

CINEMA BINGE

This article was written before the current pandemic situation. Please continue to follow government advice and stay at home. Once all of this is over, this article could inspire an outing to look forward to. Stay safe.

You get home from university, drop your bag to the floor and collapse onto the sofa – where you've strategically placed a blanket and remote for easy access to Netflix. You scroll endlessly through the countless shows and movies, trying to find something new and interesting... but, nevertheless, you settle on *The Office*. So, when the next episode begins to auto-play you just sit back and enjoy the ride, and it's only when your stomach rumbles that you realise you've been sat there for almost five hours.

Sound familiar? (*Or is it just me?*)

In this modern age, binge culture defines us as a society – and the ever-growing list of streaming platforms just adds to the easy access that binge-watching provides us.

Once a week, every week, for just over a year now, I take the trek into Nottingham City Centre and make my way through the Cornerhouse to my favourite place on Earth. ~*The Cinema*~. And once a week I write collection codes on my hand and type them into the ticket printer, watching as three tickets drop one after the other. Yes, three tickets for three films. Because binge culture shouldn't be confined to your sofa: it is a way of life.

What's not to love about the cinema? The glorious chairs (with the luxurious footrest you know you shouldn't use), the screen twice as big as your dorm room, and *slushies galore!* Truly, it thrives on its reputation as an experience. And what can be better than treating yourself to a day of brand-new movie magic?

There are many benefits to the cinema's atmosphere, too. At home, you have the distraction of social media to pull you away from the movie, but, as it feels almost like a crime to even glance at your phone during the screening, your attention is fully devoted to the film so you'll never miss a second of the action! (As long as you didn't order that extra large drink!) Cinema binges, however, require quite a lot of planning. It can be costly to spend the whole day at the cinema on a student budget, but there are many student-friendly deals available if you're committed to the screen! However, in my opinion, the value of this experience is well worth the expense: there's nothing wrong with a little self-care!

Also, finding films that you want to watch *and* fit with your time schedule isn't always a walk in the park, so choosing the screenings can be difficult. But with cinema, even if a film's not to your personal taste, you'll have watched something new in a style you might have never otherwise seen.

Cinema is incredibly useful in introducing a wide audience to literature: Autumn de Wilde's *Emma* released in February is a truly wonderful adaptation of Jane Austen's novel, and Kenneth Branagh's upcoming *Artemis Fowl* is certain to inspire its audience to read its namesake series! But it also familiarises literature that may otherwise be considered 'niche'; think of how many comic book superheroes have become mainstream staples of our culture thanks to movies! *Black Widow*, *Wonder Woman 1984* and *The Eternals* being only a few scheduled for release this year. Cinemas are always showing fresh and exciting content.

That's the joy of cinema – it's always new, always changing.

Cinema bingeing also, albeit unexpectedly, has a positive effect on literary studies. By watching a variety of genres and writers, you'll discover a wide range of writing styles – which can help your own development (especially on a creative writing course!) and will inspire your own creativity to no end! So, next time you can, sit back and relax in a comfy chair and grab an overfilled bag of popcorn. Feel the weight of assignments fly from your shoulders, take a deep breath and laugh through the ridiculous ads and trailers. Free your mind from the stress of everyday for a couple of hours and take some time for yourself. In what is turning into an age of solitude, I can't wait for the days when we can share the cinematic experience again.

