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FORUM

Introduction: Farming fame, memorialising Amy Winehouse and recuperating Salman Khan

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In this issue of the Forum, Mike Goodman and Michelle Phillipov make an intriguing intervention in the field by offering up the figure of the celebrity farmer as an under-explored and increasingly culturally noteworthy iteration of contemporary celebrity. In their contribution ‘The Celebrification of Farmers: Celebrity and the New Politics of Farming’ they situate such figures alongside similarly food-related figures such as the celebrity chef – explored and discussed elsewhere in this journal by David Bell and Joanne Hollows ([2011](#)) and Nemeschansky *et al.* ([2017](#)) – the celebrity winemaker, and the celebrity food writer, pointing to the US journalism academic and author of the well-known crossover non-fiction volume *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* Michael Pollan ([2006](#)) as an emblematic example.

Writing in 2009, *Guardian* celebrity culture columnist Marina Hyde ([2009](#), p. 212) wrote presciently, in response to a particularly vicious letter to readers by *Closer* magazine editor Lisa Burrow, that ‘If Amy Winehouse dies, Lisa will fart out some leaden prose about how no-one could help her, even though her magazine did its best by paying the photographers who hound Amy every minute of her miserable life’. Following the ill-fated Winehouse’s subsequent death in 2011, celebrity gossip media and mainstream media more broadly engaged in precisely this

kind of conveniently selective retrospection of Winehouse's life, career, and the decline in her health. Hannah Andrews hence interrogates celebrity culture's practices and politics of post-mortem memorialisation by analysing Asif Kapadia's 2015 biographical documentary *Amy* in her contribution 'From Unwilling Celebrity to Authored Icon: Reading *Amy*'. She thus makes a welcome addition to conversations about the memorialisation of deceased celebrities staged elsewhere in the journal by, for example, Richard Howells ([2011](#)) and Gil-Egui *et al.* ([2016](#)).

Upon its release in July 2016, the Bollywood film *Sultan* (Ali Abbas Zafar), which at that time was the latest vehicle for Bollywood megastar Salman Khan, broke a number of records, becoming, to cite just one example, the film with the highest numbers of advance bookings in India ever, as well as one of the top-10 highest netting Bollywood films of all time (Tartaglione [2016](#)). There are a number of reasons why the global box-office success of this film can be considered extraordinary and fascinating, one of which is that it is indicative of the enduring appeal of this star, notwithstanding, as discussed by Amber Shields in her contribution to this Forum 'Salman Khan: Counteracting Offscreen Transgressions with Onscreen Heroism', the potential for irreparable damage to have been done to the viability of his public identity and the marquee value of his persona by his widely reported 2015 prosecution for culpable homicide, following a road traffic accident involving the star, which caused one person's death and injury to four others. Shields explores some of the cinematic and extra-cinematic negotiations that took place in the mediation of Khan's screen stardom and wider celebrity status during this period of his career, with a view to thinking about how (perceived) 'transgression' is mediated, managed, and offset.

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