

EDITOR'S PICKS

GAMES

GTA - Games style

This week Games reviews GTA, and that's Grand Theft Auto, not



COMMENT

Letters

The Editor responds to E.'s pleas for easy puzzles with a few brain teasers.



FILM

Director Masterclass

Peter Brook on the works of Martin Scorsese.



Felix Sex Survey

That's right ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, our sex survey will be opening again this year!

The survey starts on Monday so make sure to load the link in your browsers and fill out some

survey.

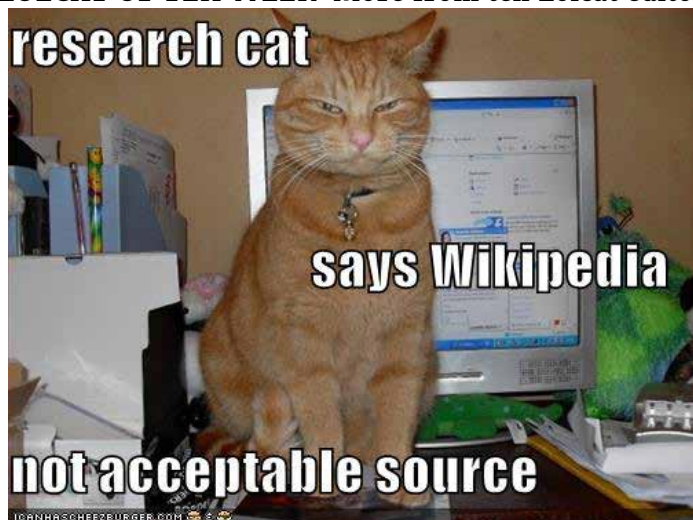
With new questions and moar analysis, this year's survey is bound to be a corker!

Whether you're a saint or sinner, clubber or reviser, come and tell us about yourself!



bit.ly/1l2exlo

LOLCAT OF TEH WEEK: More from teh Lolcat editor



Cycle Security Announcement



#SWAG

Tribute Nite

(spelling intentional, honest!)

Jazz and Rock soc are hosting a Tribute Nite on Tuesday 28th February.

You can either play up to three songs from any band, or come and watch people play while

There has been an increase in cycle theft in the South Kensington area and the concentration of cycles on campus make the college a prime target.

Over 95% of cycles stolen on campus in 2013 have been because cycles owners are buying locks that can be removed in seconds, particularly cable locks, chains and padlocks. The Security Department have been buying "ABUS Granite X plus" locks in bulk and discounting them to staff and students at a price of £30.

These locks normally retail between £70 and £80 and in the

three years that we have been selling these locks we have had no reports of locks being cut through. If you wish to purchase one please go to Room 155 in the Sherfield Building.

You can also have your cycle security marked in Room 155 free of charge.

The Security Team is also working with the local Police Team to look at what other measures can be implemented to reduce cycle theft on Campus.

If you see anyone acting suspiciously around cycles on campus please call Security immediately on 4444 or 02075891000 from a mobile



laughing and holding up the bar.

The event starts at 7PM on Tuesday and finishes at 11PM and is hosted in Metric!

Go Metric!

Exploring Cinema

It was once said that one of the most sexist things about Imperial is the line-up chosen by Imperial Cinema. Perhaps in its eclectic mix of discerning blockbusters, films aimed solely at females aren't picked that often, but that doesn't make the statement true. Looking at the showings for this term, two films stick out. Firstly, there is Frozen, one of only a few Disney films that manages to not make the viewer

angry when they put any thought into its premise. For instance, the Little Mermaid, whose entire plot revolves around the main character changing everything about herself in an attempt to impress the man she saw one time on a boat. Frozen, on the other hand, not only makes fun of the old Disney tropes, but passes the Bechdal test with flying colours. The other noticeable entry is Don Jon. In this case, it is a film that could, in the

loosest sense of the term, be called a romantic comedy. But this isn't your stereotypical 'our problems could all be solved if we actually just learned to communicate', it's actually a good film.

The rest of the line-up manages to continue this theme – nothing there is intended just for the male demographic.

And if that isn't good enough for you, then it's probably time to talk to Hollywood.

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US Energy Secretary visits Imperial

Maciej Matuszewski
 News Editor

Imperial College was visited last week by US Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz. In a talk on Friday, January 17, at the Grantham Institute for Climate Change Dr Moniz outlined the US government's current energy policy and its plans for achieving a low carbon future.

He was keen to stress that his Department understood very well that we live in a "carbon constrained world", and that lowering emissions was a major priority. His talk focused on his belief that governments must use all the tools at their disposal to help us achieve a low-carbon world, saying that "we need to prepare the way for multiple solutions and that is why we are walking the talk in making substantial investment across the spectrum of energy sources". He explained the Obama administration's

new \$33 billion loan scheme for new green technologies and emphasised the need for a wide range of ideas in the fight against climate change, saying that "there is no one low-carbon solution, but many low-carbon solutions". He also spoke of the problems involved with dealing with the already existing consequences of climate change.

Dr Moniz has a highly respected scientific background – having attained a PhD in from Stanford University and held the position of Head of the Department of Physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. While he was only appointed to his current position last May he had previously served as Associate Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy and as President Clinton's Under Secretary of Energy.

In a statement given after the speech the Director of the Gratham Institute, Professor Brian Hoskins, said: "We are really pleased that

Secretary Moritz chose to come to the Grantham Institute to give a lecture on US energy policy. His message of progress on all fronts gives hope that US technology and enterprise may give a powerful lead in the effort to limit global warming."

The Institute was formed in 2007 as a result of a £12 million donation from the Grantham Foundation for the Protection of the Environment. It brings together scientists from all over Imperial to carry out research in the field of climate science. It also aims to provide policy guidance to governments and international organisations, as well as stimulating general discussion on the topic through events such as Dr Moritz's talk. The Institute has been praised by Grantham Foundation patrons Jeremy and Hannelore Grantham, with the pair saying that it and similar groups "are vitally important to understand and respond to the scale, pace and potential implications of climate change".

Union Concert Hall refurbished with £220,000 grant



Maciej Matuszewski
 News Editor

Plans have been announced for a major refurbishment of the Imperial College Union Concert Hall, to be funded by a grant from the Harlington Trust. The space is currently used by a number of different groups, including the Drama, Musical Theatre and Cinema societies. The refurbishment is aimed at improving the technical capabilities of the Concert Hall.

The Harlington Trust was created in 1989 to manage the profit from the selloff of gravel excavated during the redevelopment of the College's playing fields in Harlington. Each year the Trust awards up to £50,000 to Union clubs and societies to improve their facilities or equipment. The £220,000 redevelopment grant comes

after the Trust's Committee decided on a one off increase to the funding available, to assist with the ongoing redevelopment of the Union building. A number of other improvements, including a full scale redevelopment of the Union's media facilities in the Beit West Basement, are being funded directly the College and Union.

Union President David Goldsmith, praised the awarding of the grant, adding: "The Union Concert Hall is a space used by student groups throughout the year and this refurbishment is going to make a real difference to so many students. The Harlington Grants Fund is an important source of funding for many of our student groups and seeing it being used on a larger project like this is really exciting."

The Trust also provided £30,000 to buy new equipment for the gym at the College's Silwood Campus and a number of smaller grants were made to individual student groups. Professor Debra Humphris, Vice

Provost (Education) and Chair of the Harlington Committee, said: "It's fantastic to be able to award this funding to two extremely worthwhile projects. I'm really proud that all the money we are able to give through the Harlington Grants Fund goes straight to student groups to improve the student experience here at Imperial. The Union Concert Hall in particular is a really important facility on campus and I can't wait to visit and see how students are using the refurbished space!"

Applications for Harlington Trust Grants from Union societies continue to be accepted throughout the year.

Deputy President (Clubs & Societies) Yas Edwards, said "The Harlington Trust agreed the funding of £215,000 for the project. We are working with the principle authors of the original bid to develop the plans at present. Our intention is that the space will be improved, allowing more drama and music groups to make regular use of the space"

Imperial Debating comes in top 16 at the World University Debating Championships



Anita Chandran
 Reporter

Imperial Debating saw success at the World University Debating Championships. Tensions and temperatures were high at Rajalakshmi College of Engineering in Chennai, the host venue of the competition. During the second year of attending the international competition, students of Imperial College argued their way through almost 350 teams into the top sixteen of the tournament.

The team of quarter-finalists consisted of Ed Middleton, a final year medic, and former president of the debating society, James Clough. Through their smooth speaking skills and practised persuasive tactics the pair were respectively ranked 38th and 41st in the competition which was comprised of almost 700 speakers from universities such as Cambridge, Harvard, Auckland and Sydney.

The competition has nine rounds of intense mental stimulation. From the rise of the 'hook up culture' to the private governance of bankrupt cities, the topics are designed to push and challenge all those involved. Clough and Middleton overcame the competition to fight for a place in the semi-finals against Victoria Wellington, Yale and Sydney, who later went on to compete in the finals. Despite narrowly missing out to Sydney, Imperial's Clough and Middleton paved the way for the most impressive result in Imperial College

Debating Society's history.

With such inspiring results from their seniors, current members of the society are fired up to compete at the World Championships in Malaysia next year. The tournament, held from late December into early January, has a competitive selection process, with debaters vying to be selected by an external adjudicator. The open trials, held internally, are an excellent training opportunity which allow people of all standards to try for success. However, it's not all about the World Championships. Opportunities for international competitions range from Budapest to Vienna, Slovakia to Paris, with plenty of tournaments held at home in the UK. The debating society urges people to come along and try it with James Clough, one of the two successful speakers at the WUDC this year, never having debated before beginning university.

However, it's not all about developing analytical abilities and learning to charm crowds into believing what you are saying. The social side of debating brings people together from across the world to celebrate the New Year in style, with cultural flair from the host nation. The links our college makes with schools from all over the U.K. and farther afield are ones that will last for a long time to come. The parties are vibrant, exciting and filled with students from a variety of backgrounds, all enjoying the festivities in the way students do. Well, with a hint of banter, of course.

To get involved with starting debating, e-mail debate@imperial.ac.uk. You know you want to.



New Year Fair

imperialcollegeunion.org/newyearfair

The New Year Fair is being held in the Great Hall on Tuesday between 11:00 - 16:00.

A younger sister of Freshers', the Fair will give you the opportunity to get involved with a range of new things in 2014. With a collection of local and national businesses, the Fair has something for everyone! There will also be entertainment provided by our very own Imperial College students.

Exhibitors include:

Nando's, The Royal Albert Hall, Teach First, HappyBird, STA Travel, TutorFair, Elections, Rate My Placement, Techtonics, Student Castle, Imperial Hubs, Action Tutoring, Stress Less, CIMA, ICU Dance, Pure Student Living, Felix, London Business School, The Mansion Group, Child Reach, iQ Shoreditch, RCSU, Westminster, Image Scotland, Scopes, Global Banking Training, Humanitarian Group for Syria, RAG, Advice Centre, Hamptons International, Events, Blablacar, Victorstone, Student Hub, Victoria Hall Student Accommodation, Give It A Go, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Seed Jobs, Scape Student Living, CSPs and more.

It's new year, new you!



Student Academic Choice Awards



After a successful launch last year, the Student Academic Choice Awards are back!

the Student Academic Choice Awards – or SACAs – enable students to celebrate and reward excellence and innovation amongst Imperial's academic and professional staff. We believe teaching and supervision are skills of equal worth and value to research, and we aim to build a community in which academics, staff and students all feel empowered to bring forth new ideas.

Nominations are open now until 28 February. For more details visit imperialcollegeunion.org/sacas.

imperialcollegeunion.org/sacas

Residential Experience Review



As part of the College's Education and Student Strategy, a Residential Experience Review has been commissioned to direct the future residential experience for students living in Imperial College accommodation. There is a particular focus on the first year experience of undergraduates. More information can be found at <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/education-and-student-strategy/actionplan/globalcommunity/futureresidentialexperience>.

The review panel want to hear about your experiences of living in Halls so all responses to the survey will be submitted as evidence to the panel for consideration.

To complete the review or find out more, please visit imperialcollegeunion.org/residential-experience-review.

imperialcollegeunion.org/residential-experience-review

Stress LESS SPRING 2014

EVENTS THIS WEEK
imperialcollegeunion.org/stressless

ZEN LOUNGE
Monday 27 January, 11:00 - 17:00
Free
Metric

Drop in for a free massage (available between 12:00 - 16:00), kick back and relax with our chill-out music. This is a work free zone!

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION
Tuesday 28 January, 13:00 - 13:50
Free
Chaplaincy Multi-Faith Centre

An introduction to meditation not connected to religious tradition. Gives simple ways to practice meditation in daily life. Run by the Imperial College Chaplaincy team.

ARTS & CRAFTS SESSION
Thursday 30 January, 12:30 - 14:30
Free
Activity Spaces

Release your inner child with our fun, free drop-in arts & crafts session. We'll have a number of fun activities for you to get involved with. No artistic talent required.

Imperial opens new ICT centre at Imperial West

Nida Mahmud
News Editor

Imperial has opened a new centre for ICT innovation at Imperial West.

This new centre is called London Node and it hopes to bridge the gap between the research that is taken and the delivery of the products commercially.

Paul Jenkins, the director of Node said: "This new Node will allow us to establish a focus for ICT innovation in the UK with a European scope. I look forward to working alongside the Node partners, EIT ICT Labs and our European partners, as well as the existing innovation ecosystem, as part of this important project"

London Node will help nurture in research, innovation and excellence in education. This will be achieved through facilitating contact between businesses and academic research as well as providing links to funding.

The founding partners of London Node are Imperial, UCL, University of Edinburgh, Institute of Sustainability, Vodafone, BT, IBM and Intel. There are six other Nodes located within Europe, these being in Berlin, Paris, Trento, Eindhoven, Stockholm and Helsinki; they bring together top universities within Europe, research centres and ICT companies.

YoYo mobile payments app rolled out on campus

Nida Mahmud
News Editor

A new app, Yoyo, for mobile payment has recently launched at Imperial. JustYoyo is a business that was launched in August 2013, it is backed by Imperial Innovations. The new app enables food and drink to be bought from shops across the South Kensington campus.

Additionally, the Yoyo app can be used with loyalty programmes, therefore negating the need to carry multiple reward cards. This enables

Imperial College NHS Trust in Consultation to become a Foundation Trust



IMPERIAL COLLEGE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST

Aamna Mohdin
News Editor

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust is currently consulting on proposals to become a foundation trust. If successful, a foundation trust status will allow Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust to become a not for profit entity that works independently from the government. The third public meeting was held on Thursday (Jan 16).

The public meeting discussed the practicalities on how Imperial College Healthcare NHS trust can become a not-for-profit organisation that provides free NHS care using powers devolved from government. A new term – the 'public interest company' – has been coined to describe these bodies. Imperial College Healthcare NHS trust hopes to achieve foundation trust status to allow hospitals to be more democratically controlled.

On their website, they said "We see achieving foundation trust status as a means towards bringing our Trust closer to our patients, the people who work for us, our local communities and partner organisations."

In 2003 the government introduced legislation to allow the best performing hospitals to become foundation trusts. The foundation hospitals will be part of the NHS but outside the control of the Department of Health and the Secretary of State for Health. The bulk of foundation hospitals funding will come from the government, and these hospitals will be legally obliged to follow the nationally set NHS standards, regulation and inspection. However, the Secretary of State will be losing its power as these hospitals will run by boards of governors that are elected and appointed locally. With these changes, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust hopes for greater community involvement on how local healthcare is ran.

Nick Cheshire, chief executive at the trust, said: "We see achieving foundation trust status as a means towards bringing our Trust closer to our patients and local communities, further strengthening engagement with our people and providing greater freedom to innovate and develop our services."

There are, however, some key vocal opposition to foundation trusts. Unison has continued to oppose foundation trusts stating "NHS hospitals were already owned by and run for the benefit of the whole public. The governance framework for foundation trusts does not lead to greater local accountability or social ownership. For example, foundation trusts are able to run with only a very small number of members in relation to the population that uses them. UNISON is concerned that foundation trusts do not represent the communities they serve."

Imperial manages Charing Cross, Hammersmith, St Mary's, Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea and the Western Eye hospitals, providing care for around two million people in north-west London. The public consultation into the proposals ends on February 10.

College Imperial College India Foundation Scholarship Programme

Nida Mahmud
News Editor

Imperial College and Imperial College India Foundation will be increasing the size of their scholarship programme. The scholarship is for Indian postgraduate students who have an outstanding academic background and reside in India. The programme initially begun in September 2013, this year two full Master's scholarships and one full PhD scholarship will be available. The foundation is supported by alumni and Imperial College.

Sir Keith O'Nions, President & Rector of Imperial College said: "The expansion of these scholarships builds on the historic and flourishing relationship between Imperial and its Indian alumni and supporters. Their

support is central to this scheme and we're grateful that their generosity has enabled it to grow further still."

The first person to attain the Imperial College India Foundation PhD scholarship, Mr Singh, commented that:

"I am thrilled to have been awarded this scholarship. Studying in such an international environment, alongside world-leaders in their field is a precious opportunity. I'm very grateful to everyone whose generosity made it possible." Mr Singh will begin his PhD in 2014 in the Mechanical Engineering department at Imperial.

The scholarship launch happened at the same time as Sir Keith's visit to India this January. The visit lasts 11 days and Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai and Kolkata will be visited during his 11 day trip; each city will have an alumni event where he will meet with a variety of representatives.

Victoria Line suffers from Civil Engineering mishap

Nida Mahmud
News Editor



USVSTH3M.COM

The Victoria line on Thursday 23 January was partly suspended with severe delays for several hours due to fast-setting concrete. Trains were not running between Warren Street and Brixton.

Nigel Holness, the director of London Underground said: "This afternoon our contractors were working on the new station in an area next to the Victoria line signal control room. These works involved the use of water and cement which leaked into the room, damaging equipment. This has meant there are no signals working on the southern section of the line. Our engineers are working hard to resolve the situation as soon as possible to get services back up and running, but the line is expected to be affected for the remainder of the day while repairs are carried out."

Imperial Teams reach BP competition semi-finals

Nida Mahmud
News Editor

Imperial students have made it through to the BP Ultimate Field Trip semi-finals. Four Imperial teams (X-tek, Team Griffon, Engineers & The Next Frontier) have reached the semi-finals stage, which will be held on the 3rd-4th February across the UK.

The Ultimate Field Trip is the UK's flagship student competition; it enables some of the brightest individuals studying STEM subjects to work in teams and answer a real life business challenge. The winning team receives a 2 week international field trip with BP. The Ultimate Field Trip is now in its fifth year. This year winners from the UK, US, Canada, Angola, Trinidad and Tobago will visit both Alaska and Chicago.

A BP representative said: "This year, the challenge has been to identify an innovative solution that will significantly reduce energy consumption and be implemented by 2025, with the potential to scale across the energy industry."

The semi-finals will be taking place in the first week of February at BP's office in Sunbury; four teams will go into the finals that will be held on 10 March in the Royal Institution.



The epigenetic revolution

Keir Little on research that redefines our knowledge of inheritance

The completion of the Human Genome Project in April 2003 was a milestone in science. Ten years on, however, Bill Clinton's prediction that it would "revolutionise the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of most, if not all, human diseases" is far from the truth. For all the project's contributions to biology, little of this has translated into promised "personal medicine" treatments.

The relatively new field of epigenetics is beginning to fill in the gaps in understanding left by genome sequencing. Epigenetics – the study of factors which control gene expression, other than the genetic code itself – accounts for why cells in different parts of the body develop differently, despite sharing the same DNA.

Epigenetic markers switch off individual genes, causing them not to be expressed in a cell. More recently, epigenetic markers have been shown to be passed on to children and grandchildren, shaking the belief that disease caused by lifestyle can have no effect on offspring.

Both sperm and egg are specialised cells with their own epigenetic makeup. Until recently, it was believed that when these fused, the epigenetic markers were completely removed in a process called 'Reprogramming', allowing the embryo to develop

completely from scratch.

New evidence suggests that this may not be the case. Last year, researchers at the Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute found that injecting pregnant rats with nicotine caused asthma to occur not only in the next generation, but the one following that: the epigenetic changes caused by nicotine, it seems, are inheritable.

In the 1980s, a Swedish scientist called Dr. Lars Olov Bygren studied the lifespans of people living in Norrbotten, the country's northernmost and least populated county. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, poor harvests here often led to starvation, though some years were unusually abundant with food.

Dr. Bygren found that grandchildren of people who had plenty of food as a child had much shorter lives than those who did not. Controlling for other factors such as disease and socioeconomic status, the difference in longevity between grandchildren of well-fed and starved Norbotten residents was 32 years. Epigenetic markers passed down through generations seem to be the most probable cause.

The idea of inheritable epigenetic markers has made its way into evolutionary biology, giving a clue as to how invasive species can thrive in new environments. For a species to do well and adapt to its environment, say the



PEARSON EDUCATION

laws of natural selection, it must have a lot of variation. However, invasive species often have limited gene pools and some, such as the Japanese knotweed, reproduce asexually, so are genetically identical. This has long been a puzzle for biologists: how do these species manage to survive?

Christina Richards, an evolutionary ecologist at the University of South Florida in Tampa, studied Japanese knotweed and found that individual

plants have high variation in their leaf shape and height – characteristics controlled by epigenetic factors. Epigenetic variation, Richards believes, is one of the things which gives invasive species their ability to do well in novel environments.

Some scientists are not so convinced. Though the role of epigenetics is largely accepted within medical science, many evolutionary biologists are sceptical about its effect

on invasive species, believing their success can be fully explained by current evolutionary theory.

Epigenetic inheritance need not oppose Darwinian evolution, but can integrate with it. The study of epigenetics could lead to new disease treatments and preventative measures, as well as ecological insights. Where the Human Genome Project has failed to keep its promises, epigenetics may deliver.



Science image of the week: a space selfie

Although it was taken back in 2007, it is the shadowy subject of the photo, rather than Mars looming in the background, that makes this our science image of the week.

This cosmic selfie was taken by comet-chasing spacecraft Rosetta, which successfully transmitted its first signal in two and a half years on Monday.

Rosetta was launched into space back in 2004 but went hibernation in 2011 to conserve energy for the long journey towards Comet 67P.

The craft successfully re-awakened at and now is currently 500 million miles from Earth, close to the orbit of Jupiter, and plans to rendezvous with the Comet 67P in August, to deploy a Lander vehicle onto the comet's surface.

Such a manoeuvre has never been done before, but hopefully it will allow us to understand a lot more about these shooting stars.



 @Scifelix

 FelixScience

SCIENCE

Smoking is neither cool nor clever... sometimes

Anand Jagatia discovers that one beast breathes nicotine, not fire

Most non-smokers will probably agree that the smell of cigarette smoke is fairly repulsive - there's little worse than being stuck in a bus shelter with someone who doesn't appreciate the finer points of the smoking ban. But scientists from the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology in Germany have found that the tobacco hornworm (*Manduca sexta*) makes use of a similar effect to defend itself against predators - by exhaling nicotine at them.

Nicotine is toxic (it blocks the signalling between nerves and muscles) and so is used by some plants as a deterrent against herbivores. *Manduca sexta* feeds on wild tobacco plants which contain nicotine, but can tolerate the compound at levels lethal to other insects.

The team identified a gene responsible for directing a small amount of nicotine from the

insect's gut into its hemolymph (the circulatory fluid - insects don't have blood). The scientists found that this gene allows the hornworm to exhale some of this nicotine through its spiracles (tiny holes which allow air in and out of the respiratory system) and into its headspace in order to deter predators.

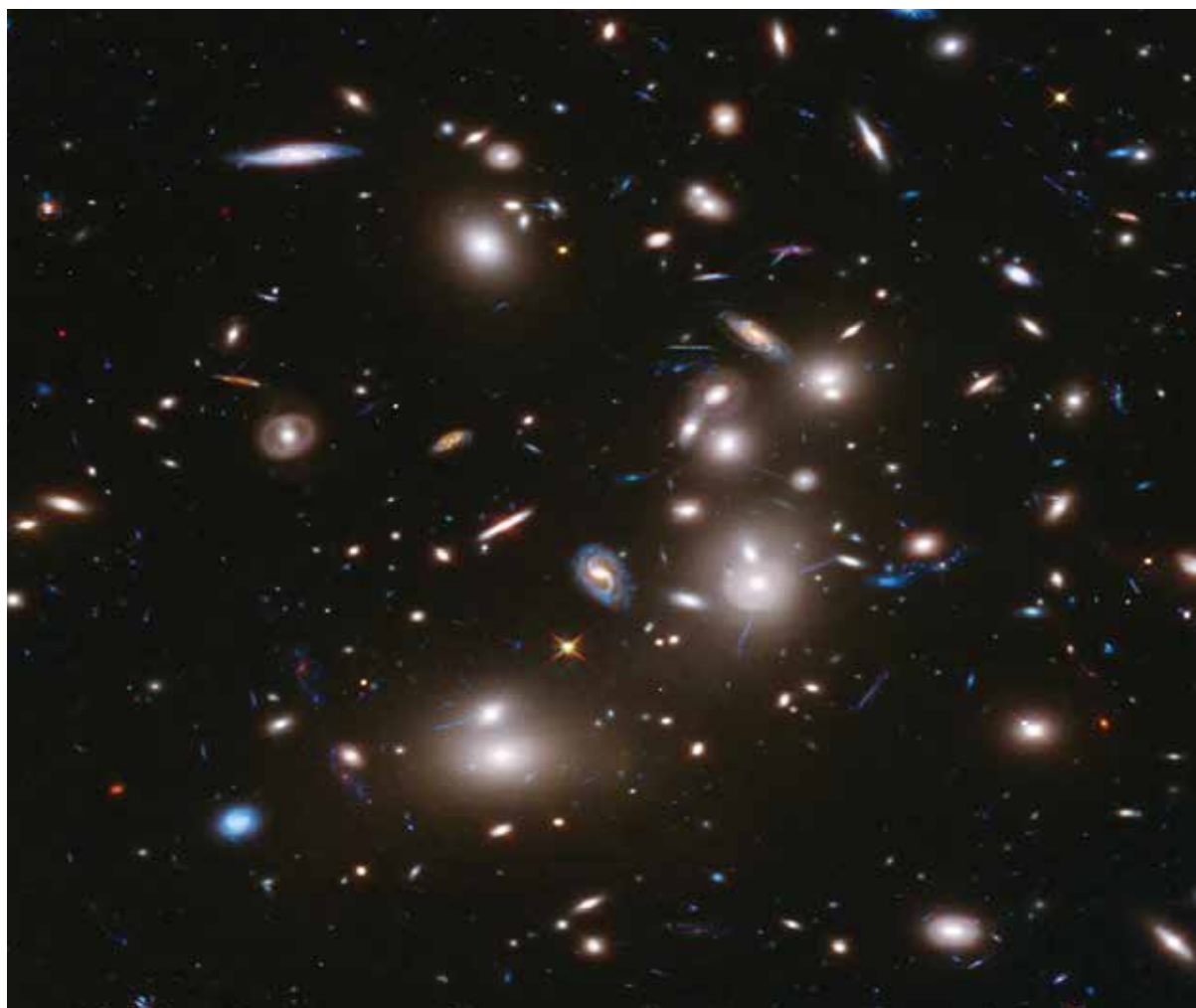
By gluing tiny sensors over the spiracles of hornworm larvae, they were able to measure nicotine emissions in larvae which had this gene knocked out. Not only did they find that these larvae had lower nicotine emissions, but also that they were preyed on more often by the insects' natural predator, the wolf spider.

They say you swallow up to four spiders in your lifetime while you sleep. That's almost certainly a myth, as it's not very likely that anyone even swallows one. But in light of this new research, perhaps it's even less likely if you're a smoker.



NICK HARRIS

Hubble gives us further insight into distant galaxies



NASA, ESA, J. LOTZ SPACE TELESCOPE SCIENCE INSTITUTE (STSCI)

James Bezer
Science Writer

18 years after the famous Deep Field image, a series of photographs from the Hubble space telescope are giving us a new insight into extremely distant galaxies that formed soon after the big bang.

This new deep image is centred on a large galaxy cluster, Abell 2744, which acts as a gravitational lens, focussing

light from extremely distant galaxies towards the earth. Some of these galaxies could be up to 12 billion light years away, making them amongst the most distant ever seen. An exposure time of 50 hours was needed to collect enough light for around 3000 of these incredibly faint galaxies to become visible.

A series of images (the Frontier Fields) are being taken in areas of the sky known to contain a large number of gravitational lenses. This first image will be taken again in May, using a different set of equipment, and another five locations will be investigated over the next three years.

Love Science?

Follow us on Twitter & Facebook!

We post any and all interesting science-related stuff that we stumble upon while trawling the Internet for cool pictures.



@SciFelix



FelixScience





MDMA - a new high in research?

Philippa Skett discusses the benefits of ecstasy, and the laws limiting science

MDMA seems to be keeping clubbers and scientists alike on their toes at the moment, with research into the recreational drug on the rise. Despite the law heavily restricting drug experimentation even within the laboratory, there still seems to be an unrelenting interest into the potential medical benefits of many of the illegal substances out there. With new research published this week, it may only be a matter of time before drugs such as ecstasy are no longer restricted to the dives and dens of those partying past dawn.

MDMA, or more widely known as ecstasy, induces the release of serotonin, dopamine and noradrenaline in the brain, and delivers feelings of euphoria, diminishes anxiety and causes mild psychedelia. Often the drug will be taken with other neuroactive substances like LSD or magic mushrooms, but when taken alone its effects are usually felt around an hour after consumption and last for a further three to six hours.

A recent study carried out here at Imperial College has revealed the first images of brain activity experienced when taking MDMA. The images, published from a project led by Professor Nutt, show just how the drug affects various areas of the brain and provide a new basis to support how MDMA could be used therapeutically.

The images were produced by functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), and show where and when blood oxygenation levels altered throughout the brain under the influence of MDMA. An increase in bloody oxygenation is indirectly

indicative of an increase in neural activity; when an area of the brain is activated, its metabolic demand increases, requiring an increase in oxygenated blood flow to provide glucose to the neurons that need more energy.

25 healthy volunteers, all with at least one experience of MDMA, took the drug under controlled conditions and were simply left to enjoy the ride.

Subjects experienced a reduction in blood flow across the right hippocampus, thought to be responsible for navigation, and the right amygdala that control emotion. The reduction in blood flow across the cerebral cortex in general positively correlated with the intensity of the drug effects felt by the volunteers.

So what does this mean? A reduction in neuronal activity by the amygdala may be related to the sense of euphoria felt when high on MDMA; the ability of the amygdala to harness emotions diminishes and therefore the feeling of elation occurs. Not only that, a reduction in activity of the hippocampus could result in memory impairment; often removal of the hippocampus altogether results in amnesia.

Both the hippocampus and the amygdala are part of a wider brain system, the limbic system, which links emotion and memory together. The research found that MDMA increases the functional connections between the amygdala and the hippocampus, shown by the results of the volunteers being asked to recall their least and most favourite memories while on MDMA.

Those on the drug recalled their favourite memories to be more vivid

and emotionally intense, and experienced their worse memories less negatively.

MDMA may therefore be useful in treating those with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); if it can make users' traumatic memories less distressful, it could be used as a therapeutic agent for when PTSD episodes occur. It has been previously found that the connections between the hippocampus and the amygdala are actually weaker in PTSD sufferers, so MDMA may aid to restore functionality between the two and alleviate the symptoms associated with the disorder, even if it is just temporarily.

However, in the UK, research surrounding the drug still remains constricted, politically motivated and indeed controversial. Despite the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs stating in February 2009 that it would recommend downgrading MDMA from a Class A to a Class B



fMRI images of the changes in connectivity under MDMA in the hippocampus (top) and the amygdala RSFC (bottom). Increases in connectivity are shown in yellow/orange and decreases in blue.

drug, the UK Home Office rejected the notion. They did this on the basis that such a reclassification would send the wrong message to young people, and so it remained in the highest Class tier alongside cocaine, heroin, LSD and magic mushrooms.

Aside from the usual class classifications in the UK, drugs are

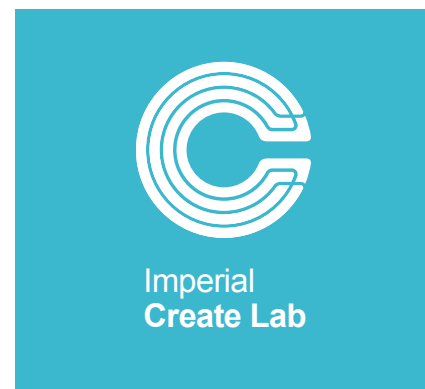
also sorted into 'Schedules', numbered from 1 to 5. These outline the way drugs can be used as controlled substances in a pharmaceutical capacity. MDMA falls into the top Schedule, Schedule I, meaning it faces the highest restrictions in scientific experimentation too. These Schedules were set by the UK Home Office, again shoehorning a political framework into the legislation surrounding research and making it exceedingly difficult to access funds and licencing for projects based on high ranking substances.

This new research could hardly be considered as a definitive landmark in neuroscience in that it does have several weaknesses; with a sample size of volunteers that is disappointingly small alongside a high-level of variability in the drug backgrounds of said volunteers, it may raise more questions than it answers.

However, with previous research hinting at the possibility of MDMA being used to treat Parkinson's disease, various anxiety disorders and even possibly pain in other parts of the body, more research is certainly needed. It may be that softening the legalisation surrounding drug experimentation needs to be done to allow MDMA to reach its full medicinal potential.



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COMMENT

Editors: **Eoghan J. Totten, Tessa Davey**
comment.felix@imperial.ac.uk



The Reappraisal of the British State

Why the Coalition Government should tread carefully

Eoghan Totten
Comment Editor
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On January 20th European tensions, sparked by Prime Minister Cameron's utilisation of migration as a political chess piece, came to a head. The tone of UK-Europe relations were reflected in the words of German Foreign Minister (and Social Democrat), Walter Steinmeier.

"Many young people from southern Europe are coming to us, to learn and study. That benefits us and also helps the states from which they come... Whoever questions that damages Europe and damages Germany."

The UK Prime Minister continues to uphold this political stance; it could be construed as an attempt to pander to popular (and sadly, uninformed) British opinion and pressure from Tory lobbying. This is dangerous in context of the rhetoric coming from other European nations who appear prepared to compromise on EU political matters. One fears, therefore, that the patience of Europe is but a

thin membrane, ready to split.

Parallels can be drawn with discussion within The Conservative Party in relation to redaction of the British state: the language is (unintentionally) damaging. Austerity and fiscal rectitude have been pursued aggressively over a three year period. British Chancellor, George Osborne, has actively championed their necessity. In the wake of positive global economic trends some advocate the idea that cutting the state might be 'good in itself'. As surmised by Jeremy Paxman on a recent BBC Newsnight broadcast (January 13th),

many politicians are now considering a complete "reappraisal of what the state is for".

The debate is nothing new. Many argue that Governmental interference with society is draconian, stifling and the embodiment of an Orwellian nanny state. One would concede that there are legitimate grounds for this: Smoking bans, seatbelt legislation and an infinity of 'red tape' have been introduced over the past half century. Many would argue that there is a critical threshold for State interference (and size) and that to exceed it violates a citizen's inalienable right to define

how they live. Public spending has peaked within the last decade at 47% of GDP. These sentiments paved the way for the flagship Tory policy of 'Big Society' in 2010.

To my mind this is where the line of thought crumbles. A decoupling of society and state is ultimately destabilising for a nation. Society originally gave consent (albeit inferred) to the state to uphold order and integrity. State is for society, not despite it. Reduction of state size may not provide a feasible solution for a nation with population 63.2 million (2012).

The debate could be ploughed ad infinitum. In light of this I will raise but a few key flags. What form would a wholesale retreat of public services take? To what would multilateral privatisation give license? These considerations prove unsettling and even appear to sit uncomfortably with members of Government. This is typified by ring-fencing of the health service and overseas aid budget. One might argue that the rhetoric is nothing but political grandstanding.

Nonetheless the rhetoric could be irreversibly damaging. It shares a common thread with the stance by some politicians that to be 'on the

dole' is morally questionable. This in turn links with anti-economic migrant rhetoric. If one simultaneously considers the UK's ongoing conflict with the European Court of Human Rights over repeal of the 'life sentence' for murder, their threats to withdraw from the Human Rights Act and their criticism of the Lisbon Treaty it is clear to see that the British Government is recurrently intent on defining 'us' and 'them'. This is undeniably dangerous on the European front, as the words of ECHR President Dean Spielmann reflected when he advised the UK PM to be careful "not to risk credibility."

In the national context it could prove disastrous. My intention is not to invoke a Domesday scenario. I simply believe that a decoupling of society and state is nonsensical. Each citizen has a duty to uphold the rule of law, revere civic space and 'contribute' to the general order of things. One worries that there would be no incentive to do so if the state were deduced. Society could become irrevocably unpleasant, with money plugging the void left by obligation. Look no further than the Salem Fire Department, Arkansas: If things fall apart and you haven't paid, no one will douse the flames.



The New Year in Northern Ireland

Internationally chaired talks fail to deliver reform

Rory Fenton
Columnist



Those who complain that British politicians lack principles should look to Northern Ireland. There is surely no other part of the UK where so many political leaders have such stupid, boring and ultimately harmful principles. Take Edwin Poots, Northern Ireland's Health Minister, who has spent £37,000 of taxpayer money on his legal efforts to ban gay men from donating blood and £57,000 trying to prevent civil partners from adopting, citing homosexuality as "an illness". This is the Health Minister.

I spent the Christmas holidays at home in Belfast where I was surrounded by reminders of some of the province's peculiarly pointless principles. Just at the end of my street, 3 men kept a weekly vigil draped in red, white, blue and drizzle, huddled in the

middle of the road. A year ago there were enough of them to block that road but now they watch haplessly as cars pass them by. They are "flaggers"; Loyalists determined not to stop protesting until the Union Flag flies above Belfast City Hall 365 days of the year, as it did until December 2012 when the council voted to fly it only on royal occasions. This movement to a more inclusive, shared public space has been labelled "cultural genocide" by many of these flaggers.

If only our politicians would pay these lonely warriors as little attention as the passing motorists do. Depressingly, these flag flying fanatics have been holding Unionist politicians to ransom, preventing any hint at agreement with Nationalists. The past few months in Northern Ireland encompassed talks between the 5 main parties, facilitated by American diplomat Richard Haass. The purpose of the talks was to tackle the issues of flags, parades and the past. "Flags" means not just the Union Flag on Belfast City Hall but the flags that appear on street lights across the country as crude markers of tribal

territory. "Parades" meant the Loyalist Orange parades that take place every July and are banned from marching through many Catholic areas. "The past" meant addressing the civil war the country has just left behind, including the issue of more than 1,500 unsolved murders from the time. Both the Democratic Unionist and Ulster Unionist parties refused to accept the proposals put forward by Haass, which were accepted by the Nationalist parties. Put simply, the proposals would have meant accepting that a shared Northern Ireland means not enforcing one identity over any other.

What is remarkable about the talks was the willingness of Nationalists to accept compromise. In proposing that Belfast Council fly the Union Flag only on royal occasions, Sinn Fein, once the political wing of the IRA, was accepting that the British flag would be flown on land they consider Irish. Rather than take this as an important victory, Unionists saw no such thing, digging in their heels and clutching blindly to their flag. It's often said that the Nationalists are too clever to admit they've lost while the Unionists

are too stupid to realise they've won. The unnecessary flag controversy is a case in point.

Perhaps it's foolish to expect a politics based historically on identity and fear of difference to be rational or reasonable. Politic-as-identity goes some way to explain our present madness: Northern Irish Unionism is undergoing an identity crisis. Many Unionists find themselves left behind by a United Kingdom that increasingly values diversity and individual rights. The stance of mainstream Unionism on LGBT rights would see them shunned even by UKIP and their insistent opposition to legal abortion is more in tune with pro-life Dublin

than pro-choice London. While Unionism is loyal to the Crown, this loyalty comes not via England but Scotland, where much of Northern Irish Protestantism originates. To be Ulster- Scot is to be British and yet Scotland is this year to vote on leaving the Union altogether.

The response so far has been to revert to the old battle cry of "no surrender" and paint more things red, white and blue. This is hardly sustainable. A mature Unionism that is relaxed in its own skin is desperately needed but none is offered by the parties in power. Northern Irish Nationalists have successfully demilitarised their identity; now it's the other side's turn.

“
Nationalists have successfully demilitarised their identity; now it's the other side's turn.
”

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COMMENT

Christy Kelly Tells It All

Christy Kelly
Writer



NHS Data Sale: Ramifications?

All members of the broadly defined 'left' occasionally fall into the trap Yeats left us when he said 'the best lack all conviction whilst the worst are filled with passionate intensity'. Thankfully, my spell amongst the 'best', demonstrated in the sickening sentimentality of last week's piece, has been rudely cut short by the Tories frankly mind-boggling new 'bright idea' – selling NHS data to insurance companies!

The experts are full of their usual panglossian justifications, that this 'new' idea will bring about the best of all possible worlds and lead to new scientific advances. Certainly, it may well lead to insurance companies 're-identifying' certain patients, but this is a 'small, theoretical risk'; says Mark Davies the new Health and Social Care Information Centre's 'public assurance director'. The title isn't even Orwellian: the Tories know that the public is going to have to be 'assured', because they sure as hell aren't going to be 'insured' any longer.

Forgive me, I move too fast; some of the public isn't going to be insured any longer. The economic 'liabilities' who are at risk of 'illness' and 'disease' and 'death' and other such 'theoretical risks'. And insurance companies have an exemplary ethical record: take Friends Life' who are refusing to pay Nic Hughes' family the expected 100 thousand pounds life insurance. Nic Hughes died of cancer at the age of 44 leaving behind wife Susannah and their twin 8 year-olds behind. But there is good reason for Friend's Life's decision: Nic Hughes lied on his application. He failed to disclose 'pins and needles'. For those of you who don't know, this devastating disease is responsible for the deaths of zero people worldwide in a given year. Symptoms are a brief, slightly annoying itch. Causes are not well known but often linked with sitting down for extended periods of time. So, who can fail to understand when this company which manages 111 billion pounds 'on behalf of its customers' makes the tough decision to punish Nic Hughes for his sin by not granting his remaining family the support they had expected and relied on. What fine and unmoving moral fibre in the face of such a pathological case. Pathological meant, of course, in



a strictly Kantian sense.

If you are not already persuaded, then rest assured (though for certain technical reasons not insured...) there is sound precedent. Private practices like Bupa already have access to sensitive patient data, and the comparison is relevant because Bupa, being a private practice, is clearly keen to take money away from patients' families. And anyway, Mike Davies is unsure how 'helpful' the distinction between 'private' and 'public' is 'these days'. Try asking at your local NHS and then some 'helpful' people might enlighten you. To the order of several thousand pounds.

This will improve scientific medical research and that is no bad thing. Forget, that the health industry now has multiple times the funding from the American government as the famous 'military-industrial complex'. Forget that this same medical industry managed to get naturally occurring chemical synthesis routes patented. This has had two effects, strangling the pharmaceutical industry in the 'developing world' and effectively preventing scientists from releasing cures to diseases unpatented even if they would like. It would seem that to Jonas Salk's question 'Can you patent the sun?' the law has answered yes.

So, as you can see, the pharmaceutical industry will benefit, the insurance companies will benefit, and other people will automatically benefit as a result. Who exactly these other people are, I do not know. There is a curious practice often noticed whereby policy makers often become consultants for companies which have benefited from their policies, but this being a purely contingent event does not amount to corruption. This would be the post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy, as the logicians like to say.

We should perhaps thank the Tories for understanding a basic inconsistency that has long gone without resolution but first articulated in Samuel Butler's Erewhon. It is of course as ridiculous to punish criminals for their crimes if these crimes are as a result of social conditions as it is to punish the diseased. And since, of course, criminals must be punished, and since, of course, criminals are almost wholly the working and lower-middle classes, and thus criminals are criminals as a result of their social conditions, it follows that any reasonable government must punish the sick and unhealthy. If these sick and unhealthy should be so indecent as to die, then this fleeing from just punishment must of course lead to the transference of said punishment to those that were the lately deceased's nearest and dearest. It is this that the Tory government has proposed and for this David Cameron, I salute ye.



The Role of Role Models

I will confess now that I have never really understood the appeal of role models. It has always seemed slightly ridiculous to treat someone as if they were an exemplary figure, and with a little maturity I also came to recognise the symbolic violence in raising that someone above their idiotic existence into something more... And leaving some Lacanian objections aside ('il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel'), I generally find the idea that a person needs some exemplar psychological support slightly belittling. This may of course be a sign of my own comfort thus far, and there is little I can or intend to do to deny this, but if this be the case then there should be a little discernment about the choice of role-model.

Take, for instance, the recently 'pardoned' Alan Turing, to be subject of a big new blockbuster starring the new darling of the Guardian left, Benedict Cumberbatch. Everyone should know the Turing story by now, but I must admit I find it baffling that he has become an LGBT icon. Certainly, what was done to Alan Turing was disgraceful by any standards, but it is hard not to sense a certain rather repulsive undercurrent of 'how dare they do that to a genius or a war hero' when his story is told. At the very least, the tales of Turing's conviction rarely have anything positive to say about Arnold Murray, Turing's then lover. Perhaps because his story wasn't 'tragic' enough – he was given a conditional discharge and nobody knows anything further – perhaps because he 'betrayed' Turing by stealing a tenner and letting his friend rob the house.

Forgive me if I don't believe that everyone is shocked by the fact that British law prosecuted homosexuality; people still seem to maintain that somehow they are not being homophobic when they object to gay marriage. Similarly, I wonder how far these writers would approve if Alan Turing had been an unexceptional middle-aged academic taking in a homeless 19 year old girl. At best, the act becomes a slightly patronising act of charity inspired out of love or pity, at worst it is a frank abuse of an imbalance in power and the academic gets what he deserves if his new girlfriend helps herself to the family silver. Why this is different in Turing's case, I don't know ('boys aren't helpless like girls...').

Finally, does a man who complains that his boyfriend has stolen his stuff – police entrapment or not – really understand the difficulties your average homosexual faced in Britain from the thirties to the fifties? Cambridge was a very tolerant place as far as male sexuality was concerned, but not exactly a place open to the general public or that many women for that matter, and it is hard to see in its tolerance anything but a leftover of the implicitly accepted homosexuality in the monastic orders of which Cambridge is an outgrowth.

It seems to me that Alan Turing satisfies a rather different function as icon than, say, a figure like Harvey Milk. There have of course been attempts to romanticise Milk as well, including the relatively recent film with Sean Penn. I don't trust Republicans, and I do not consider the claim that Milk was assassinated a settled matter (assassination requires some political intent, not just personal or ideological hatred. I admit these are subtle distinctions, but I consider most cases are adequately covered by a different word: murder).

I am against this idealisation generally, but at least Milk did struggle for and bring about concrete reforms. The iconography around Alan Turing, on the other hand, seems to satisfy a more puerile function, the identification with a 'victim'. There is a long tendency to idealise suffering and justify it through its 'virtue' by creating 'victims'. Think of the numerous female victims in literature: Imogen, Justine, Ottilie, little Nell. The one's too pure and too unworldly to stay alive: For the world's more full of weeping than they can understand – at least, in their poor, dear, little heads. Similarly, think of 'anti-racist' books like *To Kill a Mockingbird*, or *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, beloved of white liberals who can't even stand (or have never heard of) moderates like WEB du Bois, or the genuinely powerful (early) Langston Hughes.

However, this discussion isn't just my usual armchair socialist complaint about the state of the world. The growing consensus about how to 'deal with women in science' is to promote scientific role models.

This is more general than just in science, a couple of years ago I heard Michele Bachelet, ex (and likely next) President of Chile and then head of the newly created body UN women, speak of the need for greater visibility of women in leading roles.

This may quite possibly be effective in business and politics, though Rwanda, the country which has consistently topped female representation poles since the genocide, and the only country to have had a proportion of female representatives somewhat reflective of the actual demographic situation for more than five years, has not had a female president and one female Prime Minister. This might be taken as a sign that Rwanda still has a long way to go, but really, if we compare with the United Kingdom languishing at 58 on the list, I would interpret the data to suggest that having women taking a leading role in politics is not necessarily incompatible with massively sexist systems.

However that doesn't change the fact that perception is important, and certainly the immediate identification scientist = male is something that needs changing. But this is very different from saying 'Look! Women can be scientists too!' There is a slight of hand pulled here when, for instance on Ada Lovelace Day, we all gather round at look at the wonderful achievements that a Marie Curie or a Emmy Noether or whoever made. It isn't that people shouldn't recognise that these women were incredible scientists, rather people are too aware. I am not saying that we should stop recognising that these women were fantastic scientists, and nor should we ignore the 'handicap' of an essentially sexist academic world. Neither do I mean find other brilliant female scientists who also deserve to be role models – Lynn Margulis, Jocelyn Bell Burnell or indeed Ada Lovelace. The bar is set too high.

Because let's face it: we're not all Nobel Prize material. And telling me that I am capable of studying my subject because, look at all these people far cleverer than you who also studied it, is not really the way to attract me to that subject. And actually the message is worse: 'Look at all these clever women. This is what you must be to prove you are worthy to study science'. Mercy, please.



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For more information and details of the dates and times go to:

imperialcollegeunion.org/elections

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COMMENT

On adaptations and dragons

Spoiler Alert: If you haven't seen The Hobbit yet, stop reading

Pietro Aronica
Writer

As you are all undoubtedly aware, the Peter-Jackson-directed Tolkien-related orc-genociding movie trilogy for this decade is The Hobbit, which was for many cause of puzzlement and bewilderment, as the novel it is based upon is much shorter than The Lord of the Rings, and hence does not seem to be the kind of story that needs nine hours to fully tell. The way it was stretched in a trilogy became readily apparent as soon as the first movie was shown and subsequently reinforced by second one, and that is by way of adding a lot of made up stuff that was not present in the book. This move has had a lot of fans and purists up in arms, who have regarded all these additions with the suspicion reserved for a filthy hyperactive child who excitedly asks to hold some valuable item. The fear in both cases is that our precious' pristine original beauty will be dirtied and destroyed by this immature peasant and RUINED FOREVER because it is not handled with the reverence and respect due to holy relics. Rivers of ink and fields of pixels (if pixels are indeed measured by the fieldful) have been written in nerdrage about this subject, and I cannot understand why some people are so upset by the additions.

Alright, I'm lying. I understand perfectly why people are upset, and,

when scrutinised closely, it comes down to one of the tritest and oldest clichés in the book: the fear of the unknown. I get it: when you know in advance how every scene is going to play out because you've read the source material and suddenly there's something different, or a character that wasn't present in the original, or, god forbid, an interpretation of a certain plot point that doesn't match, there is the potential for a sense of loss and dismay. Additionally, a departure from the established canon can be a risky mistake in terms of the overarching narrative, as a change of even a small element can have a domino effect on the rest of the story, and be ultimately detrimental if it ends up invalidating a plot point that would've made sense had the scene been kept as in the original. As proof of this, there have been plenty of adaptations of books which have ended being subpar on the silver screen because of half-baked backstories and extraneous details that were not present in the novel. Just go on any forum to discuss any adaptation ever and you'll find lots of people who complain how changing even one iota of the original betrays its spirit and intention. While in many cases they can be correct, in that there have been adaptations that are inferior to the source material, the problem is that the changes and additions have not been done well rather than that they have been done at all.

The question, at this point, is what should an adaptation be, and while the prevailing opinion might be "a recreation that is as faithful as possible to the original in a different medium", I don't think that that is the best way

to approach the subject. Treating the source as the ultimate and perfect authority, essentially making it some sort of dogmatic canon, is rendering it a disservice and needlessly confining it to one interpretation. For starters, different media have different ways of telling a story, and expecting a scene that works in a book to work in the same way in a movie might be outright impossible. Even assuming that it translates perfectly, anything that is not outright stated (and even then, in many cases it still can) lends itself to massive speculation and hole-filling from the viewer or reader: the motive of a certain character, the reason of a certain unlikely friendship, the cause of something unexplained, this and much more can be discussed and analysed. It is as old as time itself: people were trying to figure out which interpretation of minute lines in the Iliad was the correct one for centuries, and have done the same with pretty much anything worth discussing.

But the thing is, even if Homer rose from the dead and explained what was

going through his head when he wrote that particular bit, it still wouldn't be a bad thing to offer an alternative interpretation. The only piece of literary theory that ever stuck with me is the Death of the Author, which states that we must separate the author's life and circumstances from the story he or she has written, and that the text does not, therefore, have a single "true" explanation. The conception that every work has one theme, one set of symbols, one possible way of being read, that a scene or character or plot point means one thing and one thing only, is perhaps a remnant of school-age literary analysis, where students are made to learn only one interpretation as that is easier to assess and test.

Regardless of origin, this idea can be seen in any backlash against any adaptation that departs from the original; but I feel that an adaptation that adds and changes elements is perhaps the best thing that could happen. I already know that I'll like the story, because I liked the original;

but instead of just being the same thing again, it has new pieces, different ideas, alternate takes that perhaps I hadn't considered. The original will always be there, and it cannot be sullied or ruined, no matter how much the geeks complain; an adaptation can expand on it, complement it, give it a different look, all in a familiar frame that means I'm going to get more of what I love. Sure, sometimes this is not done in the right way, and the story can be messed up by the additions; but is parroting the original just so we can keep the same traditional scheme and not be frightened by the difference really something we need to enforce for every adaptation?

Ultimately, every change should be judged on its own merit rather than in terms of the distance from the source material. To take the example I've begun with, I've enjoyed many of the additions in The Hobbit. I like how all the dwarves have a more distinct personality and appearance that was definitely absent in the novel, I like Evangeline Lilly as an action heroine and I like how they gave a proper reason for Gandalf leaving the party so often other than "if he stays with them he'll just solve all of their problems with magic". The romantic plot was a bit clumsy and awkward (though I feel it can be satisfactorily concluded in the third chapter), but generally I felt the additions helped the movie. You can disagree and claim every change was detrimental, and you are entitled to your opinion, but you should be asking yourself a question: did you not like them because they made for a worse story, or just because they were changes?



Confessions of a GTA: Part 8

Sometimes saying no doesn't get you out of demonstrating

The GTA
Anonymous



Lecturers as a profession are very hard to say no to. In general they control your life from the moment you enter college. They set coursework and will demand you spend time on it, even when it is worth 0.1% of your grade. They will set field trips or labs at times that completely don't work for you, and will expect you be enjoying ever second.

As a PhD I did not expect much to be different, just that it would be only two people controlling my entire life

instead of the teaching staff in general. This turns out to be completely wrong. Yes the power does shift. Most of the teaching staff no longer have any say though they will occasional come up to you in corridors and ask if you failed your final year. But your department lecturers will ask you favours and quite nicely too: 'Would it be too much trouble' or 'would you be interested in'. Besides, more often than not you are interested, as not only do they now love you, (and almost as importantly) they will pay you a lot of money for the honour. You become quite closely guarded by lecturers that depend on you and they will give you the good jobs such as field trips and one-to-one invigilations.

But a time in every GTAs life creeps up on them when they have to say no. This is surprisingly horrible. Frequently during my undergraduate degree, I daydreamed about giving the lecturers a few "home truths" about why their coursework was completely pointless, their course unhelpful and their exam downright impossible (and I must admit saying no to a few of these people was quite satisfying)... However when you second favourite lecturer (pipped to the mark by your supervisor) asks you a "favour", or when a really nice Professor hits you with the curveball of a fieldtrip worth £300, what do you say?

Now there is always the supervisor sandwich response: "That sounds

really interesting, but unfortunately my supervisor does not want me to take on anything more, although I know a few other people that would be interested!" This normally works fairly well, but the lecturers have come up with a counter: surprise and thankfulness. They will appear just when you are halfway through reading a paper that could change your whole thesis plan and a befuzzled 'let me check my calendar' is greeted with cries of elation. And a simple 'I will check with my supervisor', is not a safe standby as they will check with them.

Thus, if your GTA is a bit grumpy this week give them a bit of slack, because I will confess we are not always there of our own accord.



COMMENT

Editors: **Eoghan J. Totten, Tessa Davey**
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The sciences move and Yoyo arrives!



Felix



This week has seen the announcement of the departure of the Science Museum library and the launch of Yoyo, a new mobile payments app rolled out at Imperial over the last week.

There are certainly many sad souls who will miss the SM library, it's dusty old books full of historical facts and figures, and it's journals on the history of sewage (no, not swag), in London.

Fortunately there is still ample opportunity to loan books from the British Library, which only a short no. 10 bus ride away, as well as other university libraries within London.

What will be exciting is seeing what will happen to the space the library vacates, will it be filled with more books, iPads or a lush cinema suite for the times when you really need to compare the contents of your microfiche to that episode of CSI on that DVD you bought from Amazon.

On the other hand, as they say, out

with the old and in with the new! While we see the imminent departure of the Science Museum library we also have some fun Yoyo activity to look forward to.

Well, fine, paying for items is never fun, but some of our staff have certainly seen some speedy payments using the app, despite it's lovely pink background. Even the Editor admits that it's much faster to use than fumbling for cash at the checkout, let alone counting all his pennies and five pence coins to purchase that sushi snack from the JCR!

Fear not, this is not reckless promotion, merely a slightly over-excited newspaper that likes having a cashless lunch. All they have to do next is amend the app to be compatible with buying rounds at the Union and Yoyo and Felix will get on just fine.

Aside from that, and the embarrassing Civil Engineering muck up that happened on the Victoria line, we hope you have a nice week!

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

Every week I struggle with the Puzzles page and I feel so disheartened. Please, please, please could you make me some puzzles that I can complete?

Kind regards,
E.

Dear E.,

But of course, I don't always get every single solution myself!

I'll make a few puzzles, just for you!

Enjoy,
Ed.

Clues:

Down:

1. An animal beginning with the letter 'C' (3)

3. An animal beginning with the letter 'D' (3)

Across:

2. A project shot from a bow (5).

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

1.					3.		
2.							

PLUGTIME BY OSCAR FARRELL

COOKING TIME: 5 MINUTES IN THE MICROWAVE





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ARTS

The Secret Photographers

Fred Fyles gets a glimpse of the works of Warhol, Burroughs and Lynch

What: Burroughs, Lynch and Warhol: The Secret Photographers
Where: The Photographer's Gallery
When: 17th January - 30th March
Price: £4, £2.50 concessions, occasionally free

The Photographer's Gallery, nestled in the heart of the West End, is playing host to a triumvirate of titans of 20th century American culture: Andy Warhol, William Burroughs, and David Lynch. Or maybe that should be: Andy Warhol. William Burroughs. David Lynch. The gallery has decided to stage this exhibition not as a single collection, but rather as a trio of separate exhibitions, each exploring the seldom seen photographs of these masters. The result is an experience that is rich in scope, but perhaps somewhat underwhelming.

Out of the three, it is Andy Warhol who has the most obvious link to photography; the pop-art polymath's work was often based upon photographs, and the idea of celebrity culture – along with the media exposure that accompanies it – is a running theme throughout his

career. Warhol saw the advent of the 'point and shoot' camera as a means to expand his obsessive documentation of his daily life. The selection of black and white prints on display act as a time capsule from 1970s Manhattan, but the themes that underlie much of Warhol's more formal work shines through: there are shots of the inside of pantries, documentations of consumerism, and an obsession with signage. Celebrity spotting gets an obligatory mention, best documented by his candid shot of Jean-Michel Basquiat looking up mid-bite, a forkful of pastry on its way to his lips, which is reproduced and stitched together. However, since Warhol would often shoot an entire roll of film a day, it seems like an arduous task to cut such an extensive collection down to just 50 shots, and one wonders how much we are missing out on.

While Burroughs found fame as an author and essayist, the rarely-seen photos on display here reveal his skill as a photographer. Perhaps appropriate for such a leading light of the Postmodernists, Burroughs takes a much more analytical approach to photography than Warhol, often cutting and splicing his frames together into dense and rich collages.

His series *What Was, What Isn't*, in which he photographed his bed before and after having sex with his lover John Brady, forms a meditation on the power of photography to conjure up ghosts from the past, and places it in a similar role to the unreliable narrator in his literary work. He applies his 'Cut-Up' technique to portraiture, creating freakish, unnerving splices that precede the work of John Stezaker by 20-odd years. While the pieces manage to be both candid and analytical, the lack of context provided can make them seem – especially to someone like me, who isn't overly familiar with Burroughs' work – somewhat heartless.

Any disappointments I may have felt with the first two sections however were instantly erased when presented with the Factory Photographs of David Lynch. Around 80 shots of disused factories in Poland, Britain, and the US line the walls of the gallery, while an atonal soundtrack, created by Lynch himself, serves to reinforce the ominous mood. Given his illustrious career as an auteur of American cinema, it is perhaps unsurprising that his work is the most consistent, featuring tightly framed shots of urban decay in shades of black and



© WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS ESTATE, COURTESY OF BARRY MILES ARCHIVE
 William S. Burroughs, *Jack Kerouac, Tangier*, 1957

white which border on aggressive. The shots recall Bernd and Hilla Becher's exploration of industrialisation, but while the Bechers' work is ordered and playful, Lynch's is painted in much darker tones. Grimy close-ups of pipes and puddles create a setting that wouldn't look out of place in his 1977 masterpiece *Eraserhead*; one almost expects the shots to feature the Girl in the Radiator, or any other of his twisted creations, but instead they are desolate and barren, and perhaps all

the better for it.

While the exhibition may have its highs and lows, it is extremely interesting to see how these three artists fit photography into their oeuvres, and explore the themes that permeate the rest of their work. The Warhol and Burroughs give us a candid, and seldom seen, look at their lives, but it is Lynch who stands out head and shoulders above the others, with work that is both eerily beautiful, and horrifically unsettling.

Corruption of a convent girl

Emiel De Lange
 Writer

What: Manon
Where: Royal Opera House, WC1
When: Until 6th February
Price: Various

Manon premiered in 1884, at the height of the *Belle Époque*. French imperialism was at its peak, and a spirit of optimism flowed on the streets of wealthy Paris. Twenty years earlier, Richard Wagner had brought his opera *Tannhäuser* to the *Opéra de Paris* and begun his cultural revolution. French poets, musicians and painters had fallen under his spell, but now was the time for France to reclaim its place at the head of the cultural world. *Manon* was commissioned from the celebrated composer Jules Massenet and quickly conquered the world's stages.

The protagonist and title character, Manon Lescaut, is a beautiful young girl of 16 when she arrives in the city, destined for the convent. She is quickly pursued by suitors and decides to run off with a handsome *chevalier* – Des



© BILL ROH/BILL COOPER

Grioux. Soon, however, she is tempted by the life of luxury and comfort offered by her wealthier suitors. The story explores the struggle between the passions of love and of greed set against the backdrop of decadent, bourgeois Paris.

In this Royal Opera House production, Laurent Pelly accentuates this decadence and makes Manon's corruption by wealth a symptom of society as a whole. Rather cynically, the men, all dressed alike in black suits, are driven by animalistic sexual urges and act as a mob, while the women, by contrast all in white, are all too happy to oblige in return for jewels and other goods. The sets look grey and concrete, but play with perspective cleverly. As a whole the affair is rather bleak and Des Grioux's piety and good-heartedness stands out greatly. Manon, although foolish and naïve for breaking such a man's heart, is portrayed as a victim with whom we feel great sympathy.

The Royal Opera House has touted *Manon* as one of opera's great tragic heroines, on a par with the likes of Verdi's *Violetta*. Unfortunately, I feel that despite Pelly's best efforts, the work as conceived by Massenet simply lacks the cohesion, concision and unity of such dramatic masterpieces.

Manon is evidently a work of its time; created with one eye on its audience and one on the competition. The entire first half of act three, for example, appears to be an excuse for Massenet to show off his ballet music while very little happens to advance the narrative.

Despite these historical peculiarities, the musical performances were compelling, and indeed Massenet's score has exquisite moments of sensitivity and beauty. Ermonela Jaho, in the role of Manon, is a force of nature whose dynamic control is absolutely remarkable. The transformation of Manon from innocent girl to corrupted socialite was entirely convincing. On par was Matthew Polenzani as Des Grioux, and hearing their duets together was an absolute thrill. As always with the Royal Opera the cast and chorus were uniformly excellent and the orchestra under Emmanuel Villaume played passionately, if a little rough around the edges.

This production is highly accomplished and the lead performances phenomenal, but although *Manon* is an engaging and affecting drama, it doesn't quite accomplish what it was originally intended to.

Getting some or getting none?

<http://bit.ly/1l2exlo>



**Tell us about it in the Felix Sex Survey!
coming monday...**



Student Picks

Eva Rosenthal picks:

The Journal of Eugene Delacroix by *Eugene Delacroix*

The Journal of Eugene Delacroix has dominated my thoughts for the past two months. Delacroix, a French artist of the mid-nineteenth century, started keeping a journal as a young man. He wanted to improve his already lively and original writing style; he thought he had a forgetful, careless personality and, writing an account of his days, might remember them the better. He also needed to understand himself as a man and as an artist and began a journal solely for his own use. As such, his musings have a quality of self-effacement, doubt and honesty that makes them all the more interesting.

He looked at art with the qualifying eye of an artist and his interests extended to literature, music and philosophy. He writes about his favourite paintings, painters and the inspiration he takes from them; about his musical evenings in Paris; about his literary friends...

The description of a nineteenth century Parisian life, including meetings with other figures of the age – Chopin or George Sand – are another curiosity of the journal. The artist's life, as Delacroix takes it, is filled with beauty at even the most melancholy moments.

The journal is published in an abridged version by Phaidon.



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Welcome to Night Vale

Maciej Matuszewski invites you to visit America's most unusual town

How to write a review of something whose own creator describes as "weird and impossible to describe"? At its simplest, *Welcome to Night Vale*, produced by Commonplace Books, is a fortnightly audio podcast in the format of a radio news broadcast from the fictional American desert town of Night Vale. However, Night Vale is not what we would recognise as an ordinary town, it is a weird and shadowy place where the laws of physics don't always work and where behind every corner lurk eldritch abominations, ancient conspiracies and "vague yet menacing" government agencies.

"It always manages to maintain a wonderfully unsettling and otherworldly atmosphere"

This is a premise pregnant with possibilities and *Welcome to Night Vale* makes full use of them. While such themes are usually used in horror fiction this podcast takes the bolder step of turning them into a comedy. In a manner somewhat similar to Joss Whedon's highly enjoyable *The Cabin in the Woods* the podcast takes an almost perverse pleasure in smashing together as many different horror and dark fantasy tropes as possible – deconstructing them and seeing how they interact.

"...the podcast takes an almost perverse pleasure in smashing together as many different horror and dark fantasy tropes as possible..."

Sometimes this is taken to the levels of absurdity – such as how candidates in Night Vale's mayoral elections include "The Faceless Old Woman Who Secretly Lives in Your Home" and Hiram McDaniels, who is "literally a five headed dragon". Other times it is done far more subtly. Yet *Welcome to Night Vale* never descends into outright farce. It always manages to maintain a wonderfully unsettling and otherworldly atmosphere.

This is due, in no small part, to the podcast's main character – wonderfully smooth voiced radio presenter Cecil



Palmer. This is not because Cecil himself is in any way particularly unusual – indeed he often seems close to the perfect everyman. Yet it is precisely his normality in the face of the weirdness around him, and his instinctive acceptance that this weirdness is normal, that ultimately shows the listener how different the world of Night Vale is from our own comfortable experiences.

Initially Cecil starts out as a simple commentator on the goings on in the town. However, his personality is gradually and effectively developed. We get to see him as a complex and highly likeable character and, through his interactions with, and descriptions of, other townsfolk, we get to see them in the same way. *Welcome to Night Vale* manages to insert some real moments of character drama among the humour – making us really care for all these people, and entities, despite their 'eccentricities'. It might sound that trying to do so many different things at once may end up a mess, yet this podcast somehow manages it – creating a wonderful celebration of the weird and esoteric – showing us that even that which is frightening can be beautiful.

Despite having gone on for over a year and a half now *Welcome to Night Vale* continues to feel fresh and innovative. The show's creative team is not afraid to explore new format ideas and there

are regular guest contributors – both to the writing and music. The podcast reminds me of other similar comedy shows of a similar format – such as Radio 4's *Bigipedia* – however I have never listened to anything that was quite

"...a wonderful celebration of the weird and esoteric – showing us that even that which is frightening can be beautiful."

so imaginative and daring, both in terms of style as well as content, as *Welcome to Night Vale*. All of the episodes are available free online so there is no excuse for you not to check them out. With thirty nine episodes having already been released, and a companion novel on the way, there is a lot to catch up – but I can promise you that you won't be disappointed by this unique podcast.

See commonplacebooks.com/welcome-to-night-vale for more information and to purchase *Welcome to Night Vale* merchandise. The show can be streamed, for free, from <http://podbay.fm/show/536258179>.

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Black Metal and a Crywank

Forrest Seiwald and Stuart Masson report back on a very mixed bill

When I asked Stuart if he wanted to come to Crywank with me, he was understandably confused. Thankfully, I was able to quickly correct any misunderstandings and on Monday night we headed to see Crywank, performing with **Caïna**, **Old Skin**, and **Ithaca** at Power Lunches.

Crywank is an acoustic anti-folk duo from Manchester who have been told “they are the worst named band in the country”. Started in 2009, they’ve released three albums (their most recent this past November) and I was pleasantly surprised that they continue to perform songs from all of



Had to image search for Crywank...

them.

They opened with a cheery song off their newest album singing “everyone I love is going to die, and I will die as well”, immediately followed by an emotionally charged rendition of *Pope Alexander* off their first album. What followed was 30 minutes of sad songs interspersed with witty self

deprecating humor and a ditty about paperclips.

The live show was everything that I could have hoped for and more, putting all the emotion heard in the recordings into the live show. From the more depressing songs such as *Hikikomori*, to a surprisingly lighthearted *I Am Shit*, not once was I disappointed by the song choice or performance. Mixed in with it all was a humorous commentary, poking fun at themselves for writing such over the top sad music.

Crywank put on a great live show, and if you ever have the chance to see them perform live I’d recommend doing so; you won’t regret it. After Crywank, the bands all got a bit noisier, so it’s best if Stuart takes over the review.

First of the heavier acts were **Ithaca**. They seemed to be aiming for a sound somewhere in the gulf between **Meshuggah** and **The Fall of Troy**, but without living up to the level of either of those acts, they ended up coming across as **Lamb of God** trying too hard. It wasn’t exactly unpleasant, but after all that Crywank’s set had offered, I definitely felt like we were heading on a downward trajectory.

Luckily for me, I was proved wrong by **Old Skin**. They may feature Crywank’s percussionist on drums, but they could not be a more different act. Their sound is easily described by the chaotic hardcore tag, so basically, think **Converge**. That’s definitely not a bad thing though. For those of you who haven’t been, Power Lunches is a basement in Dalston with room for about 80 people. It turned what was already a really intense and heavy set into a mind melting mix of furious screams, cataclysmic riffs and pounding drums. It was really quite something.

The intensity level didn’t slow down there though. I’ve put my ears through a lot over the years, and so I generally consider really loud gigs as about the correct volume. **Caïna** hurt. Like physically hurt. In a good way. The man behind Caïna is Andrew Curtis-Brignell, and he has crafted himself quite a reputation in the UK ambient black metal scene. Apparently the name comes from Dante’s *Inferno*, where Caïna is a bottomless fissure of eternally frozen blackened ice. It’s surprising how well that describes the sound. A whirl of reverb drenched screams, shouts and chants creates an unbelievably intense soundscape



The man behind black metal project Caïna

that chills you to the bone while the volume liquifies your mind.

Sadly, his set was somewhat ruined by technical problems. His guitar never started working, so around fifteen minutes after the scheduled start, we were informed he was just going to play vocal stuff. We got two tracks of that before the rest of his equipment also stopped working. He gave a fairly grumpy apology and had to call it a night. It was an extremely frustrating end to the night, especially given how incredible the two tracks he did manage to play were. I will definitely be keeping an eye out for more London dates, because I can only imagine how good the full live experience would be.

AMS album of the week

Alcest – Shelter

Black metal has undoubtedly seen regeneration in recent years. Releases such as **Deafheaven’s** *Sunbather* or **Altar of Plagues’** *Teethed Glory and Injury* in 2013 were well received, provided you were looking for challenging music with power behind it. However, you’d be mistaken if it was purely “good black metal” that is suddenly hitting home with the hipsters, rather than just metalheads – really, it’s what these bands do on these albums that isn’t metal at all that grabbed people’s attention. Enter **Alcest**, who have been playing this game for years, merging the typical blast beats, high screams, tremolo guitars and proggy structures of black metal with a mystical dreamy atmosphere. And just as black metal had become cool, fans are left scratching their heads as Alcest abandon the very ship they left port on.



Shelter strips out the metal from Alcest’s original sound. This isn’t at all sudden, as the screams have been dying off consistently since *Ecaïlles De Lune* in 2010. On *Shelter*, clean guitars weave dream pop songs with walls of effects. The space left by the metal is now filled with a wider sound palette – pianos, guest vocals, choirs and heavily layered guitars, fitting well with frontman Neige’s ethereal voice. Many of these are present on the title track, probably the most representative song on the album, where choruses are a merge of vocal hooks, simple drumming and droning guitar.

Don’t assume that *Shelter* never feels heavy because of this style shift. *Voix Sereines*, begins with familiar vocal and clean guitar passages, and has a fantastic gradual build to its euphoric ending, where we do hear distortion guitars with the new post-rock sound. *Délivrance* does much the same, with even bolder choirs, strings and a final crescendo which ends with almost **Godspeed**-guitar drone.

It’s not all memorable, as some of the poppier songs are easily Alcest’s weakest efforts (such as *Away*, or *Opale* – unfortunately the single). The key in enjoying *Shelter* is in realising what really makes Alcest good. Behind all the noise, be it waves of reverb or bone splitting distortion, it’s the songwriting and atmosphere that has always been present making them worth listening to. It’s still the same gift on *Shelter*, it just not in the same wrapping paper as before. Disappointed it’s not black metal? Hush now, don’t worry – **Agalloch** and **Wolves In The Throne Room** will be saving the day this 2014.

Robin Thomas

I Break Horses Break No New Ground

Stuart Masson Music Editor

Swedish act **I Break Horses** released their debut album, *Hearts*, back in 2011. Full of fuzzy shoegaze, processed beats and dreamy vocals I remember being fairly impressed when I first listened to it, but by no means blown away. I then caught them at a festival in the summer of 2012 and was completely blown away. Everything got drenched in loads of noise, and it really changed my mind about the band. It’s a shame that with their sophomore album, *Chiaroscuro*, they seem intent on changing my mind back.

Opening track *You Burn* sets the tone for the rest of the album. It’s fine. It just doesn’t do anything exciting. There’s no noise, the processed beats are far quieter than they were on the debut and there’s synths all over the shop. It does have a nice ethereal atmosphere, it’s quite pretty, and you know, it doesn’t offend me at all. The thing is, I want the music I listen to be a few rungs above inoffensive.

Sadly, there are even a few moments

where it drops a bit below inoffensive. The seven minutes of *Heart To Know* are just really tedious. Dreary dream pop that goes absolutely nowhere is bad enough when it is a normal length track, but seven minutes? Fuck that. *Berceuse* is also really mundane, whilst *Faith* left me pretty numb.

There are a few better tracks here. *Disclosure* is a really great slice of dreamy electro-pop, whilst *Weigh True Worlds* is an exciting upbeat pop number that really works (even if it sounds more like **Robyn** than **My Bloody Valentine**). The highlight is definitely *Denial*. A sleek sexy electro-pop number drenched in reverb, this one is simultaneously really beautiful texturally, and also really danceable. It’s the sort of track that works just as well on the playlist for a quiet night as it would a house party (assuming you host fairly hipster house parties).

The album is perhaps best summed up with my opinions on the other seven minute track, *Medicine Brush*. The beats sound great, the synth lines are interesting and the dreamy textures are great. However, the beats are hidden away when they should be given the lead, the synths dominate everything, even when they’re not



the most interesting part, and the texture gets a bit numbing after seven minutes.

This album has a lot of potential, and it would take a few minor changes in mixing to make it really good. With louder beats, a bit of noise here and there and trimming down the seven minute tracks this would be an absolutely fantastic album. Sadly, I Break Horses clearly don’t agree with my stylistic wishes for the record and so I’ll have to make do with it being all right. Maybe I need to catch them live again for this one to click, but certainly for now, I’m back to thinking I Break Horses are just another run of the mill dream pop band, which is a real shame.



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MUSIC

The Pelican Brief

Riaz Agahi talks to Trevor de Brauw and Dallas Thomas

Following the release of their latest effort, *Forever Becoming* (the rather excellent, if a little mystifying artwork is shown on the right), an album that is instantly distinguishable as Pelican, while still breaking new ground, I had the chance to talk to Pelican's two guitarists, founder member Trevor de Brauw and Dallas Thomas, who joined the band in 2012 to replace Laurent Schroeder-Lebec, about the new album, and a variety of other Pelican related topics.

Riaz Agahi: Dallas, how did you end up joining Pelican? Did you guys know each other well beforehand?

Dallas Thomas: Well it started

with just filling in for a few shows, then a tour, then another tour... Two years later it just seemed to make sense since Laurent decided he didn't want to do the band anymore and focus on family and career. **The Swan King** practices next door to Pelican in Chicago, so we pretty much met through the walls... Yeah we all travel in the same social circles so it all kind of just naturally clicked.

Has the band's sound changed since the change in personnel, and do you feel that was an influence on *Forever Becoming*?

DT- The bulk of the material was written by Trevor and Bryan sending files back and forth to Larry in LA. There was a focused attempt to not be an extreme departure from

what had gone before and still embrace it as a fresh progression of the band.

TD- There was going to be a change in sound no matter what since the album lacks Laurent's contribution. Pelican has always been the sound of four distinct musical personalities bringing their influences and perspectives to the table. There was a sense that removing one of those voices from the mix would change things, but if we kept our heads and wrote that the remaining 75% would come up with something that was recognizably Pelican. I think the new record bears our stamp, maybe it's a bit streamlined in some regards.

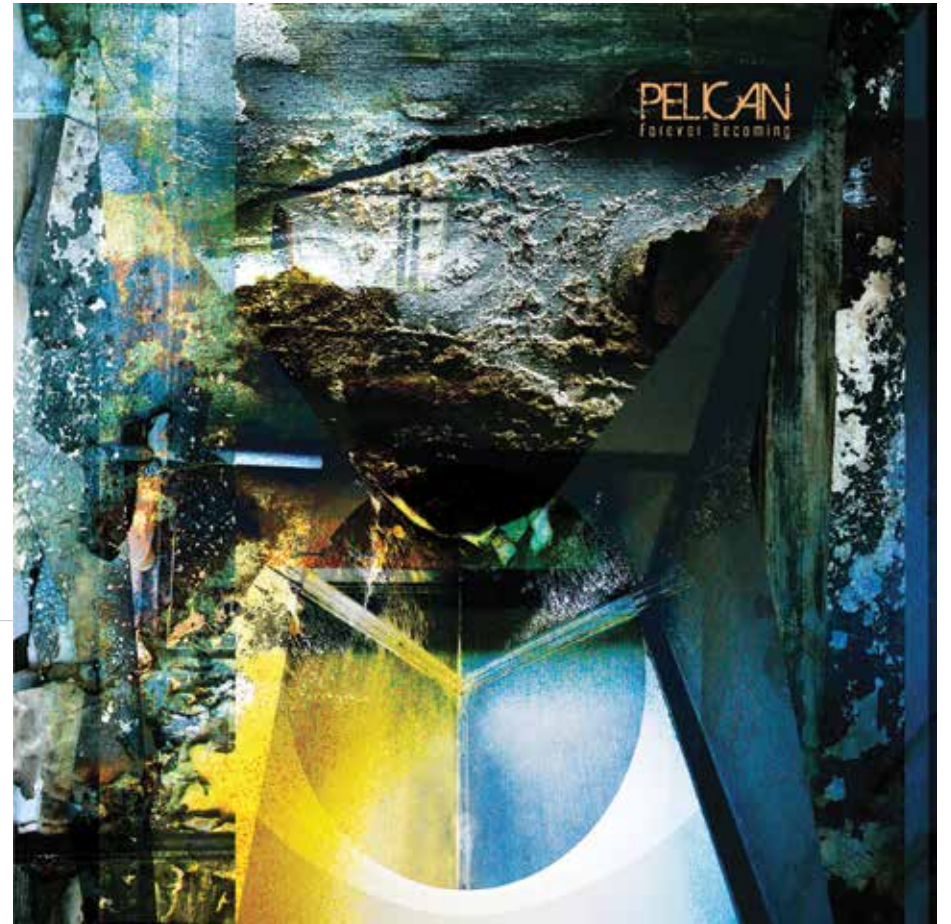
Were you guys on the same wavelength or was there a totally new set of influences?

DT- I felt everything just sort of clicked right before recording *Forever Becoming*. We all have such vast influences both similar and different that it wasn't some sort of conscious effort. We just all followed what was sounding best.

TD- The writing process in this band is really intuitive and not thought out. The influences that are brought to the table are not overt; it's more just a subliminal effect of all being voracious music listeners. I think Dallas is right that things really seemed to click right before recording - the session was booked before we finished writing to kind of give us a deadline, which I think helped ramp up the momentum last minute and bring everything into focus.

How close was the band to splitting up around the time of *Ataraxia/Taraxis*? Certain music media sources seemed to think Pelican was nearing an end...

TD- That's more or less when we got momentum going again, although that's also when Laurent started distancing himself more. For me there was never a question that we'd get back into it post-



hiatus.

How do you feel Pelican's sound or way of writing and recording has evolved since you first started making music?

Trevor de Brauw: It seems like we've just grown to know each other better and better as musicians over time and we have a clearer sense of how to compliment each other musically in the space of a composition. I wouldn't say we were necessarily over-thinking anything in the past, but there was definitely a sense of laboring over details in the past that seems to have been replaced with intuition. Conversely, in terms of actual song structure we used to just throw everything at a wall to see what would stick, whereas now we're ruthless editors. Even though some of the song lengths tend to be pretty long, they're often cut down or adjusted because we're very wary of how the song flows.

I said in my recent review (Issue 1558) that I felt like the rhythm section was a lot more prominent and I was wondering if you thought that was the case?

DT- Yeah I would say that is a

good observation, besides the point that Larry and Bryan are the bro rhythm section.

To what extent is there a kind of context or deeper message that goes beyond being simply well arranges music? I read once that the title city of echoes related to globalisation...

TD- Our records will always be a reflection of what's going on in our lives between albums, manifested musically. So context, yes, but I don't know that we'd qualify it as a message. With regards to *City of Echoes*- we wrote that record during a time when our career as touring musicians was taking off and we were constantly traveling. Globalization was definitely on our minds at that time because we were witnessing it firsthand on a daily basis; rolling into towns all over that bore uncomfortable similarities. But the album also carried this sense that music was this unifying power that had brought us all over the world and put us in touch with so many people and cultures that we did not previously have immediate contact with.

Forever Becoming was released October 15th 2013 on Southern Lord records.





Director masterclass: Martin Scorsese

Peter Brook

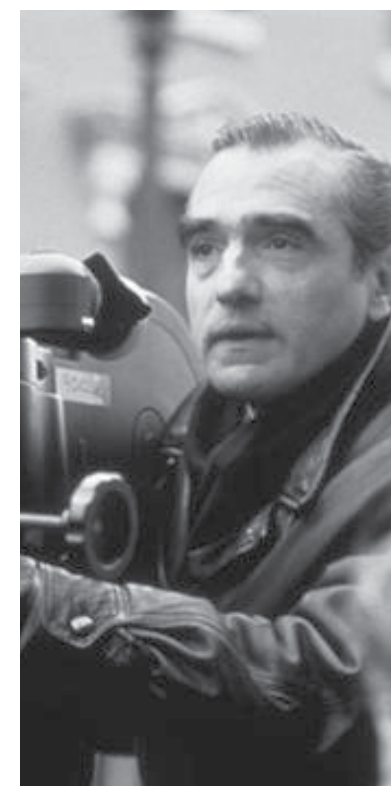
Star Writer



"You talkin' to me? Then who the hell else are you talking... you talking to me? Well I'm the only one here."

"I think I learn more in a movie or in a story when I see what a person does wrong and what happens because of that."

Scorsese has created such a variety of films from religious epics (*The Last Temptation of Christ* and *Kundun*) to kids' movies (*Hugo*) however he is really known for his depictions gangsters and vigilantes on the streets of New York.



Taxi Driver (1976)

The most iconic film of Scorsese's filmography tells the story of a vigilante who decides he wants to clean up the streets and after deciding he can't kill a politician, he goes after a pimp to rescue a twelve-year-old girl from a life of prostitution. The reason this movie is such a classic is because it masters the feeling of isolation that Travis Bickle (Robert De Niro) feels.

The atmospheric music with its jazz refrains, the slow motion close-ups of De Niro that let us ponder what Bickle is feeling and truly appreciate how brilliant an actor he is. The film sweeps you along and by the end you find yourself siding with this sad and lonely vigilante. The character, Bickle, is such a wonderful case study I'm sure it'd be worth doing a psychology degree just to try and figure him out.

The seediness of the whole piece is really boiled down in the scene where Scorsese himself plays a near crazy

husband who has followed his wife to a another mans house where she is having an affair and then talks about how he is going to kill her and what her mutilated corpse will look like. You follow Bickle in his decision to become a rouge go on some sort of spree. The denouement of the film clashes with the rest of the movie as it is just SO violent, and this is where we find catharsis.

BUT...

The final scene shows a selection of newspaper articles telling the story of what he has done and a letter from the parents of the rescued girl. Though he is praised as a hero we know he was moments away from killing a senator before deciding to a kill the pimps. We are reminded that, although we went along with him for the ride, now it is time to reflect on how a racist, fascist who has pretend-arguments with himself in the mirror accidentally became a hero.



Goodfellas (1990)

"As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a gangster," This is the ultimate gangster movie, and the first of triptych of films about organised crime including *Casino* and *The Departed*. The story shows how a kid becomes a Mafioso, then his treacherous career and in the end how he hates himself for leaving the life of crime via a witness protection program. A true epic.

As with all his previous films we get fantastic camera moves and probably an era defining steady-cam shot following Henry Hill through the back entrance of the Copacobana Club, through the kitchens meeting and greeting everyone and into the club where a table is bought out and put right at the front for him. It really led the way for directors like Paul Thomas Anderson to use such complicated tracking shots.



The Wolf of Wall Street (2014)

The Wolf of Wall Street is Scorsese looking through the eyes of Jason Belfort played by Leonardo DiCaprio, a corrupt and opulent man travelling from rags to obscene riches. One of the first scenes shows Belfort using a straw to blow cocaine into the ass of a prostitute and really this sets the tone for the rest of the movie.

The first thing to say is that DiCaprio puts in an absolutely rock solid performance filled with comedy and nuance. Alongside him the drug addled tag along Jonah Hill adds a hilarious extra dimension whilst taking another step away from his teenage knob-gag-filled past.

However, whether you enjoy this film will hang on one central tenant: Is showing a morally neutral take on an amoral person the same as condoning what they do?

His life is shown in first person and style of the film doesn't stop to let you reflect on consequences of his actions, but maybe this IS how Jason Belfort sees the world. Is this an exploitation film showing egregious sex, drug taking and violence? Yes. Is that bad thing? Certainly not.

Most films that have a three-hour from early career to highlife to decline movies usually stutter in the decline, the plot slows down and the character stops to reflect, the trajectory of this

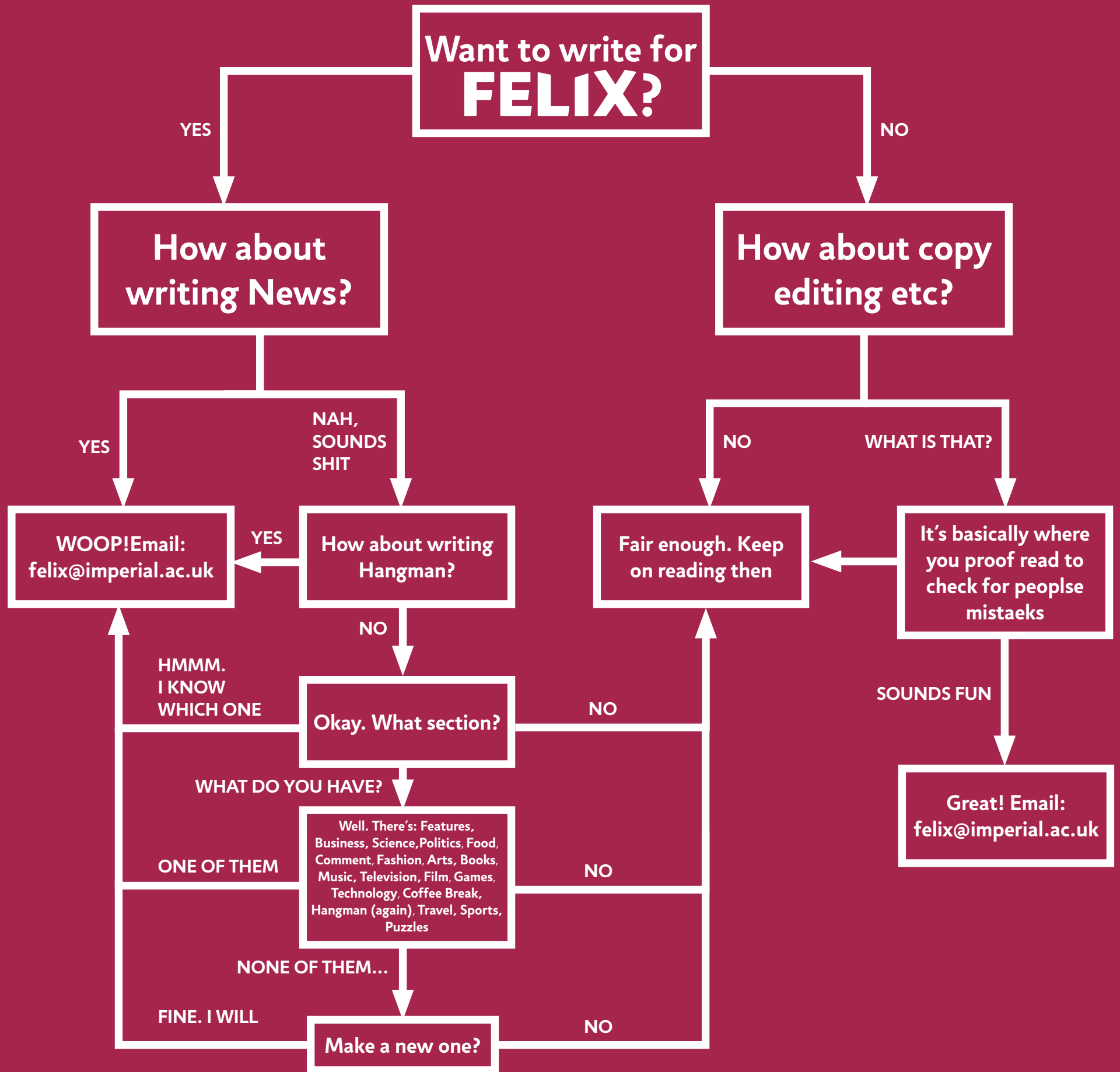
film is in fact very similar to *Goodfellas*. This character disgusted me and usually when you don't like the main character of a movie you don't care what happens at the end. In this, I was vying for his decline and I was gripped.

One strange thing to note was in the screening I saw that the room felt split between those who were reveling in his immorality (and laughing in inappropriate places) and those who'd decided he was awful. That being said lots of the film is played for laughs and there is one brilliant bit of physical comedy played by DiCaprio after taking to many drugs making the 2-meter walk to his car look like a mile.

Critics of this film will say it is just exploitation, however the last scene may give us an insight into what the director really wants to say, much like in *Taxi Driver*.

(Continued after the break with spoilers)

Belfort, having left prison, is giving a sales seminar (much like Warren Buffet does) and the final shot is of an adoring crowd leaning into listen to a multiple felon. This is a reflection of the audience in the cinema peering into the exciting but depraved world and makes you stop to think that we are all happy to forget the people who Belfort has scammed on the condition we can get in on the action too.



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It's time to dish the dirt

John Park

Film Editor

August: Osage County

Director: John Wells

Writer: Tracy Letts

Starring: Meryl Streep, Julia Roberts, Ewan McGregor, Chris Cooper, Margo Martindale, Abigail Breslin, Juliette Lewis, Julianne Nicholson, Benedict Cumberbatch, Dermot Mulroney, Sam Shepard, Mitsy Upham

Runtime: 121 minutes

Certification: 15



Here is a film of so many mixed emotions that it will make your head spin. With larger-than-life characters having a proper go at each other at a family gathering (where else?). Those of you familiar with the Walkers of ABC's hit TV show *Brothers and Sisters* will know of their infamous dining scenes where no lunch/dinner party is a smooth ride. The Weston family, hailing from Osage County, Oklahoma, take things to a whole new level. There's wine involved of course, but also pills, cursing is almost a requirement, and hurling verbal abuse is the norm.

At the head of the table sits the matriarch, cancer-ridden, pill-popping Violet Weston (Meryl Streep) who is reeling from her husband Beverly's (Sam Shepard) suicide. The entire family has gathered to support her, although with this lot they create more problems and tension. Violet's sister Mattie Fae (Margo Martindale) and Mattie's husband Charlie (Chris Cooper) turn up, as does their son Little Charlie (Benedict Cumberbatch), with events taking a more juicy turn with Violet's three daughters Barbara (Julia Roberts), Karen (Juliette Lewis)

and Ivy (Julianne Nicholson). Barbara's family is falling apart, but in the face of such tragedy her daughter Jean (Abigail Breslin) and estranged husband (Ewan McGregor) put on a united front, Karen turns up with the man of the year Steve (Dermot Mulroney) whose strongest quality is certainly not subtlety (driving a crazy loud Ferrari to a funeral, taking a phone call during prayer), and Ivy isn't as single as her mother assumes her to be. As the dramatic showdown occurs, the new live-in carer Johnna (Mitsy Upham) looks on from a relative distance as she serves up the meal.

It's one hell of a cast, with everyone pitching in strong performances to create one smooth ensemble piece. There is a mixture of loud voices who aren't afraid to lay out their opinions, and to contrast that some more restrained performances also have place at the dinner table. Streep and Roberts are clearly the loudest of the bunch, with Violet, hopped up on all sorts of pain meds, is an unstoppable train when it involves insulting her guests. Roberts is the only one brave enough to square off directly against her mother, and between the two of them

there is plenty of scenery chewed and devoured as they outright steal the show.

There is a reason why these two are hogging all the awards attention; they are both phenomenal. Roberts hasn't had a role this mature and seasoned in recent years and it's nice to see her let loose and tackle her supporting role fearlessly. When Barbara isn't butting heads with her mom, it's her husband and daughter she has trouble with, which brings out great moments for both McGregor and Breslin.

Streep, as usual, is the dramatic dominant force the film depends on, and her wild, hysteric antics remain faultless throughout, and there really appears to be no role that she cannot convincingly handle.

But the script is clever enough to give everyone at the table a chance to shine. It's a packed crowd for sure, with so many big names it becomes hard to resist.

Rounding off the Weston family are Karen, a clueless, wandering, happy-go-lucky who is willing to embrace any man who will have her, even if that means she will be wife no. 4 to her, Ivy is finally learning to find happiness,

her own place in the world and get on with her life, as the only daughter who stuck around in Oklahoma near the insanity of her childhood home.

There is a particularly effective scene where the three sisters gather around for a late-night catch-up, a short but dense segment that reveals more than expected from the characters. Nicholson is most engaging, finally revealing a part of her that wasn't previously seen as she was being largely sidelined and ignored thanks to the funeral dinner ending in absolute chaos.

Martindale's Mattie Fae is as bubbly ("give me some sugar" she says as she embracingly greets all the family members) as she can be downright nasty, most noticeably to her own son, Little Charles, played lovingly and sweetly by Cumberbatch, who is a little slow, clumsy and unemployed, which makes him a screw-up in her eyes.

Cooper, although generally quiet and perhaps the most sane, normal one of the group has his highlight scene that comes when he sticks up for his son who he couldn't be more proud of.

Beverly's suicide is only the tip of the

iceberg when it comes to what the Westons have in store for the rest of the film. No secret can stay buried for too long in this family, and as one dark, twisted fact comes to light after another, it's only a matter of time before everything falls crumbling apart. And it's this slow but sure disintegration of various relationships as an audience member that proves to be enormously entertaining to watch.

In the end however, no one comes out a clear winner, as under all that black humour there is a profound sense of tragic underlying sadness. Every single character has messed up issues that need dealing with but in this kind of environment answers aren't easy to find. The final scenes don't provide any satisfying closure, although a re-edited version of the ending, courtesy of Harvey Weinstein trying to put a more positive spin on the narrative tries to give some hope. Surprisingly this doesn't feel too out of place, and after so many unpleasantries, it could be a welcome change of atmosphere, even if that moment passes by in a fleetingly brief shot.

A true acting masterclass of how it's done on the screen, do not miss this.





2014 Critics Choice Awards

Best Picture: **12 Years a Slave**
 Best Director: **Alfonso Cuaron** (*Gravity*)
 Best Actor: **Matthew McConaughey** (*Dallas Buyers Club*)
 Best Actress: **Cate Blanchett** (*Blue Jasmine*)
 Best Supporting Actor: **Jared Leto** (*Dallas Buyers Club*)
 Best Supporting Actress: **Lupita Nyong'o** (*12 Years a Slave*)
 Best Young Actor/Actress: **Adele Exarchopoulos** (*Blue is the Warmest Colour*)
 Best Acting Ensemble: **American Hustle**
 Best Adapted Screenplay: **John Ridley** (*12 Years a Slave*)
 Best Original Screenplay: **Spike Jonze** (*Her*)
 Best Animated Feature: **Frozen**
 Best Action Movie: **Lone Survivor**
 Best Actor in an Action Movie: **Mark Wahlberg** (*Lone Survivor*)
 Best Actress in an Action Movie: **Sandra Bullock** (*Gravity*)
 Best Comedy: **American Hustle**
 Best Actor in a Comedy: **Leonardo DiCaprio** (*The Wolf of Wall Street*)
 Best Actress in a Comedy: **Amy Adams** (*American Hustle*)
 Best Sci-Fi/Horror Movie: **Gravity**
 Best Foreign Language Film: **Blue is the Warmest Colour**
 Best Documentary Feature: **20 Feet From Stardom**
 Best Art Direction: **Catherine Martin, Beverley Dunn** (*The Great Gatsby*)
 Best Cinematography: **Emmanuel Lubezki** (*Gravity*)
 Best Costume Design: **Catherine Martin** (*The Great Gatsby*)
 Best Editing: **Alfonso Cuaron, Mark Sanger** (*Gravity*)
 Best Makeup: **American Hustle**
 Best Score: **Steven Price** (*Gravity*)
 Best Song: **Let it Go** (*Frozen*)
 Best Visual Effects: **Gravity**

Time to dream big

Joe Letts

Felix Editor

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty

Director: Ben Stiller
Writers: Steve Conrad, James Thurber (short story)
Starring: Ben Stiller, Kristen Wiig, Adam Scott, Sean Penn, Shirley MacLaine
Runtime: 114 minutes
Certification: PG



travel further afield, learning more about himself while trying to find an elusive character that he's never met in person.

The cinematography in the film provides a rather stark surreal experience that adds to the overall feeling of the film. As the character develops the scenery reflects changes the terrain.

The film explores themes of romance, corporate life and online dating (via gratuitous mentions of OK Cupid) over the course of the film, with Walter becoming more of an explorer and less of a basement dweller (something I can sympathise with - Ed.).

The film also explores the relationship Walter has with his mother and his sister; two characters that provide useful plot devices in unexpected parts of the script. The audience also sees Walter's inexplicably spry skills on a skateboard, while showing tricks to Cheryl's son in a park (or a stunt man - if you believe in those kind of things).

Overall, Stiller has produced a warm, feel-good, philosophical film with some amazing cinematography, a healthy dose of good guys and bad guys.

However, for people who are looking for an intellectual, action-packed movie, it might be time to look somewhere else...

A very long walk indeed

John Park

Film Editor

Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom

Director: Justin Chadwick
Writers: William Nicholson, Nelson Mandela (autobiography)
Starring: Idris Elba, Naomie Harris
Runtime: 141 minutes
Certification: 12A



In putting such an iconic, widely beloved figure to the screen, the pressure is most definitely on. The film shouldn't offend, nor should it be an unbiassedly kind portrayal, as even the most celebrated people have flaws to speak of. And *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* does get that balance to a certain extent, putting the long years of Nelson Mandela's struggle against oppression to the screen.

The film benefits enormously from the presence of Idris Elba who plays the title role with impressive restraint and although at appropriate times, great force. His natural assets, the tall, towering frame and deep voice work tremendously to his advantage in setting him up to take the role of a strong leader. Elba takes his role even further, putting a very much relatable human face to the extraordinary man.

It moves at a remarkable pace,

sprinting through the early years of Mandela as an active revolutionary, plus the infamous trial where he was imprisoned for life, then his subsequent release after 27 years and his political actions from then on until he reaches the Presidency. Just getting him elected takes 141 minutes.

The idea of a 27-year imprisonment is remarkably diminished and trivialised and its harsh conditions are barely looked at, during which time we focus on Winnie Mandela, Nelson's second wife, and her more aggressive, no-nonsense stance to resist inequality. Winnie Mandela is played by Naomie Harris, the newest Miss Money Penny, who goes through a startling change from being Nelson's female companion, to a fearless leader who frequently clashes with Nelson's more peaceful approach to diplomacy. And it's a flawless transition Harris shows with compelling charisma.

For anyone unfamiliar with any part of the history it is enormously informative too, highlighting the most important, intense events surrounding the character's complex life (a lot of senseless shooting, a lot of rioting, plenty of deaths, cue news channel clips), but for experts, errors and missed out details will be glaringly obvious.

Could this have served better as a mini-series? Yes. Even at 141 minutes (an off-putting length for sure) not everything is squeezed in. With a cast this good they could have been put to even more use, and there are of course such productions planned, although it will be difficult to find actors as good as the aforementioned pair.

The Secret life of Walter Mitty is a Ben Stiller film based on the short of the same name written by James Thurber for the New Yorker in 1942.

In the film Stiller plays the titular character, Walter Mitty, a simple man in a niche job, born into a grey suit.

The story follows Mitty as he falls for a new co-worker, Cheryl (played by Kristen Wiig) and evolves from a man who daydreams about doing things to a man who actually steps out of his shell and taking a grip on the handlebars of life.

Mitty works as a low-level employee at a magazine before adapting to the changes brought in by the new, modern management team.

As the film progresses, Walter leaves the comfort of his home to



Imperial Cinema



Frozen and Thor: The Dark World

In recent years, many have said that Disney animation has been on the down and outs but hopefully the arrival of *Frozen* will spell a comeback! After a falling out with her sister Anna, Elsa-Princess of Arendelle runs away, plunging her kingdom into an eternal winter because of her ability to create ice and snow. Anna sets out on a mission to find her sister to reverse the deep freeze along with a host of random m8s she meets along the way.

Frozen marks the long-awaited return of the classic Disney musical format but unlike our old childhood favourites, *Frozen* uses a mixture of CGI and hand-drawn animation for a sleeker, more realistic feel whilst still retaining the trademark Disney look that we all know and love.

Thor: The Dark World sees the return of the eponymous well-muscled Norse god and his wayward brother Loki. Thor has to save dubious astrophysicist Jane (Natalie Portman) after she is kidnapped so he enlists the help of imprisoned murderer brother Loki who is consequently freed in order to save damsel in distress Natalie. *Thor 2* is blatantly silly but if you're looking for fun escapism, superhero sibling banter, wonky Hollywood science and jam-packed special effects, look no further!

Tuesday 28/1/14

Thor: The Dark World : 18:30

Frozen: 20:45

Thursday 30/1/14

Frozen: 18:30

Thor: The Dark World: 18:30

Tickets

£3 Members/ £4 Non-Members

Buy membership here:
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GAMES

Best Friends for ever?

Maximilian Eggl, on the joys of knifing his foe

If you read my christmas list, you probably know that I wanted to play BF4 for a while now. I play a lot of FPS, and the battlefield series always interested me from the off. It was the one game I had always missed out on. Especially this iteration, which has just built on the success of its predecessors, updating the graphics, gameplay and most notable introducing big "levolution". Well it seems someone read my christmas list, and got me the game!

I had significant problems running the game at first. Not only would I get kicked from the servers at random intervals, I would have random freezing as well high incredibly high ping. At first I was worried that this was due to my machine not being top of the line, but after trawling the internet, I found that other users, some with the best gaming gear, were having the same problem. After some searching, I found solutions and got what seemed like an entirely new game. Previously I could only run the graph-



ics at low setting, now I was getting a good 60fps with medium settings. The fact that DICE seemed to rush out BF4 before it was ready probably lead to several problems, that you may encounter if you get the game.

Nobody really buys FPS games to play the single player, so I will gloss over that campaign. The multiplayer

however is paramount, and where BF4 needed to impress. With several different game modes, enough variations have been thrown in to keep things interesting and cater to different moods.

The gameplay of the game itself is exceptional, and I feel all the different classes and guns are mostly well balanced. Furthermore the mechanic of

unlocking new weapons and attachments for your guns (meaning you can make your own individual configurations according to your style), introduces a bit more longevity into the game as it gives the player more of a reason to keep playing. However sometimes the game does feel a bit grindy to get certain guns and accessories. The last thing I would love to mention is the implementation of counterknifing, how sick are those animations?

The graphics of the game are outstanding, and while I could not personally run them on the ultra setting, even on medium I get some very beautiful and detailed maps. Keep in mind though that you will need a beast of a machine to get anywhere near the top graphics levels.

Now to levolution, the games biggest selling point. Basically the premise is that the maps would change radically completely redesigning the playing field, and you as a player could initiate most of the alterations. Imag-

ine skyscrapers falling down, tropical storms blowing in or dams breaking. It sounds epic, and to be honest it usually is. I mean the tropical storm in Paracel storm completely changes the feel of the map, making you feel like you are really fighting a war on some island resort. However, I don't really believe that the levolution is really as much as DICE made it out to be. Yes it is cool, but really necessary? Does it really change much about FPS in general? No, and therefore I would have wished that BF4 would have introduced some awesome new feature that would have really changed things up.

I was given this present for Christmas, which is great because it was all gain, no pain. However if I had spent the £40+, then I would have felt a bit frustrated. Sure its a good shooter, but not for the price they are asking. If you are still unsure if you want to go for BF4, wait a bit for the price to come down, DICE to iron out any last wrinkles and then you will get one heck of an awesome game.

Confessions of GTA: Gamer Style

After months of anticipation, Felix releases its review

Calum Skene
Games Editor

As a massive player of Grand Theft Auto 4 I was surprisingly not that excited for the new Grand Theft game. I felt that 4 would forever be my Grand Theft Auto game of choice and that 5 would just be more of the same in a disappointing way. The adverts showcasing the three new characters for this game and the way you could switch between them just seemed like a gimmick to me, and the city it takes place in, really a copy of Los Angeles, seemed samey. On Christmas day of 2013 Santa showed me just how wrong I was by giving me a copy of this game. Here follows everything about Grand Theft Auto 5 that managed to change my mind! GTA 5 is only available on XBOX 360 and PS3, and as much as I wanted it on the Wii U I was quite glad to revisit my XBOX for perhaps the last time. The game looks beautiful, Los Santos is beautiful,

and the game itself handles beautifully. The first time I drove a car in the game I crashed it straight into oncoming traffic on a motorway because I wasn't used to cars handling in games as well as this one. Perhaps the biggest element of this game is the story. The story mode is long! Really long! The missions don't get boring though, they are fun and varied and quite often hilarious. You start as Franklin, a Ghetto kinda guy with a vision, tired of being in Gangs Franklin wants to start making big money. You then seamlessly unlock Michael, a retired professional criminal who lives in a beautiful house in the hills. The last addition is Trevor who enters in a memorable way which I won't ruin here. The range of characters which I had originally thought would get annoying is actually one of the best things about this game. They keep the story mode fresh as you do missions with each character and also keep the long heist missions varied as you complete different tasks with different characters. Each character has their

own personality and plays differently. Franklin swears like a beast and can drive cars in slow motion, Michael is a good all round character, and Trevor is a crazy maniac who can take a beating and also dish it out. The heist missions are like the bank robbery mission in GTA4 but longer and there are many of them. Each heist requires you to complete preparation missions and training such as learning to fly a plane. There

is so much customisation such as choosing how to complete the heists and who to hire to do various jobs. You can go for pros but they will take more of a cut or you can go for quirky amateurs who will maybe mess up but you can pay them less, and the more heists you do with them the better they get. This level of changing things provides replay value, not that you'll need it as I have left the best feature of GTA5 for last.

GTA5 includes GTA online. Here you create your own character with tonnes of customisation options that enable you to create your perfect crime lord. My online character is a sleek Heisenberg inspired character (not original I know) who cruises around in his purple 4x4 truck emblazoned with my gang logo. The gang I am in I created myself, together with the hierarchy of the gang members (based on Top Gun call signs with the top members of the crew earning the rank of Maverick) and is called Danger Chicken. In my gang we race together, do missions together and basically just enjoy the magic of the world. GTA5 offers a tonne of stuff I haven't even mentioned from strip clubs to getting some fried chicken at Cluckin' Bell. This game can be played seriously for hours or just picked up to do a mission from time to time. It combines the realism of GTA4 and the fun of the earlier games in the series. Whether you are new to GTA or an old fan this game will not disappoint.



Time to fill out the Felix Sex Survey!

Opens Monday!

<http://bit.ly/1l2exlo>



HANGMAN

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This Week In The Past

The Historian
Hangman Contributor



1973 - The US Supreme Court legalises elective abortion in all 50 states which is probably the last anyone has heard of the issue.

1957 - A momentous day for the toy industry and weird niche sports as Walter Morrison sells the rights to his mysterious flying disc aka the frisbee

1927 - First live radio commentary of a football match. Unfortunately, it was between Arsenal and Sheffield United thus putting off many from ever listening again.

1924 - Ramsay MacDonald becomes the first Labour Prime Minister and goes on to create a large multi-national fast food franchise.

1897 - Murder of Elva Zona Heaster, the resultant trial is, once again, sorted out by some expert testimony from a ghost.

1570 - James Stewart becomes the first recorded instance of assassination by firearm. What a lucky guy.



MARY JANE HEASTON

Erm... sorry kids, Hangman bailed. I'm not sure what this picture is, but it does remind me of a facebook profile picture I saw last week, only more colourful...

Apologytorial

The Hangman
Hangman Editor



In Trouble - Following Lord Rennard's refusal to apologise in the face of sexual harassment allegations, this editor believes we should all refuse to atone for our many misdemeanours.

Instead of admitting to one's mistakes, the world would be a better place if we all just pretended to give less of a shit

about other people's feelings. Frankly, if we all went around apologising for any deed or comment that has offended, annoyed or otherwise inconvenienced someone we'd never get anything done.

Spilt your coffee on someone? Apologising would be crazy. Remember, you're the one who's tragically lost their paid-for drink. Let a friend down recently? So what? more fool them for trusting you in the first place.

Hypothetically, it would be acceptable

to apologise if your life depended upon it. However, given the average value of the life of a Felix reader, the reality is that it wouldn't be worth the effort.

Rennard should be held aloft as a paragon of pragmatism and logic for his refusal to apologise for any unwittingly inappropriate actions or vacuous remarks.

So, barge past strangers let down your friends and write terrible Felix articles all without guilt as saying "sorry" would only make you look worse.

Tarantino Suspects You

Timothy McSweeney
Hangman Contributor

After the news this week that the script of a new Tarantino film was leaked to agents, our sources have confirmed that Quentin Tarantino suspects you, yes you, to be perpetrator.

He also wishes you to know that he will brutally and very, very personally utilise all the resources at his disposal to hunt you down and force you to make amends.

The multi-award winning director stated that he "always knew you'd do something like this" and that he was an "idiot" for even letting you near the script in the first place.

At press time, Hangman understands that the violence in Tarantino's films will be nothing compared to what he and his henchmen - Tim Roth, Christopher Waltz, Uma Thurman and Samuel L. Jackson - will do once they find you.

"Have you tried sending emails? Email hangman.felix@imperial.ac.uk and give it a go!"

"Want to experience rejection? Email hangman.felix@imperial.ac.uk and give it a go!"

Felix in the past.



"Strongest" Winter Olympics Team Ready To Disappoint

The Hangman
Hangman Editor

Final preparations are being made by the GB Winter Olympics team to ready themselves for wholeheartedly disappointing the country.

The squad, who have declared themselves to be the "strongest in decades" have been undertaking numerous 'Disappointment' training

sessions.

"The sessions are a sort of in-depth analysis of how best to disappoint the country both in the short and long term" one squad member stated.

"They vary from how to deliver a one-off terrible performance all the way through to how to maintain sustained under performance over multiple Olympics"

It has been rumoured that this will be the most disappointing Winter



Olympics yet. However, this has been tempered by the fact that many pundits believe that such low levels of success in the past has kept the bar of expectation so low that simply seeing a British athlete at the Winter Olympics will exceed most of the public's expectations.

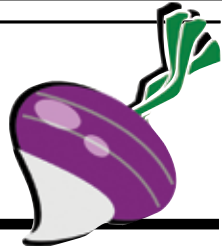


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HANGMAN

the turnip

Hangman's Finest College News Source



"China Corrupt"

Guardian Revelations Growing Less Impressive

Despite recent journalistic success in playing a major role in revealing some of the contents of the Snowden leaks, the standard of the Guardian's 'revelations' appears to be dropping. This week the tired and overworked newspaper could only muster a "China pretty corrupt" headline which surprised basically nobody.



DAILY RECORD/TUMBLR

The expose of China's ruling families, whilst adding a little detail, came with essentially little, if any, surprise. When reached for comment, a spokesperson for the Guardian stated "listen guys, we can't always have some dirt on western governments - I mean, there's only so much disgraceful stuff they can do"

"Ultimately, you're just going to have to settle for the old 'corrupt government still corrupt' headline every now and then" the spokesperson continued before adding "it's been a slow revelations day, OK?"

However, many believe this to be sign

of a terminal decline in the newspaper. One respected Felix journalist said "if they're not revealing the darkest secrets of our governments to us, then what are they doing?"

"Reporting old normal news about things that weren't top secret?"

"How's that interesting?"

The Guardian was quick to move to reassure readers that more high-level documents would be on their way in soon including a hard-hitting piece on just how much state money Tony Blair spent on cat food.

DATA IN FOR IT NOW



Bustling Slave Trade Continues

January Transfer Window Very Active



If you're looking for a graduate career look no further than this industry, these owners pay top bucks!

Following the opening of the first of the biannual transfer window two weeks ago, the trading of football-playing slaves is booming this week.

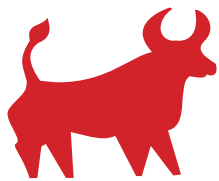
Whilst it is widely believed the best slaves are rarely available until the summer window, many slave owning clubs decide that investment in new, fresher slaves is necessary for increasing crucial points output.

At press time, Hangman can reveal that Manchester-based slave owners were interested in purchasing a spanish slave from some west-London based owners. However the deal is in doubt due to the well-known disreputable nature of the west-London owners.



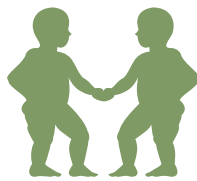
ARIES

This week you (incorrectly) decide it's not too late for Movember. You try to grow a fantastic 'tache but it comes to life and begins an evil conquest of the universe. You manage to stop it by eating an apple pie and getting it covered in filling, but appley mostaches aren't fashionable right now and so nobody wants to be seen with you.



TAURUS

This week, you eat a pie. Yum. You eat another pie. Mmm... You eat anoth- whoa! Slow down, buddy, that's enough! No! That's the critical mass of pies! You eat so many pies that your stomach collapses into ultra-dense degenerate matter. A bunch of physicists offer you a PhD opportunity if you let them study you. Win!



GEMINI

You accidentally release a large amount of radioactive waste from the Blackett laboratory into the atmosphere. The resulting wave of super-intelligent nuclear pigeons begin a quest to steal every cherry pie in the world. As if this wasn't enough, they beat you in all your exams and the marks are scaled so that you fail everything.



CANCER

You write a lab report on pie-aerodynamics. Many wonder why you're throwing pies off the roof, but hungry students below seem to appreciate your experiment. When you run out of pies, they start climbing the walls to eat you unless you throw them more food. They eat your toes and you hand in your lab report late. Zero marks for you.



LEO

This week, fivesixeight adds vegetarian sausages to their menu. The fact that the Union is now kidnapping vegetarians and turning them into sausages shows just how much business they're losing to the new h-bar. A rather sadistic looking sabbatical informs you of the 'Imperial Pies' they'll soon be selling. You flee for your life.



VIRGO

You buy a pie, only to find that it's empty! You decide it would make a swell hat. Everyone is amazed at your unique style and you win a fashion contract. You become world famous and spend the next few months on a global tour. When it ends you realize that you forgot to revise for any of your exams and you fail your degree. Pint?



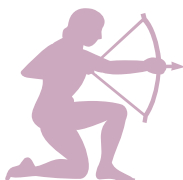
LIBRA

This week, you sit on your friend's pie. Aw jeez, he'll be really mad at you AND it looks like you missed the toilet. You try to bake a new pie with your aw-3sum c00kin 5kil1z, but words cannot describe the monstrosity that you create. You run away, but the union hears of your efforts and gives you a job as head chef at FiveSixEight.



SCORPIO

This week you get a cat for some reason. No idea why though, as you discover you're allergic to cats. Maybe you've gone insane. Yep, seems legit. No, wait - what are you doing? Why are you putting the cat in a pastry lined tin? Wha- cat pie!? Are you serious!?!? Well, you've definitely gone insane. Or you're just a horrible person.



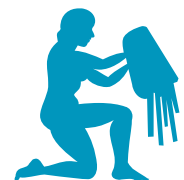
SAGITTARIUS

This week, you buy a pie only to find it's filled with live rats. You keep them as pets. In a sudden stroke of genius, you realize you could get them to sit all your tests for you! ...But they are sadly unable to write. Luckily everyone else is too busy stroking your cute lil' friends to do the tests and so you get a first. Yay!



CAPRICORN

Suddenly, a hole in your wall starts ejecting pies. Where did this hole come from? What lies on the other side? One of your housemates crawls through to investigate. They send you a text informing you they will now be living in the pie dimension. WHO I AM!? You're annoyed that they've abandoned you just before your joint lab report is due.



AQUARIUS

This horoscope is deadly serious. This week you bring a pie to the FiveSixEight writing the guy in h-bar instead!? HOW DARE YOU DEFEY ME! DO YOU KNOW THE IMMENSE POWER THAT HANGMAN WIELDS!?!? You asked for it: This week, a meteorite falls on you.



PISCES

This week you must choose between eating an apple pie and a cherry pie. What a choice! How will you ever decide between the two!?!? AAARGH!!! WHY!!!! The decision drives you into a catatonic state. You eventually awaken, only to find the year has passed and you have missed all your exams and been kicked out of Imperial. Pint?



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Premier League Predictions

James White gives his midweek predictions

Liverpool vs. Everton (BT Sport 1, Tuesday 8pm)

The Reds suffered an unexpected setback against Aston Villa last weekend, taking until the second half to find their rhythm, but Brendan Rodgers will be delighted to have Daniel Sturridge back. Liverpool's front two are perhaps the most envied in the Premier League, and both could easily be on the scoresheet in this Merseyside derby. Everton, meanwhile, continue to look the real deal under Roberto Martinez. They are making a habit of holding top teams and their strong defensive backline means they do not lose many. Both these sides play a high-tempo passing game and I'm expecting them to serve up an entertaining draw under the Anfield floodlights.

2-2

Tottenham vs. Man City (Wednesday 7:45pm)

Tim Sherwood has injected some much-needed attacking energy into Spurs' play since taking over at the end of last year. It is unfortunate for them that the sides above them keep winning, as their performances have unquestionably matched those of the top 4 contenders again of late. Meanwhile, the Manchester City juggernaut rolls on and having seemingly resolved their away day hoodoo, Manuel Pellegrini's side are now hard to back against. While this will not be anything like the 6-0 rollicking the Citizens dished out in the reverse fixture, with Sergio Aguero back in contention, they should have enough to claim all 3 points.

1-2

Southampton vs. Arsenal (Tuesday 7:45pm)

Saints could easily have been thrown into turmoil after the departure of chairman Nicolas Cortese left Mauricio Pochettino with a decision to make over his future. But fans will be relieved to learn it looks like he is staying put, and the players showed no signs of being affected by the off-field uncertainty in their 2-2 draw at Sunderland last weekend. They will face few tougher tests at St Mary's than that posed by table-toppers Arsenal on Tuesday, though. Arsene Wenger's men have not thrashed anyone yet this season, but with a rock-solid defence they have not needed to. With Aaron

Ramsey potentially back, they ought to win comfortably enough.

0-2

Man United vs. Cardiff (Tuesday 7:45pm)

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's Bluebirds showed signs of promise at Man City and will doubtless go all out for the 3 points again at Old Trafford. But the Red Devils desperately need to win and with Wayne Rooney likely to be back, they should prevail.

2-1

Norwich vs. Newcastle (Tuesday 7:45pm)

Chris Hughton has a knack of grinding out a result when he needs it, as the Canaries showed against Hull last weekend. But Newcastle are a real handful on their day and are definitely European contenders. As they showed at West Ham, they also know how to win away.

1-2

Swansea vs. Fulham (Tuesday 7:45pm)

Fulham's hapless defence should get a bit of a respite against the underperforming Swans. Michael Laudrup's side's home record has been atrocious of late and there are precious few flair players capable of lighting up this game.

0-0

Crystal Palace vs. Hull (Tuesday 8pm)

Palace finally find themselves out of the bottom three and Tony Pulis will be hell-bent on keeping up the winning mentality after they overcame Stoke last weekend. Hull are no pushovers but I just think Palace will want this one more.

1-0

Aston Villa vs. West Brom (Wednesday 7:45pm)

This Midlands derby is full of intrigue, as while Villa cannot win for toffee at home, West Brom are a shadow of the side that was lighting up the Premier League last season. Given their recent woes, both sides would probably take a point.

1-1

Chelsea vs. West Ham (Wednesday 7:45pm)

The gulf in class between these sides is immense, and it is hard to look past the Blues, who are ruthlessly efficient under Jose Mourinho. Both these sides are arguably better defensively than in attack, however, so don't expect a goal fest.

2-0

Sunderland vs. Stoke (Wednesday 7:45pm)

The Potters have an abysmal away record and without question the Black Cats have more to play for. Win here and they would skyrocket up the table. With Adam Johnson bang in form, I expect Mark Hughes' side to leave empty-handed.

2-1



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Written by Kunal Wagle

