

Movie Review:

# Oscar inevitable for 'Inevitable Defeat'

**August Lysy**  
STAFF WRITER

Among the streets of Brooklyn, while their mothers prostitute their bodies to fund their next fix, two young kids, Mister and Pete, must fend for themselves. Alone but for their friendship, Mister and Pete struggle each day for food and safety as they flee the intimidating—and inevitable—prospect of being placed in the prison of New York's circuit of child services.

This is the essence of director George Tillman Jr.'s ("Men of Honor," "Barbershop") poignant film "The Inevitable Defeat of Mister and Pete." Taking an issue of contemporary importance, screenwriter Michael Starrbury has crafted a compelling and deeply-moving film that gives an unpretentious and sincere look at a cycle of neglect—both personal and familial—that daily undermines the generations of our future.

Though at times I found myself suddenly conscious of the somewhat mediocre pace of the script; yet strangely, I accepted it and found myself captivated by the impressive charisma of the two main characters Mister

(Skylan Brooks) and Pete (Ethan Dizon). In this regard, Brooks and Dizon deliver the best child performances I have ever seen in a film: truthfully understated and all the more affective because of it.

What further renders this film remarkable is its uncompromising tone. The moderate pacing reflects the reality of the story: a journey, not an adventure; the principle difference being that the events reflect their mundane life and do not attempt to impress us with any epic tinge.

Yet, far from being tedious, the profundity of the film's events, what makes them so compelling, lies in their life and death stakes: Mister and Pete do not battle fantastic monsters—they struggle against the crushing momentum of social forces beyond their comprehension. And this is something all viewers can relate to.

In sum, "The Inevitable Defeat of Mister and Pete" is captivating because it appeals to our universal need for love in a commonly hostile world; unlike many social-conscious films, it appeals to our hearts, not our socio-economic status. The honest humility of this story has made the American canon of film all the more better.



Image courtesy of wattpad.com

# Introducing 'Oh the Humanity!'

**Matti Scannell**  
A&E EDITOR

This year as A&E Editor of TechNews, I wanted to do something edgy; something that pushed the envelope in an unexpected way. I wanted to humanize the staff and faculty of our school. I knew this would be tough.

How do you relate to someone whose career is based on catering to judgmental know-it-alls like yourself?

Well, if Russians and Americans can cohabitate the International Space Station less than thirty years after the end of the Cold

War, we can start thinking of our teachers as fellow humans now that we are in college. So here it is folks, the first brick out of the Berlin Wall that is the student-teacher divide; this is the first of a new series in which I will ask Shimer and IIT faculty and staff to describe the best concert they have ever attended.

Up first is Dr. Andy Howard who is an Associate Biology and Physics Professor at IIT.

Earlier this year I attended the Bristol Renaissance Faire courtesy of Dr. Howard, who spends every summer working at the fair as a velvet-clad anachronism. Because I already had this substantial proof that Dr. Howard is a person with interests outside of

our hallowed halls, I thought I would begin my series by asking him to describe the best concert he has ever attended.

"Probably the most memorable concerts I've attended were concerts that I was performing in myself, but I don't think that's what you're looking for... In August 2010 the male a capella choral group "Chanticleer" performed in the Pavilion at Ravinia. My family, including our daughter and her husband, who were living in Texas at the time, gathered on the lawn at Ravinia to hear the concert. It was hot, muggy, and mosquito-laden, and we weren't in a spot where we could see the performers, but it was still a sublime concert. Both the familiar pieces and

the new ones were a joy to hear, and all of us were transported into a musically special place.

Whenever I hear Chanticleer I'm amazed that there are men who, given great starting talent and proper training, can sing soprano as well as all the other voice parts; but that was secondary to the beauty and artistry of the ensemble," said Dr. Howard.

On behalf of TechNews I would like to thank Dr. Howard for his time and participation in this series. At TechNews we firmly stand by the belief that having written a doctoral dissertation does not make one less of a person.

Movie Review :

# Not-so subtle 'Don Jon'

**August Lysy**  
STAFF WRITER

At one point in "Mere Christianity," C.S. Lewis asks the reader to imagine a scene completely foreign to our cultural experience: a strip-tease. Not a strip-tease of human flesh, however, but a strip-tease of mutton-chop; the slow and erotic removal of a sheet covering a plate of steaming-hot mutton. What would we think of those people, Lewis asks the reader? Surely, their instinct for food has gone awry. Just so—he relates—has our sex instinct.

The metaphor is similar to, but not altogether fitting to be entirely imposed on, Joseph Gordon-Levitt's "Don Jon" (his full-length feature directorial debut.) Though Gordon-Levitt (who also wrote the film) has a similar message, his absurdist take is less subtle and his message is focused more on sexual aberration in pornography addiction, per se, rather than sex-addiction as sexual aberration of human culture at large.

This last point certainly does not aim to discredit Gordon-Levitt's product. On the contrary, "Don Jon" is incredibly refreshing in its style and voice; a welcomed departure from the Hollywood mold. Dealing with a typically taboo subject (i.e. pornography addiction), Gordon-Levitt tackles the subject courageously and does not yield or pull any punches so as to fit the experience with our socially-puritanical posture towards it. Through its visually and psychologically-jarring lens, "Don Jon" shows us how pornography is a means to control, essentially an avoidance of the true vulnerability

at the heart of any intimate relationship.

The film's progress (a bit meandering at times) is marked by the rapid display of lively-colored photos and video clips depicting the icons and sexual acts of Don's (Gordon-Levitt) worship. These montages are not explicitly pornographic, but they are not at all doctored—merely cropped—so the audience itself is forced to confront the very thing which holds Don in an iron vice of habit, the demon with the two backs, if you will.

The conclusion, as I alluded, is positive (albeit, to me, in a somewhat mediocre way) and comes about through Don's interactions with Esther, played by Julianne Moore—who, playing to her usual character, nicely captures the tragic depression of a woman who has lost all she loved. In each other they both find someone whom they can lose themselves in sexually—which sounds to me like a stilted, sexual compromise just slightly better than anonymous sex with strangers or getting lost in pornography, not the true human intimacy upon which relationships are formed, but small steps.

In sum, Gordon-Levitt brings a fresh vision and voice to the screen. Though he leaves unfinished some plot strands (e.g. family, religion) and juggles awkwardly with thematic devices that bring some discordance to the film's vision as a whole, Gordon-Levitt shows a lot of promise with "Don Jon" and will hopefully continue to shock, challenge, and entertain us for years in the future.

Editor's Note: This is the second of two TechNews movie reviews on "Don Jon."

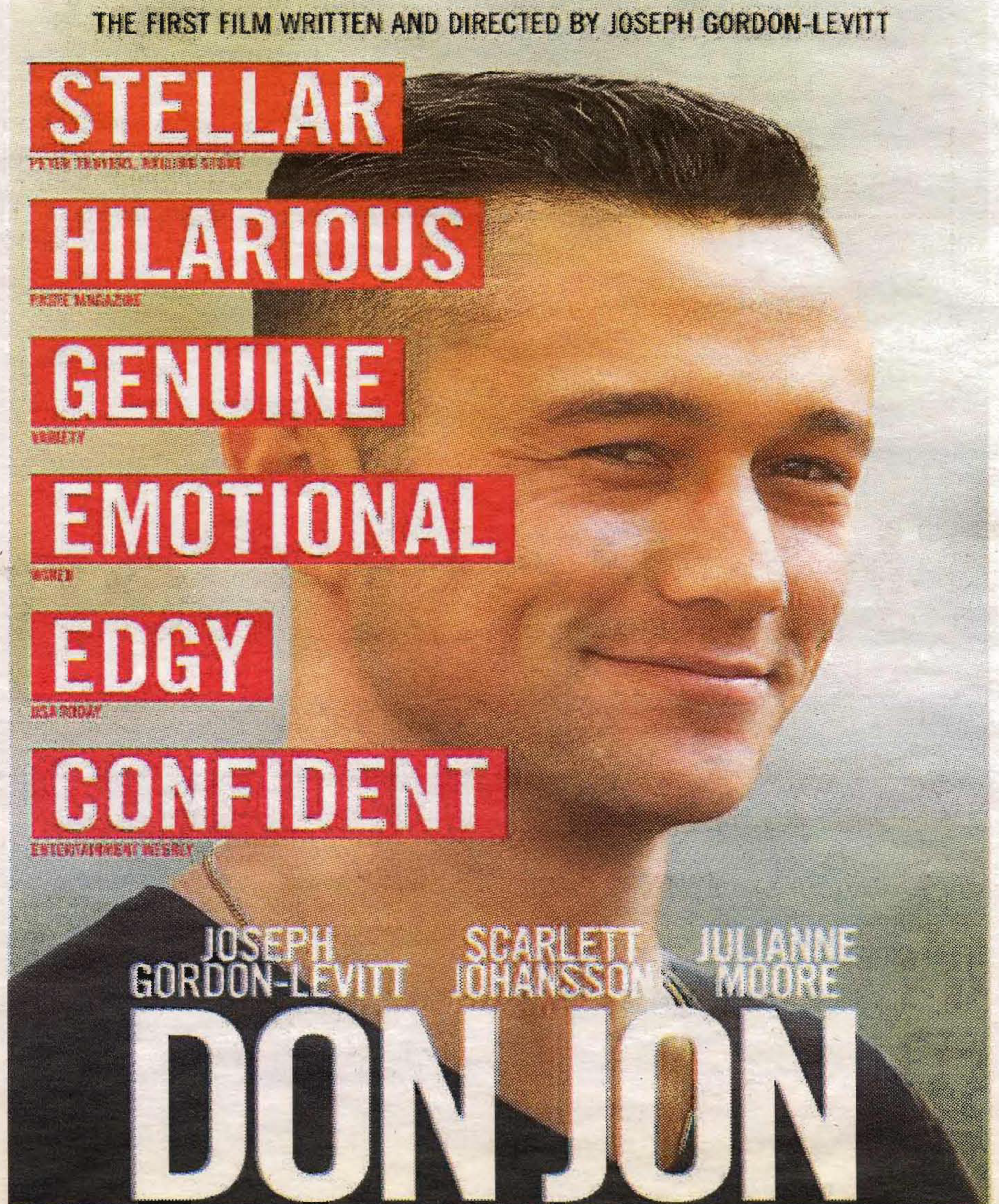


Image courtesy of imdb.com