouTube affords its creators. Perhaps the studio had a say in lightening the darker tones; A24, albeit introducing and developing many novel stories, seems to be a much more restrictive studio for horror projects than Blumhouse, the studio that *Obsession* was created under. I’m certainly not well-versed enough to comment on which is a better cinematic project, but as a piece of horror media, I definitely prefer *Obsession*.

Jumpscares

Often in horror media, the easiest way to scare your audience is with a jumpscare. This is pretty much always achieved visually and audially, and it does have the intended effect of inducing the fight-or-flight response; a scary monster screaming at you will almost always cause that massive spike in adrenaline that most horror-movie-enjoyers enjoy. For myself, it’s much more satisfying to experience a long, drawn-out period of tension, occasionally without a resolution, but a proper jumpscare at the end of a sequence like this is still incredibly satisfying. Horror video games are quite good at this tactic, making you feel uneasy for extended periods of time before a gnarled creature with way too many teeth pops out from behind a door and kills you. The genre of modern horror video games is unbelievably saturated with poor *Five Nights at Freddy’s* rip-offs trying to capture that feeling that the original gave you: I’m

thinking of *Poppy’s Playtime*, *Garten of BanBan*, *Amanda the Adventurer*, *Bendy and the Ink Machine*, etc. There are some games, however, that don’t chase that high, my favourite being *Faith: The Unholy Trinity*.

Faith is a videogame trilogy created by Airdorf Games that tells the story of Father John Ward and his repeated struggles to exorcise powerful demons, often failing to save the innocent along



the way. I adore this game, not just for the way it builds up tension through its gameplay loop and fight scenes or its absolutely horrifying imagery, but for its deceptiveness. Looking at the game from an outsider’s perspective, it can be hard to build up hope about *Faith* being a ‘scary’ game due to its 8-bit graphics and unintentionally funny computer-generated voice (although that in itself

to contemporary horror media

connoisseur reflects on their favourite modern horror media and the modern fears it preys on.

can be quite off-putting), but it's that illusion of safety that makes *Faith* scarier to me than a lot of other horror games. I will say that the gameplay itself is quite mundane, oftentimes you find yourself running around the place, sometimes away from demons, sometimes towards demons, sometimes finding clues and hints of story, but perhaps because of its simplicity, the horror itself stands out more. Although set in a religious context,

shows the player the direct consequences of people's actions, including your own, that affect the story outcome, characters' survival and more. To top it all off, the jumpscare are incredibly well-placed, marking moments of incredibly high tension in the plot. I can't help but think *Faith* encapsulates its intended fear beautifully.

Nostalgia

My favourite subgenre of horror media is decidedly analogue horror. The term, coined by YouTube series *Local58*, is used to describe a wide range of horror videos, all utilising nostalgia or rather the subversion of nostalgic feelings to produce its fear factor. Often, analogue horror videos pretend to use visuals that seem like they are from old video tapes or an old era of television and recording to instil a feeling of comfort in the viewer, most of whom would have grown up with similar looking media. What I enjoy most, however, is how intricate these videos can be, i.e. how much care and detail their creators put in the videos. I couldn't bring myself to talk about just one, so here's a little bit about a few of my favourites:

1. *Local58*: The original analogue horror series, *Local58* takes broadcasts from a local news station in Mason County, West Virginia (fake broadcasts, in case that wasn't obvious) and turns them into dread-inducing thought experiments, including a broadcast telling everyone that America has lost in the war and it is people's patriotic duty to shoot themselves, or running a simulation that aims to reduce people's ability to recognise faces, or a consistent theme of telling people to (not) look up at the moon. The father of analogue cosmic

horror.

2. *The Walten Files*: I know I complained earlier about a bunch of *Five Nights at Freddy's* rip-offs ruining the horror gaming scene, but analogue horror has been flooded with some excellent representations of mascot horror, including *Harmony and Horror* and *The Battington Tapes*, but none in my eyes have achieved just what Martin Walls has done in this series. So far only five episodes deep, it explores trauma and brokenness, a story of a family ripped apart by events out of their control, and one man's plan to put them back together. It's an incredibly fascinating take on how different people react to tragedy and honestly the most heart-breaking, frightening story that I've experienced.

3. *R.A.D.A.R.*: A short film about moving on, *Radar* tells the story of a man trapped in an endless cycle of death and rebirth, and it focuses on an extremely primal fear of death. Within the closing moments of the film, we see the events that transpire to put him in this situation, and I believe it's the relatability of the main character, as weird as that sounds with him being stuck in a death loop, that makes this so scary. His very realistic reactions to what's happening to him accentuates the fear in the viewer, an 'it could be you' situation.

There are many, many more that I haven't covered (*Vita Carnis*, *hiimmarymary*, *The Man in the Suit* etc), but I hope you can see that through this medium, many creators can turn a false sense of calm into something horrific, that has the freedom to exploit a multitude of different fears.



Fear draws out a very specific reaction in the body that no other emotion really replicates.

What's so scary?

Especially in the horror genre, it's quite difficult to explain how a visual and aural piece of media brings out emotions via some words on a page, so I do urge you, if you're interested, to check out some of these incredible works. I'm not doing any of these titles the justice they deserve, their creators put so much effort into making them and they deserve to be recognised, for me, as a testament to what horror as a genre can achieve. I believe that the horror genre is much more free than others to convey complex topics and emotions, and the induction of fear into the whole system exacerbates those emotions even more. Fear draws out a very specific reaction in the body that no other emotion really replicates.

So, why do we get scared? It's a preservation mechanism telling our bodies to do something before we get hurt, and it's incredible to see so many creators making movies, series, games, books, and more that can draw out that mechanism without our bodies actually being in danger. Pretty scary, no?



Still from *The Walten Files 5 - Faces of Grief*.
The Walten Files by Martin Walls

I don't think *Faith* is trying to capture the fear of the divine but instead the fear of failure. The first game is set in a location where Father Ward had already failed an exorcism in the past and, fittingly, most demons seen throughout the series come directly as a result of someone's failure, whether that be sacred failure (exorcism), failure of care (maternity), or failure to see past someone's deceit. The game expertly

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How not to spend the perfect night at Abdus Salam

Catnipper-in-chief
ASTON MARTINA

Despite her best efforts, Aston Martina was unable to convince the student union that the Catnip offices had enough power over the section to lock it behind a subscription model. Freshly broke and unable to keep up on property taxes for the office/dormitory skyscraper in Canary Wharf, she has had to rapidly learn how to get by.

I'm having such a fucking shit week guys like you genuinely cannot even imagine. It is a cruel quirk of life that she dangles solutions in front of you while simultaneously revving up to

fuck you raw (though at this point I'd welcome some action). I was feeling so good heading into the term: I had clawed my way to the top of Catnip, Claude was being less annoying, and I even had a cheeky 50 mg sertraline prescription to keep the content coming. But boy did the house of cards come crashing down.

I'm not surprised that the Union fucked me over on money – ever since Brexit it feels like that's pretty much all they do. But it wasn't the betrayal that hurt the most. It was my back after night 1 at Abdus Salam. It is hard to express the sheer despair that accompanies any attempts to sleep in the library. If you have ever pulled an all-nighter over there with solely the

intention to study, you do not feel even a quarter of my pain and do not fuck with me by attempting to empathise. I thought I had a strategy in place by going to that break-room-group-work-space-type shabang that they had going on over at the 4th floor, and for the first blissful hour or two I managed to recline on a soft, sheltered couch and begin winding down.

Any chance of actually falling asleep, however, was shattered, as I heard music swell around me at maximum volume. It was in all honesty a frankly ridiculous level of volume, one which could not be achieved without the use of an external speaker. Cursing the student responsible in my head (I was too scared to actually confront someone

who had the lack of inhibition required to blast music in a library), I stumbled down to the first floor, hopping over to the other group work space.

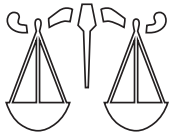
This one was not nearly as cozy, failing to clear an already ridiculously low bar, but it was quiet. After a few hours of staring at my own left elbow and trying to awkwardly wrap my right arm around a table, I gave up on the possibility of sleep. A few hours of doomscrolling later, aided by a stolen phone charger, I managed to stay awake long enough for daylight to break. Next time I have to do this, you best believe I'm going to the Felix office.

Horoscopes

ARIES
This week you forget two take yore dyslexia meds



LIBRA
This week you lower your standards and date a computing student



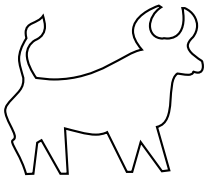
CANCER
This week all your belongings arrive a week late to uni



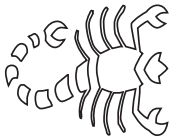
CAPRICORN
This week you snort your sertraline and get serotonin syndrome



TAURUS
This week marks the anniversary of your crush rejecting you and getting with an Aquarius



SCORPIO
This week you keep making formatting errors



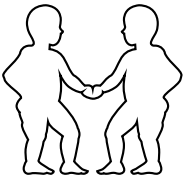
LEO
This week you get CVmogged and lose your job to a 14 year old remote work intern



AQUARIUS
This week you celebrate the anniversary of your crush asking you out! Hey why's that Taurus looking at you funny



GEMINI
This week you start wearing a hijab inspired secular accessory to your lectures



SAGITTARIUS
This week you have run out of credits, please upgrade your plan to keep reading Catnip



VIRGO
This week I'm not deceiving you. Why would I deceive you?



PISCES
This week you engage in corporate strategy meetings to streamline and engage actionable insights



Dear Diary,

This week I was at the Imperial Welcome fair and I got lost. Since when were there this many freshers? It's sweet and wholesome to see so many excited faces around (They don't know what's coming ... should we tell them?) If you're new here (fresher or not) hellooo and welcome to Felix's gem. Last year this section was taken seriously by a few people and what do you know we sniffed trouble but don't worry all has been sorted and so please do note that this is all jokes. As I'm writing this I'm understanding how hard it is to be funny by writing so y'all appreciate the efforts of this section's editor. Let me start over:

Guest Writer!
THE ALCHEMIST

Dear Diary,

This week the delivery man asked if I had any steroids. Or was it another drug? Speaking of drugs I spotted a few teen dealers at South Ken station – nothing incredible but worth a thought. I might join their conversation next time I apply to internships (which I'm apparently falling behind on since people these days think of nothing else). A guy from this one course texted the group chat asking for the assessment questions of a specific internship – is this legal? Maybe I just lost my chance to pay up my student loans via blackmail... is that legal? I need to lawyer up asap. Anyone have any recs?

Also it's incredible just how hard it is to find slippers in London. Freshers take notes: go to any 5 star hotel like you own it and tell the receptionist you need slippers (that's how you get them for free). Don't walk in socks or barefoot, it's unhygienic. I've noticed this cultural shock since coming here that people don't take their shoes off when they come home?? Incredible how I went from talking about drugs to hygiene.

That's it for today! Diary, check out.

Thanks for the guest submission, "The Alchemist"! The glowing review of my efforts is much appreciated, if unfounded.

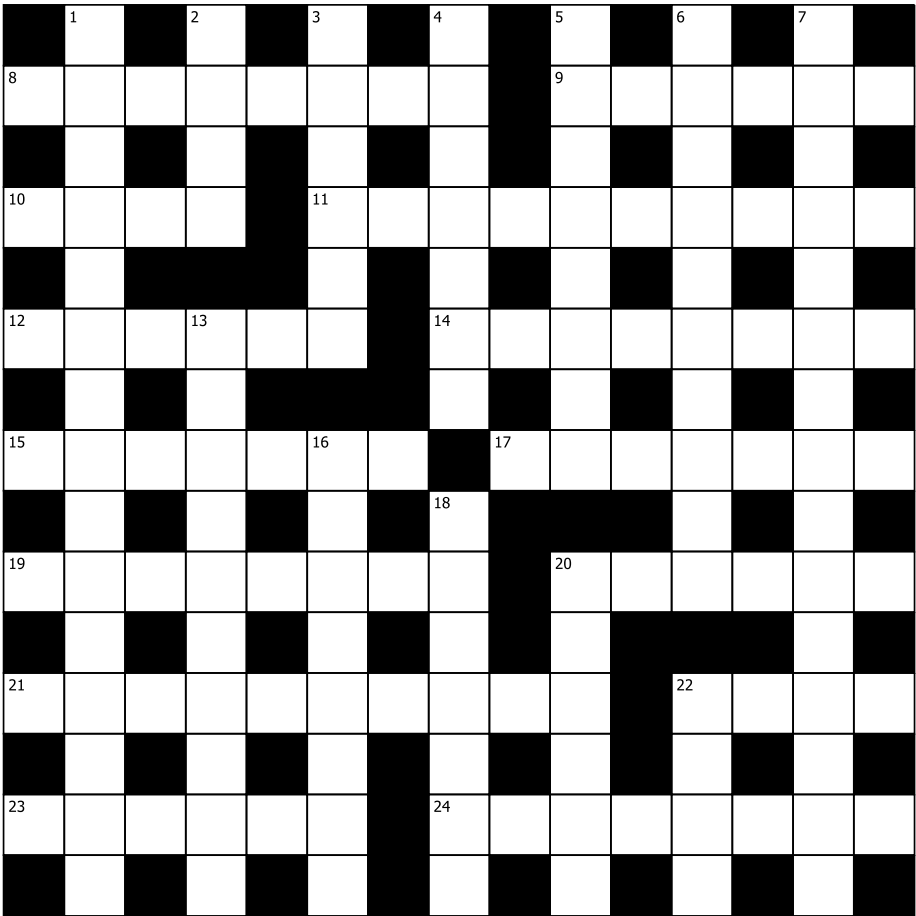
Think you could do better? You have a chance every week to prove it! Join the catnip writing team: you get a voice, and more importantly, It makes my chud life easier.

[TINYURL.COM/CATNIP2627](https://tinyurl.com/CATNIP2627)

PUZZLES

QUICK CROSSWORD

Written by David Latimer (10 pts.)



Across

- 7. Grasping basket a Minehead tripper might take. [8]
- 9. Tagline not quite as long. [6]
- 10. Ahead after company takeover. [4]
- 11. Transformers pull off calm heists. [10]
- 12. We hear a number are unwell. Tough luck! [3 3]
- 14. Begs for unfinished starter at beginning of supper. [8]
- 15. Gestures about Turkish rug she bagged. [6]
- 17. Beached after sounding rough at sea. [6]
- 20. Burning love for bird. [8]
- 22. Listen, fog is creeping from the outset. It's enigmatic. [6]
- 23. Mutated germ taints a little bit. [10]
- 24. Often seen with drab sparrow, for example, heading west. [4]
- 25. Type of network is unreal but insecure. [6]
- 26. Unpopular and mendacious, yet exceptional. [8]

Down

- 1. In retrospect, Oslo sore about suspensions. [8]
- 2. Far from dry, traces of dogs are moist perhaps. [4]
- 3. Short-lived PM initially at run-down Cornish peninsula. [6]
- 4. Bosses at organisation created material. [8]
- 5. Arrangement of four voices is forceful. [10]
- 6. Handed over the baton, by the sound of it, being too old. [4 2]
- 8. Suffolk town with no bakery start-up, could this town make the cakes instead? [6]
- 13. Gauges how somehow Metro bears pressure. [10]
- 16. Add spice to hollowed out lingonberry. Gently does it! [8]
- 18. Versions of leaderless rebellions. [8]
- 19. This piece can have an unexpected effect. [6]
- 21. Could lifeless alien be a cling-on? [6]
- 22. Setter's drink is strong, reportedly. [6]
- 24. Utter trance for parts of the week. [4]

Puzzles Editor
DAVID LATIMER

Across

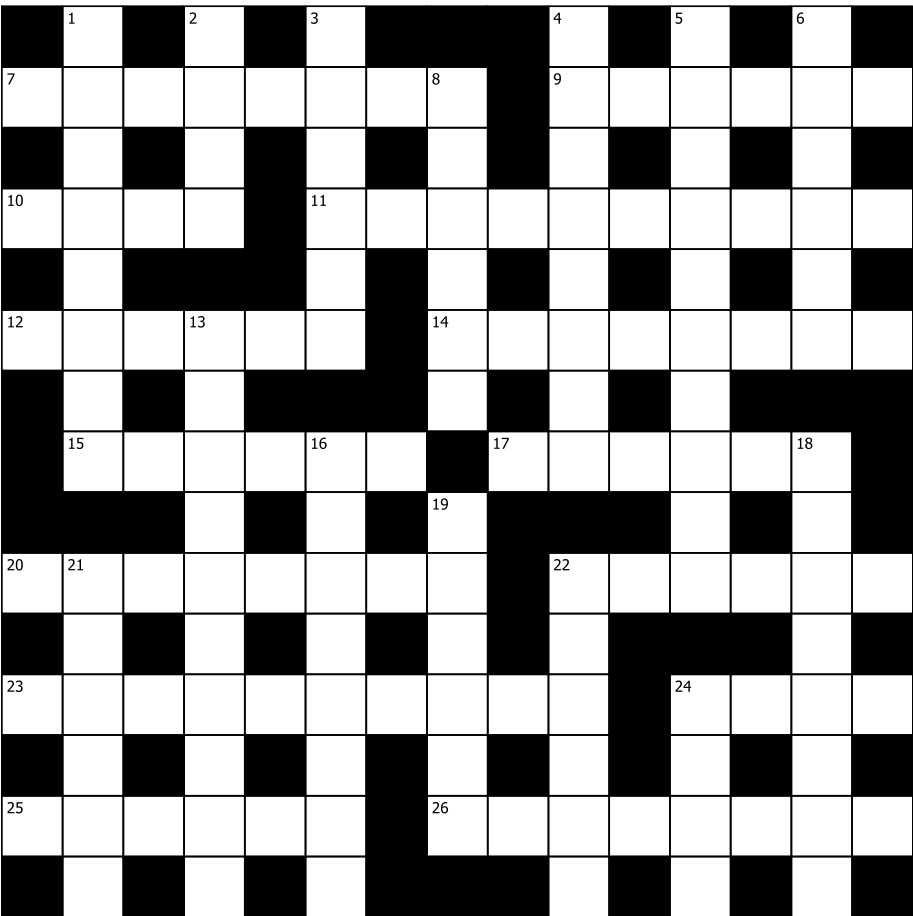
- 8. Large pot. [8]
- 9. Goes low? [6]
- 10. Green, marrow-like vegetable used in gumbo. [4]
- 11. Brown, via heating. [10]
- 12. No longer broadcasting. [3 3]
- 14. Result of an El Niño, perhaps. [4 4]
- 15. Solitary sneeze sanctification? [7]
- 17. Wed. [7]
- 19. Slang term for a military prison. [8]
- 20. Bumper car, to a Brit. [6]
- 21. Country with a pale blue and yellow flag. [10]
- 22. E or T, for two. [4]
- 23. "Peace Capital" of the world. [6]
- 24. Stopped. [8]

Down

- 1. Renaissance man. [4 2 3 6]
- 2. Small airborne annoyance. [4]
- 3. Salesman who sounds more disgusting? [6]
- 4. State of disorder. [7]
- 5. New England seafood special, as featured in TONY. [8]
- 6. You know him too?! [5 5]
- 7. 1977 Sex Pistols single. [3 4 3 5]
- 13. Connected (with). [10]
- 16. Bozo. [8]
- 18. Philosopher dubbed the father of utilitarianism. [7]
- 20. "Robert ____'s Waiting"
Bananarama song. [2 4]
- 22. Twilight. [4]

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

Written by Dyfam (20 pts.)



50/50 CROSSWORD

Written by David Latimer

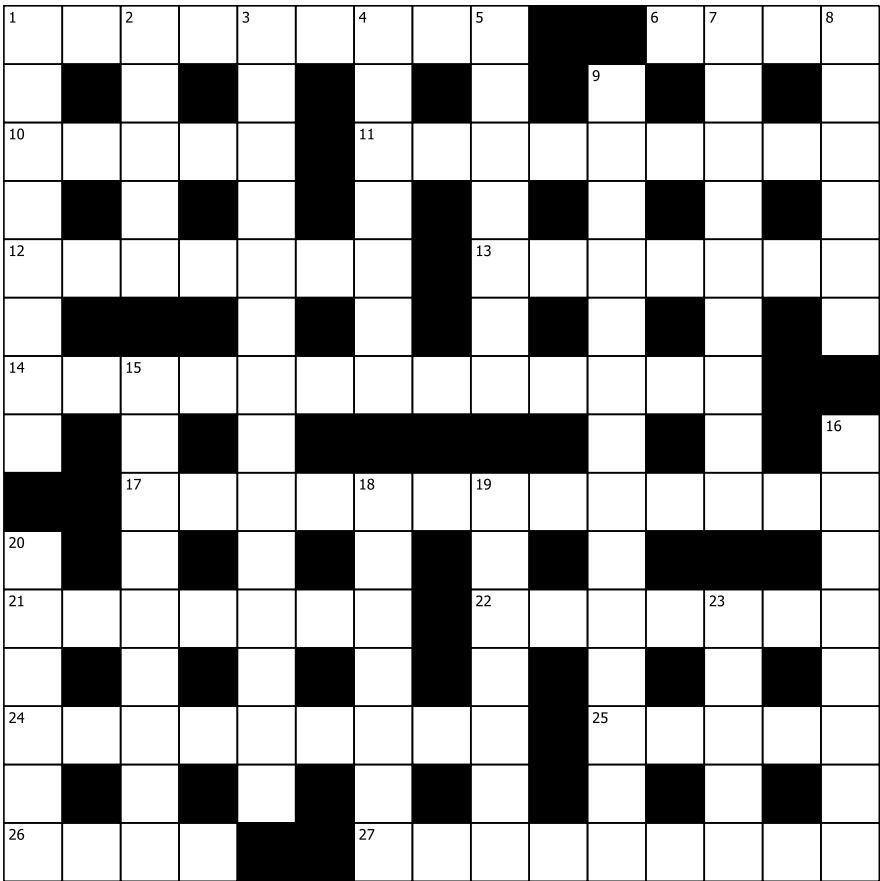
Across (Cryptic)

1. One cartel criminal's resistance to alcohol. [9]
6. Reportedly eat dog. [4]
10. Try to take money from veteran. [5]
11. Person who wants to believe is universal fool mangling the point. [9]
12. Alan somehow errs intercepting first half header. [7]
13. Twisted, South Asian, gobbling demons charged... [7]
14. ...under military operation without much ceremony? [13]
17. Capone behind hit; it's clean and result of scrubbing. [6 7]
21. Spirit falcon sheds whole wings away. [7]
22. ID naked fish inside. [7]
24. Moron cut off master at Imperial College - not really! [9]
25. Agreements in two different languages lead to way to bridge the gap. [5]

26. Group of gangsters around North American retreat. [4]
27. Ruins parade and made tears very wet. [9]

Down (Quick)

1. Value. [8]
2. Master. [5]
3. Pensioner's pad. [10 4]
4. Particle discovered to explain "missing mass" in nuclei. [7]
5. Hot stuff? [7]
7. Pixie or buzz, say. [9]
8. Disorganised. [6]
9. Potential causes for figure disagreement. [8 6]
15. Action often performed by Holmes. [9]
16. Ghost with unfinished business. [8]
18. Star-studded. [3 4]
19. Kind of Japanese grill common for cooking meat. [7]
20. In decline. [6]
23. Speak up. [5]



(15 pts.)

GROUPING GRIDS

Written by Afjal Chowdhury

Punch

Claymore

Frisbee

Wheatgrass

Doughnuts

Kiln

Burger

Grenade

Glaze

Controller

Steering Wheel

Selfish

Beggar

Clay

Vase

Apron

The sixteen clues in each of these puzzles can be placed into four groups of four, each with a common link. To solve the puzzle, write these groups and their connections below! Same format as The Wall in Only Connect or NYT Connections.

Data

Rocket

Life

Earth

Spire

Angel

Archway

Signal

Oval

Social

Connection

Needle

Star

Service

Natural

Bank

1.

Connections

2.

3.

4.

(8 pts.)

1.

Connections

2.

3.

4.

(8 pts.)

LAST WEEK

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Quick #1901

9	2	1	4	3	5	6	8	7
6	3	7	1	9	8	2	4	5
5	8	4	6	2	7	3	9	1
3	9	2	7	5	4	8	1	6
7	4	6	3	8	1	9	5	2
8	1	5	9	6	2	7	3	4
4	6	9	2	1	3	5	7	8
1	5	3	8	7	6	4	2	9
2	7	8	5	4	9	1	6	3

Cryptic #1901

4	9	7	1	3	8	5	6	2
8	2	5	7	6	9	3	4	1
6	3	1	2	5	4	9	7	8
7	1	6	8	9	5	4	2	3
2	4	9	3	7	1	6	8	5
5	8	3	4	2	6	1	9	7
1	6	2	9	8	3	7	5	4
3	5	8	6	4	7	2	1	9
9	7	4	5	1	2	8	3	6

Eldrow #1901

"There's an old man sittin' next to me
makin' love to his tonic and gin. He
says, "Son, can you play me a memory?
I'm not really sure how it goes but
it's sad, and it's sweet, and I knew it
complete when I wore a younger man's
clothes!"

Anagram: HARMONICA
Quote from: Piano Man

1	4	6	2	5	3	7	9	8
7	5	9	6	8	4	3	1	2
3	2	8	9	7	1	4	6	5
5	7	1	3	9	6	8	2	4
4	9	2	7	1	8	5	3	6
6	8	3	5	4	2	9	7	1
8	3	7	1	6	5	2	4	9
9	6	4	8	2	7	1	5	3
2	1	5	4	3	9	6	8	7

4	1	9	8	6	2	3	7	5
9	2	4	7	1	6	5	3	8
5	8	2	1	3	7	4	9	6
6	3	7	5	2	8	9	4	1
3	7	6	9	5	1	2	8	4
1	6	8	4	9	5	7	2	3
7	9	1	3	8	4	6	5	2
2	5	3	6	4	9	8	1	7
8	4	5	2	7	3	1	6	9

Sudoku #1901

Cryptogram #1901

LEADERBOARD

Pos.	Team Name	Pts.	Gain
1	-	-	-
2	Hello?	-	-
3	Is	-	-
4	there	-	-
5	anybody	-	-
6	in	-	-
7	there?	-	-
8	-	-	-

Want to see yourself on the leaderboard? Send in a picture of your puzzles to puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk before next issue to secure a place on the leaderboard for you or your team. Partially completed puzzles will still get you points!

WANT TO JOIN THE TEAM?

Have new ideas for the section? We'd love to have you on the team! Reach out to us via e-mail or scan the QR code to join our WhatsApp chat.

Email: puzzles.felix@imperial.ac.uk

COMIC

Submitted by Tengyu Zhao

Puzzle Editor's Note

Dearest Puzzlers,

Hello all. I hope the return to lectures (or I suppose first ever lectures for some of you) hasn't been so rough. And I also hope you've found time to take a bite out of the puzzles section! Remember, there's still a week to submit your first issue solutions. The deadline is **4pm on the 8th**, and is for both this issue and the previous issue.

I'm sorry about not being able to make an appearance at the welcome fair earlier this week. I've heard there was a lot of interest in the section! As always, if you want to help out with writing, have new puzzle ideas, or even want to get better at creating cryptic crossword conundrums, please join the group chat via the QR code below (and to the left). We'd really love to have you!

As I'm writing this, the Thursday drinks are tonight, and I'll be able to meet some new recruits into the section which will be exciting. If Felix once a week is too sparse to satiate your puzzling appetite, might I suggest Imperial Puzzle Society? They're a new society (not associated with Felix) dedicated to crosswords and sudokus - setting and solving. I'll be attending some of the events and I hope to see you there (and maybe recruit some of you!). For information, check the union's societies page for membership and email address.

In the mean time, I'll get back to grinding away at pre-lab preparation material. See you next week!

-David

SPORT

Sweeney or Society?

How the Novig ad exposes the broken culture surrounding women in sports.

Sport Editor

DEESHAYA PATWA

Recently, Sydney Sweeney has been no stranger to controversy. So I can't say I was surprised when I watched the Novig ad featuring her in the nude, only covered by various items of sporting equipment. My gut reaction was indignation. Olympic swimmer Ariarne Titmus articulates the feeling perfectly: 'How do we live in a world where monetising a women's body and sexualising women's sport is still a thing'. Genuinely. It's 2026. But if you reacted similarly, I'm sorry to inform you that you played exactly into Novig's marketing strategy.

All for attention

CEO Jacob Fortinsky himself said the ad 'forces us into the national discourse'. AKA, the aim was attention. And the swathes of feminists and athletes who went online to criticise the ad are unfortunately the same people who Novig depends on to achieve their goal. The ad relies on feminist outrage in order to reach its target audience as it capitalises off of the backlash; it's ragebait marketing. Whilst Novig might be a relatively small sports betting site, in the four days following the ad, the potential digital audience reach jumped from 786.6 million to 3.98 billion. You can't exactly say the ad didn't work.

"Just Sports" panders to the male gaze to target the primary demographic for sports betting: young men. It reminds me of a lads mag you would find in 2002, with a bikini-clad Anna Kournikova splashed across the front page with no mention of her sporting achievements. But, it's 2026 now. I (perhaps naively) thought that we had come far from reducing women to their sex appeal. Reverting back to old tropes of hypersexualising women to grab the attention of male sports fans is regressive; it's no shock that there are multitudes of female athletes speaking out against the ad.

Without words, Sweeney responded to the

backlash, posting pictures of the body issue of ESPN on Instagram displaying various athletes, men and women, including Serena Williams, Sue Bird and Rob Gronkowski. She equated these athletes modelling to her own ad. But that's a terrible defence. The body issue of ESPN is a display of the athleticism and physicality of athletes, turning the pages into an altar for their achievements. It's a grand celebration of sports and the ad can not compare; it objectifies a woman using sporting equipment as a prop only to accentuate her sexual features as a marketing strategy to promote gambling, undermining the sporting abilities of female athletes globally.

A matter of respect

The combination of women and sports clearly garners attention, but there still remains a lack of respect. There is no doubt that we are closer to equality in sports than we were two decades ago; the 2024 Paris Olympics achieved full gender parity which is a huge milestone in the right direction. But to what extent do arbitrary participation statistics reflect genuine shifts in the perspective of and respect given to women's sports? Attitudes towards women in sports still remain poor. They are not put on the same pedestal that men are so any misstep becomes a major setback. The backlash to the ad

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The combination of women and sports clearly garners attention, but there still remains a lack of respect.

was not slut-shaming, but a reaction to the systemic double standard. Female athletes have had to work twice as hard to gain half the respect male athletes do and yet, they are still reduced to their sex appeal. The ad reinforces this narrative, undermining decades of hard work to move away from it.

Many would argue that it's 'just marketing' and to their credit, the ad has done spectacularly well. But in a world where women in sports are still routinely underestimated, the implications of this go far beyond the cash. Sweeney may not recognise or care about the wider consequences of this ad, but it has sparked a wider conversation about how we view women in sport. It would be naive to conclude that Sweeney is the issue itself, and not an unsurprising symptom of the systemic values we've been perpetuating for decades.



What women in sports truly look like. BUCS first division Volleyball, 2017. Thomas Angus for Imperial College London