

29<sup>th</sup> March, 2011

Dear James Harkin,

I would firstly like to take this opportunity to thank you for publishing “Wall of Success”, which immediately captivated my interest being a member of the Facebook community myself. What intrigued me the most is the contrast of perspectives as well as distinctive comments made regarding Facebook’s potential for the future. Being a reader, it challenged me to think that Facebook will either revolutionize or wilt. I was specifically drawn towards reading the fact that Zuckerberg sees Facebook as a “social movement.” He seems like a humble man and I am convinced that “he is not motivated not by money but by a passion for radical transparency,” seeing as the website was made during his youthful and golden college years.

Facebook, in my opinion, is probably one of the most daring websites ever made. The thought of knowing your life is “publicly available” is overwhelming. Massive and open publicity is a bitter sweet side effect of Facebook, managing to attract over 350 million users and still counting. This allows for a new atmosphere to easily be developed among the changing world. I agree with Zuckerberg’s remark that Facebook has the ability to permanently fixate and hypnotize its users into not only becoming a more open minded generation but also “better people”. This perhaps shows that people are now recognizing the publicity’s revolution and how it works. There are limited options regarding privacy and personal space. There isn’t much to do other than accept it and pay the price if one wants to participate in an international unification. The words “rise to power” remind me of Hitler in the 1930’s. People were drawn to his authority and leadership despite the fact that it had consequences for society like ending up brainwashed and treated like puppets. Facebook’s “rise to power” has similar characteristics, showing how easy it is to make the world surrender to the movement of just community.

David Kirkpatrick’s book has grasped Facebook from a different perspective. Previous books focused merely on the “squabbles and personal relationships” of Facebook while Kirkpatrick draws attention to Zuckerberg’s intentions and what he was trying to achieve. It makes the previous books on Facebook seem bitter and narrow minded, because they are looking at Facebook being a website, ignoring the fact that it is actually a movement. Mezrich, along with other writers should not be paying attention to “those involved in [Facebook’s] early life”, because what really matters is Facebook and Zuckerberg’s future. Kirkpatrick takes a more open minded approach by comparing Zuckerberg’s initial goal to what is currently happening.

The contrasting remarks describe Facebook as more “fragile than it appears” and that it will “wither as quickly as did Bebo”. This pessimism relates to that of Sandberg’s idea of wilting of the email. Only a bare 11% of teenagers use email on a daily basis. Facebook has little chance of wilting “as quickly as [it] flowered”, because it actually has its own messaging feature, much like that of the simple e-mail. Zuckerberg’s initial goal was to have college students “flirt with each other electronically”, which is what triggered the ‘poke’ button. This shows no doubt that communication has evolved to a more personal and sensitive level. Facebook’s “become a fan” button, which after some years turned to the world known “like”, supports the fact that communication is branching off into more than just emails and file sharing.

However, I do understand that privacy is something Facebook lacks. This has not repelled its users or the new ones which join the multi-national media every day. Risk and insecurities is taking on what the 21st century needs more of. Your article shows that the global community today needs to step away from playing it safe and that Facebook could very well be the solution to this. I would like to thank you again for publishing a most eye opening article on Facebook's capability and potential. Facebook's strong identity is something Bebo and MySpace have lacked. Facebook does not surrender to the population that disapproves of its policies regarding open publicity which is what gives it the rugged impression. It stands its ground and has made no significant changes, like adding intensive security. This is something that I ironically admire, because it shows that you need a backbone in order to make it through the competition in society.

Best regards,

Kilgore Trout

Dear Editors of *The Boston Globe*,

I would like to thank you for your recent article, “Caught in the act: Juveniles sentenced to Shakespeare,” by Louise Kennedy. As a high school English teacher who oftentimes weighs the pluses and minuses of devoting time to the dramatic performance of Shakespeare’s plays with my students, I was intrigued by this initiative where performers were “sentenced to perform the play.”

The strength of Kennedy’s article is her ability to report on both the successes, as well as some of the shortcomings of the program. When describing the program Shakespeare in the Courts, she points out that it is a “nationally recognized initiative now celebrating its 10th year.” “National Recognition” is not always a sign of success—no matter how many years it has been running for—especially for programs used by the U.S. Department of Justice system.

However Director Coleman’s conclusions about the effectiveness of the program are the most helpful, acting as a counterbalance to these suspiciously press-release sounding credentials. “This does not fix them,” he concludes, however he feels that the “extreme experience that they’re having starts to change them.” This decision by Kennedy to include this emphatic statement gets closer to the heart of the debate that is surely in peoples’ minds as to whether or not juveniles’ interaction with literature and performance can help provide guidance in their lives. Of course it is one that is still up for debate, but I was pleased that Kennedy addresses it head-on.

Furthermore, the article does not sugar-coat the program’s successes. When the young performers are getting ready for their debut, she reports that one participant, an anxious Lindsay who is “less than enthusiastic” about her involvement with the production, mutters, “I didn’t sign up for this [expletive].” But Kennedy also contrasts these sentiments with the Probation Officer’s point of view, who “sees its [positive] effects” and how it “makes a difference in their self-esteem, in their willingness to try something new.” Granted the idea of it “making a difference” comes across like rhetoric instead of proof, however coming from the mouth of a P.O.—especially one who has been with the program “since its inception”—lends credibility to her comments. If anyone can give you a taste of the reality of rehabilitation through probation, it is the court appointed Probation Officers, who have the most frequent (and sometimes the most meaningful) contact with criminal offenders.

Kennedy concludes her article by reemphasizing Coleman’s point that this program does not “fix” anything. And although she also points out that programs such as these are a lot cheaper than incarceration, one wonders if there are other programs where their time would be better spent than learning lines from *Henry V*. The question of “Why Shakespeare?” is never really addressed aside from the fact that it seems like an “impossible task” to the participants, however maybe that is best left for others to debate. I, for one, oftentimes ask myself the same question as I begin *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* with my 9th grade class, or prepare a *Hamlet* unit with my 12th graders.

Hamlet himself confides to his audience that “The play’s the thing, wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the king.” One wonders if the same holds true for Shakespeare in the Courts, but instead of catching a king’s conscience, the play’s the thing that momentarily touches a troubled youth’s soul.

Again, thank you for your informative reporting,

Brian Quale  
English and Theory of Knowledge Teacher  
International School of Stavanger