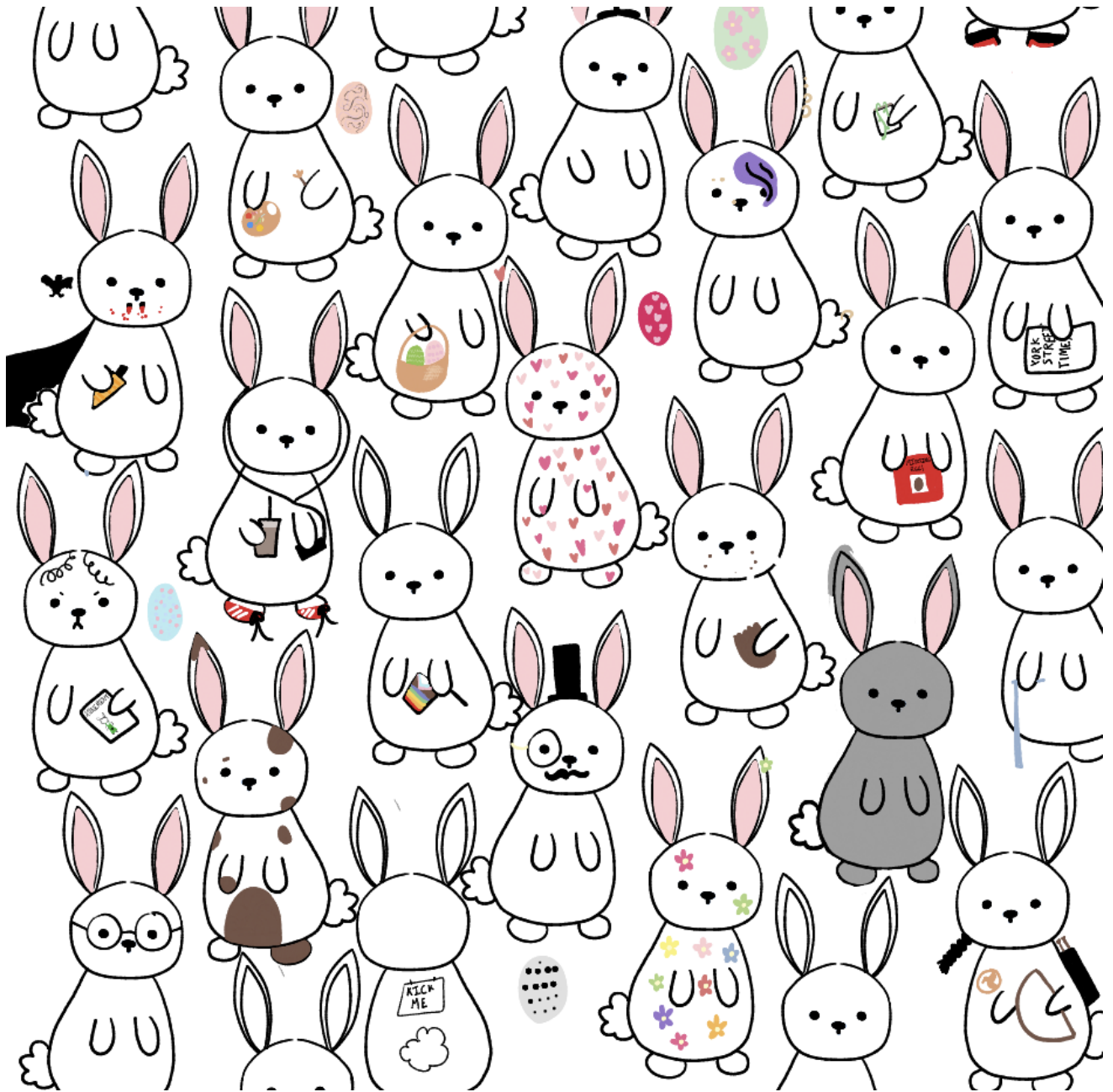


The York Street Times

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ART BY RUBY FIELD

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EDITORS' INTRO –

Hello and welcome back to another edition of the York Street Times!

This edition centers around the theme of Spring, a time traditionally seen as one of growth and new beginnings. Here at the York Street Times, we are going through our own rebirth, with the four of us having to step down as editors and hand our torch over to the Year 12s, due to our exams creeping closer and closer (no matter how much denial we're in). We have loved being editors of this paper, having spent a decent amount of time reading articles on subjects we would have never thought about – for example, we've never pondered over whether Jelly Cats are a capitalist empire before, yet here we are with the answer (which you can find in this edition). Nevertheless, you, our dear readers, are in the safe hands of:

Ava Wetherall and Lara Goudge as our Head Editors

Joss Eastwood, Holly McCormick and Annabelle Martin as our Sub-Editors

Libby Riley as our Art Editor

And Amber Wood as our Assistant Art Editor.

We wish you all the best of luck with the future of this paper (no pressure)!

We would also like to say a big thank you to our Editor-In-Chief, Mrs. Salt, who this paper wouldn't exist without, for the opportunity to flex our skills as the editors of the York Street Times. Thank you to anyone who has contributed to any of our editions, and thank you to you for your support in reading it.

We hope you enjoy the last issue with us, the current editors!

Esme Dinsdale, Billy Burton, Louisa Salt, and Izzy Nash.

BRITAIN'S MOST EGGS-CRUCIATING EASTER COMPETITION

by Lara Goudge & Holly McCormick



Every Easter, in Primary schools all across the country, children fight for the crown of the best-decorated eggs! We, at York Street Times, remember it well. The paint smeared on the walls, the glitter stuck in all kinds of places, the eggs smashed all over the floor like our dreams of winning - crushed by Beatrice's mummy's creation (because realistically no primary school child can replicate the Mona Lisa in egg form)!

If you're lucky enough to escape this emotional turmoil, let us paint the picture for you. You've returned to school after a relaxing February half-term, and all seems well. There is nothing to trouble you until

your teacher informs you about the supposedly eggciting egg decorating competition. Immediately, the whole class erupts into excitement... EXCEPT YOU. Your brain is scrambled. How will you ever think of a good enough idea to win the greatest competition of the year? It's now break time and here's your chance to converse with your little buddies. But to your surprise, their lips are sealed. No one dares to share their ideas in fear that someone clueless like you might steal them. There's a playground divided! It's World War Three only we're not fighting over territory, this is far more serious... We're fighting over eggs!

You find yourself back in class but you can't possibly focus on times tables. Thoughts of prizes, standing ovations, bowing to the assembly hall in your fame and glory race through your mind. It's an inescapable, endless cycle until the night before the last day of term. A single egg lies before you. It may only be an egg, but it feels like it's teasing you. "Wow. You really can't think of anything to paint on me! You can't come to school with a blank egg, they'll laugh at you! You'll be the joke of the school for centuries to come!"

Deep in your heart, you know your whole class will have finished theirs by now. It's quarter to eight! Times running out. It's almost bedtime and you haven't even started. Your parent comes into the kitchen. They can see you're at breaking point – you're about to crack! This eggs-cruciating competition has broken you down, it's no yolk (even your internal monologue is overcome by egg puns). Every waking minute is haunted by the wrath of easter eggs. Dreams have turned to nightmares of the Easter assembly where everyone will see your undecorated egg disaster. You can hear the laughs and the jokes and the names you'll be called. You question what you've become, totally consumed by the pressure thrown upon you. It's like walking on eggshells every second you breathe.

When you think all hope is lost and you're prepared to accept defeat, suddenly an idea pops into your head! It was there all along. How could you be so foolish? You get to work immediately. You tear through piles of paints, pencils, pens, pipe cleaners, paper, and pompoms. This is complete and utter kitchen carnage! The paint smeared on the

walls, the glitter stuck in all kinds of places, the eggs smashed all over the floor. Your parents are furious. Like a barbaric beast, you use every fibre of your being to create your MASTERPIECE! And finally - your work is done!

The last day of school rolls around and you couldn't be more ready. Your class is marching into the assembly, your heart is pounding, and adrenaline is coursing through your veins. This is the moment you've been waiting for. All the fears, all the sequins, all the sleepless nights, all the glue, all the dread. It's all coming down to right now! This is it! The headteacher stands centre stage before the whole school and their families. You wipe the sweat from your brow. The teacher drones on and on and on but you're only waiting for one thing. And you're not the only one. Looking around, you see your peers are all shaking with anticipation. The teacher begins to announce the long-awaited results. You take a deep breath, expecting to hear your name, preparing your beaming smile for everyone to see.

"Beatrice Eugenie the third"! The teacher cheers.

Your whole world collapses like a Greek tragedy! Tears well in your eyes. You don't understand. This is the biggest miscarriage of justice known to man! Everybody knows her mum's an art teacher. How dare she? She's only in it for the chocolate eggs! You put your heart and soul into this project. It was more than just a competition. It was your life's legacy all in the shape of an egg!

FROM FLUFFY FANTASY TO HARSH REALITY: THE TRUTH OF IMPULSE PET-BUYING

by Lara Goudge



With Easter hopping ever closer, the temptation to buy adorable, fluffy bunnies as Easter gifts is growing every day. I too have fallen down the rabbit hole of cute rabbits swarming my Pinterest page (I'm not complaining). But before you leap into buying one, let me remind you of the responsibilities that are often overlooked in the excitement of impulse, seasonal pet buying.

Live animals or holiday decorations?

In 2019, the RSPCA recorded that a shocking number of '2,500 pet rabbits were abandoned,

with the peak just weeks after the festive period'. I completely understand that most of these will have been bought on a whim- with the best, heartfelt intentions- but **BUNNIES ARE FOR LIFE** not just Easter! And, like all pets, they do not come without the need for love and attention. And **vet bills** and **food** and **water** and **cleaning** and **hutches** and **treats** and **toys** and the list goes on. Oh, and did I mention – they need a companion? Rabbits are social animals and, therefore they are best kept at least in pairs to avoid causing unnecessary loneliness.

Once the novelty of these cute creatures wears off and their owners realise they're more than just a festive mascot, many are abandoned, left to fend for themselves in the wild. This is the second mistake frequently made by unprepared, uneducated pet owners, as domestic rabbits and wild rabbits are different species (with different brain structures). Our fluffy friends are not prepared to survive in the wild so releasing them is a death sentence.

Is it just rabbits? No, rabbits are not the only innocent victims of festive impulse-buying crazes. Both dogs and cats suffer too!

Puppies for Christmas

A puppy is thought of as an extremely precious and generous Christmas gift. However, sadly, so many puppies are abandoned or surrendered to shelters each year as the thrill and excitement wear off, leaving the reality of commitment and cost to become apparent. In January 2019, The Dog's Trust received 2,247 calls from people wanting to give up a dog. This figure does not stand alone, as 'In January 2018, the RSPCA also received 1,678 reports of abandoned dogs in the UK' and 'the two weeks leading up to 25th December saw searches of 'get a dog' increased by around 27 per cent, while the week before Christmas saw a spike of 44 per cent of the online search 'buy a puppy' – The Dog's Trust' also show the same pattern of reckless and thoughtless dog buying. With this pattern being so prominent, it makes you wonder who's to blame for this seemingly innocent (yet harmful) tradition.

I believe the media promotes this irresponsible behaviour. Have you ever seen photos of puppies in Santa hats or Christmas stockings? Yes, me too! Before we get too distracted, looking in awe at their cute faces and sleepy eyes and their little paws and ears that feel far too big for their teeny-tiny bodies, let me remind you this is all PUPPY PROPAGANDA!

Dogs have nothing to do with Christmas traditions! These adorable images simply line the pockets of dog breeders and puppy farms at this festive time of year, encouraging people to indulge in buying puppies without the necessary preparation or consideration.

Cats for Halloween

Unlike rabbits and dogs, cats are not always treated with the same level of kindness and good intentions during their festive season (Halloween), especially black cats. Some shelters even refuse to adopt out black cats in October due to concerns about abuse. This disgusting behaviour is linked to the stigmas and superstitions of cats that began thousands of years ago. In 1233, Pope Gregory IX claimed that devil worshippers were consorting with their master in the form of a creature that was half man, half black cat. This idea that cats are evil and demonic creatures caught on and even to this day, cats are commonly seen as familiar Halloween symbols.

These stigmas may be outdated but their effect continues in the modern day as black cats are at an increased risk of abuse during the Halloween season. It has been reported that black cats have even been murdered as sacrifices! Some cats are also bought as living, seasonal decorations (like bunnies at Easter) only to be dumped at animal shelters days afterwards. This mistreatment of our innocent, feline friends must stop!

In conclusion, I hope it's clear that animals are lifelong responsibilities not simply gifts or household decorations. Though they may seem like perfect gifts, they're living beings just like us and deserve owners who are willing to treat them with respect and unwavering commitment. I'm sure no one would be offended if you gave them an easter egg this Easter rather than a bunny!

NEURODIVERSITY IN THE MEDIA

by Libby Riley

Society's attitudes have changed drastically over 50 years, and the media is no exception. Now, we're seeing things in the media that would have been unimaginable to people a few decades ago; topics like LGBTQ+ and cultural diversity are openly discussed and celebrated. However, there's still a long way to go, and one aspect of many people's lives that I don't think the media has explored nearly enough is neurodiversity. Neurodiversity is essentially anybody with a mental difference or disorder, such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia,

dyspraxia, and bipolar disorder to name a few. Admittedly, it's not completely hopeless, and there have definitely been some accurate representations of neurodiversity. But there have also been many more that are painfully, often insultingly stereotypical (sorry, Sheldon Cooper), and the media often treats neurodiversity as something exclusive to white men.

As much as I love *The Big Bang Theory*, the one thing about it I've never been able to see past is how frustratingly stereotypical Sheldon is as

autism “representation” (granted, it’s never officially stated, but his actor has said that in his opinion, Sheldon “couldn’t display more facets” of autism). Although the show does give Sheldon his fair share of moments where he shows genuine empathy and kindness, and he matures a lot in the last two seasons or so, most scenes show again and again his childishness, stubbornness- and in a lot of cases he’s downright mean- usually done to confuse and annoy his friends or for the audience’s benefit. As an autistic person myself, I don’t think this would annoy me as much if this kind of character wasn’t what so many people associate with autism, thanks to bad representation on the media’s part- a male, prodigal genius with virtually no social skills and a tendency to say wildly inappropriate comments. This kind of thing’s so common in the media- not just with autism, but any neurodiversity- and I think it contributes a lot to the negative stereotypes and stigma surrounding these conditions since we tend to form a lot of our opinions on things we ourselves haven’t experienced or are familiar with from things like TV shows and books - something that I really think needs more attention and correcting.

Moving on to other conditions, things like OCD are often treated almost as jokes within the media and something associated with paranoia, like the ever-famous “germaphobe” or “clean-freak” (Monica Geller ringing any bells?). Conditions like OCD are often perceived as something ridiculous and to be overcome, or “REE-REE-REE-REE” to quote the ever-iconic Phoebe Buffay, and even mocked within the shows themselves, with Monica actually trying to “cure” herself in one episode by deliberately leaving shoes out overnight to prove to her friends she can be a “kook”, then worrying about it all night as she’s torn between putting the shoes back and having her friends know she couldn’t follow through or leaving them and being kept up- her end comment of “I need help” would be quite eye-opening if a laugh track didn’t

follow. Other conditions, despite affecting many people, are barely ever represented - ADHD, dyslexia and dyspraxia are hardly mentioned in any form of media; I can honestly only think of one ADHD character and one dyspraxic character I’ve ever read or seen, the character herself even goes as far as saying at one point, “but you’re still more likely to find a magical monster in a story than someone like me.”

Having said all that, I’d be lying if I said that media representation of neurodiversity hadn’t improved over the last few decades (heck, there probably wasn’t a single good representation 30 years ago!) and there have been a lot of characters that accurately portray neurodiversity in an eye-opening and non-insulting way. The 2012 film “Silver Linings Playbook” portrays a man with bipolar disorder who attempts to reconcile with his ex-wife while developing feelings for another woman while they train for a dance competition, and was critically acclaimed by viewers for its sensitive direction. As for Percy Jackson and the Olympian series that’s become so popular recently, its main character has both ADHD and dyslexia and was also positively received by many critics. Luz Noceda from *The Owl House* (one of my favourite shows of all time) is a brilliantly well-written combination of several different diversities, as a non-white, LGBTQ and ADHD girl. These characters (and many others!) definitely prove that neurodiversity can be presented positively in the media and are often universally appreciated when they do appear. However, I also still think the continued inclusion of frustratingly inaccurate and one-dimensional neurodiverse characters is something that really needs addressing in order to combat a lot of the stigma surrounding many conditions, which is in large part thanks to the negative portrayal of them in the media that encourages a lot of people to alienate and judge the neurodiverse community.

IS FAUX FEMINISM THE NEW IN ON TIKTOK?

by *Holly McCormick*



I'm sure most of us are familiar with TikTok, but, for the small minority of people who must have been living under a rock for the last six years, it's a social media platform which allows users to share short videos. Since its origins in 2018, the app has transformed drastically from dance trends and comical audios into something we've never seen before in any app. TikTok has the ability to make

influencers "famous" enough to attend the *Barbie* premiere, resurface songs which have been collecting dust on charity shop CD shelves and tempt you into buying the most random products. Its international rapid success has seen it become the most popular app downloaded since 2018, so bearing this in mind it's almost impossible to find someone who has not got the app on their devices or at least heard about it. But

TikTok's power really lies with its impeccable gift of making anything go viral – trust me, literally anything.

I believe, as someone who has the app, and admittedly uses it quite a lot, I've seen it all. But over the last few months, there's been an emergence of what I believe to be a toxic TikTok. While disguised as a good cause, it's actually a way to gain followers and likes, and to scrutinise a whole group of people, while seemingly appearing innocent on the surface. So, what is this TikTok trend you ask yourself? Well, it's TikTok feminism.

“Over the last few months, there's been an emergence of what I believe to be a toxic Tik Tok trend disguised as a good cause.”

I am by no means arguing that users of the app choosing to use their platform to show awareness is a negative thing, if anything it's brilliant that individuals are doing so! Neither do I think using simple phrases like “girl math” (a term used to joke about internal calculations used to explain behaviour) is totally offensive. My point stems from the culture of faux feminism where eating disorders are glamorised, and

users take TikTok feminism as an excuse to be transphobic and to discriminate against others. This is the toxic side of TikTok feminism which is subtly promoted time and time again on our For You pages.

Firstly, take a look at “Girl Dinner.” For those who are avid TikTok users, I'm sure “Girl Dinner” needs no introduction. After being popularised in the May of 2023 hundreds of thousands of videos featuring that infuriating audio and people showing off their meals became popular. With that minimalistic description, the trend seems pretty harmless and, in most circumstances, I agree, “Girl Dinner” is. However, the “Girl Dinner” trend on TikTok has been criticized for promoting unhealthy body image concerns and increasing the risk of eating disorders. How, might you ask? Creators on the app showing off their tiny meals to the audio implying that to be trendy and cool you need to eat unhealthy quantities. It is important to remember that this is most certainly not all videos and just a small minority on the app but with this said the idea of instilling conventional body norms into women is not a new concept. Throughout modern society, perhaps even before, women have always been told what to look like, what to wear etc. So, is it that these trends are just adding to the pressure that women already face?

Secondly, there is an exploitative nature concerning TikTok feminism where creators will take sensitive situations and use them for likes, followers, and views. These videos usually consist of short clips from movies

with powerful female leads, such as Emerald Fennell's critically acclaimed thriller "Promising Young Women" plastered with captions detailing examples of female abuse. The reason these TikToks are viewed as problematic is the nature in which they are posted in order to gain "clout," popularity, and relevance. I believe wholeheartedly it is important to start conversations about these topics, but through a TikTok format, with the use of viral audios, it's hard to deny these have ulterior motives which take away from the severity of the subject. However, the problematic nature of these types of videos is not always obvious. If a TikTok creator is just using sensitive topics which entail graphic scenarios of abuse for likes, there is something incredibly immoral about it. So, how is this feminism and not exploitation?

Thirdly, TikTok feminism is used as an excuse to discriminate against transgender women which completely contradicts the definition of feminism. Even in the 21st century, transgender people are still berated by society, made to feel ostracised and alienated purely for being their true selves. Unfortunately, TikTok is a platform where transphobia is promoted through faux feminism. For example, influencer Dylan Mulvaney (a transgender activist whose main platform is TikTok) was attacked online for being named "Woman of the Year" by British magazine "Wednesday." I see no problem with a woman being named "Woman of the Year," but a large group of people complained to the magazine and took to Dylan's social media to abuse her. These people who claim

to be "girl's girl," "feminists" and "kind people" who preach thinking of others harassed Dylan for being unapologetically herself. Furthermore, Dylan Mulvaney encouraged her followers (no matter their gender identity) to carry menstrual products with them to support people with periods and was given hate for this too! This concept of feminism isn't just prolific on TikTok, it's common off social media too. So, how is this feminism – to mock and hate women?



I reiterate my point that not all TikTok feminism is negative. It's wonderful if anyone, no matter gender, age, race, or sexuality can spread awareness and the same goes for any social issues we face in society. But this idea of "TikTok feminism" is toxic and promotes negative ideals to younger generations who use the platform. It is not okay to glamourise eating disorders. It is not okay to exploit other women's horrific experiences for followers and likes. It is not okay to devalue someone's identity. This is faux feminism. This is the category TikTok feminism often falls under and gives the real feminism a bad reputation.

WHAT TIKTOK TELLS ME: HOW THE VIDEO-SHARING APP DISTORTS EXPECTATIONS

by Flo Green



Mean Girls, 2004. One of the most iconic movies of all time. If you've been on social media for longer than a week, chances are you've come across at least a few quotes from this movie. I grant you, certain topics within it are handled a little... distastefully, but no one can deny that this movie has withstood the test of time. It may not be as relatable

as it once was, but you had best believe it's still incredibly popular.

You might be reading this and wondering, 'Why on earth is that relevant at all to this article?' Well, dear reader, I'm about to give you your answer.

Recently, TikTok has become absolutely flooded with commentary on the new Mean

Girls movie (2024), an adaptation of the musical. All three pieces of Mean Girls content were directed by Tina Fey, and she played Ms. Norbury in both film adaptations. When the trailer was first released, people had many things to say. Those who were unaware there was a musical didn't understand why they were remaking Mean Girls, as it was such a hit the first time around - "If it ain't broke don't fix it." Others, or more specifically theatre kids, were just excited to get Reneé Rapp belting the iconic 'World Burn' high note in a better quality than the Nokia Brick (totally legal) 'slime tutorials' on YouTube.

“TikTok distorts people’s expectations because the combination of herd mentality and extreme opinions sets everyone up for failure.”

However, when it was released in cinemas, it was a disaster. Every other video on TikTok was a complaint about one thing or another, how the movie didn't do this or *did* do that, just not quite the right way. Everyone had *something* to say about this movie, but why exactly was that? Looking back on the trailers that were released, there wasn't anything implying that this was to be a remake of the original movie, or even a remake of the musical, or that this

movie was to be a cinematic masterpiece. So why is it that so many people were so disappointed?

To put it simply, it's because of what they had seen on TikTok. Too many people walked into their cinemas and expected the next coming of Christ in film form, and because of these high expectations, they were doomed to be let down. TikTok has a nasty habit of dramatizing everything, and the majority tend to find somewhere on either side. It's very difficult to find a middle ground for any opinion on the platform, as most people take to the extremes. This leads to a lot of different things, primarily a herd mentality between users. People hear one person's opinion and latch onto it like it's life or death, and this tends to lead to a lot of more extreme opinions. When Elemental (2023) released its first trailer, the masses quickly decided that it was a rip-off of Fireboy and Watergirl, and that it wasn't worth watching. However, once the movie itself was available in cinemas and people gave it a chance, people found that it was actually a good movie. They had simply been told to expect the worst by TikTok and had done so.

To cut a long story short; TikTok distorts people's expectations because the combination of herd mentality and extreme opinions sets everyone up for failure. If you hear anything about anything on TikTok, try to do your own research and form your own opinion before grabbing your pitchforks.

ARE JELLYCATS A CAPITALIST EMPIRE?

by Ruby Field



JELLYCAT®

A disease has taken over the hearts of teenagers - symptoms include furr, frivolity, and a concerning amount of trips to local underground toy tradesmen, Cowgills. The disease is highly contagious, said to be spread from multiple sources; TikTok, peer pressure, or maybe just the soulless black eyes of a stuffed animal. The name of this disease? Jellycats. For a Jellycat is too great, and we cannot quit for the desperation of another hit of

sweet, sweet, jelly-tainted fluff. But when will this madness end? Creatures out for our destruction. (Well, the destruction of our bank accounts.) It seems we cannot win this fight against toys.

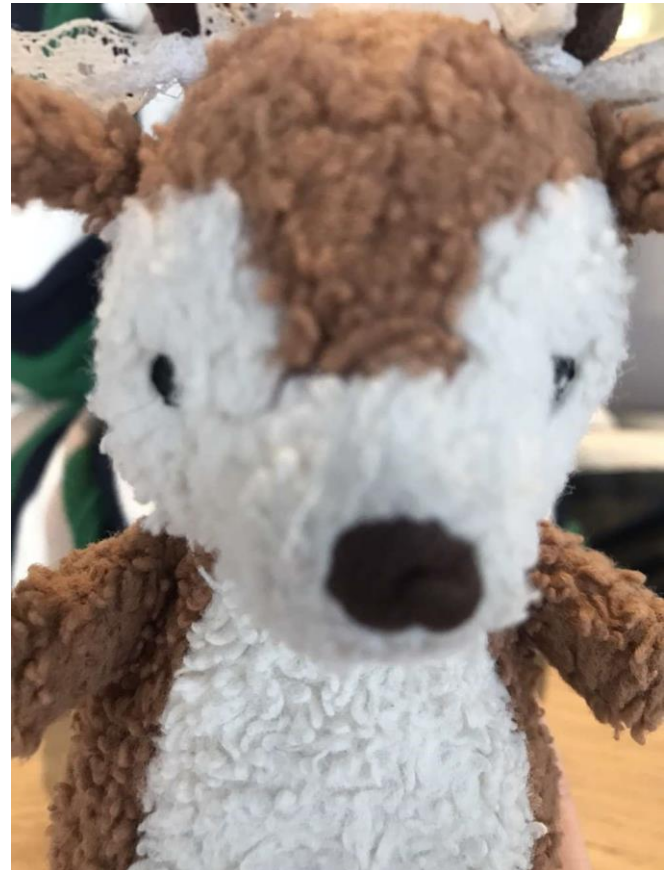
While I myself am not innocent, being infected with my own little reindeer friend, I intend to question this revolution that has taken our world by storm. Because, to put it simply, it is starting to get worrying. In the

past year, Jellycat sales have been rocketing, with some of their most expensive items costing close to three hundred pounds. Is it really necessary to have a collection of these creatures, that without the distinctive label, would simply be just another (admittedly cute) toy? I think this raises a greater issue - are we becoming too easily influenced by crazes?

Many of us struggle against the never-ending toils of a minimum wage job, and yet need Jellycats. And while yes, they are adorable, they have no real purpose in our lives other than the small satisfaction we feel when we first buy them. But it is not long before we feel our first toy growing lonely, and another must swiftly follow, followed by another, then another, and then the disease takes hold. You turn around, and your room is filled with their blank expressions. Or maybe, on a normal approach, you realise serotonin is not a thing that can be purchased (not that that stops you from trying.) It seems these jelly cats are in truth, a distraction from our current worlds. There is a reason it's older teenagers that are purchasing these, the anxiety of the current world being briefly paused in the face of a new fluffy friend. It's a sad fact, that maybe the reason so many of us are drawn to these jelly cats is because they provide a brief look into our past, a simpler time of childhood.

But jelly cats are not entirely a bleak reflection into our late-stage capitalist society. The company, despite being a billion-pound corporation, does have some redeeming factors. For a start, it's not

terrible for the environment, unlike many other toy-making companies (cough cough, build-a-bears destruction lead attack on the planet). They even have a modern slavery section on the website, saying they don't like it, and a long-term commitment to ethical production methods. (Try doing that Amazon!)



So, while Jellycats might not be perfect, they should definitely not be thought about too hard – that would risk a full-blown existential crisis that will drive you to the arms of Karl Marx. Because at the end of the day, they're very cute and show us that money can buy happiness.

Best wishes, Ruby, (and Impeachment the reindeer).

CLASSIC LITERATURE IN MODERN CINEMA

by *Annabelle Martin*



English Literature is a common blueprint for some popular rom-com movies. Stories generally follow a narrative arc with exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. So, isn't it inevitable that literature has become the basis for some popular cinematic storylines?

The most recent example of this is "Anyone But You," which was released in 2023 (I personally think that it's well worth the

hype it received). The movie is based on Shakespeare's play "Much Ado About Nothing", which tells of the relationship and scandal involving young Hero and her suitor Claudio. This thrilling take on the enemies-to-lovers trope captivated viewers, with some making comparisons to alternative romcoms. In the play and film, two characters initially dislike each other, but there's a deeper connection. So the side characters help them get together until they confess their love.

Some people have said that "Anyone But You" is the modern-day "10 Things I Hate About You". Let's look at this adaptation of Shakespeare's novel "The Taming Of The Shrew" which is written about the character Lucentio who loves Bianca but can't date her until her shrewish older sister Katerina marries. In the movie adaptation, Bianca can't date Cameron until Kate is in a relationship. Another popular film adaptation of classic literature is "Clueless" (1995) based on Jane Austen's "Emma". This follows the misadventures of the protagonist, Emma Woodhouse, who fancies herself as talented in matchmaking. The protagonist in Clueless (Cher Horowitz) considers herself to be the same.



Shakespeare's written work has inspired many movies and pieces of entertainment. You may be wondering why. Well, it makes English literature more accessible and often easier to comprehend. One of my personal favourites is "She's The Man" (2006). This love triangle is based on Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" where Orsino is in love with Olivia but she's mourning so rejects him. He sends Cesario (who is Viola) with love letters to win Olivia over on his behalf (he is successful). The movie encapsulates this with a feminist twist - a worthwhile watch. Another well-known example is "Gnomeo and Juliet" (2011), based on - you guessed it - Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet". As I am sure you are aware, Romeo is a Montague, Juliet is a Capulet, and their families are entangled in a feud. But once they meet (disguised at a party) they fall in love.

Finally, Timothee Chalamet has recently taken the movie world by storm starring in the new "Wonka" movie. However, before this in 2019, he starred in "The King". This intense movie is based on Shakespeare's "Henriad" series where the rise of the Lancaster branch of England's House of Plantagenet and the dynastic, cultural, and psychological journey.

Next time you're thinking of watching another movie, why don't you try a modern movie adapted from Shakespeare or Jane Austen? You never know, you might enjoy it more than you anticipate!

IS 'SALTBURN' REALLY ANYTHING NEW?

by Evan Turner & Louisa Salt



Everyone's talking about *Saltburn* at the moment, not least because Jacob Elordi's performance in the critically acclaimed film is 'so Baby-girl'. The uncomfortable and repugnant themes surrounding sex, money and morality have been much discussed on social media, and in the film industry. But are the themes of *Saltburn* really that new? When we strip these controversial scenes back to their origins a rich variety of literature is unveiled, spanning the traditionalist classics of Waugh and Bronte, via *Brideshead Revisited* and *Wuthering heights* to the perplexing and

postmodern *Atonement*. *Saltburn* could similarly easily be compared to the Shakespeare classic, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' begging the question, is it really anything that cutting edge?

In 1945, through *Brideshead Revisited* readers encountered the tale of Charles Ryder whose narrative spoke of struggles with class and sexuality, as an Oxford student uncomfortable with those around him. The struggles associated with same sex attraction were far ahead of its time, leading the book to initially be banned due to its homoeroticism,

with the central protagonist of Evelyn Waugh's landmark novel setting a precedent for homosexual representation in media and literature. Fast-forward to 2023 and a second more perverse Charles Ryder makes his appearance via Barry Keoghan's outcast character Oliver Quick, similarly uncomfortable in the upper-class environment that the world of 'Saltburn' presents. The Marxists among you may suggest director Fennel knows very little of this class tension being an Oxford graduate from a prestigious background, she predictably creates a stereotype by presenting Oliver as a demon of the working classes, infiltrating the upper; presenting a direct link to Brideshead along with Oliver's struggle with his suppressed attraction to Felix. Realistically, can we blame him?

Broader than sex and class however, Saltburn relies on the inspiration of Emily Brontë's 1857 'Wuthering Heights' to bring a classic Gothic aesthetic to the film. Darkness and thick fog blanket the Catton estate in Oliver's first meeting with Venetia and throughout the 'vampire scene'. This unforgettable scene is arguably drawn from the dark and sinister heath that Wuthering Heights is set on. Saltburn incorporates Gothic elements such as an isolated setting that invites and facilitates the horrific actions that transpire and vague allusions to the enigmatic Heathcliff are made throughout. Wuthering Heights has given inspiration to Kate Bush so why not Emerald Fennel?

It would indeed be criminal to overlook the literary inspirations from Ian McEwan's 'Atonement', after all where would Saltburn be without the Country house trope? The

bane of essays everywhere, 'Atonement', and McEwan's postmodernist style serves to confuse readers and add an extra delightfully confusing layer to A' level Lit revision. We are, however, all just about able to grasp the intense, suffocating heat of the 1936 summer and the Tallis country house, which is wonderfully reflected in the Catton Estate in Saltburn, a space outside of society that breeds neglect of its inhabitants and serves to host and condone criminal actions.

Finally, the crown jewel of Emerald Fennel's literary inspiration is Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' This magical romantic comedy is explicitly referenced with the theme of Oliver's birthday party, yet its characters are further echoed in the text itself. The mirroring between Felix and Oliver and Oberon and Puck is as obvious as Trump's fake tan. Felix's similarities with the king of the fairies are vast; both admired yet bored and wielding clear toxic power over their counterparts. Oliver embodies a deeply sinister version of Puck, a rogue sprite, who simply aims to please their master. Ringing any bells?

I could go on to describe countless more texts of which 'Saltburn' mirrors, but this article is already overdue. Nevertheless, it is clear to see just from this small selection that while 'Saltburn' may have shocked the old nans on 'GoggleBox', it is not at all radical when we compare it to its predecessors who paved the way. If anything, this article is a great suggestion list, if you (like most people) couldn't stop talking about Saltburn. Alas, these novels sadly don't contain any form of Jacob Elordi, so I'll allow you to decide whether it's actually worth a read.

DORIAN GRAY – THE SCANDAL OF SUBTEXT

by Jocelyn Eastwood



Last year, I discovered Oscar Wilde’s novel ‘The Picture of Dorian Gray,’ which kept me hooked, clinging onto every single page. I was infatuated with Wilde’s witty and beautifully visual writing style, and, by the time I had finished the book, I was left utterly dumbfounded. I scoured the internet, reading every review, article, and analysis I could find on this literary masterpiece because I couldn’t get enough of such a rich and morally challenging novel. However, I soon realised that many of

the quotes referenced in the articles I was reading, I had never read before. I had already picked up on one of the main characters, Basil Hallwood, and his complete admiration for Dorian Gray, his artistic muse. I even found some aspects of their relationship to be quite romantic, but I didn’t think too much of it. I read lines such as ‘*I find a strange pleasure in saying things to him I know I shall be sorry for having said. As a rule, he is charming to me, and we sit in the studio and talk of a thousand things,*’

unknowing that Wilde originally wrote it as *'I find a strange pleasure in saying things to him I know I shall be sorry for having said. I give myself away. As a rule, he is charming to me, and we walk home together from the club arm in arm.'* Then discovered that I had read a censored version of the novel, in which most of the subtext to do with Dorian and Basil's homoerotic relationship, and references to mistresses were eradicated due to it being called 'vulgar,' and 'unclean,' by the British press around 140 years ago. Reading this uncensored version of Dorian Gray felt like watching a movie in black and white when the director intended it to be in colour – brilliant, but not the full experience.

One of the first things I noticed in the uncensored version of the novel was the difference in exchanges between Dorian Gray and Lord Henry- Basil's friend. The previously two-dimensional discussions emerged into constant implications of desires and connections. The line between mentorship and seduction grew blurred and added depth to the challenging morals embedded into the book.

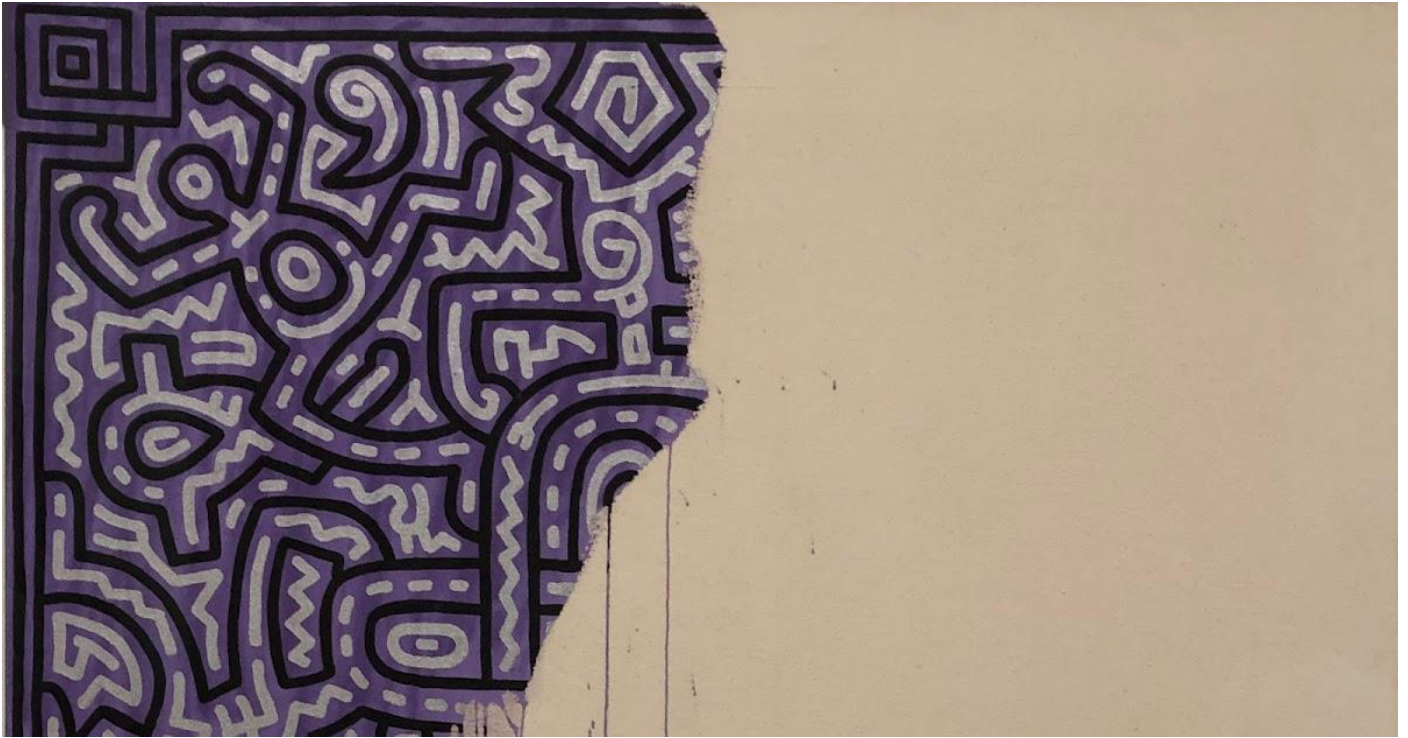
Furthermore, in the censored version, the relationship between Basil and Dorian contains every aspect of a romantic relationship, without the acknowledgement of this romantic element, or the physical connotations to go along with it. However, Dorian and Basil were written to be *'arm in arm'* in Wilde's original draft, which obviously proved to be too scandalous for a Victorian audience. Wilde wrote *'It is quite true I have worshipped you with far more romance of feeling than a man should ever give*

to a friend. Somehow, I have never loved a woman,' which was completely eradicated from the published book. The intricate patterns of subtext between the lines of every page hinted at his challenging attitudes towards sexuality and social norms. Over 500 words were ripped from Wilde's original novel, mostly centring around the subtext of a same-sex relationship. The censorship of such an intricately written novel was not just due to its vulgarity, but an attempt to silence a voice desperate to speak out and criticise the strictly moral and established order of Victorian society. Wilde's strong sense of identity and flamboyance in appearance and writing style only fed the disdain many felt towards him, and just five years after its publication, his novel was used as evidence in trial against himself for gross indecency.

The queer themes are the heartbeat of the original novel, making the book even more intensely emotional and devastating due to the love Basil holds for Dorian. The uncensored version is still beautifully crafted in its tragic nature; however, it's dulled as a result of the strict societal standards of Victorian England. Many of Wilde's works fight the restrictive constraints that society placed onto the general public, including his plays such as *'The Importance of Being Earnest,'* and *'An Ideal Husband.'* If you're a fan of Oscar Wilde's works, the uncensored version of Dorian Gray is a key to his mind, to understand his thinking and struggles in repressing his own sexuality in an era where morality reigned supreme. This is emphasised in the preface of his book *'There is no such thing as an immoral or moral book, books are well written or badly written. That is all.'*

THE 'UNFINISHED PAINTING' - FINALLY FINISHED?

by Jocelyn Eastwood



In a world of strange and modern contemporary art, acclaimed American artist Keith Haring is a name that stands out in the crowd, which millions of art gallery-goers know and love. Born in 1958, his first canvases were the walls of New York's subway stations, in which he would fill empty poster spaces with his signature stylised shapes and figures. He rapidly became a pioneer of the general contemporary art movement, with his works frequently exploring the issues of politics, war, sex, and LGBTQ+ rights. As a queer artist working during the AIDS crisis, many

of his pieces touched on the personal topic and stigma surrounding being gay during the eighties, with one of his most famous and emotional pieces titled 'Unfinished Painting' - his final artwork. The piece was initially supposed to be a self-portrait; however, Haring knew of his own impending death due to developing AIDS, and left it incomplete as a harrowing comment towards the government's neglect of the crisis, which robbed him of his own future. The disease prematurely claimed his life at the age of thirty-one. The painting carries heavy visual symbolism, with the top left hand of a canvas

being covered in his signature style, in purple and black, before abruptly stopping, with the remaining canvas left bare. The only other paint on the canvas is the remaining drips of purple paint from his previous work, falling down the blank space, a reminder of what could've been completed. This piece holds a lot of emotional weight, and Haring is remembered today as an inspiration to modern artists, whose passion for activism was powerfully communicated through the development of his own vibrant, visual language.

Recently, Twitter user @DonnelVillager posted an AI-completed version of Haring's purposefully unfinished painting, with the caption 'The story of this painting is so sad! Now using AI we can complete what he couldn't finish!' The so-called 'finished painting' is an image that is not only untrue to Haring's personal artwork, but an utter disrespect and disregard to his own name, beliefs, and general LGBTQ+ history. The completion of a painting, left incomplete by a sick, dying man, is something that has sparked mass controversy, backlash, and upset throughout social media.

So why did the AI completion of this painting cause such online outrage? Firstly, the 'completed' painting does not replicate Haring's art style truthfully, as his works almost always contained human figures, and the AI-generated version does not. Moreover, it shows a complete ignorance towards the powerful message of his artwork, as we were never meant to see the finished painting to emphasise his, plus many other lives in the gay community, being cut short, and the government's responsibility in the

abundance of early deaths. It demolishes the piece's meaning and shows complete contempt towards the honest and real creation of art. The use of artificial intelligence to finish this painting resurfaced another ongoing debate about the artificial creation of art by AI, and how it has the potential to ruin the careers of artists forever.

For artificial intelligence to be able to form artworks, it needs to be trained by being provided with millions of examples of artworks so it can be informed on what pieces should look like. Software's such as ChatGPT and OpenAI have begun to create increasingly convincing and developed 'artworks' from plain prompts. However, it has been realised that such software's have been trained on millions of artists' stolen works, plagiarising artists' styles and skills. Therefore, the formation of the finished 'Unfinished' painting from artificial intelligence disrespects Haring's name, his life, his legacy, and the community of artists today.

Despite such an ill-mannered tweet about Keith Haring's art, the discussion of his final painting has resurfaced the discussions of how the AIDS crisis was handled and raised awareness towards the controversy of AI-created artworks. Activism is embedded into Haring's art, as he constantly shone a light onto social issues of his time, so the anger formed from this controversy has resulted in a wider awareness of problems in our present day, which, in a way, has stuck to the great legacy of Keith Haring, and what he always loved to do. In every cloud there's a silver lining.

POWER, CORRUPTION & AN ANARCHISTIC ANIMAL FARM

by Durell Eatough



Another trip to the Bolton Octagon was long overdue for our drama students, and this visit, dare I say, put the others to shame. Our Year 10 – 13 students all had the chance to take part in this visit, and I, for one, would go again in a heartbeat. Packed with farm animals, live vocals and communists, this unlikely

combination brought the stage to life in a spectacle of colour, set design brilliance and corrupted leadership. Taking on a simple premise to begin with, the play follows a farm full of animals (hence the name) as they celebrate the passing of their nefarious farmer. Stepping up to the plate, the pigs decide to assume the new role as the farm's leaders, ensuring a

better, more liberal future for every resident. I'll leave it there to avoid any spoilers, however the play's political messaging towards communism serves as a harsh reminder to you, the audience, that not everything that's said can be taken as truth.

“Thrilling, gripping, and the slightest bit blood-curdling, Animal Farm was a play we won't be forgetting soon – for all the right reasons.”

With all the boring stuff out of the way, I'd like to discuss the play's reception. Despite the occasional gripe about the play's premise and theming, it is undeniable that Animal Farm contained some of the most well-executed acting seen during one of these theatre visits. The actors were able to move and traverse the stage like real animals, mimicking sounds and facial expressions to immerse us in the illusion. The

lighting was spectacular, too, with harsh and brutal sounds of pigs squealing combined with a brash, red flashing light to both shock and entertain the audience in a somewhat savage manner. The play was brutal, that's for sure, but a feast for the eyes no less.

As one of the final trips for us Year 13s, this was undoubtedly a trip worth the visit. Thrilling, gripping, and the slightest bit blood-curdling, Animal Farm was a play we won't be forgetting any time soon – for all the right reasons.



BRUMMIE ON BROADWAY: ACCENT VARIETY IN MUSICAL THEATRE

by *Esme Dinsdale*



If you know me, which most of you probably don't, or you have any sort of access to my Spotify, you know that I love a good musical. So, when I heard that *Hadestown* - a musical retelling the heartbreaking myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, and one of my personal favourites - was making its debut on the West End stage, I knew I had to see it, and consequently followed the story of its transfer like a disciple of the Gods and Goddesses it portrays.

As we neared the opening night (which I was unfortunately much too poor and much too living in the opposite end of the country to attend), the *Hadestown* social media

pages started posting videos of the rehearsals, which I naturally dropped everything to watch as soon as I was able, and I couldn't help but notice something unusual about the songs I know to death.

They were being sung in regional accents.

Naturally, my little linguistics heart exploded when I realised this. Accents and Dialect? In musical theatre form? I could hardly contain my excitement (it's a little pathetic, I know). It got me thinking about musical theatre as a whole - why is it that when I'm listening to cast recordings, or watching shows performed live on a stage, there is always a very small variety of

accents, even though the programs are telling me that the cast I'm watching has been carefully curated from all over? Why are all these people performing in an accent I know only 2% of the British population use (Received Pronunciation)?

“Why is that when I’m listening to cast recordings, or watching shows performed live on a stage, there is always a very small variety of accents?”

In some musicals, accents can't really be too varied. One of the most famous examples of this is Lin Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*, a musical detailing the life of one of America's Founding Fathers, Alexander Hamilton. In a musical like this, about American history, full of characters that were real American people, you can't really be expecting a British regional accent. In musicals where the setting is apparent, the accents should match the setting. Another example of this is *Heathers: The Musical* – an adaptation of the 1988 film of the same name starring Winona Ryder, in which they frequently reference being in Sherwood, Ohio, and is therefore performed in an American accent.

One of the reasons *Hadestown* can allow their actors to sing in a variety of accents is quite simple: its setting is never outwardly disclosed. Sure, the second act exists in the Underworld – but where is the Underworld? What accent do they use in the Underworld? It is a space that doesn't exist and doesn't subscribe to the rules of our world. 'The Underworld' doesn't exist, and therefore doesn't have an accent attached to it, so accent diversity can exist within it. No one can dictate that 'the Underworld is here so it sounds like this.' In fact, the ambiguity of the setting of *Hadestown* is one of the many things I love about it – it shows how universal the tale is. It could be set anywhere, at any point (although it does take inspiration from the Industrial Revolution) because the tale doesn't exist within a certain context – the only thing that matters is the characters and the love they feel for each other. Who knew I was such a romantic sap? But this means that a variety of accents doesn't feel out of place, in fact, at least in my opinion, it only serves to emphasise how universal some of the experiences in *Hadestown* are, as anyone can experience them, no matter how you sound.



One example that caused a ruckus in the musical theatre world is *Six: The Musical*.

Six tells the story of the six wives of Henry VIII outside of their husband, in a pseudo-concert format. *Six* caused a commotion when it announced it would be having a Broadway transfer (being performed on Broadway as well as the West End, where it originated). The main question everyone was asking was this – would the Queens carry their English accent with them across the Atlantic, or would the performers play the characters with their American accents? Some argued that as they were English queens, they should have English accents, but to that, I say that by the same logic, Catherine of Aragon should have a Spanish accent, and Anne of Cleves a German one, for authenticity’s sake. Just because these six women were all queens of England doesn’t mean that they were English. *Six* exists in somewhat of a liminal space – yes, the characters are historical figures, but not in the same way *Hamilton* is. Whilst the portrayal of characters in *Hamilton* aims to encompass what those figures were actually like, *Six* takes the figures and tells their true story whilst also giving them new personalities based on well-known pop figures, with Catherine of Aragon being modelled after Beyonce, Jennifer Lopez, and Jennifer Hudson, while Jane Seymour is based off Adele, Sia and Celine Dion. To put it simply, *Six* feels like one of those films that are ‘based on a true story’ but add embellishments to make the story more interesting to your average viewer to the point it is only loosely based on a true story. *Hamilton*, on the other hand, is one of those films that are ‘based on a true story’ and tries to stick to the source material as closely as possible. This allows for much

more freedom for the crafting of the Queens in *Six*, which is reflected through the change in accent.

“Accent diversity should be encouraged. It brings a level of uniqueness to a cast recording or performance that is so rare.”

If any of you are still with me after my incredibly niche ramble, I should really thank you for indulging me (and saving my friends from hearing the same ramble in slightly different fonts once again). My devised rule for accents in musical theatre is this: if the setting is important, then the accents of the characters should reflect the setting. However, if the setting is a background thought or doesn’t exist within the real world, then accent diversity should be encouraged. It brings a level of uniqueness to a cast recording or performance that is so rare, and after all, if you have hand-picked your cast to give the best performance, let them do so in their natural voice. And definitely not because I am a little Lancastrian girl fed up with songs that only sound right in Received Pronunciation. When I’m screaming along to songs in my car, I don’t want to have to put on an accent, sue me!

ATE AND LEFT NO CRUMBS: EXPLORING CANNIBALISM IN MODERN MEDIA

by Ava Wetherall



We've had zombies, we've had vampires, but recently these aren't the only things taking a bite.

Imagine this: High school girls' soccer team resorts to cannibalism after being stranded by a plane crash. This is the premise of the hit TV show 'Yellowjackets' (2021), which uses cannibalism to create not only shock value, but also empathy. Cannibals have been depicted in cinema for decades, but with the release of 'Yellowjackets' (2021), 'Bones & All' (2022), 'Fresh' (2022), and 'Raw' (2016),

there seems to be a link between coming-of-age or romance films and, well, cannibals. And if I say that cannibalism is a metaphor for love, you either know *exactly* what I am talking about, or you are quite concerned. Even Rolling Stone said "2022 was the year of the cannibal", and I don't see this changing any time soon. How did we get here?

Zombie movies and TV shows have been a huge success, such as '28 Days Later', 'The Walking Dead', and 'World War Z'. However, the amount of zombie movies now

is impossible to count. Listen, I promised that I definitely would not promote any sort of cannibalism in this article - but I do think that cannibals are more interesting than your average zombie. You could say that after the COVID pandemic, zombies aren't exactly on our radar anymore (apart from the game adaptation 'The Last of Us' which was incredibly popular). Cannibalism as a sub-genre of horror has always existed somewhere, but are we becoming desensitised to it?

As an audience, we are constantly searching for escapism through cinema. The horror genre takes the fears of society and uses them over and over again, creating a world which resembles our anxieties. In horror, we know that even if our world is scary, the fictional world is scarier. Sophie Thatcher, leading actor in 'Yellowjackets,' explains this: "I don't know how to say this without sounding psycho but, on the show, we kind of normalise it (cannibalism)." "Everyone is striving for something as dark as possible as if our world isn't already dark." It is an extremely taboo topic in our culture, but we are often drawn to this the more stress we are experiencing as a society.

Cannibalism, as depicted in literature and media, is often not just literal but is a metaphor to address important and complex themes. It can be used to critique societal constructs such as consumerism, where extreme wealth and privilege in a capitalist system come at the expense of others. Author of 'Bones & All,' Camille DeAngelis, explains that going vegan gave her "a new perspective on why these monster narratives are so compelling. With zombies, everyone just thinks it's about overconsumption in general,

mindless consumption. I'm thinking, more specifically, about who we consume."

Cannibalism is also used as a metaphor for love. Just as cannibalism involves the literal consumption of another being, the metaphorical use suggests the desire to merge with the other person and to be consumed by their presence. This concept has become a trend on social media recently. There are TikTok videos, YouTube videos, Pinterest boards - and even Spotify playlists - about cannibalism. But even though it seems to be popular at the moment, cannibalism as a metaphor for love is hardly a new idea. The link between love and the consumption of food is seen in literature and art, such as poetry by Christina Rossetti and Carol Ann Duffy. While the literal act of cannibalism is not always seen, the metaphors are often there.

However, cannibalism (clearly) has darker connotations too. In the film 'Fresh' (2022), cannibalism is used to highlight misogyny, where the protagonist meets a supposedly perfect man who is... far from it. The film explores the dangers of modern dating and the objectification and exploitation of women, describing a love that is possessive and suffocating. Director Mimi Cave states "there was something about the symbolism it held within the context of the story for me," "relating specifically to women's bodies, I immediately saw so many layers of visual metaphor in my mind."

So, is cannibalism the issue, or are we? While you're thinking, I'll go back to watching 'Yellowjackets.' Or maybe I'll do my favourite BuzzFeed quiz 'What flavour of cannibalism as a metaphor for love are you?'

IS A JOKE EXPLAINED A JOKE LOST? BARBIE AND THE GOLDEN GLOBES CONTROVERSY

by Annabelle Martin



The film *Barbie* released on July 21, 2023, grossed \$1.44 billion and sparked controversy due to its feminist themes. *Oppenheimer* was released on the same day, leading many people to take part in a double bill of both films. Greta Gerwig (the director) stated, “*Barbie* focuses on the expectations placed on women and the damaging repercussions these expectations can have.” These themes are illustrated in a

monologue from *Gloria*, played by America Ferrera.

The Golden Globes 81st Annual Awards were hosted by Jo Koy (an American stand-up comedian and actor) on January 8, 2024, honouring American and International television.

In his opening monologue, Jo attempted to make some jokes on several topics, one being the *Barbenheimer* phenomenon. The most controversial joke he delivered

was: “Oppenheimer is based on a 721-page Pulitzer Prize-winning book about the Manhattan Project, and Barbie is based on a plastic doll with big boobies”. This objectified the character of Barbie and contradicted the purpose of the movie, focusing on the appearance of the dolls rather than their achievements.



After an irrelevant comment on attraction to plastic dolls, Jo Koy reflected on what he believed was the main point of Barbie: “The key moment in Barbie is when she goes from perfect beauty to bad breath, cellulite, and flat feet... what casting directors call a character actor.” Yes, this was significant. But, by degrading what happened and linking it to an actor Jo Koy created more offense.

“The incident sparked conversations on social media, with some criticising and others supporting Jo Koy.”

Clearly, Jo Koy found his jokes amusing as he giggled to himself before claiming

“Some I wrote, some other people wrote” as if to disassociate responsibility. The audience's reactions display their disappointment that Jo Koy was saying such things, particularly on this platform. Emma Stone looked disgusted, Ryan Gosling remained expressionless, and Greta Gerwig appeared unimpressed but unsurprised by the comments made. The incident sparked conversations on social media, with some criticising and others supporting Jo Koy. For example, "Someone needs to tell Jo Koy that a joke explained is a joke lost" - @brianlogandales via "X"

During an interview on "ABC's GMA3: What You Need To Know," Jo Koy claimed it was an "off night". Jo Koy stated, “We had 10 days to write this monologue. It was a crash course. I feel bad, but I got to still say I loved what I did.” He suggests ten days is not enough time to create jokes for the monologue. This has been criticised online with individuals stating that “it took Jo Koy 10 days to write his "jokes" and 10 minutes for Taylor Swift to write "Willow" and that is the difference between a man and a woman" - @shazebbluvsTS.

So, Jo Koy has received some backlash based on his monologue. Hopefully, this can be used as a lesson for those who agree with his comments. However, a positive of this is that it has sparked a conversation about feminism and given individuals a reason to reflect.

NETFLIX'S AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER & MODERN-DAY MISOGYNY

by Esme Dinsdale



A *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. The original ‘Avatar,’ having premiered four years before James Cameron’s film full of blue people. A beloved childhood cartoon to many, that has stood the test of time and is still beloved almost 20 years later. However, *Avatar: The Last Airbender (ATLA)* has unfortunately fallen into the pit of Netflix live-action reboots, following *Winx Club’s Fate: The Winx Saga*. After M. Night Shyamalan’s 2010 attempted live-action remake of *ATLA*, fans were sceptical when Netflix announced their plans.

Well, Netflix’s version premiered on the 22nd of February, and I have a lot of opinions about it, and I’m here to tell some of them to you all.

I’m going to be focusing on one problem I have with the live-action remake – the misogyny. Somehow, they took the misogyny away from one of the characters and made it more misogynistic in the process. Let me explain.

In the original cartoon, one of the main characters, Sokka, is, at the beginning, full of misogyny. Coming from a culture that maintains the idea that men are the warriors and women the healers, he is a loud and proud misogynist. In Season 1, Episode 4, he says to his younger sister, Katara ‘*Simple – girls are better at fixing pants than guys (sewing), and guys are better at hunting and fighting and stuff like that. It’s the natural order of things.*’ Yikes. You can’t get any closer to outdated ideals of masculinity and femininity than that.

However, in the same episode, they meet an all-female group of formidable soldiers – the Kyoshi Warriors. Their leader, Suki, a recurring character throughout all three seasons of *ATLA*, shows Sokka that gender has nothing to do with fighting ability, and quite literally knocks the misogyny out of them. Quite forward-thinking for a children’s cartoon that premiered in 2005, don’t you think?

The live-action remake, however, completely removed the misogyny from Sokka’s character, to ‘modernise’ the source material. This would work if misogyny was something he maintained throughout the rest of the original cartoon. But Sokka unlearning his misogyny was a key part of his early character development, and something that made him a fan favourite. In the remake, when the characters meet Suki and her Kyoshi warriors, the arc of the episode does not teach anyone who watches the show that women are amazing, it becomes Suki fascinated with a man, who is the exotic outsider to her isolated village, and therefore he must be so much wiser and more

experienced than her, when it is obvious that she is the superior warrior, even though Sokka claims himself as ‘the protector of his village.’

So, the episode goes from Suki knocking Sokka down to size and kicking off his journey to forget the misogyny his culture has taught him to Suki being fascinated by a man, reducing her character down to a love interest that revolves solely around Sokka. That certainly feels more misogynistic than her tackling patriarchal ideals, does it not? So, Netflix, what do you have to say about this? How did you manage to fail so spectacularly at trying to make your show more ‘woke’ that it ended up going in the opposite direction?

The reason as to why Netflix did this is quite simple: the remake, unlike the original, feared giving their characters flaws that may make them unlikeable. But, without flaws, fictional characters tend to fall flat. Flaws are something people can relate to, and can make for amazing character development that makes a character someone everyone hates to someone everyone loves – just look at Zuko’s arc in the original *ATLA* cartoon. From the primary villain to one of the heroes of the series, Zuko’s redemption arc is one widely regarded as one of the best in fiction, because he was allowed to have flaws. So, Netflix, I am begging you, please let your characters have flaws and make mistakes. And let your characters learn from said flaws and mistakes. And don’t take misogyny out of the source material if it’s only going to make the whole thing more sexist. You really didn’t think that one through, did you?

THE OSCARS: A WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY?

by Billy Burton



A few weeks ago, the 96th Academy Awards took place in Hollywood, celebrating and honouring films released in the past year. The Oscars are undoubtedly prestigious, certainly the most significant and widely known awards in the film industry. Nevertheless, I've always been suspicious of the Academy Awards, and of award ceremonies in general. This is coming from someone who would consider themselves a cinephile, and who spent a significant amount of time during COVID

lockdown trying to memorise every Best Picture winner since 1929. While I can appreciate the nerdy trivia and potential for pub quiz questions, I can't help but wonder if award ceremonies like these really are the best way of celebrating cinema.

Art, after all, is subjective. It's not the Olympics. There's an easy way of finding out who can jump the highest, or run the fastest, or lift the most weights. But actors, directors, and writers? Are there really any

benefits to pitting creative people against each other? Winning an Oscar may bring filmmakers a certain prestige and enhanced reputation, but it's purely because of a few thousand voters (predominantly old, white, and male) deciding that some films are better than others. It's no surprise that some consider the Oscars to be a complete waste of time, nothing more than a self-indulgent, self-congratulatory get-together with no real importance. When George C. Scott turned down a Best Actor Oscar in 1971, he stated that he didn't feel he was in competition with his fellow nominees and described the ceremony as a "two-hour meat parade." Two hours?! Those were the days!

“Winning an Oscar may bring filmmakers a certain prestige and enhanced reputation, but it's purely as a result of a few thousand voters (predominantly old, white and male) deciding that some films are better than others.”

The Oscars are consistently accused of 'getting it wrong,' demonstrating that there's never going to be unanimous agreement on who the worthy winners are. Also, although there might be the

occasional truly surprising win, most results are usually rather predictable, following trends from other award ceremonies like the Golden Globes. The Academy have a tendency to play it safe more often than not. Many have also pointed out that there are an increasing number of films that seem to be made with the sole intention of being nominated for an award, and so play into the perceived biases of the Academy. Oscar voters like biopics, literary adaptations, war films, underdog stories, veteran actors playing historical figures and, most importantly, nothing that's too political.

That being said, 'Oscar-bait' films don't always end up having much success during awards season, and it certainly isn't true that all Oscar wins are foregone conclusions. In fact, recent years have seen several films that aren't typical Oscar winners pick up big prizes. Bong Joon-Ho's excellent satire *Parasite* made history in 2020, as the first film not in the English language to win Best Picture. The win infuriated the then-President of the United States, who asked "Can we get *Gone with the Wind* back please?" You can normally judge how good a film is based on how angry it makes Donald Trump.

The role of politics at the Oscars has a long history and has been brought into sharp focus following this year's ceremony. There are those who like to criticise out-of-touch, privileged liberal elites using the Oscars as a preaching platform. Personally, I don't particularly mind actors and filmmakers speaking about politics at awards ceremonies. In fact, it seems to me an

infinitely preferable option to the alternative: wealthy Hollywood celebrities swanning about as if the world revolves around them and ignoring everything happening outside. However, the hypocrisy in the way politics is used is more problematic. Again, it comes down to a matter of ‘playing it safe.’ Low-risk political commentary that aligns with the broadly liberal agenda of Hollywood might get you a standing ovation. But anyone who dares to actively challenge injustice or stand up to power beyond just saying “Donald Trump is a (insert expletive here)” is likely to face a less welcoming response.

Upon receiving an award for his Holocaust drama, *The Zone of Interest* at this year’s Oscars, Jonathan Glazer gave a speech in which he called for an end to the dehumanisation of victims in Gaza and Israel. Although he has since been praised for his powerful, personal, and rousing words, Glazer’s speech has also been deliberately misinterpreted by many commentators in the media. It’s a reminder that asking the audience to step out of their comfort zone and take responsibility for themselves can be a dangerous game. He isn’t the first Oscar winner to face backlash for outlining a justified moral position upon accepting an award. Michael Moore was booed in 2003 when he used his acceptance speech to criticise President Bush just days after the US invasion of Iraq. Perhaps most famously, Marlon Brando turned down an Oscar in 1973 in protest against Hollywood’s mistreatment of Native Americans. Sacheen Littlefeather, who spoke on his behalf, also faced a hostile

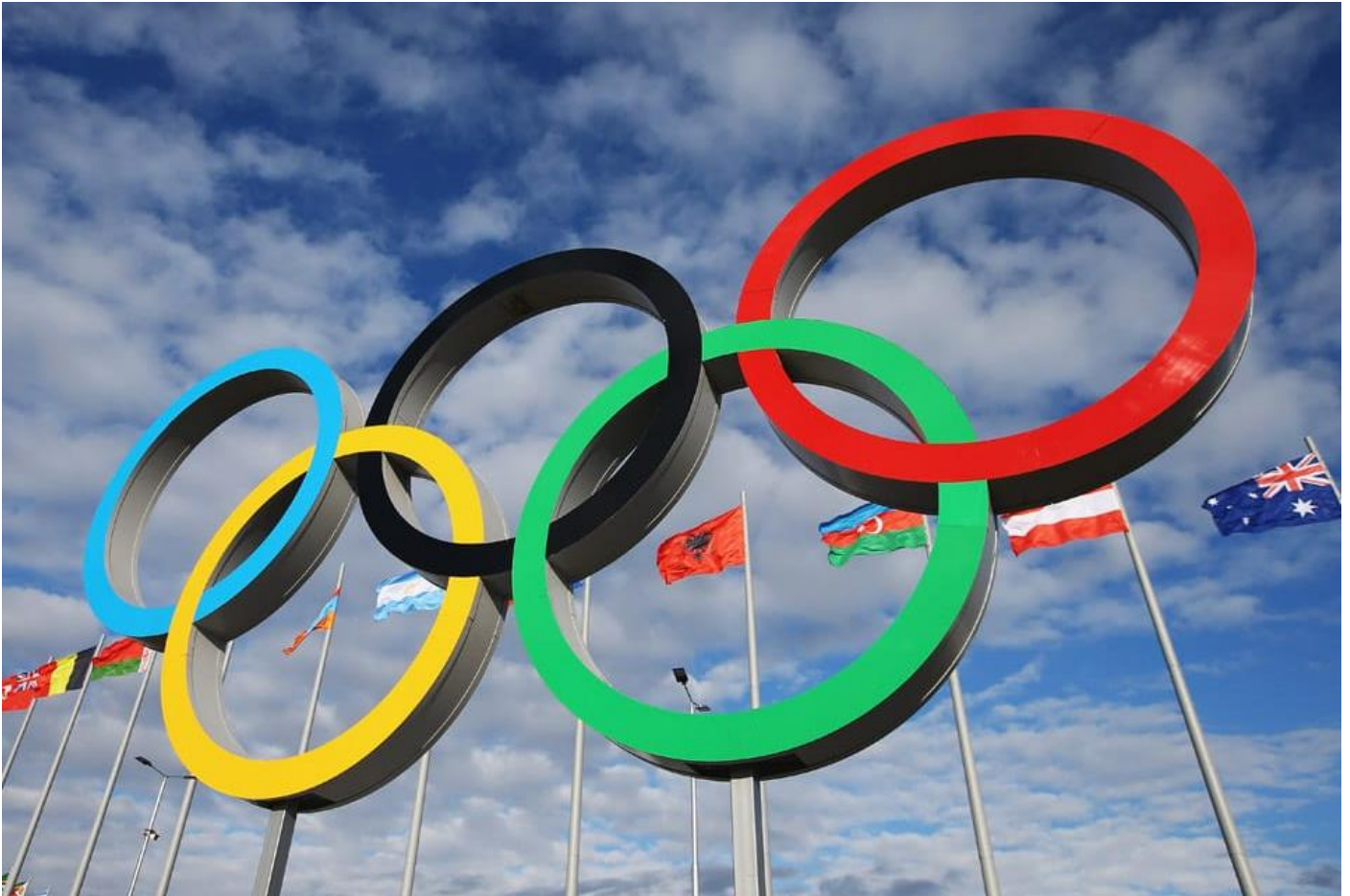
reaction, with John Wayne reportedly having to be held back from assaulting her. What a nice guy!

As I’ve outlined, there’s a strong argument that the Oscars are nothing more than a waste of time and money – an excuse for rich celebrities to pat each other on the back and celebrate the films everyone thought were going to win anyway. And yet, they remain arguably the most important event of the year in the film industry. Almost 100 years on from the very first ceremony, it’s surely more important than ever that they commit to championing truly great, original filmmaking, especially by those whose stories may have so far been ignored, or with perspectives that don’t necessarily fit into the Hollywood formula. If that means letting actors, writers and filmmakers reveal some uncomfortable truths, then all the better for it. After all, the best cinema, like all the best art, is about fighting for what’s right. Michael Moore went on to say of his 2003 acceptance speech, “People would later remember ‘I’m that guy who told the truth.’”

(I couldn’t end without mentioning the real highlight of this year’s Oscars – Holly Waddington, a former pupil of CRGS Sixth Form, picked up the award for Best Costume Design, which she won for her work on *Poor Things*. An outstanding achievement, and it means CRGS can now count an Oscar-winner among our alumni...)

REIGNITING THE OLYMPIC FLAME

by Izzy Nash



Over 3 billion people watch it; 206 nations compete in it; and 14,000 athletes train for it. Yes, that's right, I'm talking about the Olympics - the biggest sporting event in the calendar. It's been this way for hundreds of years, having tracked the evolution of sporting history like no other competition, including many weird and wonderful sporting events along the way

(who knew that Tug of War was once an elite Olympic sport?)

Yet, it all boils down to Ancient Greece (as many things do) when looking at where the Olympics we recognise today comes from. Undoubtedly, in 1896, when the games were re-established as a quadrennial event in the international calendar, the founders wanted to resurrect

the prestigious sporting traditions of Ancient Greece. After 1,500 years of lying dormant and forgotten, the Olympics was given a new lease of life in its home city of Athens.

“The fact that events have stood the test of time is evidence of the power of sport to remain a constant, responsible for fostering community and co-operation between countries today.”

But how similar was an Ancient Greek Olympics to the one we will see in Paris 2024? Held in honour of Zeus, king of the Ancient Greek gods, surprisingly there is a lot we might recognise in the Olympics of the ancient world as a spectator from the 21st century. Artwork on amphorae displays, footraces, jumping, discus and javelin, all sports that thousands enjoy watching and taking part in across the world today. The fact that these events have stood the test of time, remaining virtually untouched, is evidence of the power of sport to remain a constant,

responsible for fostering community and cooperation between countries today. Indeed, the Ancient Olympics was accompanied with a peace treaty that extended throughout the entirety of Greece providing safe passage to all competitors and spectators even from kingdoms at war. This helped to foster a sense of shared Greekness, mirroring the idea of international cohesion today. In fact, the UN gave the Olympics the catchphrase “building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal” showing how the Greek’s use of sport as a means of securing peace is reflected in the modern world.

The ultimate prize in the Olympics we know today is undoubtedly the infamously scarce gold medal; swiftly followed by silver and bronze. Yet, in the Ancient Greek Olympics, the prize for winning was entirely different. Even though it might seem rather underwhelming to us today, the ultimate prize was a crown of olive leaves cut from the sacred olive tree at Olympia. And yes, there was only one olive crown; the Greeks only recognised the winners at their games - after first place everyone else was a loser. But more important than this crown was what it represented. Athletes gained fame and popularity from supporters watching the games, some even going as far as creating statues of themselves to commemorate their victory. That’s like Michael Phelps - the most successful Olympian of all time - putting 28 statues

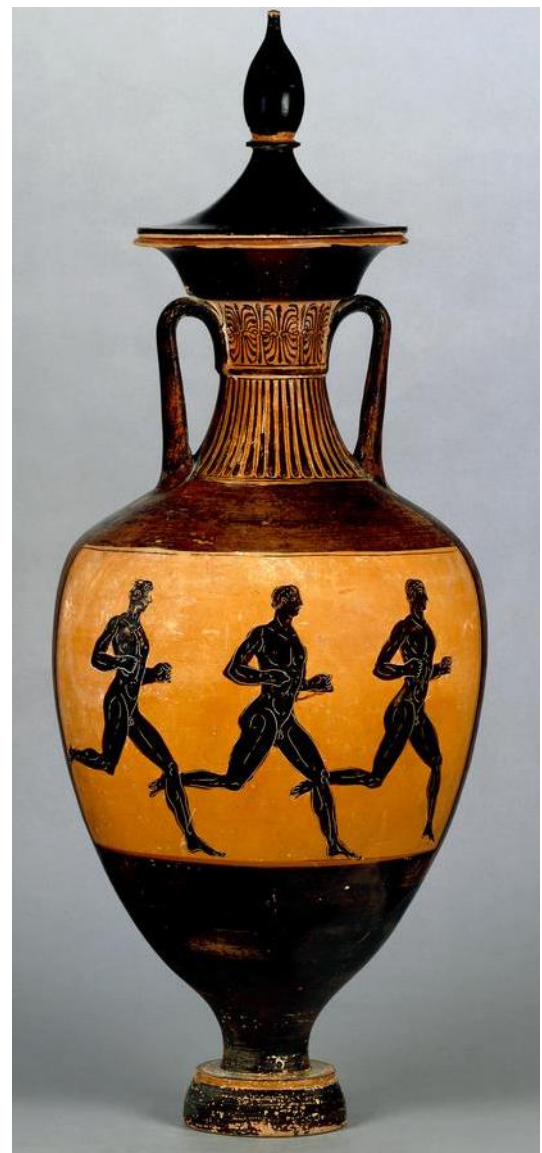
of himself up in Athens, Beijing, London, and Rio!



Yet, the Olympics has evolved since it was first created. For one, believe it or not, the Olympics didn't used to be all about sport. In fact, the Olympics was first and foremost a religious festival dedicated to Zeus. Taking place in a religious sanctuary surrounded by religious architecture from temples to altars, it was hard to escape Zeus as ultimately the most important aspect of the games - not the athletes themselves. Athletes made sacrifices to Zeus hoping to perform well in their competition and made a promise to Zeus that they would not cheat. Clearly, the sporting events were simply played within the context of religion and the festival honouring the gods. When the Olympics was being remodelled in 1935, many wished to interweave Christian beliefs with the games saying that "the first essential characteristic of the modern Olympics is that, like the Olympics of ancient Greece, they constitute a religion." Yet, as society has become more and more religiously and culturally diverse, religion has been entirely separated from the games, throwing the

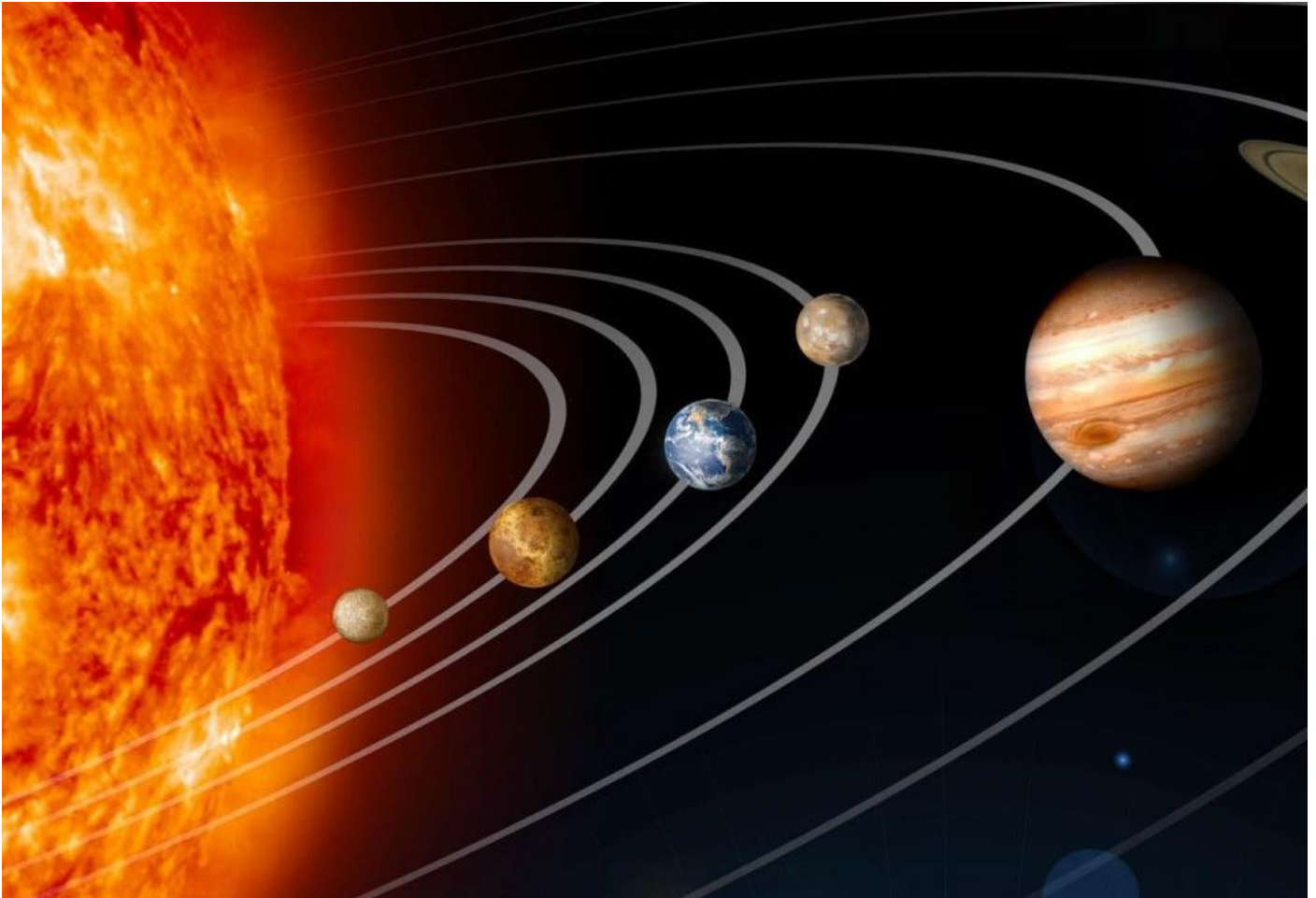
sporting competition into the centre stage of the Olympic Games as we know it.

So, even after 12 centuries, the Olympics remain just as relevant and important to us today as it was to the Ancient Greeks. By looking at ancient sources it truly is remarkable how much of the modern day we can see in the past. Sport, despite evolving as time passes, provides us with a direct link to the people of ancient civilisations displaying how Classics continues to impact the events of 2024.



ALIENS? THEY MIGHT BE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

by Sophie Evans



For over thousands of years now, humanity has looked up at the stars and wondered what might be out there, and if we are truly alone in this vast universe. As far back as Ancient Greece, philosophers like Epicurus and Democritus, who considered the universe to be the result of a chance jostling of atoms, thought that it was highly likely

that there were other inhabited worlds out there.

But were they right? Well, it should be said that there is still no solid evidence for the existence of aliens, but dream we can and so dream we will. It's not all fairytales though. In fact, aliens could be living right on your doorstep. Well, if the

distance to your doorstep is 628.3 million kilometres. And no, it's not Mars. It's actually Europa.

Europa? Isn't that a continent or something?

No, that's Europe. The smallest of Jupiter's Galilean moons, Europa is almost the size of Earth's moon, yet much brighter. It has a water-ice crust with an atmosphere that is composed mainly of oxygen, and so already has two key factors for life. The heat from the icy layer stretching due to Jupiter's gravity at different points in the lunar year causes the water to remain liquid despite the freezing temperatures, as well as the presence of salts. However, no matter how much liquid is present, the coldness of this moon is still a great barrier to life as life requires energy, and cold waters such as these host little to no usable energy. So, life on Europa would not be possible...or would it?

“On Europa, radiation could provide a source of free energy, enough to sustain entire ecosystems!”

Well? Would it?

Not all of Europa is as cruel and frosty as you might think. Water vapour plumes have been detected by the Hubble Space Telescope, thought to be caused by 'cryogeysers,' which are absolutely as cool as they sound. A cryogeysers is where large eruptions of mostly water vapour come from active cryovolcanic features, in this case, hydrothermal vents under the ice crust. As we all learned in science, to become a gas, water must boil, and somewhere in between the cool water and the boiling vapour must be a sort of 'Goldilocks' point where the temperature is neither too hot nor too cold for life to exist. Even if any life does not use such energy, it is suspected that cracks in the surface of the ice could allow for photosynthesis to occur. And, even if organisms don't fancy either of those there's still another option – radiation. This could provide useful molecules at the moon's surface which, if delivered to the liquid underneath, could provide a source of free energy, enough to sustain entire ecosystems!

So, it's confirmed then? Europa has Martians?

No, nothing is confirmed. Not yet anyway. But, even if we have nothing else, we can still hope. And even if aliens did exist, they wouldn't be called 'Martians.' Those come from Mars.

WILLY WONKA: THE NOT-SO CHILD-FRIENDLY EXPERIENCE

by Cloris Woo & Amber Wood



For £35 per person, you'd expect the real-life actor Timothee Chalamet to pop out – but the Wonka experience was in Glasgow, so that wasn't possible. Multiple interviews, news and online memes have formed on social media about this anti-climactic experience. You would initially expect myriads of joy and laughter and an unlimited amount of chocolate to your

heart's content... **BUT NO!** This is Glasgow!

With just one jellybean, and half a cup of Tesco's own brand lemonade that was served, children were *severely* underwhelmed. On this very, *very* special day, the real MVPs were the parents, who role-reversed with the actors and ended up having to entertain the children themselves. Ultimately, the event left

children in tears in the sparsely decorated warehouse - it was no surprise the event went viral.

Above, is a picture comparing how the event was marketed and the reality. Demanding refunds, even inviting the police to deal with the furious families or perhaps to fix the Oompa-Loompa's makeup even Hugh Grant would be ashamed of!

The event was short-lived, following the immediate complaints after the sighting of scattered plastic props, organisers had to call a halt to the event only a few hours after opening.

Have you heard of the recent moral panic regarding artificial intelligence (AI)? Well, an entirely AI-generated script was created for the fiasco, which worked well for classic characters such as the Oompas or Wonka, but the Unknown? I don't remember that one being in any of the movies – that's because it *wasn't* in any of the movies! This entirely new dark, silver-masked monster twitched out from behind the walls, creeping up on small children who were obviously quite startled. What a disaster. Let's just hope the Unknown doesn't come out from our school walls instead...

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