

THE
BINGHAMTON
Free Press a binghamton media group publication

FEBRUARY 2014



The reality of this viewer

What's the point of boycotting Woody Allen?

By **EMILY D'EMIC**
Copy Editor

By now, everyone is well aware of Woody Allen's reputation and the controversy surrounding his estranged daughter, Dylan Farrow and her letter published in the New York Times on February 1st, 2014. In it, Farrow describes the sexual abuse she endured at the hands of Allen throughout her childhood, and the shame and silence that came with being raised in his shadow. Woody Allen is no stranger to criticism: in 1997 he married Soon-Yi Previn, the adopted daughter of his ex-girlfriend, Mia Farrow. Woody Allen's recent acceptance of the Cecil B. DeMille lifetime achievement award at this year's Golden Globes has brought to light questions of society's loyalty to accused perpetrators of sexual

assault, as well as the suffering that victims are forced to endure in its wake.

I can only imagine the nightmare that Dylan Farrow has been forced to endure in the face of Woody Allen's inescapable popularity. Surely, all victims of abuse experience a pain that is unfathomable to most people, and this pain must be heightened when your abuser is let go without being reprimanded, but is also venerated by millions of fans.

In response to accusations surrounding Woody Allen, and to show support to victims of sexual assault everywhere, many have chosen to boycott Woody Allen films. I have an immense respect for these people and completely support them in their

decision. However, I cannot bring myself to do the same.

Movies have played a large role in my life for as long as I can remember. It seemed as though every night of my childhood involved lying on the couch with my parents and sister, drinking a sippy-cup of apple juice and watching whatever film was being shown on television. Woody Allen was among the directors whose films my parents loved. Movies like *Manhattan*, *Radio Days*, and *Broadway Danny Rose* have come to shape the way I see the world.

Continued on Page 6

Coca Cola and Buzzfeed Go Global: So Should We

By LORY MARTINEZ
Free Press Contributor

I just came back from a semester abroad in Paris and, how should I put this? America hit me, hard. I mean when you're in the center of Europe for so long, you begin to feel like a global citizen. Everyone speaks multiple languages in a collective attempt to understand each other and each other's histories. And not to generalize here, but at least for me, back in the states, there's less of an interest in what's going on in the world and more of a marked interest in what affects us, the United States, alone. It's a bit isolating, and nothing highlighted that feeling more than the most American thing I encountered when I got back: the Super Bowl. Aside from being a jolly occasion to eat wings and enjoy a celebratory beer or eight, the Super Bowl brings people together to watch some very expensive, very well made commercials. One in particular warmed my now croissant-shaped heart: A Coca Cola ad that featured the song, "America, the Beautiful," in multiple languages. I mean, they had children singing and jump roping in front of a sunset that only exists in California. It was adorable.

People immediately took to Twitter and Facebook to react, the overwhelming response being positive and in praise of Coke for embracing the international side of its company, of its culture, and our culture, all over the world. On the other hand, there were posts such as, "this is America, speak English #Boycottcoke" or "This is America, speak American #f**kcoke" and many variations thereof. It's true that this is the kind of trolling apt to happen online, and it's not completely surprising, but it's still more than a little appalling in 2014.

As the richest and most influential country in the world we should be more globally conscientious, and, I can't believe I'm saying this, take after Coke.

A nation of immigrants, we should really get over the whole, America=English thing. English is the most international language precisely because of its global importance. But that doesn't necessarily mean other languages aren't just as beautiful and important. And a lot of us are aware of this, I mean, I peep that Duolingo app on your iPhone.

Even so, according to 2012 stats taken by the Pew Research center, American public interest in international news has declined in recent years. According to the Tyndall Report, a data collecting site that analyses the international news stories covered on the three major networks: NBC, CBS

and ABC, in 2013, large parts of the world went uncovered. Among the regions not listed for top-priority coverage are Latin American countries, which Tyndall explains: "The assumption seems to be that anyone interested in Latin American coverage would likely speak Spanish and find it in that language."

The good news is, despite all of that, Americans do have interest in international stories, albeit via unconventional news sources. According to Poynter.org, one third of adults get their news on social networks now, and a number of sites that follow short-form news stories. Shortformblog, which is hosted by Tumblr, scans the Internet for major news headlines and writes synopses of important stories as they

happen all over the world. Gawkermedia, though largely nationally focused, produces short-form stories that are accessible to newsreaders via their phone app. The best example of this trend, though, is Buzzfeed. From cat GIFs to nostalgic "listicles," Buzzfeed.com is an addictive media source most of us use to kill time and distract ourselves from the inescapable reality of exams, papers and the sad end of Flappy Bird's availability in the app store.

Lately though, the site is singing a different tune. Buzzfeed's executive staff has made the decision to use the momentum gained from its extremely viral articles to expand and bring foreign news to its readers. BuzzfeedGlobal is the site's new foreign news department whose correspondents in cities like Cairo, Istanbul and Moscow are writing stories with headlines such as: "Introducing The Hummus, being called The Onion for Muslims" alongside "Egypt's security forces once again using virginity tests on female detainees."

And though there's a marked difference between the two, the change in coverage is gaining attention as news readers turn more and more to short-form-style sites like Buzzfeed and Twitter to get the latest in current events. These days the site's most popular articles remain those related to nostalgia and DIY, but the viral capacity of Buzzfeed's format allows the kind of foreign news stories mentioned above to get the same amount, if not more attention from readers.

Here's to hoping this trend will lead to a more globalized, and internationally aware public.

"Americans do have interest in international stories, albeit via unconventional news sources."



THE BINGHAMTON Free Press

EDITORIAL BOARD

SKY STAGE
Publisher and President

RUCHI JAIN
Opinion Editor

BRIAN KERINS
Editor-at-Large

NICHOLAS WILSEY
Phoenix Editor

KEATON DALEY
Business Manager

TASFIA NAYEM
Associate Editor

SHANNON SWENSON
Layout Editor

EMILY D'EMIC
Copy Editor

DAN SPAVENTA
Distribution Manager

MELISSA NEIRA
Photography Editor

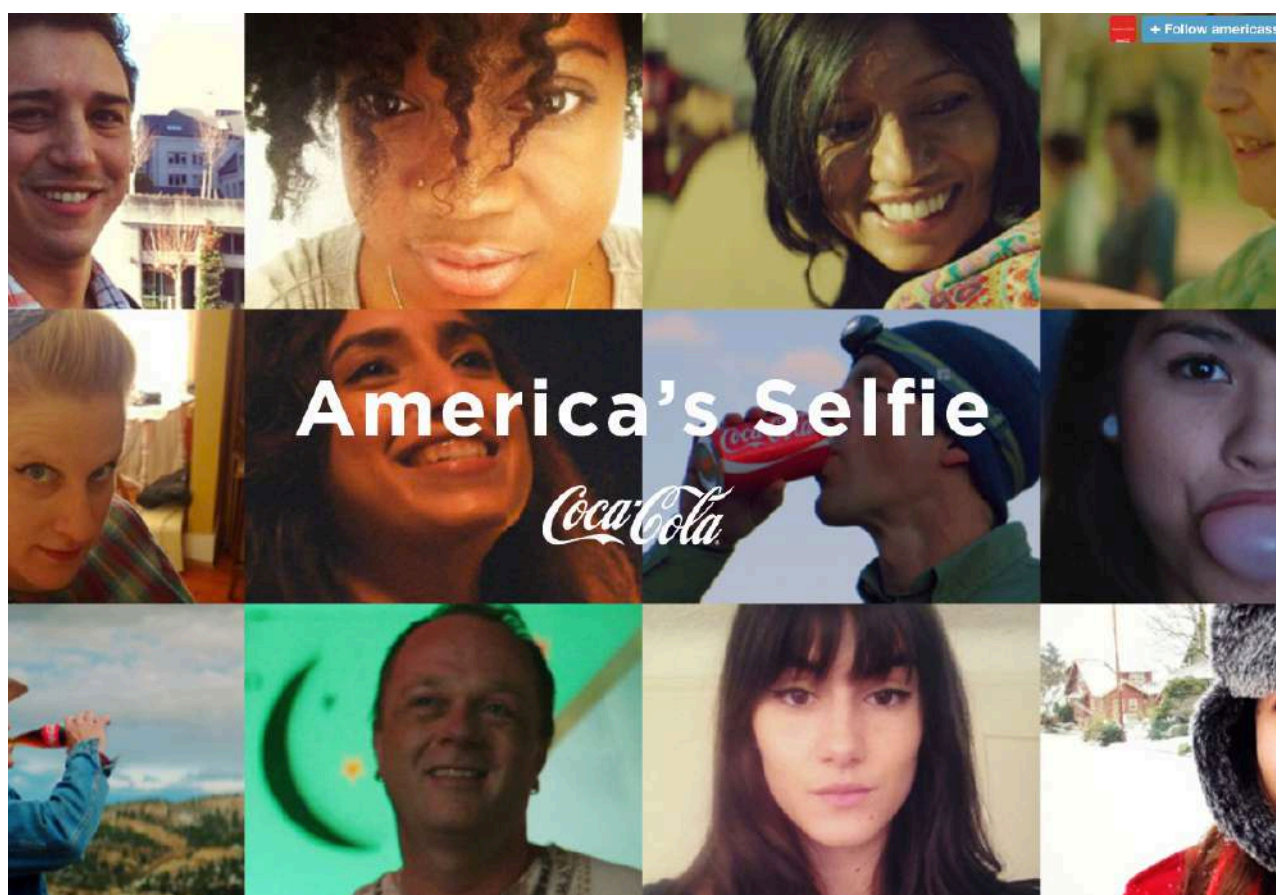
NICHOLAS SCHAFRAN
Editor-in-Chief

The Binghamton University Free Press is a Student Association Chartered student-written and managed newspaper published by the Binghamton Media Group for the Binghamton University community.

The editorial board of BMG has sole authority for the content of the newspaper. All inquiries can be sent to publisher@bufreepress.com.

No part thereof may be reproduced in any form, in whole or in part without the explicit written consent of the Publisher.

Copyright (c) 2006-2013 Binghamton Media Group



Food trucks in binghamton?

Revitalizing the downtown area



By NICHOLAS SCHAFFRAN
Editor in Chief

As Binghamton continues to adjust to its post-industrial economy, a myriad of city revitalization efforts have been made. These efforts, which continue to grow as SUNY Binghamton (and SUNY Broome Community College) do so concurrently and exponentially, provide a means for the city to prosper in ways it has not in decades. The increase in student apartment rentals downtown, from 20 Hawley Street to Chenango Place, have seen beautiful properties in the city put back to use (and many more residents moving in downtown), while restaurants, cafes, and other service based businesses have also popped up in once-vacant storefronts. Looking forward, there is only room to grow.

One logical extension of this transition is the introduction of food trucks to Binghamton. While currently unlawful in the city (due to traffic codes restricting such vehicles from idling for extended periods of time), a proposal to allow food trucks is currently being discussed by members of city council. This proposal comes on the heels of a survey showing

popular support reported in the Press & Sun-Bulletin. The survey, which polled 661 local respondents, found 88% claiming they would eat

“Food trucks give more people the reason to go downtown (in broad daylight) and spend time and money”



at food trucks if they allowed in the city. These mobile kitchens, which are extremely popular in metropolises such as New York and Washington D.C., could benefit the downtown atmosphere, as it sees an increase in student residents. College students and full time residents alike would be able to get off at their bus stop, visit a vendor, and pick up a quick

lunch in the public square before heading back home or to class.

Not everyone supports the idea, however. Some business owners,

eateries in general, a mutual benefit. Of course, food trucks are only one piece of the puzzle, and it is no ones intention to overextend the benefits they might bring. Mayor Rich David has much work to do in order to meet the goals he set out for the city in his campaign, especially in terms of economic revitalization. The abandoned shops decaying along Court Street, lack of public open spaces, potentially unsafe parking structures, disjointed transit options, and many other roadblocks keep the city from a more approachable atmosphere. I merely suggest that they might be a beneficial part of Binghamton's march forward into a new era.

Binghamton is a city that deserves a proper restoration. The infrastructure, culture, and shaping of a vibrant city are apparent, and just a few more steps are required to really foster a sense of community. Food trucks give more people the reason to go downtown (in broad daylight) and spend time and money. More activity in the public square, fostered by the presence of such amenities, is definitely part of this restoration.

phoenix



Title: "People." Artist: Kim Muller

An open letter to the man on the subway who made me cry, and to all of the people who were on the subway car with us

Don't think I'm new to the subway. As a New York City resident for twenty years, I've been taking it as far back as I can remember. My mother would push my stroller onto the E to go shopping in Manhattan. When we were old enough to go out without our parents, my friends and I would take the 7 to Flushing to get bubble tea. In high school, taking the subway an hour back from school every day with my closest friends was a comfortable, conversation-filled end to every school day.

PHOENIX

MALT
WHITMAN

Sitting on the shaky ex-prison blue buses on Friday nights in Binghamton, I would look back fondly on my former primary mode of transport.

This past winter, I found myself back on the subway to attend a high school reunion. In the first minute that I got on the train, I noticed that your friend, the seated man I was standing in front of and you were sitting next to, was staring at me. Contrary to what you would later say, I actually did ignore the staring at first, thinking that perhaps I was imagining it or that maybe his glance just lingered a bit longer than normal. But no, excepting the short conversation he had with you before you fell asleep, he was staring at me. But not just staring; he was discernibly looking me up and down for several minutes. I made eye contact; usually letting someone know you can see what he is doing is enough to get him to stop. But no, your friend took that opportunity to lick his lips and give me a wink. I looked away.

Were the subways always like this? Is this conduct, which I consider disgusting, now more common? I thought of the lifelong subway rides I had looked fondly back upon, and it hit me. Feeling objectified on the subway isn't a new thing. I'm not saying it happened every day, but it happened. I remembered my best friend and I changing compartments when we noticed we were being stared at. I remembered trying to keep out of sight under my hooded coat on the F after high school parties to make myself less noticeable. I remembered trying to find other women to stand near during late night subway rides alone. And, unlike what you may think, I don't think it was me being over-cautious; I had been harassed and had seen girls being harassed by people like your friend enough times. I remembered my best friend in 7th grade getting sexually assaulted on a crowded subway in the middle of the

day when she was fourteen years old and still wearing our private school uniform. I remembered her crying and shaking, telling only me and making me swear not to tell anyone because she was so ashamed.

I'd like to think that I'm wiser now. I'd like to think that I've grown - that I am a more confident person coming out of college than I was going in. I'd like to think that I am comfortable with myself as a woman, and that I would speak up when I saw something wrong. And so I did.

"Can you please stop staring at me?"

"What?"

"Please, can you stop staring at me? It's making me uncomfortable."

And he did. He looked down, and I felt relieved and a little bit silly. I had been getting worked up, while this man was acquiescent, even if in shame, of my request. I started thinking that maybe the reason he felt he could be so bold with me (and probably with many other girls before me) was because no one had outright told them they were uncomfortable.

"What the fuck did she just say?"

It was you. Your eyes had been closed until now. Now they too were looking me up and down.

"Did she just fucking tell you to stop looking at her? Does she think she's hot shit?"

Your eyes snapped harshly from my body to the one of the sleeping woman sitting across from you.

"There are so many other women, even in this compartment, who look better than her. Does she actually think she looks good? Why the fuck would anyone stare at her when I can stare at that girl. That girl's got both a better face and a better body, compared to this girl who thinks everyone just wants to fucking stare at her. I bet she always thinks people are trying to get with her. Well let me tell her something, she's cute but she's not that fucking cute. She's barely worth a second glance, yet she thinks everyone wants her."

You were looking at me, speaking about me, but would not acknowledge me. And so I told you that I am not an object, though you were speaking about me like one. I am not an object, and neither is the woman across from you, and neither is anyone on this subway. We are not riding the subway to be ogled, to have our bodies compared. We were riding the subway for the same reason as you, as a means for us to carry on with our business.

"And so I got off the train and I felt objectified and marginalized."

We are not objects here on display for you, for your friend, for anyone. We are not just the flesh that makes up our bodies. We are humans. I am a human, and I ask for just enough of your respect, the bare minimum of your respect, to be acknowledged like one. And I asked you this, and you told me it's a free country, and I responded and you did and by this point I was shaking and marginalized and you were seated and still not acknowledging me and I felt my eyes start to tear and you made another comment about how I just want attention that my looks don't deserve and on and on.

And I looked around for a moment to see if anyone else cared. They could at least hear us, I know that. You were seated next to a man and his young daughter. I saw him put his arm more tightly around her. And I hate to sound like a new age child and I hate to draw on the sentiments of my namesake, but Walt Whitman said it most potently. Are not all women ever born your sisters and lovers? And mothers? And daughters? Am I not kin to the man on the subway with his daughter, staring intently at the floor while I was stripped bare with your eyes and with your tongue in front of him? Am I not kin to everyone who sat there and averted their gaze? To your friend, to you?

And so I got off the train and I felt objectified and marginalized and cheapened and I didn't feel like a real person and I quoted Whitman to myself and I thought about womanhood and humanity and it was all so stupid and I was so unsettled and my thoughts were so cheesy but so unfortunately earnest and it's because of you. All of you. And so that night when I was getting back on the subway to go home, I covered myself in my coat and I tried to sit in a way that would make me seem the most invisible and I looked around from under my hood trying to figure out if anyone around me was objectifying, trying to figure out if anyone around me would care if I was.

The importance of bystander intervention

By SARAH AZZMAN
Free Press Contributor

Remember that really awkward sex-ed lecture you were made to sit through during orientation? I certainly do. And while most of what was discussed was just common sense and felt silly, there was one video that stuck out.

That video was the “Who Are You?” video that showed how bystanders (the friend, bartender, stranger, suitemate) all noticed an overly-drunk girl with someone and they all chose to intervene before somebody got hurt. This is essentially what bystander intervention is—the common sense to step into a situation before it escalates. The concept is brilliant, simple, and effective enough to reduce the frequency of sexual assaults on University campuses.

The idea is not about pinning the blame on one specific group. In a recent article published by the New York Times, Sergeant Richard Cournoyer, a Connecticut state trooper, is quoted: “These aren’t people jumping out of the bushes. For the most part, they’re boys who had too much to drink and have done something stupid. When we show up to question them, you can see the terror in their eyes.”

The article, titled “Stepping Up to Sexual Assault” discusses ways in which outsiders can

intervene before a situation escalates to sexual assault. It describes a situation in which a guy told his drunken buddy that there was a girl downstairs who was more interested in him than the girl he was talking to, even though there was no other girl. Other diversions in the article were discussed by Jane Stapleton, a University of New Hampshire researcher, and include: suddenly turning on the lights at a party or turning off the music, “accidentally” spilling a drink on the guy, forming a conga line and pulling him away from the woman he’s bothering and onto the dance floor – whatever it takes to stop the situation before it turns to sexual assault.

The biggest problem I’ve seen with the bystander program is the fact that many college students see it as something negative, akin to ‘blocking’. But that’s not the case. It’s not consent if both individuals are not sober and consenting. What the program is doing is preventing potential consequences for both parties, such as losing scholarships, getting kicked out of school, potential criminal records, etc. This concept is intelligent because it’s preventative. We go to parties to relax and have fun, right? We

shouldn’t be constantly worrying about these terrible situations.

Sexual assault may still occur, but knowing that other students have been trained in these tactics and have my back in case I have too many drinks and the guy next to me won’t back off is a very comforting notion. Not only that, but it gives us strength in numbers; we can all do our part in preventing. Being able to prevent sexual assault also prevents the complicated after effects. The accusations, ‘he said’-‘she said,’ that becomes court battles, which, for the most part, accomplish nothing other than emotional trauma, tarnished reputations, and potentially ruined futures. Often the blame is placed on the school for not responding in an efficient manner, with victims filing federal complaints. Because of this, according to the New York Times, the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights has had to create legislation stating that schools are required to maintain a complete system for handling complaints of sexual assault. Failure to comply could result in the school losing federal funding. The best thing about bystander intervention

“The concept is brilliant, simple, and effective enough to reduce the frequency of sexual assaults on University campuses.”

is that it will reduce sexual assaults, reduce the number of lives forever scarred, and leave room for actual progress. This program will make it much easier for the officials to find rapists and get them off our streets.

Would a bystander intervention counseling program be good for Binghamton University? I say yes. With proper education and training, each of us can be empowered with the vital tools and techniques needed to help one another. If we all pledge to not be that passive bystander who lets that drunken person get in that car with that stranger, things can change. Promise to be an assertive and bold bystander! This pledge has the potential to make college campuses much safer and comfortable places for everyone.

Senior column III: college needs to keep up

The education system is just too old

By RUCHI JAIN
Opinion Editor

If you’ve been following this column, you’ve probably noticed subtle criticisms of the higher education system and its part in society. Statisticians, doctors, and experts of varying fields have all had their say on why education in the United States is failing and why college is no longer guaranteeing students jobs like it used to. But nobody asks us students, what we have to say about it. Does anyone want to know if we think we’re ready for the job market? Can anyone explain to us the stark difference between what we learn in class and what we end up doing out there?

I will now share a few ideas about where college lost me.

One thing I won’t miss after graduating is the repetition of education: the classes, the homework, the tests – identical curricula to the ones students faced last semester or at another university (academic integrity, anyone?).

I’ve learned that I hate doing the same thing over and over again. No matter how exciting and fun it is at the beginning, I eventually get bored out of any activity to the point of hating it. I find new ways to make a course exciting for myself: skip a lecture every once in a while, migrate around the library literally ten times “for a change” (mainly to refrain from studying), and at the end of it all get rewarded by a grade too curved for my own good.

I’m not saying that other students feel the same way as I do, or that all professors fail to engage their students with new and exciting academic programs, but I am saying that everybody is different. Some people are unimpressed and unimpressible (stuck up) and there is definitely too much history around some of the courses we are being taught today and the way in which they are being taught to us. Higher education isn’t the same, because the world just isn’t the same. The Industrial Revolution created overcrowded modern cities, making individuality the most desirable characteristic in human beings. In the multitude, being different was the only way to save your consciousness and free will. And now we have the Internet, where individuality is the norm. So why does our education system divide us into homogenous groups where we have to be slaves to the majority?

We act surprised, but intrigued when we learn about the dance major who got into medical school, the bio major who eventually went into law, or the business major who is now

a comedian. The fact of the matter is that with the rapidity of technology and means by which information is exchanged, it is completely plausible that all of the above to be true. Everything is on the Internet now and we are absorbing more knowledge now quicker than ever before. Plus society admires multi-talented individuals and makes pathways to success for them. But what about our universities?

Challenging curriculums and advanced coursework makes diversity in academic programs difficult to manage. And

what’s more is that advisors don’t really encourage you to take courses that are varied even if they match your hobbies or interests. You are simply given a list of classes to take to graduate with your degree. Watson Engineering advisors, for example, already have an aged four year plan written

out for their students, and leave little leeway for anything else. But my advice is this: don’t let your major limit you, define you, or tell you who your friends are. Take classes in any school of this University. It’s really simple actually, all you have to do is talk to the advisors and undergraduate heads of other departments and they’ll register you for a class if you’re qualified enough. Don’t be afraid to overload your schedule. You only get four years, and sixteen credits per semester are not enough for some people to take all the classes that they actually want to. Challenge yourself by doing something different; you’ll be surprised by your own talent and ability.

In the meantime, universities need to rejuvenate their academic programs to give students the opportunity to have a more unique and varied curriculum. That was most likely the idea behind the “core curriculum” that most universities require, but there are still limits. For example at BU, courses in the Finance department are restricted to very few majors and art courses are scheduled in such a way that they almost always conflict with other classes. Making it easier for a Finance major say to take an art class or an art major to take a Finance class can only benefit both majors and help them stand out to a potential employer. Our University needs to recognize that and not assume that either student cannot perform well in the other’s classes, but in addition to that, students need to recognize this as well. More knowledge will only benefit you and make you feel more fulfilled after you graduate.

The reality of the viewer

From page 1

The pure love and appreciation with which Allen captures the city of New York and the essence of human relationships has inspired me creatively and helped lift my moods on the blackest of nights.

It is hard to believe that a man who has helped me grow in my love for film, who has made an indelible mark on my life through his art, is also a pedophile. It’s hard to believe that anyone whom we admire can disappoint us, show us a side that we cannot possibly reconcile with the one we have grown to know and love. Yet Woody Allen has done this. Still it is, in my opinion, ridiculous to completely discredit a person who is a genius in his trade. Throughout life, we must reconcile the good with the bad. There will always be murderers, rapists, and generally evil people who make the world a dark, terrifying place. However, not watching and enjoying Woody Allen’s films accomplishes nothing.

Talent is in no way an indication of moral character, and society should not expect it to be. It has been said that one of the main reasons why Woody Allen was never convicted of sexual abuse was that those presiding over the case were so blinded by his celebrity that it was impossible for them to accept the fact that he was a rapist. Perhaps if we stop equating a person’s moral worth with net worth, we’ll realize not only that more people are capable of disappointing us than we thought, but that those we never expected anything from may surprise us.

“Why does our education system divide us into homogenous groups where we have to be slaves to the majority?”

