

Letters from our readers

23 January 2014

On "Seventeen charter schools closed in Columbus, Ohio"

Excellent article. Thanks.

Jonathan F

Germany

21 January 2014

On "Heat wave and bush fires engulf southern Australia"

While climatologists issue dire warnings of impending ecological catastrophe, the ruling Liberal/National coalition sits tight and advises to "take precautions", the Greens bemoan the elimination of the Carbon Tax as the only means to avoid climatic meltdown, Labor is noncommittal, and the public bemused and confused, as it must adapt, and keep adapting to the "new normal". As in Mrs. Thatcher's time, TINA, there is no alternative!

And they are perfectly right: under the present economic/social system of capitalism, and its extreme version, neo-liberalism, we are all condemned to untold years of war and increasing poverty, and ecological degradation, all in the service of profit and power for the few, immiseration for most, and destruction of our environment for all. If there is a glimmer of hope, it is in Marx's immortal words that "capitalism creates its own gravediggers", but have we got enough time?

Miroslaw S

Australia

17 January 2014

On "The Coen brothers' Inside Llewyn Davis: The story of a struggling musician ... but which one?"

This film has only just been released in Australia. My opinion is that it is disrespectful to Dave van Ronk on whose life it is very loosely based. The main character is an anti-hero for whom nothing ever works out because he fails to take responsibility for the consequences of the decisions he makes and the damage he causes to himself and others. He resents the success of others because he himself is unsuccessful.

He consistently misses opportunities to demonstrate caring and compassion for others including a series of marmalade cats.

At the end of the film, Llewyn Davis ends back at where he began and the implication is that he will never succeed unless he changes his attitude and becomes less "precious" about his musical abilities which are presented in the film as mediocre.

The film seems to say that artists who resist easy pigeon-holing and who remain true to themselves or their calling are self-deluded, arrogant and lack knowledge of what the general public "demands", and that those who succeed in the music industry are those who "get with the program" and allow themselves to be molded by the music industry's decision-makers.

The film has a highly manipulative feel as though the Coen brothers enjoy playing malicious gods toying with their human creations in a haphazard and indifferent universe.

Jennifer H

20 January 2014



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