

## The Ye Paradox

By [Alex Thompson Thompson](#)

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By the time this article goes from a scrappy word document to the published article you're reading, Kanye will have undoubtedly been involved in some bizarre new controversy. Whether it's donning a "Make America Great Again" hat to meet Donald Trump, delaying his album to build a recording studio in Africa, gifting Yeezys to a homophobic dictator in Uganda, suggesting slavery was a choice on TMZ or dancing on SNL dressed as a giant Perrier bottle - Kanye's antics are clogging up Instagram feeds - and yet he shows no sign of stopping. All this madness from the man who's dropped 5 incredible albums this year. Anyone who's ever discussed music with me over the past few years knows how much of a Kanye fan I am. I love most things about him: the controversial lyrics, the glitzy production, the ridiculous fashion, the ego. I even love his album 808s & Heartbreak. It's therefore no surprise that 2018 has been a somewhat awkward year for me - with constant eye rolling, flustered justification and even rapidly changing topic whenever someone brings up Kanye.

For years, I've tried to claim he's sparking debate, pushing boundaries and is often misunderstood. But is it finally time to jump ship? 'It's like we're on the wrong side of history' admitted Jonah Hill in a recent interview with Pitchfork magazine: 'He's a genius but I don't know what the fuck this whole thing's about'. Hill seems to have understood this situation pretty well. Kanye may be one of the greatest artists of our generation, but he also happens to be the most deluded one. When his frustration is channelled into music it can be profound and compelling. West's latest solo album Yewas a beautiful collision of confession and apology, a self-aware side project where the rapper opened up about his mental health and misguided faith in Trump. It was a moment of genuine honesty from Kanye who finally admitted that he's fallible, that he's fucked up.

The problem is when this confusion is placed in a tweet or an interview, where his previous self-awareness vanishes and he becomes a ridiculous caricature, spewing rhetoric and unsubstantiated claims. His views are sliding further to the right and simultaneously further from his past self and I can't get behind the politics of the "new Kanye". Kanye is diverging from everything he's previously stood for: the only relief is that this ideology has yet to properly permeate his music.

Whilst I may never agree with Kanye's politics, I can't help but love his music, despite my desire to separate it from his behaviour. It's like breaking up with your boyfriend but keeping his jumpers. For now I'll keep Kids See Ghosts in my albums of the year, even if I cringe every time Kanye takes to Twitter.



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