

EDITOR'S OPINION: Stop romanticising university

[Oscar Bentley](#) argues that the myth of university is so greatly sold to young people that they can't help but be disappointed when they arrive

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Image: Simon Q

As sixth formers who were finally seriously thinking for the first time in our lives about actually going to university, it was sold to us as the Holy Grail. Go to university they said, and there, you will find yourself, discover what you are meant to do, and exit the other side as a fully formed adult human being.

It's not just our mentors and peers who told us this, but so did the media. Take any of the bout of university or college films that told us university is a party mad haven that will propel any willing student into the future of their imagination. Believe the myth that general society tells young people, and you'll come to university believing that it's your life's calling.

That, however, is not what I have found. I'm not saying that university is bad or that I'm not glad to be here. But the university life I am experiencing is not the one I fantasised about, and now I'm struggling to decide whether university itself is the problem, or whether I just feel disappointed because it's different to how it was sold to me and how I'd imagined it.

I experienced no epiphany of meaning upon stepping foot through the door. Maybe it's York? I dreamt of university as a place of history, an institution of stoic culture, but while York is a historic city, the 54 year old plate glass University certainly isn't. Maybe it's Halifax? Popular culture sells us the picture of interconnected halls and dorms, but the houses in Halifax, supposedly meant to foster a village community-like feel, do anything but. Maybe it's Hes East? My course is there, and while university is

supposedly a bustling hive of busyness, Hes East is a barren wasteland. Maybe it's my course? Film and Television Production isn't exactly the most typical university course. Maybe it's my housemates? After becoming really close in freshers', some of our relationships have drifted apart.

But my problem is that I'm not sure any of these things are intrinsically bad. They're just not what I anticipated; they're not the picture popular culture sold to me. At home when I'm asked whether I like university, I reply yes, but always feel as if I'm lying somehow. And that's the problem: I don't massively like or dislike university. I enjoy it, but it's also just my life now. And that's why we should stop romanticising university to the young.

Stop setting them up for disappointment.



2 comments

Fff 28 May '17 at 10:00 pm

That's a shame

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pok 20 Jul '17 at 8:34 pm

It might depend on the person as well. I loved my time at York uni and I expected a lot from it as well. My course was incredible and I met some really fantastic people there.

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