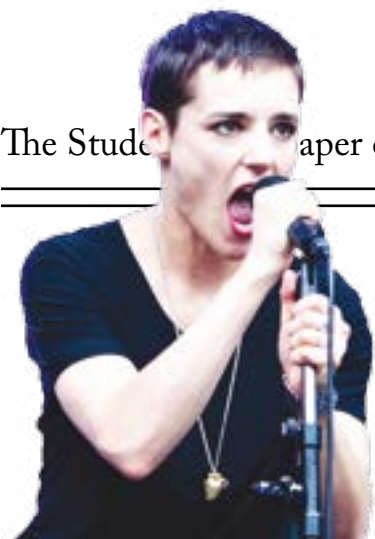




FELIX

The Student Paper of Imperial College London



Savages before breakfast

PAGE 22 **MUSIC**

How does the left feel about free speech?

PAGE 5 **COMMENT**



Rowers thrown out of hotel for partying too hard

Venue bars non-medical boat club after accusations of damage and disorder

Grace Rahman
Editor-in-Chief

behaviour did not improve they would be ejected from the venue. The hotel accuses students of damaging equipment, bringing alcohol and consuming it in the hotel which is not allowed, and leaving bar bills unpaid. At 10pm, two hours earlier than planned, the hotel management turned on the lights and threw the students out.

The students are also accused of smashing the glass wall of a toilet cubicle in the hotel, which it is now seeking compensation for, as well as extra cleaning costs.

The club were also told in the subsequent email that the hotel's

"business relationship" with Imperial College may now be in danger, and that college would be informed of the matter "to make them aware of the behaviour of their students".

The club has now been temporarily suspended by the union.

This comes just one week after the medical boat clubbed were stopped at Dover on their annual trip to Belgium for being too drunk. Some had port bottles taped to their arms as P&O ferries decided to deny them passage due to being "drunk and disorderly".

Regarding the non-medical boat club's recent antics, the union told FELIX: "Following the alleged incidents of Saturday 23rd January, the club have been immediately suspended pending investigation.

One student was accused of "vomiting all over [the] manager"

They are cooperating to establish the facts of what happened on the night."

Last Saturday, Imperial College Boat Club's annual party ended early when students were chucked out for bad behaviour.

In an email seen by FELIX sent from the venue's management after the event, the students are accused of throwing food at members of staff, vomiting in corridors and staircases "around the hotel", with one particular student accused of

"vomiting all over [the] manager when he was explaining to you that the function was going to be stopped due to the behaviour".

The party was held at the swanky Ambassador's Hotel in Bloomsbury. In the email, the management told the boat club that they were now banned from any future events at the hotel.

Early in the evening, managers warned students that if their

Is Crossrail 2 coming to Kensington?

Local bosses publicly back plans to bring new rail link to the King's Road

Bosses of organisations around West London, including Imperial College Union's managing director, have signed an open letter to the Evening Standard announcing their support for a Crossrail station

on the King's Road.

The proposed station would be part of the £30 billion infrastructure project by Transport for London and Network Rail that would open in 2030 and provide new links between Surrey and Hertfordshire,

passing through several stations in London.

The support was provided through a letter to the London Evening Standard which was also sent to London Mayor, Boris Johnson.

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FELIX EDITORIAL



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A word from the Editor



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Oh hey there! Take a seat. There's been a lot of talk in the paper this week about political correctness gone mad, and all that gross garb your granny comes up with at Christmas. But unlike Grammy, these bite-sized chunks of bigotry don't sandwich an M&S card with a ten pound note inside.

Some LSE students, presumably the ones that aren't occupying, have decided to form a free speech club, because their strain of debate isn't being catered for at a university well known for political activity. And look, this isn't disgusting in principle.

They say they want to offer a platform to speakers that have previously been 'no-platformed', but surely they're a union club, so are subject to the union's safe space policy just the same as the Humanists, Palestine Society or FemSoc. I'd have to go to a meeting to really judge. If anyone wants to

do the same at Imperial, invite me. I'd happily be the Holly Willoughby to the Katie Hopkins you find somewhere.

What I have a problem with is using free speech as an excuse to be a dick. Yeah, you can say what you want, and people are going to die for your right to say it, but just because you can say it, does it mean you should? It's easy to be inoffensive and engage in debate. It's called not being a terrible person.

It's a hazy road from debate to purposely being controversial, with not being awful about stuff floating somewhere in the middle. Political correctness is a phrase certain folks seem to take as a personal affront to themselves, despite the fact that usually they're discussing a marginalised group that they are not a part of.

Instead of calling it that, which upsets people so much, maybe just replace it with "not being be a dick and respecting people". It's easy!



"Why can't I be a bit racist against immigrants?" Just don't be dick about it! "But Muslims think differently to me, what's up with that?" Again, just respect people! "What if trans people are different to me and I don't share their experiences?" Be nice and not a dick, simple as. Also, work hard and call your mum at the weekends. Hot-take over.

Union boss one of 46 representatives of local "business, major employers and institutions" to sign pro-Crossrail letter

...continued from front page

The signatories' letter says that the north-south link would provide Kensington and Chelsea with the "integration with the wider London public transport system, especially the Underground" which they say it currently lacks.

The 46 signatories were cultural, business and health chiefs including the chief executive of the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, the chair of Harrods, and the director of the Natural History Museum. The signatories claimed that the project would "safeguard the area's status as a world-leading cultural hub and location for pioneering medical, research and educational establishments".

The current plans involve building the station opposite Chelsea's Old Town Hall on the King's Road. A campaign opposing the proposal

is being led by some famous local residents including The Good Life actor Felicity Kendal and Made In Chelsea stars Georgia Toffolo and Hugo Taylor.

The proposals are currently part of the wider consultation on Crossrail 2 led by TfL who recently reported 19,000 responses, which are currently being analysed. The project has previously met with criticism when Soho's Curzon Cinema was earmarked for demolition to build a Crossrail station's ticket hall.

"A number of suggestions and alternative proposals have been put forward and will be considered" announced Michèle Dix TfL's managing director for Crossrail 2. The results will be published in Spring.

**GRACE RAHMAN &
PHILIP KURUKGY**



Not everyone's a fan. Photo Credit: Get West London



LSE students start free speech society

Their union recently said it would ban “something like a colour” if it offended students

Grace Rahman
Editor-in-Chief

Students at the school have started a ‘Free Speech Society’ due to what they call the “growing sense of censorship” on campus.

The group say they’re tired of their university’s reputation, given that so far this academic year the sale of *The Sun* has been stopped in its shop, the rugby club has been disbanded for a year after it distributed sexist and homophobic leaflets, and trigger warnings were put up around a Palestinian Society

Founders of ‘Speakeasy’ believe that the standard student isn’t being treated like an adult



Breath in, can you smell that? It’s the spare time of Humanities students. Photo Credit: Wikipedia

protest.

The group’s founders argue that universities “should prepare us for the real world instead of putting us in the safe-space bubble”. Although there are often debates as part of the union, chaired by elected officers, the founders of ‘Speakeasy’ believe that the standard student isn’t being treated like an adult, and claim debates on sensitive topics are being “shut down” for fear of being offensive.

They say they want to create a climate that welcomes debate, instead of censoring discussion out of fear of offending. One founding member argued that there is

confusion between debating a point and agreeing with it, saying that some students feel there is a “veil of hypocrisy” while students “pretend they agree so as not to disrupt the safe space”.

The club’s page on the LSE’s student union website says its aims are to campaign against no-platforming and censorship, invite speakers, and protect free speech on campus.

LSE’s newest club recently got profiled by *The Independent* – quite a coup for a club who hasn’t actually had a real life meeting yet.

One of the founding members is the son of *The Sun*’s former foreign

correspondent, Nick Parker, who in 2014 was charged with handling an MP’s stolen phone, but cleared of aiding abetting misconduct in a public office. Charlie Parker is in his second year of a Philosophy degree.

Here, the argument seems to be that the feelings of what these students feel are only the few should not be overshadowed by what they feel is a “ban culture” at LSE.

The university, ranked fourth in the world for Economics, is somewhat notorious for its left wing vibe and political activity, renamed the student union president post ‘general secretary’ in the 80s in solidarity with striking miners.

What does it all mean?

Safe space

A ‘safe space’ policy is something most student unions have, and promise to keep members and staff happy and protected. Imperial SU’s own policy includes measures to combat sexual harassment, violence, abuse and discrimination, citing ‘blackface’ as one example of unacceptably offensive behaviour.

While most of these policies are broadly similar, some unions cite their policy more than others, leading to the phrase becoming synonymous with, depending on your view, political correctness gone wrong, or the right to comfort and safety during your time at uni.

No-platform

This is when someone decides that a speaker’s views are so offensive that the platform is going to be removed, ie their talk cancelled. Most universities, notably the NUS, have policies on this, which list certain groups that unions should not give a platform like the BNP and EDL. These groups are usually openly racist or fascist.

Business school still 4th best in UK says *FT*

Imperial’s full time MBA slipped one place internationally, making it 35th in the world

Imperial College Business School’s full-time MBA program is the 35th best in the world and the fourth best in the UK according to the 2016 *Financial Times* MBA rankings released this week.

The list, which is published annually, ranks business schools based on the average weighted salary of students, employment after three months, salary increase (the increase in alumnus salary from before the MBA to now), and a

number of other factors.

The latest weighted average salary, which makes adjustments based on variations between sectors, of Imperial College Business School graduates after three years was £78,400, an increase of around £2600 from last year.

The business school is considered at “the forefront of MBA teaching for a digital era” according to the *Financial Times*, referencing the recent £20 million funding for the KPMG Centre for Advanced

Business Analytics. The KPMG Data Observatory, a 313 degree visualisation tool which launched in November, forms part of this investment.

Dr. Gawer, Associate Professor in Strategy and Innovation at the business school said, on the importance of digital business, that: “The fusion of business and technology is at the heart of where the economy is going. I think our MBA participants understand that.”

CALE TILFORD



Imperial means (un)intelligent business. Photo Credit: Imperial College London



Rebranded union election nominations open

The annual 'Leadership Elections' begin on Wednesday

Grace Rahman
Editor-in-Chief

Get ready for off-puttingly upbeat lecture shout outs, a fortnight of Facebook spam and unwelcome accosting in the library over your jacket potato – it's election time.

Nominations for positions open on Wednesday the 3rd of February and close on the 28th of the same month. Candidate manifestos have to be uploaded by 5pm the next day, or you risk relying on just your face to get that post.

Turnout last year was 42% (60% undergraduates, 22% post grads).

Since rules changed before the elections last year, every club with more than 150 members has to have its election online within the union's eVoting system, rather than in person at an AGM.

Constituent unions will vote for their presidents, clubs with more than 150 members will vote in their committees and everyone will



Last year's results night. Where was the Felix Editor? Already working, probably. Photo Credit: Imperial College Union

vote in the various volunteer roles within the union, including the representation officers (Disabilities, Campaigns, Gender Equality etc).

Several sabbatical officers, who

will take a year out of real life to debate student issues, will also be elected. These positions are open to any current student, regardless of experience, and offer the chance

to sit on the trustee board, making real decisions for the future of Imperial's student union. They get paid a tasty £19 grand a year plus free accommodation in their choice of

halls.

Positions on the trustee board are also open to students who don't want to take a year out. Two student trustees are elected, and get to sit on the board, making those big decisions, whilst still plowing on with their degrees.

If you prefer the anarchy of union council, you could go up for council chair, another part time elected position. This person gets the final say over the (sometimes not even quorate) rabble of students who debate the issues over at union council once a month.

They get paid a tasty £19 grand a year plus free accommodation

Business school Dean sticks up for Bitcoin

The dean spoke out on the economic fad dividing the internet in *City A.M.*

The dean of Imperial's Business School published an article in Monday's edition of *City A.M.* bemoaning the finance industry's complacency when it came to Bitcoin, and other cryptocurrencies.

Using the example of Sony's complacent attitude to MP3, which allowed Apple to sweep in and take advantage, Professor G. 'Anand' Anandalingam warned that big banks, like Barclays, that have been closing the accounts of customers with dealing in Bitcoin, are at risk of losing out.

Last year, a British teen's Barclays account was closed with little explanation after he'd dabbled in the Bitcoin trade, and the incident

was not isolated.

The Dean went on to describe the merits of Bitcoin, saying that big business should stop seeing it as currency used by those on the dark web and embrace the speed it can bring to electronic transactions.

Having mentioned Imperial's own "digital money startup", Yoyo, he also used the article to plug Imperial's symposium on the subject, brought to you by Citi bank. The event, held at Canary Wharf on Tuesday, also gave the Dean the opportunity to announce the founding of a new Centre for Global Finance and Technology at the Business School. The centre will be headed up by Professor Andrei Kirilenko, who has previously worked for the US government's Commodity Futures

Trading Commission and MIT's School of Management.

Anandalingam unsurprisingly hailed Citi as one of the few banks that had moved with the times and embraced the new financial technology, or 'fintech'.

Bitcoin was started with the aim of decentralising a currency, so it wasn't in control of banks or governments, but rather by traceable network of users online. Recently, the system has struggled to deal with technical issues. Bitcoin developer Mike Hearn recently said that "the community [of Bitcoin] had failed", that it was "completely controlled by a handful of people" and that the network was on the "brink of technical collapse".

GRACE RAHMAN



Can't get out of it now! Photo Credit: Imperial Business School

FELIX COMMENT



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The regressive left

Has political correctness become more important than free speech?



Jack Foxabbott
Writer

You would be forgiven for expecting a guy like me, raised by a mother whose list of accolades includes filing suits against a nursery nurse for telling 3-year-old me to remove my nail varnish because “that’s what girls wear” and a post office for not allowing more than two school children in at a time (ageism, obviously), to have been well and truly smothered in leftie PC rhetoric to the point of opting to punch myself in the face rather than mistakenly refer to a transgender person using a cisgender personal pronoun.

There are dozens of situations where free speech was smothered by political correctness

However, I think it’s time those of us at Imperial and elsewhere who define ourselves as part of the hard left join me in taking a look at the extent to which this rapidly changing political movement truly represents us.

The values those on the hard-left like to claim as their own can be well described as Robin Hood-esque. They consider capitalism a game of chance: those born into riches generally prosper while those born into poverty generally stay there. They want to level out the playing field so fewer people have to suffer. They’re sound principles, but do the more specific political beliefs and actions of members of this movement really embody them?

It is quite clear that a significant proportion of the hard-left has,

in the past five years, become so obsessed with political correctness that they are actively stifling free speech.

Just look at our universities, where you would expect that free speech would be protected at all cost. What kind of institution would want students to only hear things they agree with? Where does that get anyone?

In fact, there are dozens of situations where free speech was smothered by political correctness at even some of the best universities in the country.

At Oxford, for example, a debate about the morality of abortion was shut down by 300 or so people on the grounds that it was scheduled to be between two men. Since when were debates only allowed to take place between those directly affected by them? Would an infertile woman not have been allowed to take part?

Elsewhere, Goldsmiths University SU voted against a measure to hold commemorations for Holocaust Memorial Day because it would be “Eurocentric” and wouldn’t take into account atrocities committed by the UK. Months later, Goldsmiths SU officer Bahar Mustafa put together a protest against inequality, with advertisement saying “If you’ve been invited and you’re a man and/or white PLEASE DON’T COME.”

This is obviously preposterous – imagine seeing a flyer captioned “WOMEN AND BLACKS NOT WELCOME.” The culprit would likely be kicked off their course. Meanwhile Bahar’s defence, that minority women could not be racist, was apparently sufficient.

Satirical T-shirts depicting Jesus and Mohammed drinking beer would have got an LSE Atheist society kicked out of their freshers’ fair had they not covered them up, as it was deemed offensive by LSE’s student union, which would make blasphemy an offence.

I’m offended by loud breathers and people with BO but I wouldn’t dream of petitioning for a ban on such things. While there’s religion there are people opposed to religion, just like with anything.

I could go on to talk about how Birkbeck University have banned UKIP, 32 UK Universities have



Milo Yiannopoulos was banned from Manchester SU because his views could “incite hatred”. Photo Credit: dailystormer.co.uk

banned magazines including *Charlie Hebdo*, *The Sun* and *The Star*, UEA banned a Mexican restaurant from handing out sombreros because it represented ‘cultural appropriation’, hard left societies at a selection of universities have banned speakers including Maryam Namazie, Milo Yiannopoulos, Germaine Grier, Nigel Farage, David Willets, but I think the point has been made.

What these people are doing is simply shutting down other people’s opinions. If we disagree with people we should surely invite them along in order to challenge their opinions. A debate is not won by muting one’s opponent. We’re being denied the opportunity to think and challenge our opinions just because a few people get offended. It’s for this reason that the proposition of banning Donald Trump from the

not only the right, but by major figures like Bill Maher and Richard Dawkins who stand firmly left of centre: The Regressive Left.

The Regressive Left are those who, after Charlie Hebdo and the Bataclan attacks, rushed to Twitter not to condemn the attacks but to beg and plead others not to associate this Islamic terrorism, terrorism in the name of Islam, with Islam. The Regressive Left doesn’t dare criticise Islam because that would make them ‘Islamophobic’.

Criticising Islam will not hurt Muslims any more than criticising a scientific paper damages the paper – it does the opposite. These people are willing to be liberal about everything but Islam. It is no surprise that those on the far right are mocking the hard-left’s ridiculous behaviour: Milo Yiannopoulos ironically set up a college scholarship fund only available to white men. It’s worth mentioning that when he looked into the statistics and found that poor white boys are in fact the most under-represented group in universities in the UK and US, he decided to make this fund a real thing. Of course, the hard-left exploded.

The bottom line is we need to chill. Open debate is what we’re here for. We can’t purge our lives of anything that’ll make us question our beliefs, as considering the opinions of others is how we grow.

A debate is not won by muting one’s opponent

UK is ridiculous.

A new term referring to these social justice warriors has been thrown around on social media by

FELIX COMMENT



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The Green Paper – the college stance...

The new Green Paper suggests high-achieving universities should increase fees



James Stirling
Provost

Last November the Government published a Green Paper outlining proposed changes to higher education which, if implemented, would have a significant impact on the way universities operate. I was delighted that Imperial College Union submitted a response, and indeed there is a great deal of common ground between the Union's response and that of the College.

The focus of the College's response was the introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The Government proposes that,

The proposed new assessment framework risks driving the wrong behaviour



Universities are going to change. Photo Credit: Cale Tilford

through the TEF, an assessment of each university's teaching excellence would be made, drawing on quantitative measures and an institutional statement.

Universities achieving certain levels of attainment in the TEF would be allowed to increase the fees they charge Home and European students to keep up with inflation.

The College welcomes initiatives that promote excellent teaching. In the government's own words, universities should be "putting students at the heart of the system".

A core part of our strategy is to provide an educational experience in a vibrant, research-led, entrepreneurial environment where students learn alongside researchers

who are experts in their fields and gain the intellectual and practical skills to tackle the major challenges facing society. Our close working relationship with students, through Imperial College Union, and with employers is helping us to achieve this.

Assessing and incentivising teaching excellence across the diverse range of universities in the UK is not straightforward. Our response voiced reservations about the specific proposals in the Green Paper.

One concern is that the assessment methods for teaching excellence proposed for the TEF fall short of the level of credibility, rigour and robustness that would

meet our own high standards and fulfil the Government's objective to stimulate higher quality teaching while maintaining the confidence in and support of the sector.

The proposed new assessment framework risks driving the wrong behaviour, such as a focusing on particular metrics that can be 'gamed' rather than taking a balanced approach to quality enhancement.

For those and other reasons, we've argued strongly in our response that the TEF should be fully piloted in order to develop an appropriate measure of excellence in teaching, identify unintended consequences, and gain the confidence of the sector.

Imperial would be pleased to be part of any such pilot exercise. We also said that while we strongly support policies to encourage students from disadvantaged backgrounds to study at research-intensive universities such as Imperial, we believe that these crucial policies should be kept separate in Access Agreements – a well-established and effective system – and not included with the TEF as suggested in the Green Paper.

The Green Paper proposes that a successful outcome in TEF would allow a university to increase fees with inflation. We've argued that this link should not be mechanistic. Teaching quality – in fact, the quality of the student experience as a whole – is a goal worthy of being pursued for its own sake.

In any case, inflation-level increases in tuition fees will not address a fundamental problem at the heart of the higher education system which the Green Paper does not adequately discuss: high quality STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine) education costs more to deliver than education in other subjects.

The College is committed to delivering a high quality educational experience for our students. This will require additional income, but higher fees are not the sole solution. The support of Government as well as our corporate and individual supporters is essential.



What's being said inside the cube? This. Photo Credit: Wikipedia

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...and the student's view

Are we about to witness the sculpting of a new higher educational landscape?



Luke McCrone
Writer

Too many universities in England have allowed teaching to become a “poor cousin to research”.

This was a quote from Universities Minister Jo Johnson. It seems the government have responded accordingly to this dilemma.

So what is the Green Paper exactly? The Green Paper is a governmental document which outlines proposals to “reward excellent teaching with reputational and financial incentives”. There is no commitment to action; instead it acts as a tool used to simulate discussion.

It primarily aims to boost teaching standards, support more people (from disadvantaged backgrounds) into university and to give students better value for money from their education.

The proposal is partly based around the notion that not all universities assign teaching the same level of importance as research. High quality research is currently rewarded via the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The government now aims to mimic this concept by implementing the Teaching Excellence Framework – rightfully so.

Despite favouring this seemingly great reward system, we must scrutinise the implications of this proposal. The framework will act as a substantial measure of an institution's educational potential. It will likely be used as a basis for deciding league table positions. From the 2017/18 academic year, it will even be used as a mechanism for

Like any
market
fuelled by
competition,
there are
winners and
losers



Is there any point in protesting when fees for better degrees are so likely to rise? Photo Credit: Cale Tilford

granting higher-ranked institutions the ability to increase fees for new students.

Mr Johnson claimed that whilst many academic institutions go above and beyond, there are many that opt for a “disengagement contract”.

On the one hand, it is likely that the presence of stronger incentives for excellent teaching will drive universities to optimise their own teaching potential. On the other hand, we must ask ourselves if the additional fee income will exacerbate the gap between the competences of higher and lower ranked universities.

Will this fuel the creation of an elitist educational hierarchy comprised of divided teaching-based and research-based institutions?

It seems the proposal is aiming to make the higher education sector increasingly marketable and accessible to a wider group of prospective students. Like any market fuelled by competition, there are winners and losers. Will we see a rise in ‘losing institutions’ that struggle to keep pace with it all?

Another defensive angle which Mr Johnson employed during interrogation of the proposal was the need to compensate for a “skills shortage and a skills mismatch” with graduates entering the working world. He felt that the proposal would act as a robust solution for unfavourable graduate employment

levels. The question in response to this is quite simple: are we witnessing a skills shortage, or a job shortage?

Statistically, a growing population has dictated an increasing level of purchased goods, services and business start-ups meaning more jobs. Some industries, including Oil and Gas, are in particularly low demand for graduate jobs currently. Therefore, both sides can be argued.

Interestingly, it seems that the government are inclined towards manipulating the National Student Survey (NSS) as an assessment basis for the TEF. Therefore, the NSS will likely have a greater bearing on things than ever before.

I personally feel this is where Imperial College, as an established and capable institution, should really start to up the ante. Imperial's NSS output (2% above the sector average for student satisfaction in 2015) is already remarkable and is only getting better thanks to the hard work of many. Nonetheless, I believe the implementation of other NSS-related incentives for Imperial students would only improve the situation. Introducing an inter-departmental prize specifically for the most improved participation rate (compared to the previous academic year) seems like a sound option, for example.

This would require the future collaboration of the Deputy President of Education (student union representative) with the

Imperial education office and faculty leadership to introduce such a prize.

I think it is imperative that we as students understand and respect the main consequences of the Green Paper for us as young professionals entering the working world. One way of raising awareness is through the effective communication of this information to the Imperial student population, provoking a well needed interest in the subject.

Another way in which the Green Paper could significantly impact the educational landscape is via the implementation of the Grade Point Average system. This will alter the current ‘degree band’ scheme as we know it. It would aim to support employers in making recruitment decisions, as well as helping students to track their progress throughout the course duration, not just during exam period.

The proposals in the Green Paper have huge scope to benefit many, including the under-privileged, yet it seems its modification to the educational landscape will provoke controversy. Are we witnessing an attempt to genuinely improve the quality and accessibility of English universities, or are we faced with a framework within which universities will compete on every level in order to financially sustain themselves?

It's time for you and I to address the proposal and adapt to the change.

FELIX COMMENT



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Masters of self-sabotage

Our mentality towards mental health needs to change if we are to reduce suffering



Varun Mann
Writer

It is my belief that it is a question of pure, unadulterated human arrogance that has led us to the self-sabotage that I make reference to in the title.

Humans have successfully institutionalised suffering. Whether that be through the failure of our democratically-elected leaders or the failure of a society so repelled by the idea of change that creating and propagating our own suffering has become as natural to us as the happiness we all crave.

When I think about this, I think about the millions of LGBT youth across the world, struggling to deal with who they are, and who they love, all while in the midst of a world so ferociously hostile towards them. To be so unapologetically cruel to these kids is to play with fire. Subjecting them to further mental stress is to tempt fate, and

There is
such a
thirst to
be 'happy'
and to find
'happiness'

it is my belief that fate will oblige, should it be tempted so.

Blood stains are what we are left with when we are so torturous to those who are so innocent, especially when it comes to those struggling with their sexuality.

With this in mind, it is important to remember humans are a self-destructive species, and the tendrils of this self-destruction are far-reaching. When we so brazenly elevate our achievements and conflate our intelligence with untouchability, it is no wonder that we are the victims of our own delusions of grandeur.

So little is known about the brain, so to me, it is sadly poetic that it is subject to such underestimation. The



Our obsession with appearing successful prevents us from reaching out for help, or from offering it to others. Photo Credit: Hercampus.com

same brain which has built a fully-functioning, orbiting space station has also justified the slaughter of gay men by throwing them from atop buildings in towns in Syria. It is obvious that its capabilities are all at once amazing, and terrifying.

We have all experienced the joy of a society which utilises the strengths of our collective intellect. It is, therefore, a mystery to me to see a society stigmatise mental health so viciously. We are as much at the mercy of our minds as we are the masters of it. To so easily cast mental illnesses into the shadows is both arrogant and extremely dangerous.

That being said, it is somewhat understandable for there to be a lack of engagement with mental health. It is easier to sympathise with someone who has a broken leg than a broken soul. But to be so callous as to force the people around us into a veritable state of hiding is morally reprehensible. One in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year, so it seems the shadows are filled with suffering souls.

I believe mental illnesses are tied to an intangible vulnerability that people fear so deeply. There is such a desperation for every single one of us to be the absolute best of ourselves, to be successful and to achieve, and to fulfil our potential, God-given

or otherwise. There is such a thirst to be 'happy' and to find 'happiness' and I think, all things considered, our desires are misplaced. We are so concerned with finding our own perfection that we forget to be human. These attitudes fuel our own prejudice towards mental illnesses.

However, I think bigotry and prejudice are more of the heart, than of the mind. To overcome our prejudices we must put our hearts first.

To approach issues in this way can be so rewarding and so pivotal in shaping the views of a wider society. Whether that be a Priest who speaks out in support of same-sex marriage, or a mother who accepts her son's sexuality as part of who he is, by using our hearts we can create

We are the
victims of
our own
delusions of
grandeur

a more positive environment for the most vulnerable amongst us.

I have made a conscious focus on LGBT youth in this article because it is of personal importance to me, but my message can be applied to anyone and everyone. While education and more comprehensive mental healthcare will go a long way in helping those who suffer so needlessly, on an individual level we must all do more to help those around us, and we must lead with our hearts in doing so.

It is because our brains are so brilliant that we should be vigilant and supportive should things go wrong. Vulnerability should be embraced, our flaws should be embraced, and ultimately our weaknesses should be embraced. Only then can our own mental health be seen as health just as a broken leg or a stomach bug.

Our minds are as fragile as they are wonderful, and there is a fine line that separates us from that fragility.

I think, in the end, we are all lost. But it is better to be lost with the ones we love than to be lost alone.



The figures speak for themselves. Photo Credit: Time to Change



Is science for everyone?

As the US government steps in to tackle sexual harassment, it's time to ask, what is it going to take to fix this problem?

Madeleine Webb
Writer

Sexism in science; is there a real problem? How do we fix it? When is everyone, including myself, going to shut up about it? Probably not for a while. And yes, I do realise that I could begin sounding like a broken record, considering this is the third piece I've written for FELIX discussing the topic, but unfortunately the problem isn't disappearing so neither will the analogous articles. Things are about to get a bit gross and very complicated.

Following the increased publicity around three high profile sexual harassment cases in US university science departments, democratic lawmaker Jackie Speier is proposing to Congress the strengthening of existing federal discrimination laws in order to tackle the issue at hand. Although the exact details haven't been finalised, Speier has made it clear that the system needs to change and people should be held accountable. "It shouldn't be like the Catholic Church, where once there was an establishment of paedophilia, they just move the priest to another parish", Speier told reporters.

However, the proposed changes are not unanimously supported and some argue that the actual impact of these changes will never trickle down to the lab level. Many states have laws that explicitly prevent the sharing of employee personal

records between Universities, which are themselves constantly under threat of lawsuits. However, what is clear to most people is that the current academic set up is untenable.

For those of you who haven't been keeping up with these cases, which is understandable considering the whole thing is pretty depressing, here is a short synopsis. In a 2005 investigation recently released by congresswoman Speier, Arizona University unveiled that lead astronomer Timothy Slater created a workplace environment that involved lunchtime trips to a strip club, demeaning comments to female co-workers, and open leering at female undergraduates. The condemning report was released on the same day it was reported that a Caltech astronomer, Christian Ott, had harassed and fired two undergraduates from his lab after they filed a complaint against him. The whole situation turned into a massive scandal, partly because just three months earlier, a prominent astronomer from the University of Arizona, Geoff Marcy, was found guilty of sexually harassing female co-workers.

If social media is anything to go by, unfortunately these cases are only part of a wider trend. These high profile examples of sexism and sexual harassment have triggered the formation of a new hashtag, #astroSH, which is being used by scientists to share stories and voice opinions on the reality of being a woman in STEM, with emphasis on Astronomy. Such



Geoff Marcy was found guilty of sexual harassment. Photo Credit: Wikipedia

outcry has prompted institutes like NASA to put out statements reinforcing its commitment to inclusivity. Administrator Charles Bolden stated, "Let me be perfectly clear: NASA does not tolerate sexual harassment, nor does any organization seriously committed to workplace equality, diversity and inclusion." Strong and encouraging words, but some argue that although scientific institutions wholly condemn sexism, there are no consequences for those who unfairly discriminate against women.

The worrying part of both the official and anecdotal cases is the general lack of repercussions faced by most of these individuals. Although the report about Timothy Slater is damning to say the least, he was allowed to stay at the University of Arizona until 2008 and now holds a science education chair position in the state of Wyoming. Geoff Marcy, the professor from the University of California has been allowed to continue calling himself the honorary title of "Professor Emeritus" since he technically chose to step down amidst widespread criticism, rather than being fired. Ott was never fired and CalTech allowed him to continue to work with undergraduates. This unaccountability has created a culture where victims of discrimination don't feel able to

report the harassment. A series of articles recently published by Forbes called "Deciding whether to report harassment in science" demonstrate that many cases don't move through official channels because of a tendency to sweep the indiscretions of important professors under the rug.

So you can see how the whole thing is a bit of a mess and the scientific community is once more stuck, knowing action is needed, but remaining indecisive as to what that action should be taken. Just to clarify, no one is saying that all male scientists are sexist, chauvinistic pigs or that work place harassment is unique to STEM fields or only

towards women in STEM. The fact that the problem is so hard to tackle seems to generally be the result of sexism, racism, homophobia and other general unpleasantness being prevalent within society and subsequently academia. But, science at its best doesn't lead from behind nor does it sit on its hands waiting for the world to catch up. Personally I'd love for this problem to go away, if for no other reason, just so that I can write articles about literally anything else at this point.

It's absurd and deeply worrying, that for a bunch of supposedly smart people, we still struggle with tackling what should be a simple issue.



Jackie Speier fights to tackle the current sexual harassment issues and the lack of repercussions. Photo Credit: Wikipedia



#AstroSH – hashtag to voice the reality of sexual harassment in STEM.

Green Paper: If the TEF is the answer, what's the question?



Jennie Watson

Deputy President (Welfare)
dpwelfare@imperial.ac.uk

Mere months to roll out a national scheme for measuring the teaching quality of 1500+ degrees at over 100 institutions. Allowing universities that produce high earners to charge more, meaning the institutions that educate our nurses and carers will see their income erode. Trapping students in the bind that if they rate their education highly, they support ramping up fees for the next cohort. Finally, taking the authority to set tuition fees from Parliament and giving it to a single politician to raise at will.

The Government's Higher Education Green Paper put forward a lot of ideas; ideas that affect how students learn - and pay up - for decades to come. We are proud of our Green Paper Response (available in full at imperialcollegeunion.org/greenpaper), in which we oppose the majority of the ideas suggested. We found College, and much of the higher education sector, agreeing with us.

Imperial College Union has long lobbied for improved teaching standards, through our Academic Representation Network and Student Academic Choice Awards; we feel that teaching should be given as

much respect and recognition as high-impact research. But when a Teaching Excellence Framework looks like a back door to raising fees far past £9k for selected institutions, we get suspicious. When the sector agrees that no one has a clear idea how improvements in teaching excellence can be reliably and fairly measured, we get sceptical. Put it this way: even the universities who want nothing more than to raise fees right now are not convinced that the TEF is the right way to do it. As it stands, the Teaching Excellence Framework idea is vague, rushed and unworkable. We ask that it be delayed, put on a solid foundation of reliable data and processes, and tested for its ability to work in favour of students - and that it doesn't price students out of the education they merit.

There are a number of other proposals in the Paper; two are worth mentioning now. One proposal - snuck in on page 64 - would allow politicians to raise fees without Parliamentary approval; we describe this as fundamentally wrong, a historic mistake and a deeply undemocratic decision. The other, on page 61, asks out of the blue what can be

done to make students' unions more democratic and accountable, including the misguided suggestion that students' unions should fall under the umbrella of trade unions. I don't think the Government expected the outpouring of support and respect for the educational value of strong students' unions that has emerged from across the sector - including from College. Students' unions are amongst the most transparent and democratic organisations you can think of, with high levels of engagement, open finances, and student involvement at all levels.

Taken together, these two proposals sum up the attitude to students and universities that underlies the whole Green Paper. Centralise power to politicians rather than academics, charge individuals more and more, and undermine the single biggest group of people in the whole higher education system: students.

Imperial College Union will continue to speak up for its members by opposing these measures, and suggesting more sustainable and fairer reforms to higher education at every opportunity.

We are a gold employer!

Imperial College Union has joined an elite group of organisations that hold the Investors in People Gold award this week. The Investors in People standard accredits organisations that excel at leading, supporting and managing their staff and is recognised world-wide.

Imperial College Union was awarded the basic standard in February 2015 and less than a year later the Union has been awarded the gold standard, which is only achieved by 7% of the 15,000 organisations that hold accreditation. Awarded by Investors in People assessors, the gold award judges an organisations ability to meet over 125 of 130 criteria through a series of interviews with staff members. Successful accreditation against the Investors in People Gold standard is the sign of a great

employer, an outperforming place to work and a clear commitment to sustainability.

Joe Cooper, Managing Director, Imperial College Union said "Imperial College Union is led by student officers and its army of volunteers, but it needs a team of highly talented, engaged and committed staff to ensure that the Union delivers on its strategic vision of being recognised as a leader in student development and engagement. I am incredibly proud that the ongoing hard work of our team of staff and our management team, and the commitment of our Board of Trustees to staff development, has been recognised with this prestigious award. Imperial College Union is a great place to work, and this means we can provide students with even better



activities, representation support and development opportunities". Louise Lindsay, Director of HR, Imperial College London said "This external recognition of the high standards of staff development and professional practice is a great achievement for the Union. The award is well deserved and reflects the transformative journey the Union have undertaken over the last few years in staff development

and engagement. An exemplary role model for others to follow." By holding this award the Union clearly demonstrates that it is a great place to work, helping us to better recruit and retain the best possible staff who in turn can continue to provide the best services to our members and excel in our mission to enhance the student experience at Imperial College London.

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From scorching deserts to frosty windows

Namib desert beetle provides solution to the formation of frost on surfaces

Lizzie Riach
Writer

Frost can be a problem in cold climates or at extreme conditions. It can form on aeroplane parts at high altitudes and condenser coils in fridges and windshields, particularly during the winter months. Frost formation can create such a logistical headache, that in fact a large amount of money is required to ensure important units stay frost-free in order to maintain their function.

However, a team of researchers from Virginia Tech has found an answer in an unlikely source. Namib desert beetles live in one of the hottest and driest climates on Earth, Africa's Namib desert, which receives less than 1.3cm of rainfall a year. In order to survive, they harvest water vapour from the ocean breeze through the utilisation of their unique shell structure.

Whereas bumps on their shell

attract moisture, the smooth parts surrounding them repel it. This causes droplets to form on particular

This is not the first time this beetle has inspired scientists

spots, where they can then be channelled into the beetle's mouth through ridges around the sides of the shell, providing a welcome and much needed beverage in these extreme arid conditions.

The scientists at Virginia tech

learned from this peculiar survival mechanism that they can control where dewdrops form. To mimic the beetle's shell, water-attracting patterns are put on a water-repelling (hydrophobic) surface. Dew can only form on top of these specific patterns. As frost starts with a single frozen dew drop and spreads to other connected droplets across surfaces this information can be applied to restricting or stopping this occurrence. If the droplets that form are confined to very small areas and kept separated, the spread of frost can be stopped altogether.

"I appreciate the irony of how an insect that lives in a hot, dry desert inspired us to make a discovery about frost," said Jonathan Boreyko, an assistant professor of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics at Virginia Tech. In these initial tests, Boreyko and his team were able to create a single dry zone which surrounded a piece of ice. They are hoping to scale up their research to encompass large pieces of machinery such as wind turbines or aeroplanes



The Namib desert beetle *Stenocara dentata*. The bumps on its shell collect water droplets which are then siphoned to its mouth. Photo credit: Hans Hillewaert

in the future.

This technological breakthrough, although simple, could save a lot of money in the aeronautical and wind energy industries. Currently a large amount of chemicals are used in order to defrost equipment.

This is not the first time the Namib desert beetle has inspired scientists. Back in 2012, the idea of a self-filling water bottle was initialised by

a U.S. start-up company and later, an Austrian industrial designer created the Fontus self-filling water bottle which allows condensation to be collected during bike rides.

It goes to show how biomimicry can be used for a vast expanse of ideas, and that there is a lot more to be discovered from the natural world that can aid humans in overcoming complex problems.

Natasha Khaleeq
Writer

This week's science picture

Communicating science to politicians appears to be a challenging task especially when none of them have an academic research background. Luckily, 8% have some form of science degree and seem interested in current research.

20 years ago a group of science communicators joined forces with the government and created the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST). Today the organisation is led by Dr Chris Tyler and Dr Chandrika Nath and consists of twelve staff members who mediate between politicians and researchers, informing MPs of important scientific and technological issues.

This is achieved through the production of detailed yet concise briefings, which are discussed in the science conference room.

This quarterly process is important as it allows MPs to make informed, evidence based decisions on a range of subjects.



Parliament's science conference room. Photo Credit: Natasha Khaleeq



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FELIX FEATURES



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An idiot's guide to the US Election

Primary? Caucus? Superdelegate? What does it all mean?

Matt Johnston
News Editor

The United States Presidential election. The \$6 billion race for the White House. The battle between Democrats and Republicans, Donkeys versus Elephants. Like an Olympics for politicians, it happens every four years and has the potential to shape world economics and policy until the next one.

But what on earth is happening?

February 1st marks the start of the Presidential nomination race, specifically the Iowa Caucus, with it being the first time the public can voice their opinions. This process will contribute to the eventual decision on which candidates are picked to represent the Republicans and Democrats in the November presidential election.

Republican frontrunners include Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Ben Carson, Jeb Bush and the man of the moment, Donald J Trump. They are in competition against the Democrat candidates, Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and, to a lesser extent, Martin O'Malley.

But what is a caucus I hear you scream, and is it the same thing as a primary? Well scream no more.

Caucuses and primaries are indeed different things but they largely serve the same purpose, to decide the makeup of delegates who vote for each party's presidential election candidate at the National Convention in July. Each state, as well as a selection of other territories (notably American Samoa, District of Colombia, Guam and Puerto Rico) each get either a primary or a caucus from which the makeup of delegates is decided.

Who gets delegates?

How many delegates a certain region gets is dependant on a crazy and confusing system of rules and regulations, which change depending on the party. Several rules that the Republican party uses include choosing delegates based on the number of representatives that the state has in the House and

Senate, and whether the state voted for the Republican candidate at the last election.

The Democrats, however, take into consideration the previous election voting in comparison to the wider nation, as well as the electoral college votes that each state has (a crude way of incorporating population). Bonus delegates are also assigned for a multitude of reasons, ranging from when you hold the primary/caucus to if your neighbouring states also hold theirs on the same date in a process known as "clustering".

(Fun fact: Hawaii and Alaska are classed as neighbours of Washington and Oregon for this.)

Essentially all the relevant, and seemingly irrelevant, data is fed into the system, the alignment of the planets is checked and if the groundhog sees his shadow then you've somehow got yourself some delegates.

So how are these delegates chosen?

Well, some aren't for a start. These delegates are referred to as unpledged or are given the snazzy title of 'Superdelegate' and are free to choose who they like out of the candidates. At the Democratic conference there are around 700 of these Superdelegates, making up roughly 15% of the total vote and comprising of high ranking party members as well as former Presidents and Vice Presidents.

The Republicans select far fewer, around 168, which equates to around 5% of their vote and these are drawn from three senior party members from each of the regions who have a vote.

Superdelegates can sway the overall vote, as well as the larger public opinion, and are seen from opposing sides as either a steady hand to guide the nomination process or an encroachment into an otherwise purely democratic selection.

But what about the remainder of delegates? That's where the primaries and caucuses come in.

Primaries

Primaries are similar to any other election and a secret ballot is held in which delegates are selected based



There's gonna be hell toupée. Photo Credit: ABC News

on these results. The complications arise when a primary is either open or closed as this affects who can vote. Usually in a closed primary only voters who are registered with that party can vote, but some states do allow independent voters to cast their vote too.

In contrast, an open primary means that a registered voter may vote in either party's primary but only in one (i.e. a Republican voter may vote for the Democratic nomination but not the Republican nomination too). Open primaries have been criticised for allowing a certain extent of vote rigging to occur, as one side may vote to get a weaker opposition candidate in order to stand a better chance in the final, presidential election.

Primaries of one form or another take place in all regions bar ten (Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, Nevada, North Dakota, Wyoming and Iowa) and the remainder have the mystical caucuses.

Caucuses

Voting at caucuses is conducted at a large number of small meetings across the state in question, with the results from all these combined and then distributed to the delegates.

The way in which these are conducted again vary by both state and party but the general format is

a period of debate and discussion, followed by a vote. These can be both open and closed like the primaries, and mostly follow the same rules. Some states have systems in which the voting is done via a secret ballot and some via physically moving into groups of voters with a count being taken. It's all a bit of a mess as to who does what.

But why have both?

It's a case of different votes for different folks and all that really. Each have pros and cons as although the caucuses usually allow decisions to be made on wider issues aside from the election, they take longer, meaning only the more politically engaged voters in the state turn up.

In the end all the votes from the state get tallied up, and the delegates are given out either in a proportional or in a winner-takes-all fashion, depending on the party, state and what time of year it is (genuinely).

Well what's so special about Iowa then?

The Iowa Caucus is the top dog when it comes to caucuses and this largely boils down to the fact that it is first. It gained it's frontrunner position in 1972 due to hotel rooms (don't ask) and tradition/state law means it has now become the first event of the nomination calendar.

This means that it has great influence on the trajectory of the whole campaign as it gives a first indication to see who voters are favouring. This can change campaign strategies wildly in some cases, and can even cause participants who fair terribly to drop out all together.

Results from Iowa have also been known to cause a snowballing effect in which endorsements and visibility is garnered for candidates who were seemingly unnoticed beforehand.

The whole Iowa circus tends to propagate its own existence too, as where the media are, the candidates usually aren't too far behind and vice versa. This has lead to the seemingly innocuous state being national and international news for a brief period every four years.

Come on then, will Trump actually be our overlord?

Maybe, possibly, who knows. All that is certain is that he stands a decent chance of becoming the nomination for the Republican party at least. This is largely in part to the plethora of different rules that could fall in Donald's favour (such as the cross party voting by Democrats to bolster their chances). A big indication will come this Monday as to his, and indeed the candidates from both party's chances, but there's over 280 days and a lot of voting before it's all over.

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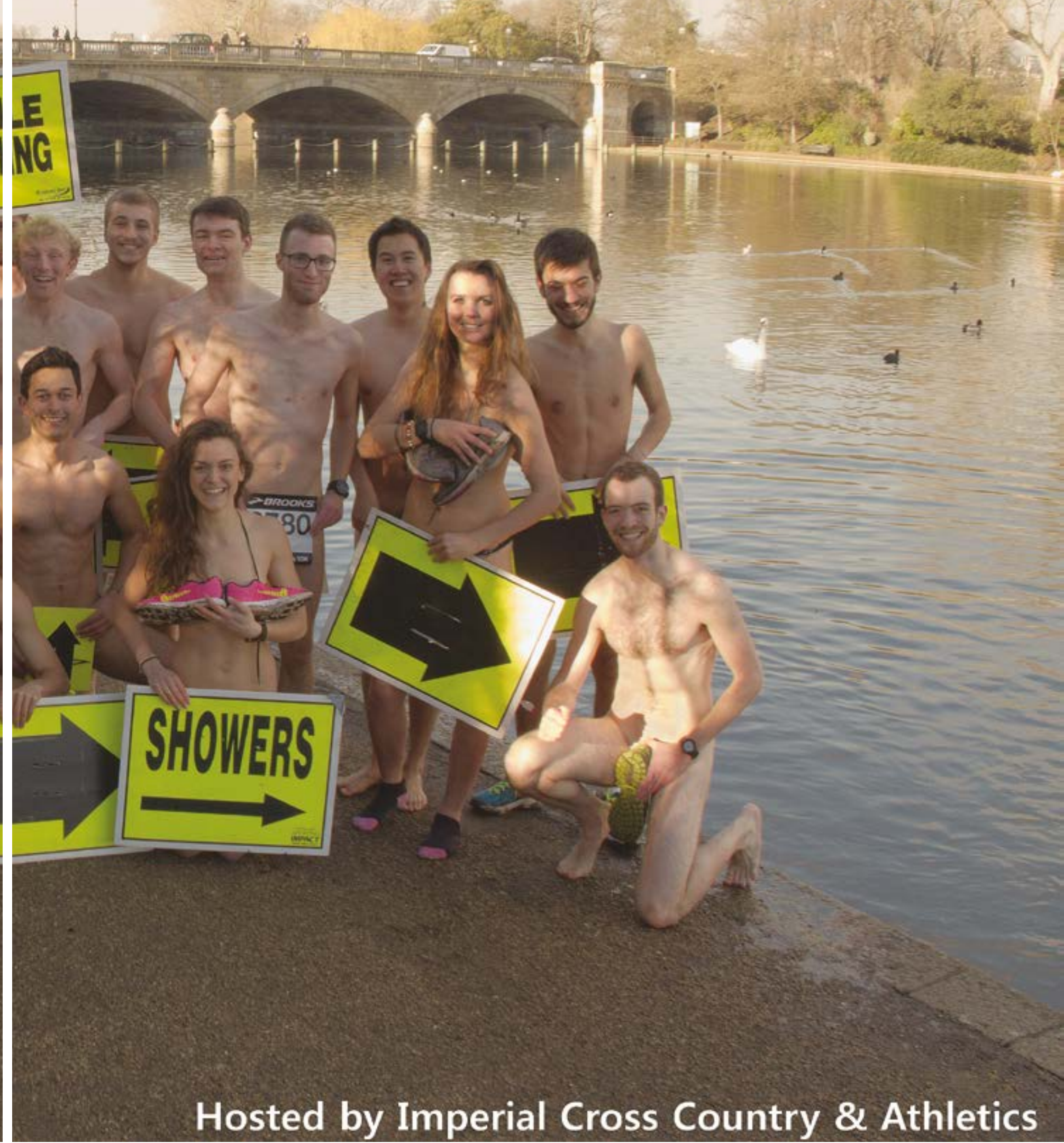
Date	Event	Time	Location
Every Tuesday	Super Quiz	20:00 - 22:00	FiveSixEight
Every Tuesday	Cocktail Night	18:00 - 23:00	Metric
Every Wednesday	CSP Wednesday	19:00 - 01:00	Metric & FiveSixEight
Wednesday 3 February	ACC	19:00 - 01:00	Metric & FiveSixEight
Every Wednesday	Sports Night	19:00 onwards	Reynolds
Every Friday	PGI Friday cocktails	16:30 onwards	h-bar
Every Friday	Reynolds Cocktail Club	17:30 - 00:00	Reynolds
Friday 29 January	Common People	20:00 - 02:00	Metric & FiveSixEight
Friday 5 February	iPOP	20:00 - 02:00	Metric & FiveSixEight



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The top three *Oscar snubs*

not involving *DiCaprio*

Well it looks like the drought is finally over. After putting out several arguably ‘Oscar-worthy’ performances Leonardo DiCaprio may finally be awarded his long awaited and joked-about Oscar. We have Alejandro G. Iñárritu and *The Revenant* to thank for this. However, whilst DiCaprio is the most famous repeat snubée the Academy has a history of some seriously massive blunders (*cough* *Chicago*). Let’s look at some other examples:

Andy Serkis

It’s an interesting debate when you think about it. Can/should an actor portraying a 100% computer-generated character be recognised by the Academy? It’s an interesting debate when you think about it. Should the Oscar not go to the animators? Ultimately, with the advancing precision of technology I think that acting as a CG character should be considered just as legitimate as ‘real-life’ performances. Many people seemingly agree both with this since, in 2011, thousands petitioned a nomination for Serkis’ role in *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*. Keep up with the times guys.

Tilda Swinton

OK, before you say it, yes we all know she already has an Oscar. The issue here is that in a world where Bradley Cooper has been nominated three times (Holy sweet lord Jesus, how can anyone like *American Hustle* or *American Sniper*?) the fact that Tilda Swinton has only ever been nominated once is getting more and more ridiculous. In my opinion, the snub for her portrayal of Eva in *We Need to Talk About Kevin* is the stand-out example of pure injustice.

Jamie Foxx

I don’t normally do this but let’s keep this bullet point-level simple: *Django Unchained* is a phenomenal film; Jamie Foxx is perfect in it. *Les Misérables* is a terrible film; Hugh Jackman’s performance in it was awful. Somebody go back to 2013 and swap these nominations. Thank you.

BEN COLLIER

The *Suicide Squad* trailer is not okay

When it comes to the shortcomings of Marvel or DC’s cinematic output, as a self-confessed comic book fan-boy, I’m usually pretty forgiving. Unfortunately, the first official trailer for DC’s latest film, *Suicide Squad*, which dropped last week, hints at a film with some serious flaws. It might only be a two-minute trailer, but the way it trivialises mental health and sexualises its female cast has me worried for its release this August.

It begins by introducing the main villains who make up the ‘Suicide Squad’ – a group of ‘the most dangerous people on the planet’ forced to work for the government on impossible missions. Military officer Rick Flag, played by Joel Kinnaman, narrates the trailer, describing each of his fellow squad members as they appear on screen: “Guy who shoots people. He’s a crocodile and he eats people. Burns people. You’re possessed by a witch.” At this point, Harley Quinn (played by Margot Robbie) appears on screen: “And she’s just crazy.”

By defining Quinn by her mental state, the filmmakers potentially waste a complex and powerful female character. The scene that follows is even worse, in which she hears voices and jokingly remarks to the military force surrounding



Margot Robbie as Harley Quinn, whose character seems to be overly sexualised. Photo Credit: DC Comics

her: “What was that? I should kill everyone and escape? Sorry. The voices. Haha, I’m kidding. That’s not what they really said.” Well done lads, you just trivialised auditory hallucinations, a common symptom of certain mental illnesses, for comedic effect. It’s important to remember that *Suicide Squad* marks the live-action cinematic debut of Harley Quinn, and for many this might be their first – and most lasting – introduction to the character.

Further analysis of the trailer hints at Harley Quinn’s supervillain origins in the DC cinematic

universe. In one part, the Joker is seen holding her in a toxic pool, a scene that can also be found in her latest comic origins tale, in which she is forced to become the Joker’s lover and side-kick, against her own free will. It’s a story that is not in any way empowering. At one point she even wears a jacket with the words ‘Property of the Joker’ embroidered on the back, further evidence that the film will present Quinn as an object under the Joker’s control. The problems with her costume don’t end there: along with the rest of the female cast, she’s blatantly sexualised, wearing underwear

whilst her male cohorts are covered in layers of protective clothing.

While these issues alone are troubling, what is more worrying is that – as a major blockbuster – the film is unlikely to start a conversation about suicide or mental health. As the world is starting to wake up to the seriousness of these issues, it’s disappointing that the movie is being advertised in a way that fetishises criminals and mental health patients. Now all we can do is wait and hope that the film is more nuanced than its trailer.

CALE TILFORD

The most romantic film themes of all time

Henry Mancini’s “Moon River”, from *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (1961)

There are three versions of this song in the film adaptation of Truman Capote’s acclaimed novel: a choral version, an instrumental version, and one performed during the film by the amazing Audrey Hepburn on her guitar during the film. All three are dreamy and full of hope, perfectly illustrating Holly Golightly’s spirit.

Michel Legrand’s “Les Parapluies de Cherbourg”, from *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* (1964)

The touching music of Michel Legrand is more than a mere companion for Jacques Demy’s film, considering the fact that in the whole film there is not even one word of spoken dialogue; all dialogues are sung on top of Legrand’s compositions, which were

also responsible for establishing his talent in Hollywood.

Nino Rota’s “Love Theme”, from *Romeo and Juliet* (1968)

In quite possibly the best film adaptation of the most famous love story of all time, Nino Rota achieves a masterpiece, full of drama, along with the a perfect medieval tone that perfectly suits the setting of the story.

Ennio Morricone’s “Tema d’Amore”, from *Cinema Paradiso* (1988)

The Maestro’s music was essential in making Giuseppe Tornatore’s *Cinema Paradiso* the classic film masterpiece it is today. This track perfectly captures Toto’s young, all-consuming love for Elena, with the necessary shades of melancholy and nostalgia that perfectly complement their story.

IOANNA MORIANOU



All's fair in love and finance

Esoteric economics are brought down to earth in Adam McKay's hugely enjoyable film

The Big Short



★★★★★

Dir: Adam McKay. *Script:* Adam McKay, Charles Randolph. *Starring:* Christian Bale, Steve Carell, Ryan Gosling, Brad Pitt. *130 minutes.*

Tom Stephens
Film Writer

There are many ways a movie can go about breaking the fourth wall: direct communication with the audience can come in the form of subtle wink-wink moments of dialogue, such as *Kingsman: The Secret Service's* conversations about classic spy films; the perfectly-timed stare at the camera that Eddie Murphy mastered in *Trading Places*; references to real-world events and people such as Riggan Thomson's hilarious Jeremy Renner spiel in *Birdman*; or even just plain old narration. *The Big Short* is a film that takes all these methods, bundles them up into a great big fist, shatters the wall with a single punch, and grabs the viewer by their ears, screaming: "HEY. LISTEN. WE'RE TRYING TO TELL YOU SOMETHING."

What it's trying to tell you, on the surface at least, is the story of a bunch of outsiders who foresaw the collapse of the worldwide housing market and did what they could to profit from it – centred particularly around hedge fund managers Dr. Michael Burry (Christian Bale) and Mark Baum (Steve Carell), and Wall Street trader Jared Vennett (Ryan Gosling). But as the movie unfolds it becomes clear that what it's really trying to tell you is something much more serious, and much more important; something you already know, but have never wanted to.

The multi-character perspective from which the film's story is told allows us to interact with the real people who were tied up in the insanely nebulous market crash – we come face to face with the villains and victims of the event. Director and screenwriter Adam McKay's previous films have never



Christian Bale sweeps up the nominations with his performance as Dr. Michael Burry in *The Big Short*. Photo Credit: Paramount Pictures

been afraid of poking a hefty dose of fun at modern society – the absurd nationalism displayed by over-proud Americans was taken to the tenth power in *Talladega Nights*, and the nature of over-saturation of air-headed news networks was subtly explored in the *Anchorman* films – but the comedy in this film sits squarely in the back seat.

The film's breaking of the fourth wall becomes painfully astute; it reminds us that the crisis was caused by a small number of bankers so desperate to make even more money that they were willing to gamble with the livelihoods of the general population. But more worryingly, it tells us that if more people had simply looked harder at the ugly truth, perhaps the whole mess could have been avoided. As the film reaches its conclusion, we realise with a heavy heart that we already know exactly how it ends, and that rather than creating some kind of propaganda piece in hopes of inciting a rebellion against 'the system, maaan,' all the film has done is present us with the facts. The marketing tagline chosen for the film is a perfect pick, and develops a whole new meaning after leaving

the theatre: "This is a true story".

It speaks volumes of the McKay's talent that *The Big Short* makes its desperate subject matter not only arresting, but also hilarious, and never uninteresting to watch. An excellent effort from the production team results in a slick, perfectly stylised viewing experience; the tiny details that make all the difference fly by in a blink-and-you-miss-it fashion – seconds-long shots of pictures of our protagonists' children on their desks are not followed by scenes of the characters' good parenting techniques, but rather even quicker shots of those same children at home tapping away on MacBooks, implies they're indifferent to whether their fathers care about them or not. The story's most important moments ring loud and clear, but never feel forced or over-the-top.

On top of the dramatic heft the true story packs, McKay manages to squeeze even more sympathy out of the audience with a set of vivid, oddball characters who bring the screen to life – although perhaps the real reasons behind the audience's sympathy for these characters is the strength of the performances. Bale

happens to be the one raking in award nominations for his portrayal of Asperger's-suffering economic visionary Dr. Burry, and his carefully selected opus of mannerisms (not to mention his skills on a drum-kit) are deployed to fantastic effect, but in truth there is not a bad performance in this movie. Special recognition should go to everyone, including each member of Baum's team (Rafe Spall, Jeremy Strong and

Hamish Linklater), as well as John Magaro and Finn Wittrock, who portray Charlie Geller and Jamie Shipley respectively, two young hedge fund upstarts who cross paths with Vennett and get ahead on the market's collapse.

But if that recognition can only go to a few, it is fully deserved by the leads – Ryan Gosling has never been so convincing as Vennett, with a sliminess and a smoothness that makes for a bafflingly effective combination, and Steve Carell's turn as the perpetually on-edge and deeply pained Baum continues the expansion of his now incredibly diverse acting range. Any of the three would be worthy of the nominations in my mind, but the fact that Bale's equally excellent performance is the one receiving them will certainly not have me losing sleep.

The Big Short is a film that may be difficult to think about after watching, since its subject matter only reveals its true importance upon reflection. But the fact remains that it is technically almost flawless, written with cutting-edge wit, excellently directed and acted, and ultimately truly essential.

The Big Short is technically almost flawless, written with cutting wit

FELIX FILM



film.felix@imperial.ac.uk

The Assassin



★★★

Dir: Hou Hsiao-Hsien. *Script:* Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Chu Tien-wen. *Starring:* Shu Qi, Chang Chen, Zhou Yun. 105 minutes.

I tried to like *The Assassin*. I really, really did try. First hearing about it during its rapturous reception in Cannes, where Hou Hsiao-Hsien became the second Taiwanese director in the festival's history to win the coveted Best Director Award, I watched as it made its way towards a UK release, pushed along by wave after wave of ecstatic reviews. After seeing it at the London Film Festival I was left disappointed; the glacial pace of the film meant there were many points where I drifted off. But then a few months later, *The Assassin* was named *Sight and Sound's* best film of 2015. I must have been overtired, I rationalised to myself; I ought to give it another shot, and really focus this time, to try and catch what I had missed. Well, call me a philistine, but I really didn't get it – Hsiao-Hsien has indeed created a

thing of beauty, a work of art in the most aesthetic sense of the word, but his insistence of keeping the audience removed from the work results in a feeling of tedium and overwhelming isolation.

Set in 8th Century China, *The Assassin's* premise is that a young woman from the province of Weibo was given away to a nun at a young age, who trained her up to become a master of the sword, and a lethal assassin. After fobbing an assignment, she is returned home, under strict instruction to kill her cousin, to whom she was once betrothed. This is all explained in the first five minutes of the film, a stunning black and white tableau of nature and violence; to say that the plot only thickens from there is an understatement. A political rivalry between Weibo and the Imperial Court, along with a revolving cast of characters, whose presence is unexplained or justified, means that often we are swimming in a sea of confusion without the lifejacket of context. While a second viewing revealed more of the plot, the entire set-up was so impenetrable that at some points I felt it would be more worthwhile to ignore the subtitles



Shu Qi as Nie Yinniang, the titular assassin. Photo Credit: The Assassin PR

on the screen, and just let the poetic visuals wash over me.

And what visuals these are. Hsiao-Hsien is a master behind

the camera, constructing intricate interior scenes, where billowing silk obfuscates the view of the lens, which contrast with the vast dramatic landscapes of rural China. Cinematographer Mark Lee Ping Bin, of *In the Mood for Love* fame, gracefully handles the interplay of light within the film, providing Hsiao-Hsien with a ravishing colour palette from which to construct this visual tone-poem.

But while the style is there, a sense of substance isn't – or at least, it's so deeply buried within the labyrinthine plot as to make it invisible. While Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* may have elevated *wuxia* films to high-art, making them appealing to Western viewers, *The Assassin* tries to take things to another level; however, the high-intensity nature of *wuxia* and the laconic character of the film are uneasy bedfellows. Ultimately, *The Assassin* reminded me so much of the pots produced during the Tang Dynasty in which the film is set: stunning to look at, with a glossy surface of gilded colour, but hollow on the inside.

FRED FYLES

Documentary corner: *American Movie*

Ben Collier
Film Writer

It's not often you see a documentary split opinion in such a love-it-or-hate-it fashion. I suppose that is something that comes with 'cult film' territory, and personally, when I think of the label of 'cult classic', *American Movie* is the first film that comes to mind. The star here is Mark Borchardt – an amateur filmmaker who has spent his whole life trying to inspire his family and slacker friends to fund, star in, and help produce a short horror film 'Coven'. He does this in order to garner interest and money, eventually allowing him to produce his magnum opus 'Northwestern'.

Mark's charm manifests itself in his unwavering enthusiasm in the face of ridiculous odds; What one comes to realise is that everybody but Mark – and his best friend/side-kick Mark Schank – knows that *Coven* is doomed. We see scene-after-scene of failed shoots, horrific acting based on a woeful script, topped off by laughable



"Coven, man, we gotta get this sucker done, though." Photo Credit: American Movie PR

special effects. If you look up the infamously hilarious scene of Mark's attempts to direct his bored and grumpy Uncle Bill (the unwilling main financier of the project) to say just one line "It's alright, it's ok! There's something to live for! Jesus told me so!" you'll get the idea.

But, of course, complexity is present beyond the can't-look-

away car crash humour. What is so uniquely brilliant about this film is how hilarious it can be whilst simultaneously maintaining a serious and quite depressing undertone.

This, I feel, warrants some explanation. The difficulty here is that describing this movie accurately is near-impossible due

to it simply being that bizarrely dichotomous in its feel. Some examples may give a rough idea though. One line that stands out is when, following an endless string of laboured takes, Mark shouts to Uncle Bill "you have to believe in what you're saying!" to which Bill bitterly replies "Well, I don't; I don't believe in nothing you're doing."

The pessimism shown by Uncle Bill throughout really contrasts and cuts through the child-like enthusiasm of Mark, helping us to see past his fantasy world and understand the reality of his life. Both Mark and Mike grew up in a very working class area of Milwaukee and both experienced quite desolate upbringings; both face a number of demons. A burgeoning alcoholism is evident in the film, and Mark's issues with both gambling and a deeply dysfunctional family are also explored later on. Mike, at several points, explains that the only thing for friends to do for fun in his city is slack off and drink can-after-can of shit beer.

I consider *American Movie* to be one of the best documentary films ever made, and would happily place it very high up on a list of my favourite movies. What it presents to the viewer is a uniquely unpolished, warts-and-all look into the lives of people attempting to do away with their label of "trailer park white trash," achieve success in Hollywood, and live the American Dream.



SOPHIE, sweet like whipped cream

Cale Tilford
Music Editor

Over the last few years, **SOPHIE** (the stage name of Samuel Long) has played many times in London and around the world. I've been lucky enough to see him twice. This time he played at Village Underground, one of London's most hip venues. With each successive live performance he has debuted new material to the audience and each time a new song is debuted the reaction is the same: pure unadulterated joy.

The hyper-consumerist (yes, his debut album is called *PRODUCT*) nature of SOPHIE's music and aesthetic means that nearly every song he's produced is calculated and refined to be addictive and engaging. He reels his audience in with obscure, yet oddly familiar sounds. His use and appropriation of these is most obvious on his recent collaboration, 'Let's Ride'

with Charli XCX – he mixes her vocal onomatopoeia such as 'beep beep' and 'vroom vroom' with the sounds themselves. When Long plays this live, the crowd almost laughs each time they hear the sounds of the car. Most people are

Every song he's produced is calculated and refined

here for songs like 'Lemonade,' with its comical bubbling, or 'Hard.' Everyone knows the words to every song, but then you'd expect that when the lyrics are so basic – which is probably why SOPHIE has done so well.

There were times when the audience's enthusiasm seemed to fizzle out – when Long played tracks that weren't from his recent release *PRODUCT* or other collaborations, but these moments never lasted long.

The rest of the PC Music crew (including **A.G. Cooke**, **Danny L Harle** and **GFOTY**) were all in attendance. To an outsider (and to nearly everyone else in the audience) they were inconspicuous – they looked like every other ironic hipster in the crowd. None of them have really seen the same success as SOPHIE (although GFOTY will be supporting **Animal Collective** on a number of tour dates later this year). They too were probably in awe and will want to emulate his simple yet iconic live performance.

The set ended with 'When I Rule The World' by **LIZ**, a song produced by SOPHIE last year. LIZ sings "You should do as I say cause things are gonna be my way." At the moment, Samuel Long and the rest of PC Music might have



I get that fizzy feeling and I want lemonade. Photo Credit: Cale Tilford

a small, devoted fan base – but with more collaborations like this and energetic live performances, it

won't be long before SOPHIE and the rest of his friends will rule the musical world.

Savages before breakfast



Look at all these people who are going to be late for work. Photo Credit: Cale Tilford

Cale Tilford
Music Editor

In interviews, **Savages** have always described themselves as a live band: "you don't understand who we are unless you see us play live." They aim to

create a reaction with their live act, something more than static head bobbing. Watching the video for 'The Answer,' the first song on their new album *Adore Life*, you might expect a Savages gig to be a messy, explosive affair. I expect it might be if it wasn't at 8:45 in the morning. The idea of a gig before work,

without alcohol, is a weird one. But replacing intoxication with a coffee high works surprisingly well.

Lead singer Jehnny Beth charms even at such an early time in the morning. In between songs she confidently sips her cup of tea to the amusement of the crowd. Her performance throughout the set

is sublime; those at the front were graced by her presence. At times she reaches towards members of the crowd, holds their shoulder

Replacing intoxication with a coffee high works surprisingly well

and sings to them, as if there's no one else in the room. There is one moment on 'Adore' where the band are silent; the crowd match this absence of sound in awe, enchanted

by Beth's presence. The rest of the band are more subdued, probably in need of a few more hours in bed.

Their latest album is brilliant by itself, I didn't expect it to gain much from a live setting, but it does – and I implore anyone to see Savages on their upcoming world tour. At one point, Beth jokes that watching this gig was the best excuse for being late to work and that we were all employees of the month. Even if I had been late for something, I would have started the day more awake than any cup of coffee could ever induce.



Photo Credit: Cale Tilford



Is it human to adore life?

Cale Tilford
Music Editor

Adore Life is an album about the good and the bad parts of love. The title should really be a question because Jenny Beth and her band are conflicted: "Is it human to adore life?"

Savages stream of post-punk is extremely accessible and flirts with all sorts of sounds. The quartet come together brilliantly; Gemma Thompson on guitar provides grizzly riffs, Ayse Hassan on bass controls the tempo of each song and Faye Milton's drums help induce intense climaxes. And then there's Jehnny Beth, with a voice that wanders and wanes.

'The Answer' starts the album with melodic guitars and the statement

that "Love is the answer." On 'Sad Person' Beth delivers one of Adore Life's best lyrics, "I'm not gonna hurt you / Cause I'm flirting with you." 'Adore' starts slow with fuzzy

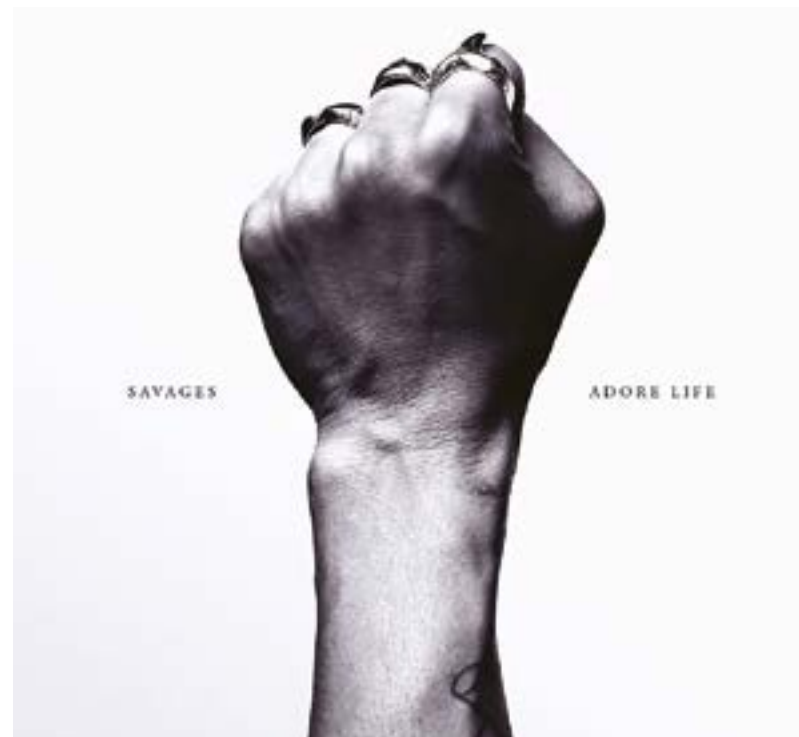
An assured and defiant collection of songs

guitars and then the drums kick in and trick the listener into believing the song has reached its peak. Eventually, it comes to a halt; there's a brief moment of silence which is broken by Beth when she asserts: "I adore life." The song grows into

thrashing guitars and percussion and we hear a rare twinkling synth. Then it suddenly ends. It's undoubtedly the best song Savages have ever written.

Beth demonstrates the power and range of her voice on 'I Need Something New,' delivering the first few lines completely unaccompanied before the sound of a guitar screeches against a high note. 'T.I.W.Y.G.' starts off heavy with pummelling guitars which act as an instrumental response to "That's what you get when you mess with love."

Despite all the problems life might throw at us, Beth insists that life is still worth loving (like many romantic relationships, it's worth it for the good bits). Adore Life, on the other hand, is all good and their best album yet – an assured and defiant collection of songs.



Defiant. Photo Credit: Matador

Upcoming gigs



NME Awards Tour, 02 Brixton Academy 11th February

Sure, NME might be irrelevant now, but they can still put together a great line up. Expect music from **Bloc Party's** divisive new album.



Iglooghost, The Waiting Room 19th February

Recommended for fans of **Flying Lotus**. Iglooghost was recently signed to **FlyLo's** Brainfeeder label and released the weird and wonky Chinese Nu Yr EP last year.



Oneothrix Point Never, Village Underground 24th February

One of electronic music's great innovators, Oneothrix Point Never, will be bleeping and blooping again at the Village Underground after playing last November.



Chvrches, Royal Albert Hall 31st March

Their latest album might not have been great, but their live act is still fantastic. If you missed them at Alexandra Palace in November you're in for a treat.



Mura Masa, Oval Space 7th April

Guernsey born youngster, Alexander Crossan, impressed last year with his experimental EP Someday Somewhere mixing hip-hop and trap.



Animal Collective, Shepards Bush Empire 11th April

We've only heard snippets of their upcoming album so far. *FloriDada* signals an interesting direction for the band. Expect a colourful and extravagant performance.

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The ancient art of being illustrated



Tattoo by Kirsten Holliday, Wonderland Tattoo, Portand, Oregon, USA Photo Credit: Kirsten Holliday

Indira Mallik
Arts Editor

Skin as a blank canvas is not a new idea; Ötzi the Iceman, frozen sometime between 3239 and 3105 BCE had a tattoo. Inking or marking skin unites cultures and continents across the ages.

Until recently in the West, tattoos have been seen as a mark of belonging to a counterculture. They are so subversive that in 1995 *The New York Times* art critic Michael Kimmelman likened tattoos to the ‘art of the insane’.

However, now one in three adults in Britain has a tattoo. Even in ubiquity, tattoos remain controversial; a quick poll in the FELIX office revealed tattoos to be variously ‘hot’, akin to ‘gangrene’ to ‘putting people at risk of missing a dermatological condition’. No prizes for guessing the latter was the opinion of a medical student.

Tattoos when inked well and well placed (collarbones are a personal favourite) can be beautiful, but can they be defined as fine art?

Perhaps it depends on the artist;

Kate Moss is the proud owner of two swallows inked on the small of her back by Lucien Freud. She has joked that were she to graft the skin and put it up for auction she could earn herself a few million pounds.

Fine art institutions have already started to capitalise on the popularity of tattoos. In May 2014, **Musée du Quai Branly**, Paris, hosted ‘Tatoueurs, Tatoués’, or Tattooists, Tattooed, an exhibition which explored the history of body art.

Tattoos occupy the same space as graffiti in the world of art, the establishment doesn’t quite know what to do with it. Tattoos cannot easily be locked up in glass cases or bartered for; not yet at least, though the Wellcome Collection does in fact have a collection of preserved tattooed skins. For most however, inking their skin remains the ultimate expression of bodily autonomy; now as for centuries, a way of marking personal history. The pain of the process becomes a ritual; it’s permanence a statement of artistic intent, that the art changes, sagging, stretching, shifting with changing skin is a bonus.



Maud Wagner, the first known female tattooist in the US 1911. In 1907, she traded a date with her husband-to-be for tattoo lessons. Photo Credit: Margot Mifflin

That the Science of Cartography Is Limited

—and not simply by the fact that this shading of forest cannot show the fragrance of balsam, the gloom of cypresses, is what I wish to prove.

1847, when the crop had failed twice, Relief Committees gave the starving Irish such roads to build.

Where they died, there the road ended

and ends still and when I take down the map of this island, it is never so I can say here is the masterful, the apt rendering of the spherical as flat, nor an ingenious design which persuades a curve into a plane, but to tell myself again that

the line which says woodland and cries hunger and gives out among sweet pine and cypress, and finds no horizon

will not be there.



Hit & Miss at Knock2Bag Comedy

Ben Williams
Writer

Fresh outta West Basement, this comedy virgin headed out to meet Knock2Bag. Hailed by *Time Out* as some of the best comedy in the East End at brilliant value, it had a lot to live up to.

On the menu this month – a four course slap up of sexuality, served up light with a little Irish on the side. Each set follows a strict fifteen-

Fifteen minutes can be a thousand heartbeats too long

minute limit, so this is more a tease than a full on strip, but as a means of getting newer comics involved, it works.

That said, fifteen minutes can be

a thousand heartbeats too long. The headline performance by Sam Simmons, was undeniably dire – surprising coming from the winner of this year's Foster's Comedy award. Watching him on stage is like seeing a walrus in headlights. You can smell the fat frying.

Worse – and maybe, maybe, it's just that moustache (and the suspenders) but there's something downright creepy about his act. It's more than a hint of voyeuristic shopkeeper – stacking up cans of cheap lines without the courage to do anything more than grope at his audience.

I should have taken the fact that Jessie Cave (that's Lavender Brown to you, IC) had pulled out last minute as a sign. Like that point in a crap date where you pay your half of the bill and suddenly remember that your house burning down.

Fortunately, Knock2Bag had Mae Martin to prove me absolutely and completely wrong. I'll admit there's a chink in my stone critics heart for a girl who can stand on stage and laugh about her sexuality. The beautiful thing here is that this is



Foster's award funny man Sam Simmons. Photo Credit: Sam Simmons, Death of a Sails-man

part of the act, but it doesn't define it. We don't just get 'gay' Mae. Whether it's that dick joke about her brother and her dad – or her willingness to talk about her last boyfriend, this act is remarkable for its openness. There are definite influences of that undefeatable 'gay' gallows humour (see *Eighty-Sixed* by Feinberg for

a rough taste). However, the really fantastic thing is that it doesn't matter where you are on the debate, you'll laugh all the same. At basics, Martin says – the world is just too crazy to take seriously. Who could disagree with that?

Other notable performances included Spencer Jones, as a rougher

kind of Mr. Bean. It's blunt physical comedy. In the format of a fifteen minute piece though, there just isn't enough build an explosive, funny ending that's believable.

Overall, for the price – £8 online (£12 on the door) – the value is very decent. Just come prepared for a few nose dives along the way.

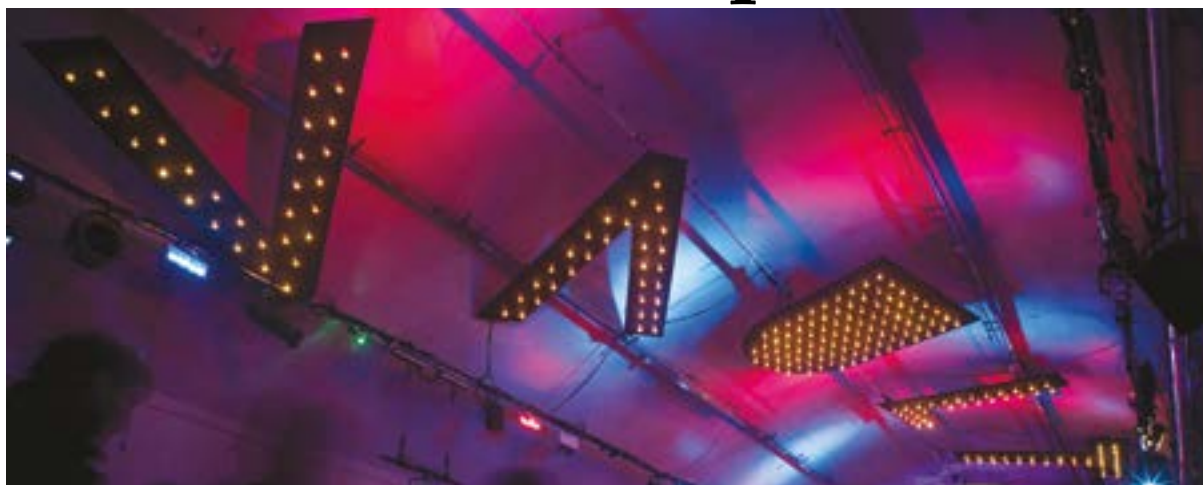
Subterranean arts festival promises to surprise

Jingjie Cheng
Arts Editor

Have you ever wondered what goes on underneath London's famous "graffiti tunnel" that is Leake Street, near Waterloo station?

Halfway down the tunnel is the entrance to The Vaults, a subterranean labyrinth of creative space and entertainment. For the third year running, the venue will be home to the Vault Festival, a six-week event jam-packed with exciting shows and workshops – London's cousin to the Edinburgh Fringe. Built on the philosophy of "reinventing the non-funded creative sector", the line up is refreshing and promises to surprise with the unexpected and experimental.

On Wednesdays to Sundays every week between the 27th of January to the 6th March, the Vault Festival will host more than a hundred theatre, cabaret and comedy performances. Here is a selection of FELIX Arts' top picks.



The Vault. Photo Credit: We Are Full Fat PR

Vault Surge

Throughout the festival

Vault Surge is an in-house programme of workshops, discussions and shows (mostly free) running throughout the festival. Designed to encourage conversation in the arts, these include artist surgeries, new acts performed in the restaurant within, as well as *Femme Fierce* – UK's largest all female street art and graffiti festival. Not to mention the *Vault Fundays*,

which include activities like "speed-gaming" – speed dating for gamers!

The Devil Speaks True

17th – 27th Feb at the Cage, £16

In this immersive performance theatre, *you* are cast as Banquo from Macbeth in a story tracing his journey from the battlefield to banquet table. With the help of headphones, video projections and live performance, the show focuses on the effects of war on men

returning home from battle and the bond between soldiers.

Tar Baby

10th – 14th Feb at Brick Hall, £16

Subtitled with "Let's beat the shit out of racism", this solo theatrical event takes a hard look at the story of race in America. Using history, autobiography and current events, the interactive show comments on minority experiences on the other side of the Atlantic.

The show won a Fringe First Award for new writing in Edinburgh in 2015.

Clowning workshops

The Art of Hysteria – 6th Feb, £12

Clown Smasher workshop – 27th Feb, £10

The festival feature two clowning workshops, with a "hysterical" one, 'The Art of Hysteria', celebrating the new play *Hysterical*, and another one by the Fringe First nominated Helen Duff. 'Clown Smasher' will be a mix of solo improvisation and collaborative games. Why not take a break from work and learn a new skill (and maybe cheer your friends up)?

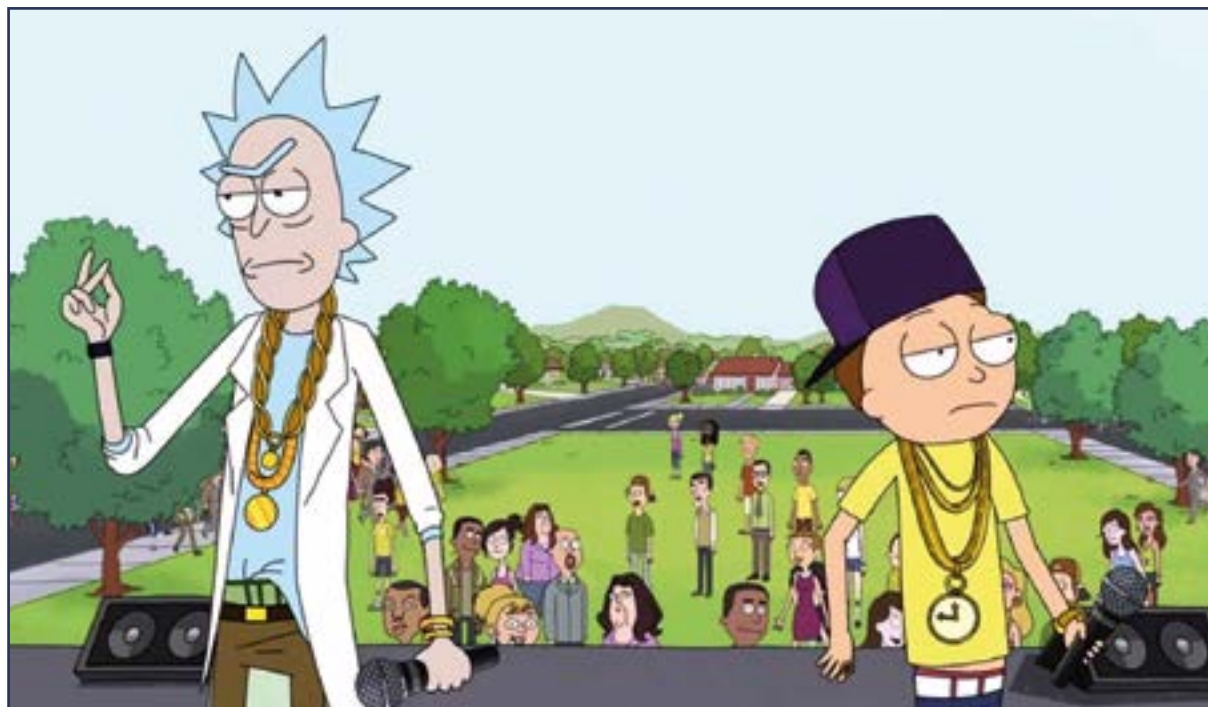
The Forest

24th Feb – 6th Mar, £16

This hour-long experience is an immersive, multi-sensory test that claims to "revolutionise the way you process data" and "give an insight into the functionality of your brain". Is your brain a computer chip that can be debugged? Yeah, I'm curious to find out what that means, too.



Cartoon Corner: Rick & Morty



Let's get Schwifty!. Photo Credit: Adult Swim

Saad Ahmed
Television Editor

Sometimes considered a loose and boisterous reimagining of Doc Brown and Marty, Rick and Morty is a fun and wild, animated science-fiction show where things are anything but classic Sci-Fi. If you haven't heard of this show by now, you've either been subjugated by the rule of the canines or are trapped in a miniverse, inside a miniverse, inside a miniverse inside your car battery.

The show's creator is Dan Harmon, also well known for being the guy behind the comedy show Community. As any fans of Community can tell you, Dan Harmon is known for not following the classic tropes you see on most media. His style is his own unique thing, doing away with typical clichés entirely or portraying them with a different spin.

Rick and Morty is no exception with the show either parodying several sci-fi tropes and/or taking them in wild and over-the-top directions. The payoff is a bizarre but highly entertaining and humorous set of episodes that'll have you craving the next installment. For example, in an inception-style episode, our main characters enter a dream, within a dream, within a dream, for the purpose of convincing Morty's math teacher to give him better grades.

The series features Rick, an old, outlandish and alcoholic

scientist, and his gullible grandson Morty, who go on various crazy and dangerous adventures across alternate universes and different

Amidst these mad hijinks, the show has some dark moments

sectors of space.

The major crux of the show is the interplay between Rick and Morty, which never gets old. Rick is depicted as a genius scientist, full of witty one-liners, preferring to live free and party hard, always considering himself superior to others. Morty, in contrast, is good-natured but easily distressed and is frequently shown to be reluctant and disapproving of his grandfather's methods resulting in several causes of friction and drama between the two.

The characters may seem a little one-dimensional at first, but as the series progresses, we gain more insight into the development and layers of our protagonists. For example, behind Rick's brash, arrogant and lively exterior, there's

a lonely, troubled, haunted past. The viewer is also exposed to a less nuanced part of his personality – a real and deep concern for his family. Meanwhile, we see Morty grow and evolve, becoming more confident, taking initiative and standing up to Rick now and again.

Besides these two, other characters with their own traits feature, each bringing something new to the table. The most prominent of them is the rest of Rick and Morty's dysfunctional family. These include his parents Beth, Morty's assertive, level-headed and dissatisfied mother, and Jerry, his insecure father who severely disapproves of Rick.

Morty's older sister Summer also graces the screen more as the show progresses, with her being

conventional, superficial and somewhat jealous of Morty having all the fun. These characters get increasingly involved in different and interesting ways as the show goes along, though sometimes the subplots leave much to be desired. Seeing Rick have a go at Jerry never loses its charm. The characters are written so well that the viewers even care for characters who show

weird or out-of-place, instead always coming naturally.

An example of a more softcore incident is when Morty gets tired of all the crazy stuff he's put through and goes full on berserk mode, à la the purge.

This clever and inventive show is the epitome of high-concept storytelling, with a healthy dose of hilarity and poignant character moments mixed in now and again for sustained emotional and punch. Many of these episodes are standalone, though there is a greater focus on continuity as the show evolves.

However, this is nothing too taxing and the creators know just how much to lean on it so that future developments carry more weight. At times, Rick and Morty becomes its own worst enemy, becoming slightly less innovative and repeating old storylines. However, even these episodes are written wonderfully, and if they're the worst the show has to offer, it speaks volumes about the overall quality.

For a show that was initially an adults-only Back to the Future parody, Rick and Morty has now become something much more special. With the successful formula of merging high-concept sci-fi storytelling with biting humour and a dash of emotionally complex character development, this show is always a blast to watch, and I highly recommend it if you haven't watched it yet.

And that's the waaaayyy we go!!

*Rick and Morty is available on
Adult Swim*

This clever and inventive show is the epitome of high-concept storytelling

up only a couple of times like bird person (P.S. F*** Tammy).

Amidst these mad hijinks, the show has some dark and uncomfortable moments in which Rick and Morty are put through pretty extreme stuff. While a little disconcerting to watch, these moments help shape our characters when moving forward. It is also a sign of the greatness of the show-moments such as these never seem



Standing with your family. Photo Credit: Adult Swim



Making a Murderer

Harry Wilkinson
Writer

Making a Murderer, released to stream on Netflix in December 2015, is Netflix's second foray into documentary filmmaking after the mostly ignored Chef's Table. It has already been described by many as the service's most addictive program yet.

The series follows the story of Steven Avery, a resident of Manitowoc County, Wisconsin, convicted of a crime he did not commit, serving 18 years in prison before being found innocent through DNA exoneration. He then decided to sue the county sheriff's department for \$36 million for the gross mishandling of his case. However, before the case can be settled, Avery is accused of the murder of a woman named Teresa Halbach, the trial of which makes up to bulk of the series' runtime.

What follows is an incredibly harrowing look into police and judicial corruption and misconduct. There is evidence presented of the police department, planting evidence, coercing witnesses and improperly handling the legal proceedings of the case, among other equally disturbing acts.

What is interesting about this documentary is the depth to which it investigates and presents the story. Where one might usually expect such a documentary to cover this in around two hours, this series has ten hours to provide lengthy

explanations for the evidence that Avery's defence presents, as well as the prosecution's explanations (or lack thereof). However, as this features events spanning from 1985 to 2014, focussing on a case that itself had over 200 hours worth of evidence presented, there are, of course, omissions that one could take issue with.

The series does suffer slightly in that it undoubtedly has bias

The series
does suffer
slightly
in that it
undoubtedly
has bias
in Steven
Avery's
favour

in Steven Avery's favour. This manifests mainly in downplaying some of the darker parts of Avery's past, most egregiously dismissing Avery's criminal activity prior to his false conviction for rape as

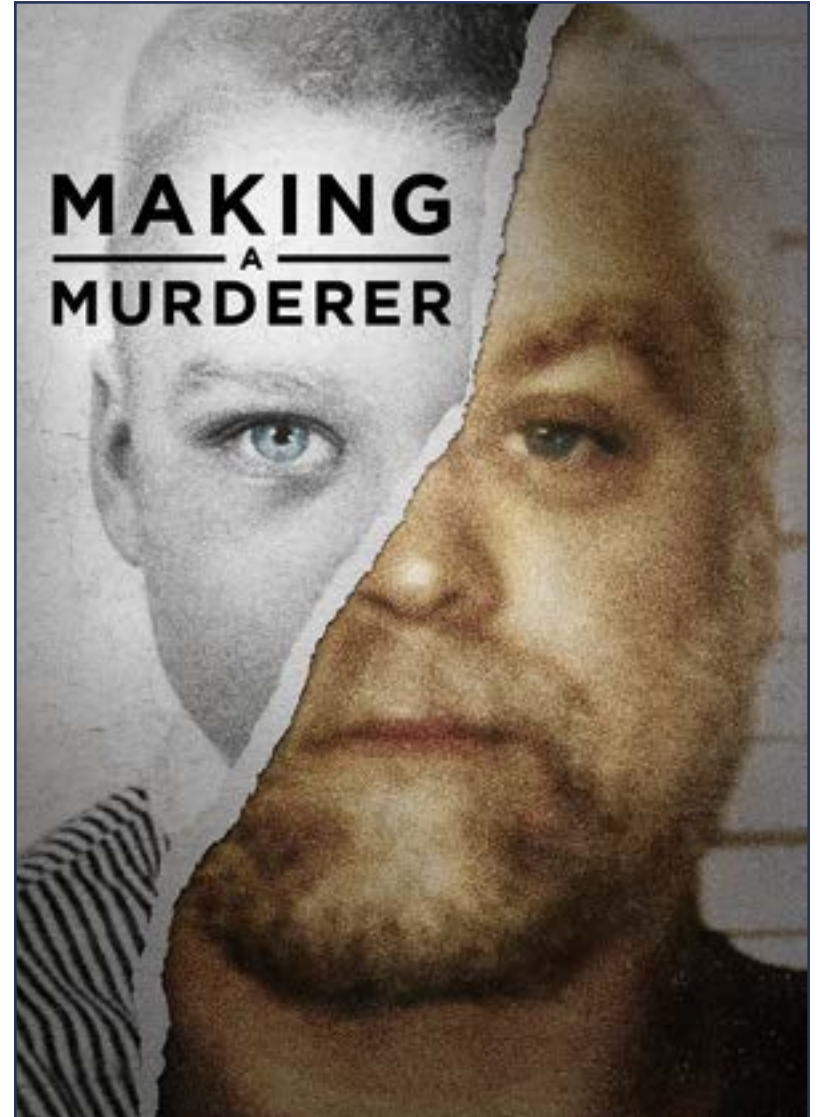
simple adolescent antics, the reality of which is much more disturbing. He was arrested and jailed three times prior to his false accusation, for burglary of a local store, assault of his cousin and, most shockingly, for dousing his cat in gasoline and setting it on fire. Omissions such as these serve only to undermine the purpose of the documentary which should not be to paint Avery as a saint, but to display the mishandling and sabotaging of the case by the Manitowoc Country Sheriff Department.

I would, despite this, unreservedly recommend watching the series, if for no other reason than to join in the cultural phenomenon it has become.

Warning: The rest of this review will contain spoilers.

In the short time since its release, the show has reached memetic status, with a *change.org* petition calling for President Obama to release Steven Avery reaching nearly 450,000 signatures, despite such an action being outside of the President's jurisdiction. It has also inspired many couch detectives giving their theories on what really happened to Teresa Halbach. People have been blaming anyone from her brother to her roommate, to the police department themselves for her murder. To make such unfounded accusations goes against the very purpose of the documentary, that it is not okay to accuse someone of a crime just because of your personal feelings toward them.

Many members of the Manitowoc Sheriff's Department featured



Who is responsible when an innocent man is sent to prison? Photo Credit: Netflix

There are,
of course,
omissions
that one
could take
issue with

in the show have had to release statements providing their views on the documentary, with most dismissing it, claiming it skips huge swathes of evidence that implicate Avery in the murder. However, none have responded to the claims of evidence planting laid against them.

The documentary certainly came at the right time. With so much discussion all over the US on police corruption and unfair treatment of minorities, this is undoubtedly

a large contributing factor to its success, and one that makes it hit so close to home for so many people.

The most harrowing part of the documentary is the interview of Brendan Dassey, Avery's nephew. The video shows two experienced detectives coercing and manipulating a 16 year-old into admitting to committing various heinous actions on Halbach including, but not limited to, rape, torture and murder.

Throughout the interrogation it is clear that Dassey does not fully realise the consequences of what he is saying, and is just saying whatever he thinks the detectives want to hear in order to go home. The interrogation was eventually deemed to be inadmissible in court but not before the District Attorneys describe in graphic detail all that was said, diminishing both Avery's and Dassey's chances to win fair trials.

Making a Murderer is available on Netflix



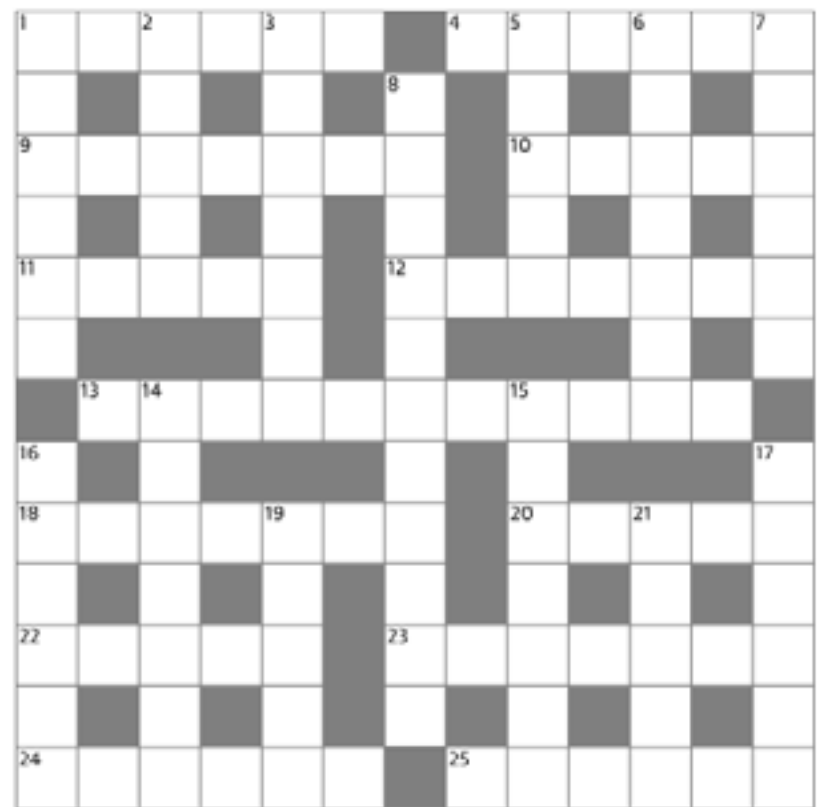
Steven Avery – the victim of the story Photo Credit: Netflix



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



1. Identify the next number in the sequence
31, 28, 31, 30, ___?
2. H, Be, F, S, Mn, Kr, In, Gd, Tl, ?
What's the next in the sequence ?
3. Replace the # symbols with mathematical
operations (add, less, multiply or divide) such that
the following becomes correct:
 $9 \# 8 \# 7 \# 6 \# 5 \# 4 = 91$.

[illegible]

FELIX HANGMAN



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NEWS WITHOUT THE NEWS




MEDICS UNSUCCESSFUL IN SECOND ATTEMPT TO GET TO BELGIUM



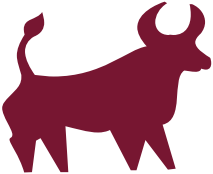
“Sorry Mr Trump, but you don’t abide by our safe space policy.”

HOROSCOPES




ARIES

This week, unable to find any news for your weekly newspaper, you make the whole thing up. Every word. Even the horoscopes. Will anyone notice? Or will they just assume every article is a finely crafted piece of well-researched truth? Is it?




TAURUS

This week you’re every sports club at Imperial. Tired of your own antics, you realise that nothing you ever do will get you into the Daily Mail again. Those Warwick rowers get in every year with their naked charity calendar. Grrr.



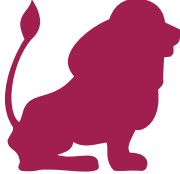
GEMINI

This week, you try and impress girls from American universities at the union by referring to FELIX’s guide to American politics on page 13. It’s all going well until she’s sees the article coming out of your pocket. I love that guy, she says, pointing at Trump. Ah well, nearly.




CANCER

This week, your hook up your new virtual reality headset to Panopto, making your the most powerful dork at the whole of Imperial. However, drunk on power, you moon the lecture theatre, but as you watch lectures from the M&M store now, you get a life ban.




LEO

This week, you change your name by deed poll to Google in the hope that you can fool HMRC into only having to pay 3% income tax. Googling yourself will never be the same again.




VIRGO

This week you read the entire green paper. All 105 pages! Damn, you must really love higher education. You’re disappointed at the ending though; it wasn’t about weed at all. BORING.



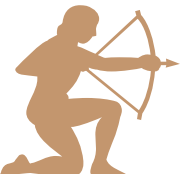
LIBRA

This week, your comment under a Secrets of Imperial post gets 20 likes. Shut the front door. You call your mum, explaining she doesn’t need to worry about the mortgage anymore because you’ve made it now. Congrats.




SCORPIO

This week, you start raiding ‘Imperial Memes’ for ‘Secrets of Imperial’ shit to post. This works quite well, because no one on Secrets even remembers memes, they were too busy doing their A-Levels. This is quite a good idea actually.



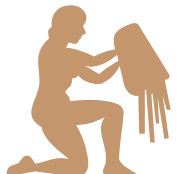
SAGITTARIUS

This week you decide to run in the Big Elections, sorry the Really Quite Large elections. No actually, we’ve just had word they’re now the Presidential Elections. We mean Bellend Selections. Oh wait, no, our fault, they’re actually the Leadership Elections.




CAPRICORN

You apply to every position in the elections. Genius! No one’s ever done that before. God you’re so hilarious. Ha ha ha.



AQUARIUS

This week you are a famous rapper called Bob. Your tweet about the Earth being flat makes international headlines. Where is the curve? Have you been to the edge? Once you go flat, you never go back.



PISCES

This week you are a RIGHT wingin’, BITTER clinging, PROOOOOUD clingers of.... ourgunsourgod OUR.... and our religion! You decide to endorse Donald Trump because you’re mad and you’ve been had.



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That Dragon, Cancer

Numinous Games' debut adventure is great, but you probably shouldn't play it

Cale Tilford
Music Editor

The titular metaphor of Ryan and Amy Green's autobiographical exploration game – that cancer is a dragon – is used to describe their young son's condition to a more innocent audience. Cancer is a beast that is likely to haunt most of us directly or indirectly throughout our lives. The sheer power of the word cancer makes it a hard subject to discuss and communicate. 'That Dragon, Cancer' is the first (mainstream) game to explore cancer and its effect on the families of sufferers; it portrays a difficult struggle between hope and despair, acknowledging that we all react in different ways.

While it is the story of one family – it's unfortunately a struggle that many other parents will have to endure. It's definitely an emotional game, however, it's affect on each player is likely to differ based on their own experiences and their ability to imagine parenthood. I felt awful for Ryan and Amy, but having a child feels like such a distant event to me that there was some emotional disconnect. It still made me think how I might react if I was ever in the same situation, which is something I've never wanted to consider. It's clear that Ryan and Amy react differently to their son's

cancer. Amy is full of hope and faith in God, while Ryan despairs. These two opposing ideas become central themes of the narrative. If you don't have children this is a game worth playing. If you've been through the same ordeal as the Greens it might be comforting. For everyone else That Dragon, Cancer might just be too depressing.

Modern games rarely make us think; we play them to escape the real world

The presentation of a narrative driven game is always important. It's obvious that a long time has been spent making the game flawless in this respect. To make the game even more personal, the Green family provide the voice acting themselves. They narrate scenes and read out letters placed throughout the world with emotional performances. The abstracted polygonal world is



Waiting for bad news. Photo Credit: Numinous Games

beautiful, with murky dreamscapes and dark tree like structures haunting the landscape (which act as the physical representation of cancer in the game).

Modern games rarely make us think; we play them to escape the real world, to take part in fantastical experiences that would otherwise be impossible. So why is there a growing trend of indie developers creating games about their own lives? There's been a (not so) sudden realisation that a medium where you can actually control and interact with the world is probably

the best medium to relay personal experiences. And it's likely that virtual reality will enhance these sort of games even further. Gamers everywhere should welcome this growing category.

However, there is still some resistance to games like That Dragon, Cancer; many question if they should really be called games. Personally, I don't think this question needs to be answered; we don't need another category of art. This sometimes divisive reaction indicates that the art form is still maturing – when compared to

books and film, games are still in their infancy.

We shouldn't judge games by their ability to make us cry or scream. Evoking such extreme reactions is relatively easy. It's the complex, subtle emotions that a player feels that make That Dragon, Cancer so powerful. It's not a game that demands introspection, but by its end you'll look back at your own life and question how you might respond in the same situation.

That Dragon, Cancer is out now on Steam



Playing videogames. Photo Credit: Numinous Games





Rolling in the deep (space)

Tharsis is a brutally hard space survival strategy game, with dice

Cale Tilford
Music Editor

Friendishly difficult games have proven popular with gamers in recent years. Most of these games require fast reactions and an intimate understanding of each level or enemy. Tharsis is as difficult as games like Dark Souls and Bloodborne and it should be. Your spacecraft is on it's way to Mars. It has just been hit by a meteorite and you've lost two members of your crew. Your chances of survival are infinitesimally small – you might never beat this game because it's all down to luck. It's emulating real life.

Most games hide their randomness, the chance of a player's success in a given situation, beneath layers of code. In RPG's there's a small chance your attack will deliver a 'critical hit' and in other games different events will randomly occur at any given time. So when things aren't in your favour, the player often feels frustrated. Tharsis is painfully hard, but by exposing its randomness – in the form of rolling dice – it removes part of the frustration. Rather than resenting the developers for building a 'mean' game, you start to curse your luck in

defeat.

Dice essentially act as an in-game currency which you can spend protecting your ship's health, the four members of your crew, and their stress levels. Each turn (you must complete ten before you arrive on Mars) new problems appear on your ship, ranging from fires to a blue screen of death. Micromanagement

You start to curse your luck in defeat

is the key to success and the game does a good job of teaching you where your priorities should lie after each successive death. One of these is food – which is essential to survival and replenishes your dice. When you're really low on dice and you have no food, the game gives you an unforgivable choice – do you resort to cannibalism? Make



Those are some pretty dice. Photo Credit: Choice Provisions

this choice, and your dice are from that point onwards stained in blood and that character's total life is permanently reduced by one. It's the game's way of saying that a part of your soul has just died.

Even when the dice aren't red they look astonishingly realistic and the physics have been perfectly refined (definitely turn your rumble on if you're playing with a controller) to make every roll incredibly satisfying. In general, the presentation of

Tharsis is sublime. Each module of the ship is beautifully rendered and the lighting gives a real sense of emergency when all is about to be lost. Planning out your strategy each turn requires concentration and the accompanying music does a lot to mitigate the stress. The chill electronica never grows old, sounding like a subdued Tron soundtrack.

Choice Provisions have developed a great game, but I feel like its

difficulty might be off-putting for many. In the playthrough where I finally succeeded (it took about six tries with each unsuccessful run lasting from ten to 20 minutes), every member of my crew ate human flesh. Tharsis teaches that sacrifice is necessary to achieve the impossible; a sacrifice that many might not choose to make.

Tharsis is out now on Steam and PSN

ANOTHER CASTLE

Imperial's gaming magazine returns this spring

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