

*“HEY! THEY’RE TRYING TO LEARN FOR FREE!”:*  
AN ANALYSIS OF *THE SIMPSONS* AS A SATIRICAL PORTRAYAL  
OF NEOLIBERAL INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

A Thesis

Submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Education in the Department of Educational Administration

University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, Canada

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## ABSTRACT

Rooted in the philosophy of Michael W. Apple, this thesis examines how *The Simpsons* has portrayed neoliberalism's influence on public education.

This thesis begins by reviewing literature related to *The Simpsons*' ideological thrust. It considers how *The Simpsons* is rooted in a left-of-centre antagonism towards American hegemony, yet the program will mock anything it deems worthy of ridicule. Next, a framework of neoliberalism as it relates to public education is built using the works of Michael W. Apple. Four specific categories are put forth: privatisation, marketisation, performativity, and the enterprising individual. These categories form the basis of the conceptual content analysis that sampled each of *The Simpsons*' 12 seasons before the 2001 introduction of *No Child Left Behind*, the United States' widely-discussed neoliberal reform package to public education.

The research data is explicated in a series of four chapters, each discussing how *The Simpsons*' portrayals of education reflects neoliberalism as perceived by Apple. What emerged was that while *The Simpsons* tended to critique teachers and schools in a manner similar to what neoliberal ideology contends, when Springfield Elementary enveloped the neoliberal values and reforms that are believed to be a "fix" for education, it was most often further damaged. Because of this cynicism towards neoliberal reforms, this thesis concludes that *The Simpsons* provides wider opportunity to expose and discuss the folly of neoliberalism's influence on public education.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Last June I attended three days billed as professional development but intended to sell computer products: the 2010 International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE) conference. Assembled at my final breakout session—the ISTE Leaders Roundtable forum—were the educators who made up ISTE’s leadership alongside senior management from technology manufacturers. At the roundtable, they congratulated one-another on increasing sales to schools. They complained that Education professors were not steeped in technology applications. They asserted that teachers lacking technological skills would not be working in schools. Then Jim Vanides, Senior Program Manager of Hewlett-Packard, told the assembled leaders and delegates that “I would like to formally proclaim that Larry Cuban was wrong.” Applause erupted. I looked from teacher to executive, and from executive to teacher, and from teacher to executive again; but already it was impossible to say which was which. The closing of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* had just been reconstituted for a neoliberal education system.

This experience would have been lost on me had it not been for this learning process. But how does one acknowledge all those involved in gaining new understandings? It extends from professors to school teachers, from family to friends, and from parents to best friends’ parents. Assembling this list is the ultimate delimitation. Many are missed, but those closest to this research deserve acknowledgement.

Foremost, Dr. Bonnie Stelmach deserves great recognition and gratitude for wisely, trustingly, and even-handedly guiding me through constant disarray. Also deserving recognition and sincere thanks are Dr. Woodhouse, who challenged my conceptions of common sense; Dr. Burgess, who put fear—or possibly respect—of process in me; and Dr. Prytula, who demonstrated graduate research is a challenge but need not be an inquisition. Finally, imperative is the extension of my gratitude to the Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan, for their generous support and unprecedented trust in my professional judgement. And Adam Blüm, for his generous support and unprecedented trust in my personal judgement.

## DEDICATION

I hereby dedicate this thesis to myself.

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CHAPTER ONE:  
*THE SIMPSONS*, SATIRE, AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

*“Cartoons don’t have any deep meaning.  
They’re just stupid drawings that give you a cheap laugh.”*  
Homer Simpson

From Riverdale High to Mr. Chips, popular culture has never shied away from the institution of education. Yet the experiences of the likes of Archie Andrews tend to portray a sanitary view of education. While it would be incorrect to claim that all popular culture consistently depicts idyllic views of education, as any Pink Floyd or *South Park* fan would attest, it was not until the curtain closed on a decade of Reaganomics, globalization, and marginalised social democracy that a distinctly different portrayal of education—and society, in general—burst onto the popular culture forefront with the 1990 prime-time television series debut of *The Simpsons*.

Since its debut, *The Simpsons* has arguably grown into a cultural institution of its own. To date, this mixture of domestic sitcom and animated cartoon has won 27 Emmy Awards and was the 1996 winner of electronic media’s most prestigious award, The Peabody, for “providing exceptional animation and stinging social satire” (Peabody Awards). Testament to its influence, in December 1999 *Time Magazine* named *The Simpsons* the television show of the century. So pervasive has this program become that one 2006 study revealed 22% of Americans could name all five Simpson family members (Delaney, 2008) and *Simpsons’* lexicon has crept into mainstream vocabulary and even the Oxford and Collins English Dictionaries. *The Simpsons* spearheaded animated television’s mainstream re-emergence and carried on to become the longest-running scripted series ever aired in North American prime-time. After twenty-two seasons, *The Simpsons* still lays claim to an estimated 80 million viewers worldwide (Delaney, 2008).

In the nearly 500 *Simpsons* episodes to date, its undeniable satire has taken countless community institutions, corporations, and individuals to task: public education is a frequent



target and the portrayal is not flattering. In fact, “viewers looking for a sanguine or sanitized perspective on American education may well be disappointed or offended” (Kantor, Kantor, Kantor, Eaton, & Kantor, 2001, p. 185) by *The Simpsons*’ depiction of education, centred around Springfield Elementary School.

Springfield Elementary is anything but an ideal learning institution. The only books the school can afford are those banned by other schools. The periodic tables are provided by Oscar Meyer. The computer lab is equipped with Colecos. The lunch room serves rat milk. The teachers’ desks are fitted with independent thought alarms. And so bad is its physical condition, Springfield Elementary was once declared the most dilapidated school in all of Missouri, shut down, and moved brick-by-brick to its current location in *The Simpsons*’ Springfield.

Woodcock (2005) believed that *The Simpsons* provided a rich bank of resources for students of political theory (p. 196). So does *The Simpsons*’ satirical depiction of education reflect a dominant political ideology’s influence on education? The writings of educational philosopher Michael W. Apple would suggest so. Apple (2001b) asserted that “it is open season on education” (p. 1), and squarely placed the blame for the faltering state of public education on “leadership . . . exercised by the neo-liberals” (p. iv). Through Apple’s framing of neoliberalism, this thesis will explore the research question:

- How does *The Simpsons*’ satirical portrayal of education reflect neoliberalism’s influence on public education?

### *The Simpsons: A Synopsis*

*The Simpsons* is meant to be a reflection of everyday American life. The series is based around a nuclear family living in a fictional town named Springfield, USA. This indeterminate American location was meant to establish that the show could be set anywhere: there are no less than 71 real Springfields in 36 different American states (Delaney, 2008). Wood and Todd (2005) described this fictional setting of Springfield as an “omnitopia” that, in part, represented

“the struggle of place to confront a mode of public life in which corporate interests shape all civic sites and relationships” (p. 217).

To build its omnitopia, *The Simpsons* uses animation in a manner that allows for most imaginable amenities and a flexible geography. Episodes contain scenes located virtually anywhere from a convenience store to a sea harbour. Yet this flexibility is grounded in realism and localism: features expected in most cartoons such as characters’ eyes popping out in shock and animals talking are a seldom occurrence, and settings revolve around a few core, recognisable locales, spanning out only to suit episodic needs.

As documented at *The Simpsons Archives*, Homer and Marge Simpson live in a two-story suburban house on Evergreen Terrace, and send their school-age children Bart and Lisa to Springfield Elementary School, overseen by Principal Skinner. While Marge stays at home with infant daughter Maggie, Homer works at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant, owned by Springfield’s oldest and richest man, Mr. Burns. On Sundays, the Simpsons attend the First Church of Springfield, officiated by Reverend Lovejoy. The Simpsons’ neighbours, the Flanders, are devout Christians. In their neighbourhood is the rather unkempt Moe’s Tavern, and a Qwik-E-Mart operated by an East Indian named Apu. Social services in Springfield include the Springfield General Hospital where the Simpsons seek the services of Dr. Hibbert, and the Springfield Retirement Castle, home to Homer’s elderly father Abe. Television station Channel 6 serves Springfield, featuring news anchor Kent Brockman and children’s entertainer Krusty the Clown. Springfield has a local baseball team, the Isotopes, and local products including Duff Beer, a take-off of the Slurpee called the Sqwishee, and Krusty Burgers served at the local fast food chain endorsed by the television clown. Even governance, law making and law enforcement are represented through Mayor Quimby, Police Chief Wiggum, and a handful of local judges. On the other side of the law is mobster Fat Tony, leader of Springfield’s organized crime, and Snake, Springfield’s blue-collar criminal.

While *The Simpsons* appears to mirror many communities, there is one notable exception:

Springfield has an uncharacteristic sense of place and civic responsibility. Town hall meetings are attended by all main characters, childless characters are seen at school events, and virtually all of Springfield's residents regularly attend church. This sense of community spans out to include well-attended local fairs, sporting events, and even protests. Springfielders are engaged citizens living in a common community.

In this common community, individuals often become the caricatured representation of their class, role, or other identity. For example, nuclear plant owner Mr. Burns could be seen as representative of the capitalist, Mayor Quimby representative of the elected official, and Kent Brockman representative of the news media. Abe Simpson could be considered representative of the senior citizen, Mrs. Krabappel of the public school teacher, and Barney Gumble of the alcoholic. By intermingling representative characters of numerous classes and lifestyles in Springfield, *The Simpsons* is able to present grand political and ideological machinations shaping society and demonstrate their impacts on common life through localised circumstances and conflicts in which Springfield's citizenry find themselves.

In specific regard to Springfield Elementary, while the school suffers numerous plights, these plights are almost entirely depicted through the trials and tribulations of the school-based administration, teachers, and support staff, along with the school's students, parents, and community members. Rarely visible are the political and bureaucratic organisations regulating school policy. Evidencing this secondary role, Springfield Elementary's central board office has never been depicted, and its Superintendent, Richard Chalmers, is only a recurring nemesis to Principal Skinner.

On the surface, then, *The Simpsons'* familiar representation of typical American people facing typical American situations seems to be consistent with media scholar John Fiske's (1987) suggestion that the most popular television shows closely gauge the ideals dominant in society. Different to many television programs, however, is that *The Simpsons* gauges these dominant American ideals by reflecting them through situation *and* deconstructing them through satire.

### The Approach

Despite the significance of mass media in the shaping of public discourse (McChesney, 2008, p. 14) and *The Simpsons'* unprecedented success as a mass media product, Knox (2006) found a general lack of scholarly writing on the series (p. 73). Within this limited field, there appears to be a specific lack of literature that directly analyses how *The Simpsons'* satire could reflect neoliberal ideology, particularly in the field of education. However, this lack of literature should not be considered as evidencing a falsehood of this connection. Hursh (2007) argued that a “larger shift from social democratic to neoliberal policies . . . has been occurring over the past several decades; a shift accompanied by both *discursive* [italics added] and structural changes in education and society” (p. 493). Thus, if education and society have structurally moved in a neoliberal direction, then some of the satirical discourse on education and society would address its neoliberal state. *The Simpsons* appears to do just that.

John Alberti (2004), editor of *Leaving Springfield: The Simpsons and the Possibility of Oppositional Culture*, seemed to agree with that premise. While not directly stating that *The Simpsons* is a satirical portrayal of neoliberalism's influence on society, Alberti theorised that satire in *The Simpsons* could be:

the latest version yet of the co-optation of the subversive, where a critical point-of-view is turned from being the basis for political action to a kind of attitude, coping mechanism, and *ultimately consumer profile* [italics added]. (p. xviii)

By reasoning that *The Simpsons* is a “consumer profile,” Alberti spoke directly to the role of citizenry in a neoliberal society. Neoliberalism's “unadulterated emphasis on the market as the source and arbiter of rights, rewards and freedom” (Mudge, 2008, p. 705) equates participatory actions of the citizenry to consumer choices. Therefore, if *The Simpsons'* representation of contemporary America is a consumer profile, it is reflecting one of the core roles of citizenry in a neoliberal society. Intended or not, it would seem that *The Simpsons* demonstrates society's link

to neoliberalism.

If *The Simpsons* demonstrates society's link to neoliberalism, one of the major subset premises of the show—public education—could also contain representations of neoliberalism's influence. This thesis will therefore examine *The Simpsons* with a lense used to critique neoliberal influence on public education: the works of Michael W. Apple. Apple (2001a) specified four broad and intertwined areas of neoliberal discourse and policies that threaten public education: privatisation, marketisation, performativity, and the enterprising individual. These create the framework for which a neoliberal model of education will be constructed to analyse how *The Simpsons* portrays neoliberalism's impact on education.

*Privatisation.* Apple (2001a) contended that neoliberalism advocates a shift of public education to the purvey of the private sphere (p. 419). Because the neoliberal aim to privatise shifts the functions of public goods to a free-market construct (p. 409), this leads to the undermining of teaching.

*Marketisation.* Apple (2001a) argued that neoliberalism has pushed for free-market practice to solve schooling's perceived problems (p. 412). This has led to school culture of competition for the "best" students, while schools swim in a sea of corporate advertising and corporate-produced curricula (p. 413). All of this comes at the expense of true academic independence, but is meant to produce what neoliberals consider "better schools" (p. 413).

*Performativity.* Apple (2001a) found that schools are being moved into a system where neoliberals demand measurable, results-based performance through standardised testing and accountability (p. 412). These performativity measures are largely marked by impossibility of achievement, and used in a punitive fashion for public education (p. 414).

*Enterprising individual.* Apple (2001a) believed that neoliberalism dictated that individuals and organisations must be enterprising, and their failures are solely the result of having made poor marketplace decisions (p. 410). Apple argued that this is a "social Darwinist thinking" (p. 410), with no accounting for culturally-intrinsic social and economic inequalities.

He further pointed out that neoliberalism has thus allowed “the state [to shift] the blame for the very evident inequalities in access and outcome it has promised to reduce, from itself on to individual schools, parents, and children” (p. 417).

Through examining these four areas of neoliberal directions in education in the context of education’s satirical portrayal on *The Simpsons*, further understandings of a satirical popular culture institution should emerge. This is significant due to Fiske and Hartley’s (1977/2003) assertion that “culturally learnt codes and conventions transform what we watch from mere external stimuli into actual communication, where the message is not only received but also decoded, understood, and responded to” (p. 50). Critical understandings of neoliberalism can be furthered by providing indications of how popular culture portrays its influences on education.

#### Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The assumption was made that neoliberalism has been the dominant, most actively implemented political ideology in the western world since at least the 1980s. This assumption was reinforced by analysis from Apple (2001d), Giroux (2008), Hursh (2007), and Mudge (2008), amongst others. Second, it was assumed that “satire as impassioned social and political critique is . . . a long-established element in the English literary canon” (Wagg, 2002, p. 328) and *The Simpsons* generally fills the role of a postmodern satire, as argued or reinforced by virtually every academic and popular culture work produced regarding *The Simpsons*, including Kohn (2000), Alberti (2004), Turner (2004), Gray (2006), and Delaney (2008).

A delimitation in analysis of *The Simpsons* was which aspect of the franchise to study. Before its existence as a weekly animated series, *The Simpsons* first aired as a series of shorts on *The Tracy Ulman Show*. It later branched into a series of print cartoons, a motion picture, two record albums, several video games, and a great deal of licenced merchandise. However, this research was delimited to avoid consideration of areas outside the flagship weekly television series. While the potential to gain further understandings exists through analysis outside of the

core weekly television series, the weekly broadcast program is the most identifiable, most widely-distributed, and most accessed aspect of *The Simpsons*' franchise.

Several considerations were taken when determining which episodes to examine. While the series has enjoyed unprecedented success over twenty-two seasons, references have been made regarding which seasons were the most satirically incisive. There is no accepted date of when the satire in *The Simpsons* became less influential, but it is often put forth that *The Simpsons*' ability to influence public perceptions has diminished: Alberti (2004) targeted the mid-90s as the so-called golden years of the program (p. 296); Turner (2004) claimed the program went downhill after season eight (p. 40); and Sloane (2004) found many self-referential instances within the program—largely as it approached the end of season eight in 1997—that *The Simpsons* could not infinitely sustain its satirical influence. While this is a rather subjective area, the wide-spread acknowledgement of the decline in the program's satirical incisiveness—acknowledgement even encoded within the program—provides incentive to focus on earlier episodes.

Further reason to avoid study of *The Simpsons*' full library of episodes can be found when considering limitations surrounding the arduous task of accessing the series' entire run. To date, *The Simpsons* is only available on DVD up to and including season 13 which completed broadcast in May 2002. Previous studies such as Neimi (1997) video recorded syndicated episodes of *The Simpsons* to create a data pool. However, episodes in syndication are edited from their original broadcast version to allow for more advertising space. Thus, even if a complete collection of episodes could be procured through syndication recordings, the episodes would be edited. Three other possible sources of episodes beyond season 13 exist: bootleg DVDs, streaming video sites, and online peer-to-peer downloads. However, these recordings may not be of the original broadcast premieres but instead of syndicated episodes, thus suffering the same problem of editing.

Perhaps the most important delimitation is the United States' *No Child Left Behind Act*,

legislation formally proposed in January 2001 and viewed as a substantial neoliberal reform (Apple, 2007). There are significant reasons to delimit the data pool to episodes written, produced, and aired before the announcement of *No Child Left Behind*. It meets the needs of the existent library of officially-released DVDs, it includes what are widely accepted as the most incisive years of *The Simpsons* as satire, and it will allow for examination of satirical discourse on the effects of neoliberalism on education before the introduction of this highly controversial and highly publicised neoliberal legislative reform, thus avoiding any possibility of the satire being conceived as merely a reactionary product. It should be noted that while this research will not aim to understand possible connections between popular culture and the widespread political acceptance of *No Child Left Behind*, the January 2001 stop-point creates the possibility for further comparative research of how the education system was satirised on *The Simpsons* post-*No Child Left Behind*, while also beginning a pool of research on media portrayals of public education before *No Child Left Behind*. The January 2001 stop point reconciles several key considerations for examining the program while providing foundations upon which to build future research.

Several limitations of this thesis largely relate to its format as a textual analysis of a fictional satire. Even though “when *The Simpsons* satirizes something, it acknowledges its importance” (Cantor, 1999, p. 742), as Rhodes (2001) observed, *The Simpsons* offers critique “in a way that does not provide predigested solutions, and leaves a space in which the viewer can be active in making sense of the situations that are presented” (p. 382). Thus, while the framework will provide a method for analysis of the program, it must be acknowledged that conceptual content analysis leaves room for valid alternative interpretations to be applied through alternative readings (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 292). This thesis is delimited to Apple’s views of education with respect to neoliberalism for an analytical framework. Further, this thesis does not claim that *The Simpsons* is an intensive project in educational satire. As Gray (2006) noted, putting all of the satire of one particular topic dealt with on *The Simpsons* into a single study will



make that satire seem more coherent than its periodic appearances (p. 13).

### Significance

This thesis will be a unique addition to existent and emerging educational research on neoliberalism. There appears to be a longstanding general apathy or resignation towards the encroachment of market influences on public education (Giroux, 2001, p. 2), while Mudge (2008) more pointedly argued that neoliberalism has brought about a “marked disdain for politics, bureaucracies, and the welfarist state” (p. 705). By analysing how *The Simpsons* reflects neoliberalism’s influence on public education, it will help bring about a better understanding of and greater interest in the impacts of societal subscription to neoliberalism. Many people are already familiar with *The Simpsons*’ reflection of contemporary life, thus through Jerome Bruner’s instructional scaffolding concept (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), the general public’s understanding of Springfield Elementary could be used to scaffold a disinterested public into a better understanding of neoliberalism. The satire of *The Simpsons* is an especially useful vehicle for opening discussions about neoliberal influence on education, as not only did Considine (2006) note that Jonathan Swift found satire the best way to bring people to an awareness of government’s shortcomings, but Gray (2005) believed that parody’s potential is rich since jokes are small packages that travel well due to the ease in being retained and remembered (p. 234). This research will then find itself filling discursive needs identified by Apple. Apple (2001a) contended that “analyses of globalisation and the intricate combination of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism remain on a meta-theoretical level, disconnected from the actual lived realities of real schools, teachers, students, and communities” (p. 421). By using what News Corporation CEO Rupert Murdoch called “the most important show on television” (as quoted in Gray, 2006, p. 148), discussions can be created about neoliberalism and public education.

This research was conducted and completed during times of economic instability. While varied opinions exist on the current and forthcoming state of world economic systems, Krugman

(2010, June 27) speculated that “We are now, I fear, in the early stages of a third depression.” In the past, massive turmoil in economic systems has brought about changes in dominant societal ideology. Neoliberalism, according to Mudge (2008), began its ascendance after the 1973 OPEC embargo’s disruption to the western economic system (p. 709). Predicting neoliberalism’s future would only be speculative, but there does exist the possibility of a forthcoming ideological shift in society. This is evidenced by former Bank of Canada Governor David Dodge’s assertion that current economic turmoil could fundamentally alter the nature of capitalism (Scofield, 2009) and Ash’s (2009) observation that neoliberalism seemed on the verge of destruction. Therefore, now is an opportune time to be analysing the messages popular culture has built around neoliberalism and its influence on education. Satire in specific is an especially important tool for those with an interest in the directions of dominant ideologies, because:

while political and social elites may dismiss [satirical] accounts as ‘irresponsible’ or ‘obscene’, they are also often afraid of them. They know that if the official narrative fails to unfold as the leaders envisioned, the satirical narrative will quickly gain credence. The moment politicians are made into fools, their power quickly dissipates. (Ringmar, 2006, p. 407)

Economic turmoil could be indicative of the official narrative of neoliberalism not unfolding as leaders have envisioned. This then lends more certitude to analysis of satirical discourse on neoliberalism, because “when everything is supposed to get better and nothing does—when bombs are going off around you and the electricity never works—only with satire can sense be made of the situation” (Ringmar, 2006, p. 413).

CHAPTER TWO:  
*THE SIMPSONS'* SATIRICAL THRUST: CONSIDERATIONS AND INDICATIONS

*"Facts are meaningless.  
 You can use facts to prove anything that's even remotely true."  
 Homer Simpson*

To ignore television's significance within society is to ignore "the most popular pastime in history" (Fiske & Hartley, 1977/2003, p. xi). Statistics Canada (2006) reported that Canadians spent an average of 21.4 hours per week watching television. Even though 21.4 hours still only represents a fraction of the many messages television portrays, the medium's popularity—combined with Gray's (2006) contention that television texts transcend their initial broadcasts to become part of common culture and everyday life (p. 119)—provides reason to explore some of television's messages more specifically. This remains true despite the high-culture conception that popular culture is a lesser form of art, worthy of distrust because of its ingrained culture of buying and selling (Savage, 2004, p. 210). Admittedly, even those bereft of artistic intelligence yet suspicious of neoliberalism would understand some motivations for artistic distrust of popular culture, just as they would be suspicious of neoliberal influence on public policy. This artistic distrust, however, provides little reason to deem all television incapable of purveying intelligent messages.

Jameson (1984/1991) believed that television had great potential for purveying intelligent messages, as postmodernism was erasing the divide between high and low culture and giving video-format art "claim for being the art form par excellence of late capitalism" (p. 76). This has been reflected in the writings of those who have studied *The Simpsons*: Savage (2004) considered the divide between high and low culture as nothing more than a "false dichotomy" (p. 202); and more pointed was Alberti's (2004) assessment of the fundamental problem that underlies detractors of *The Simpsons*:

When scholars and critics approach cartoons with the assumption that the medium is not capable of cultural critique due to its popular appeal or corporate origins, they set out on

the wrong interpretive course from the beginning and so are less likely to get it. (p. 219)

Those who have approached *The Simpsons* with what Alberti would consider the correct course did “get it.” Not only has MacMahon (2001) established that messages portrayed in *The Simpsons* are teeming with heuristic value, but both Koenigsberger (2004) and Knox (2006) found *The Simpsons* to be a valid provider of cultural critique, a role particularly strengthened by the program’s hyper-awareness of its double-coded identity as commercial and critical art. Regardless of *The Simpsons*’ role in the high or low culture debate, it is undeniable that televised popular culture products would have messages—intended or otherwise—that society readily consumes. It is *popular* culture after all. So popular, industrialised western society is psychologically dependent upon television for information that enables full participation in society (Fiske & Hartley, 1977/2003, p. 73).

Because of television’s significance in western culture and neoliberalism’s dominance of that culture, explorations of its television products could disclose significant insights into how neoliberalism frames western culture. To understand how this research can accomplish this, it is first necessary to explore the role of *The Simpsons* in this political environment. To begin, the satirical foundations of *The Simpsons* were considered in order to frame the political context of the program. Next, due to this research’s basis in a political ideology, literature that has evaluated episodic incidents of *The Simpsons* as political satire was examined for indications of its stance with regard to neoliberalism. Finally, literature with episodic considerations of *The Simpsons* as school satire was examined to specifically understand how the program reflects education in a neoliberal context.

### *The Simpsons* as Foundationally Sound Satire

#### *The Partisanship of The Simpsons*

The entertainment industry is not politically neutral. *The Simpsons*, like many other entertainment products of the industry in which it exists, is said to have a liberal slant (Cantor,

1999, p. 745). However, *The Simpsons* is not ideologically blinded by any particular view. To be clear, the show's creator, Matt Groening, claimed in 1991 that he was raised in a left-wing environment (Henry, 2004, p. 230) and told *Rolling Stone* magazine in 1988, when *The Simpsons* merely existed as a recurring series of shorts on *The Tracy Ullman Show*, that "if I can make myself and my friends laugh and can annoy the hell out of a political conservative, I feel like I've done my job" (as quoted in Sloane, 2004, p. 138). However, Groening also stated in a 1999 interview with the Associated Press that *The Simpsons* "[does not] have a particular axe to grind" (as quoted in Anthony, 1999). Further, it is important to understand that *The Simpsons* is a collective creative project and several key stakeholders also claim no particular agenda: writers Al Jean and Mike Reiss stated that *The Simpsons* "promotes no point of view on any issue" (as quoted in Rushkoff, 1996, p. 113), executive producer Mike Scully purported the show to be an omni-partisan undertaking intended to "point out hypocrisies . . . but we're not trying to single anybody out" (as quoted in Galdeiri, 1997), and executive producer Sam Simon disavowed political or ideological motives in the show (Broderick, 2004, p. 258). Also of interest was *Simpsons'* writer and producer George Meyer's observation that *The Simpsons* "have enough different opinions on the staff that we don't espouse anyone's political views" (as quoted in Zahed, 1998), a claim seemingly further corroborated—or at the very least not discredited—by the fact that while *The Simpsons* has featured hundreds of guests, a request from then-presidential candidate Al Gore to appear on the program was rejected (Griffiths, 2000).

Cantor (1999), Wallace (2001), Dettmar (2004), Armstrong (2005), and Delaney (2008) corroborated the show's claims of all views regarded as targets on *The Simpsons*, with Cantor best summarising *The Simpsons'* approach to political issues as an exercise "[u]nwilling to forgo any opportunity for humour" (p. 735). Even those most sceptical of the program's political neutrality refused to paint the program as a partisan undertaking. Rushkoff's (1996) discussion of subversive messaging in the media only went as far as to consider the writer's claims of neutrality as "debatable" (p. 113); Henry (2004) believed the satire had a leftist slant that

“regularly presents and juxtaposes both liberal and conservative ideologies” (p. 239); and Gray (2006), who believed *The Simpsons* to have a left-of-centre thrust, still found the program had a “proclivity to mock anything deemed worthy of ridicule” (p. 147) and displayed a “broader politics of mischief and deconstruction” (p. 147).

Unfortunately, there is no substantive study that deconstructs the exact political leanings of *The Simpsons*. Yet together these considerations would seem to indicate that *The Simpsons* cannot be solely pegged as partisan political satire. Instead, as Broderick (2004) summarised, “a close reading of separate episodes or the series as a whole demonstrates an ongoing antagonism towards American hegemony” (p. 258), that as Matheson (2001) reinforced refrains from taking issue-by-issue positions of its own (p. 115). These considerations are significant as it appears that the program, while likely having a vantage point somewhere on the left of the United States’ political spectrum, is a broader postmodern satirical examination of the society in which Americans live. Because this society is framed by neoliberalism on both the political right and political left, there should undoubtedly be critique of neoliberalism embedded in the program. Yet, given the broader politics of *The Simpsons*, it should also be expected that even if the show is believed to be rooted in left-of-centre antagonism towards American hegemony, some of the show’s satirical critique will come from a perspective that perpetuates or reinforces neoliberal beliefs.

#### *Postmodern Political Satire Delivered Through Neoliberal Media*

To contend that *The Simpsons* contains representations valid for consideration as neoliberal critique requires addressing the fact that the program is a product of and broadcast through privately-held corporations. The privately-held media are fundamentally neoliberal institutions, because the United States’ media system “does not exist to serve democracy, it exists to generate maximum profit to the small number of very large firms and billionaire investors” (McChesney, 2000, p. 3). If major television broadcasters are neoliberal, then analysing

television creates an interpretive quandary regarding the nature of political satire on this medium: why would neoliberal corporations disseminate satire of the political ideology they engage in and support? Admittedly, a similar argument could be made regarding the printed word, as many publishing companies are also large multinational corporations. However, not only are there fewer barriers to entry for the printed word than there are for televised productions, but as Alberti (2004) noted, the printed word long predates corporate entities while television began as a corporate product (p. xx). These considerations suggest that the printed word as a medium has some footings in creative independence never experienced by television.

Despite conceivable limitations of political satire being produced and disseminated by neoliberal entities, Rushkoff (1996) noted that *The Simpsons* has been able to present intelligent discourse and release radical ideas into the cultural mainstream (p. 117). Reinforcing this premise, Alberti (2004) pointed out that *The Simpsons* “has entered fully into the mainstream even while apparently embracing ideas (e.g., the promotion of Paganism; the critique of Christianity) that conventional wisdom would see as fatal to mass public acceptance” (p. xii). Considerations of television as a liberal medium notwithstanding, understanding *The Simpsons*’ ability to disseminate controversial and satirical messaging lies partly in understanding the relationship between the show and its broadcast network FOX. At the time of *The Simpsons*’ debut, FOX was a fledgling, fourth-place American network described by *Time Magazine* as a “try-anything underdog” (Zoglin, Natale, & Williams, 1990). Trying *The Simpsons* worked: the series is universally credited with bringing FOX mainstream commercial success as a television network and by 2001 had brought over one billion dollars in direct revenue to the network (Gray, 2006, p. 8). Therefore, as neoliberal doctrine puts high value on profit, it is not antithetical for *The Simpsons* to contain political messages contrary to the political desires of the medium’s owners because, as Sloane (2004) hypothesized, “the logic of capitalism has [quite possibly] evolved to the point that it may support the sale of *anything* that proves profitable, even if the product’s content explicitly defies its productive logic” (p. 139).

Further enabling the dissemination of messages contrary to neoliberal ideology is the creative process allowed to *The Simpsons*. Due to FOX's weak position as a television network in the late 1980s, veteran television producer James Brooks was able to negotiate a deal for *The Simpsons* that kept network interference out of the show's writing (Kuipers, 2004). In reference to this deal, *Simpsons'* writer Mike Scully (as quoted in Sloane, 2004) elaborated on this aspect about creating the show:

it's a completely unique experience as a writer, because on most shows you have to accept the input of the network and the studio, their notes on the things they want to be changed. Normally, there would be around twelve people going over your script, telling you what's wrong with it and how to fix it, and we don't have that here. We're completely autonomous. We make all our own creative decisions and so, if the show comes out great, we pat ourselves on the back; if it stinks then we have to blame ourselves. (p. 143)

It would be incorrect to deduce from Scully's comments that *The Simpsons* is a writing free-for-all: a multitude of constraints exist in the world of conventional broadcast television and there would undoubtedly be limits in how far *The Simpsons* would go in its critiques for fears of alienating its audience or jeopardising its own existence. However, this approach would seem to indicate that *The Simpsons* has existed with a relatively healthy writer-centric—as opposed to corporate-centric—creative thrust.

Also worth consideration in how *The Simpsons* finds itself able to disseminate satirical messaging that could be read as contrary to ideological desires of neoliberal media is how the program displays Springfield's media. While *The Simpsons* takes many satirical jabs at all forms of media—including the FOX network on which it airs—it portrays Springfield's media not as globalised organisations, but instead as open and accessible institutions largely under local control (Cantor, 1999, p. 744; Woodcock, 2005, p. 194). This illustration of media then tempers the satire by portraying common citizens as empowered to shape media messages. Even if



modern globalised media conglomerates are not responsive to local needs, Springfield's media are.

The creative considerations granted to *The Simpsons* evidences that the program exemplified Jameson's belief that intelligent messages can be portrayed through television. When this is considered in light of the show's massive profitability and neoliberalism's propensity to sell anything, the concept of *The Simpsons* being a widely-distributed televised satirical discourse portraying satirical viewpoints that would otherwise be marginalised by neoliberals is certainly plausible, if not to be expected.

#### *The Simpsons as Canonical and Accessible Satire*

Postmodern cultural theory can help explain how, through satire, *The Simpsons* empowers voices and viewpoints marginalised by neoliberalism. Applying Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Koenigsberger (2004) concluded that postmodernism represented "both a return of the repressed and a recentering [of marginal, oppositional politics of the early modernists], and this double-movement produces the kind of cultural production of which *The Simpsons* is typical" (p. 39). While *The Simpsons* is not the sole postmodern force with the ability to re-centre marginalised voices to the mainstream, given its genre-creating status in animated satire and mainstream success as a consumer product, it has certainly been a powerful player in bringing what could be considered fringe viewpoints to the centre of societal critique. Chow (2004) furthered Koenigsberger's postulation. In the context of *The Simpsons*, Chow believed that "American popular culture is at once guilty of reinforcing traditional hegemonic representations as well as *providing widely-accessible sites of resistance* [italics added]" (p. 113). That *The Simpsons* has been acknowledged as enormously successful in building a role as a valid provider of critique of and a site of resistance to American hegemony—and has done so using the levers of a neoliberal media—further validates its potential for providing satirical discourse on dominant political ideology. As well, its genre-

creating role even opens the possibility of the show being canonic.

With due credit to Hanna-Barbera for launching the adult cartoon format with *The Flintstones*, Mullen (2004) credited *The Simpsons* as opening the door for mainstream acceptance and success of postmodern animated satires such as *South Park*, *Family Guy*, and *Beavis and Butthead*. Further, Savage (2004) pointed out that much like *The Simpsons*, satirists such as Twain and Dickens who wrote to entertain are now unassailably canonical (p. 222). Reinforcing Savage's link, Holt (2001, p. 180), Wallace (2001, p. 245), and Broderick (2004, p. 201) all speculated that the satirical approach of *The Simpsons* was in the tradition of Jonathan Swift. Considine (2006) was most specific in placing *The Simpsons* in the literary tradition of Jonathan Swift, along with George Orwell. He believed that similar to Swift's and Orwell's works, *The Simpsons* is considered entertainment best-suited for children, it deals with contemporary issues in politics, and it does so through non-disruptive allusion and distorted human forms. Considine added that much like Swift and Orwell, *The Simpsons'* creator Matt Groening has described the series' subtext to be how those in power do not have the people's best interests in mind (p. 224). Undoubtedly, Swift, Orwell, Twain, and Dickens set standards for literary satirists that followed, just as *The Simpsons* planted the roots for the current crop of animated satire. Thus, by playing this significant role in bringing forth political critique and satire to the mainstream of mass culture, the literature seems to hint at the possibility of *The Simpsons* being canonic. These early postulations of the program's canonical nature further indicate that the program is a valid satirical mechanism for analysis of political ideology.

Despite these compelling views of how *The Simpsons* is a provider of relevant and powerful satire, it does not necessarily mean that this satire is accessible to all viewers. In the context of how *The Simpsons'* satire has found a place on corporate media, Sloane (2004) pointed out that "a text may be *encoded* with oppositionality" (p. 140). An encoded message would require decoding and many viewers may not decipher all possible meanings, thus reducing the message's impact and reducing the satire's social risk. Salient to this speculation was

Beard's (2004) observation that *The Simpsons*' open-ended nature left room for diverse interpretations by viewers (p. 277), and Gray's (2006) study of the public's differing reads of *The Simpsons*. Further, Alberti (as quoted in Brook, 2004) cautioned that:

As academic fans of the show, and as students of popular culture, we tend to watch TV as a political document and potential source of cultural and political critique. We tend to forget that this is not a universal nor even necessarily a prudent expectation. (p. 191)

Beard and Alberti's speculations are not without merit, as Rushkoff (1996) noted that audiences interested in *The Simpsons*' subversive elements are not in enough quantity to keep the program in business (p. 115). Therefore, if as has been suggested, *The Simpsons* is soundly-based satire with potential for examining neoliberal perspectives, the message—however valid or intended—is possibly being decoded as such only by a limited audience.

#### Episodic Indicators of *The Simpsons*' Neoliberal Satire

Academic deconstruction of *The Simpsons*' theoretical underpinnings exists alongside episodic recounting and analysis of its contemporary American satire, and some of this has relation to two key concepts of this thesis: political and educational satire. While the literature that explores specific episodic indicators of *The Simpsons* as political and as educational satire is limited in quantity and there has been no specific discourse on *The Simpsons*' relationship with neoliberalism, it does help to evidence the nature of the satire in relation to political factors and to better illustrate the program's attitudinal stance in relation to education. Because the literature is limited, it does not allow for a full grasp on how, exactly, neoliberalism is being approached in *The Simpsons*. It does, however, provide strong indications that the program is reflecting and satirising the neoliberal underpinning of perceiving individuals as utility maximisers, and that the program is reflecting and satirising public schooling as suffering major shortcomings. This research has potential to substantially expand upon these existent but limited understandings of *The Simpsons* as political satire and as school satire.

### The Simpsons as Political Satire

Given the neoliberal emphasis on the microeconomic concept that all individuals maximise personal utility, there appears to be signposts within existing literature that would indicate *The Simpsons* has been exploring neoliberal values. In what is likely the closest that *Simpsons*-related literature comes to directly approaching aspects of neoliberalism, Considine (2006) considered *The Simpsons* to be an ideal tool for teaching public choice theory, a method of institutional reform considered a root of neoliberalism. Public choice theory's advocacy against the role of centralised government in relation to social and welfare services is based on the belief that all individuals, including those in power, are self-maximisers of utility, and so centralised power leads to misappropriation of public funds (Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2006, p. 153). Considine found that *The Simpsons* modelled all individuals, from voter to leader, as self-maximising caricatures. Matheson (2001) corroborated this belief, claiming that as a whole, *The Simpsons* portrayed caring at the level of the individual, not the collective (p. 114). This is not surprising, as it is consistent with Fiske's (1987) observations of the individualistic thrust of fictional television. However, as *The Simpsons* is satire, Springfielders' self-maximising behaviour reached perverse levels, including their civic conduct.

Exemplifying the prevalence of self-maximising behaviour in political leadership is Springfield's Mayor Quimby. Considine (2006) pointed out that despite Mayor Quimby's predisposition to accept bribes and to misappropriate funds for personal benefit, Springfield continually returned him to power because the alternatives never proved better (p. 225). It is understandable that alternatives never prove better for Springfield's self-maximising electorate, given Cantor's (1999) conclusion that "Mayor Quimby is a demagogue, but at least he is Springfield's own demagogue. When he buys votes, he buys them directly from the citizens of Springfield" (p. 743). While Mayor Quimby bought votes to the perceived benefit of Springfield's citizens, he also showed reckless disregard for his constituents by placing financial return supreme over other aspects of the public good, as evidenced by Wood & Todd's (2005)

recounting of Quimby's behaviour towards a movie producer with thirty million dollars to spend in the episode "Radioactive Man" (Swartzwelder & Dietter, 1995). Eager to bolster the local economy, Quimby offered to "blow up our dams, destroy forests, anything! If there's a species of animal that's causing problems, nosing around your camera, we'll have it wiped out!" Clearly, corporate needs and financial gain took precedent over sustainability under Quimby's governance. Since Quimby retained power through demagogic methods, and because Springfielders were maximisers of their individual utility, short-term financial benefits to Springfield could keep the electorate placated even if the common good is disregarded.

Mayor Quimby's representative role as the elected official illustrated how *The Simpsons* most often frames politics: Springfield was characterised by a high degree of local control and autonomy in political decision making (Cantor, 1999, p. 743). Woodcock (2006) echoed this, believing that deliberative democracy works in Springfield: local control was exercised through frequent public meetings where all citizens have a belief of being moral equivalents (p. 194). Although a high degree of localised citizen participation in the political process would not be considered characteristic of a neoliberal society, it was consistent in the manner with which *The Simpsons* framed most issues locally. Further, it allowed *The Simpsons* to explore political motivations and ramifications of individuals maximising utility. Woodcock pointed out that Springfield's public meetings do not always lead to successful public policy because voters tend to be ill-informed and act in a self-maximising manner (p. 194).

To evidence the shortcomings of both Springfield's voters and leaders in regards to substantive political discourse, Considine (2006) pointed to *The Simpsons'* recurring motif that voters were unable to see the relationship between public expenditure and taxation levels, as illustrated in "Much Apu About Nothing" (Cohen & Dietter, 1996). When a docile bear roamed into Springfield and destroyed the Simpsons' mailbox, an incensed Homer led an angry protest to town hall. Mayor Quimby agreed to citizen cries for a bear patrol, and the costly program involving ground troops and stealth bombers resulted in a tax increase. Incensed by higher taxes

yet unable to comprehend the bear patrol's burden on the public purse, Homer once again led an angry anti-tax mob to town hall. Unwilling to explain causality in regards to Springfield's high taxes, Quimby appeased the mob by blaming high taxes on the burden of illegal immigrants. Considine found this sequence as an example of how politicians deliberately mislead voters while taking the path of least political resistance. The entire ordeal, Considine believed, evidenced that citizens want the highest quality of public services but are unwilling to pay for them (p. 226).

When Springfield had surplus civic funds, as a collective they again proved themselves unable to make wise investments for the public good. This was best illustrated in Wood and Todd's (2006) discussion of the process by which Springfield determined how to spend a three million dollar windfall, in "Marge Vs. The Monorail" (O'Brien & Moore, 1993). At a town meeting, a fast-talking huckster sold Springfield on a monorail just as the town appeared to reach a consensus on investing in Springfield's Main Street. The decision to build the monorail was never rationalised. Instead, it was driven by simple mob mentality. That a flashy visitor's claims of a monorail putting Springfield "on the map" superceded arguments for core infrastructure investment brought Wood and Todd to conclude that the Monorail affair evidenced how *The Simpsons* "consistently mocks the potential of the masses to demonstrate common sense" (p. 216). Further, Wood and Todd believed the monorail to be nothing more than symbolic of the "working class fantasy of upward mobility" (p. 216): efforts to actualise middle-class upward mobility through public means in Springfield resulted in wasted public dollars that failed to enhance public good.

While Springfield's political leaders and populace were both discounted as short-sighted self-maximisers incapable of delivering prudent governance, the learned were not portrayed as a suitable alternative. Skoble (2001) examined rule by the learned through evaluating "They Saved Lisa's Brain" (Selman & Michels, 1999), an episode based on Plato's *Republic*. Springfield's Mensa members, interestingly including Principal Skinner, formed an "intellectual junta" that

took control of Springfield. The junta had a successful start but ultimately failed due to introducing self-interested rules that, while perhaps well-grounded in theory, were untenable to most citizens. The resulting citizen opposition combined with the junta's infighting led Skoble to conclude that this episode was both a critical analysis of how the average person is unable to recognise the merits of rule of the wise, and how the very concept of rule of the wise has serious flaws (p. 33). Cantor (1999), in considering "They Saved Lisa's Brain," came to similar conclusions, noting that the actions of the intellectual junta provided evidence of disdain for the common man, and that intellectual rule can also lack sensibility (p. 746). Both Skoble's and Cantor's conclusions regarding intellectual leadership have great applicability to Woodcock's (2006) examination of an episode where Principal Skinner and Edna Krabappel entered into a romance.

In "Grade School Confidential" (Pulido & Dietter, 1997) Superintendent Chalmers demanded that a romance between Principal Skinner and Edna Krabappel be discontinued. Evidencing the high degree of community involvement in Springfield, Mrs. Krabappel countered that the issue should be taken to the townspeople to decide. Chalmers, referring to two of Springfield's more colourful citizens, Bumblebee Man and Sideshow Mel, responded "Who do you want to talk to first? The guy with the bumblebee suit or the one with a bone through his hair?" In the flexible world of cartoon animation, "the one with the bone through his hair," Sideshow Mel, was immediately put forth to respond, "My opinions are as valid as the next man's." This exchange brought forth the value of expertise versus the equality of voice in democracy: Superintendent Chalmers' position reinforced Skoble's (2001) and Cantor's (1999) observations that expertise should carry some value, while Sideshow Mel's stance was indicative of Woodcock's (2006) belief that Springfield's citizens view themselves as empowered moral equivalents. It is also worthy of consideration that Bumblebee Man is one of the few visible minorities on *The Simpsons*, which—while likely not an intention of Chalmers' retort—spoke to their general lack of empowerment.

While the political emphasis of *The Simpsons* was local, it did appear to branch out to grander levels. Considine (2006) demonstrated this point with his analysis of the events of “Mr. Lisa Goes to Washington” (Meyer & Archer, 1991) when public officials were first caricatured at their worst through corruption and pork-barrel politics, then at their best by reforming to serve ultimate public interest. The representations given in this episode were neither the whole truth, nor entirely false: instead the viewer was left to decide how to effectively constrain public officials so they behave closer to the collective public interest. Considine found this to evidence that *The Simpsons* is not simply one-sided and cynical in its portrayals (p. 225), and the events seemed to reinforce the widely-held belief that the program will juxtapose alternative stances when addressing issues.

Overall, while analysis of *The Simpsons* as political satire was extremely limited, what did exist illustrated some common themes. It became clearer that *The Simpsons* was not a partisan critique but instead an overall critique of American hegemony. Democracy was portrayed to have major failings and the only people equipped to change the system were a self-maximising public that appeared void of sound decision-making skills. Political leadership could not be trusted to remedy problems facing Springfield, but instead acted as another self-maximising agent. Therefore, considered as a whole, the political lense of *The Simpsons* appeared to emphasise society as built upon self-maximising individuals—albeit with an unusually high sense of community—and such self-maximising behaviour resulted in failures in public policy regardless if decisions were being made by centralised power or by voter choice. Given the intent of this research to explore the reflection of neoliberalism in education, exposure of self-maximising behaviour of the interested parties in Springfield Elementary may become apparent, including administration, staff, parents, and students, along with discovery of how this behaviour is contributing to the failures, and perhaps successes, of Springfield Elementary.



*The Simpsons as Educational Satire*

Delaney (2008) deemed that *The Simpsons* provided a wealth of information to evaluate education's state. However, despite the series' prolific run, literature directly addressing *The Simpsons* and education was another extremely limited niche in an area already short on academic writing. What exists tends to be student or teacher-centric in its analysis, seldom considering the political forces responsible for the less-than-ideal learning situations at Springfield Elementary. While the literature does not categorically delve into how neoliberal values have shaped this learning environment, it does provide general understanding of messages regarding education portrayed on *The Simpsons*.

Kantor et al. (2001) in what is likely the widest-scoping—but not necessarily probing—published analysis of *The Simpsons* as school satire found *The Simpsons* to be the most successful example of a show that mined the recognisable characteristics of education from field trips to red pens, offering:

penetrating commentary . . . on such matters as critical thinking, multicultural education, gender bias, business-school relationships, cultural literacy, ability grouping and tracking, school funding and access to resources, private versus public schools, the separation of church and state, and traditional versus progressive approaches to teaching and learning.  
(p. 199)

Their analysis largely focussed on teachers' relationship to Springfield Elementary's shortcomings. While they did suggest that the show allowed for faith in teachers and schools, as a whole Kantor et al. found Springfield Elementary's staff to be "lazy, uninspired, authoritarian, pessimistic, condescending, elitist, propagandistic, biased, lonely, insecure, depressed, dissatisfied, pathetic, defensive, fearful, reactionary, or, especially, incompetent" (p. 186). This was consistent with the brief summation of Springfield Elementary's staff put forth by Delaney (2008, p. 310). Kantor et al. connected these teacher inabilities and narrow-minded attitudes to the hindered progress of Springfield Elementary's students, most specifically Bart, the

academically-underperforming yet maniacal genius, and Lisa, the under-challenged yet ideal student.

It would seem most logical to look at the tone the program set forth with regard to education by first examining *The Simpsons*' opening sequence, due to the prominence of Springfield Elementary in it. Viewers were first introduced to Bart in detention, writing lines in what Wood and Todd (2005) blandly described as a "vaguely art deco-looking elementary school" (p. 207). Most episodes featured a unique line for punishment from the apparently absurd "The cafeteria deep-fryer is not a toy" to the ironic "I will not waste chalk" to the biting "I will not expose the ignorance of the faculty." There did not appear to be literature deconstructing these lines' meta-purpose, although cursive observation revealed that they were generally associated with episodic themes or topical trends. Further, introducing Bart in detention evidenced Kantor et al.'s (2001) belief that Springfield Elementary did not meet the needs of its students, given that Bart's maniacal misbehaviour indicated intelligence equal to his straight-A sister Lisa (p. 188).

During what Kutnowski (2008) described as a mediocre and out-of-tune school band rehearsal (p. 603), Lisa was introduced breaking into a blues-inspired saxophone solo. For this display of individuality, Mr. Largo kicked Lisa out. Emphasising Lisa's individuality, much like Bart's ever-changing chalkboard gag Lisa's solo is chosen from a library of 37 different numbers (Garvey, 2010). Kutnowski speculated that Lisa's introduction represented the structure and restraint that held back Lisa's intelligence and creative potential (p. 603). This was again consistent with Kantor et al.'s (2001) conclusions that Springfield Elementary was unable or unwilling to respond to individual student needs. Considered in whole, it appeared that the opening sequence perpetuated negative portrayals of public schooling, by exposing Springfield Elementary as an institution not performing a pedagogical function for individual students, but instead acting as a place of oppression and punishment.

While the introductory sequence of *The Simpsons* painted a portrait of demoralised school

children, episodic portrayals of schooling revealed that the teachers were not much better off. Some of Springfield Elementary's faults were made clear in Kantor et al.'s (2001) reference to possibly one of the most important education-related episodes of *The Simpsons*, "The PTA Disbands" (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). "The PTA Disbands" told the story of dilapidated and underfunded organisational conditions that led teachers to strike. With teachers absent, Springfield's residents assumed teachers' roles. The strike was only resolved when Principal Skinner and Mrs. Krabappel realised that they could make up for school funding shortfalls by renting out cloak rooms as holding cells for the overcrowded prison system.

When considering this episode, Kantor et al. (2001) did not link Springfield Elementary's failures to the school's organisational circumstances beyond poor staffing. Although, their overall summation of *The Simpsons* did acknowledge that the series' approach to school matters were "often tied to economic issues, especially as related to cutbacks in funding, the interests of big business, and discrepancies between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'" (p. 195), concepts all notably related to neoliberal influence on education. "The PTA Disbands" was summarised by Kantor et al. as "a critique of the profession: that virtually anyone (including a cyborg) can teach" (p. 190). While conceding that as teachers "most of [the common residents] fail miserably" (p. 190), their analysis did not consider how the episode's storyline brought teachers to labour action, nor did it consider the episode's back-handed acknowledgement of teachers' professional skills given that Springfield's residents perform even more poorly than the town's grossly inadequate teachers. Their analysis also failed to provide insight into the political dynamic surrounding the strike. What can be ascertained was that the failure of the strike to actually improve Springfield Elementary was consistent with Rhodes' (2001) analysis of the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant as a critique of organisational behaviour: *The Simpsons* "does not provide a new organizational utopia, but rather creates the opportunity for critique" (p. 383).

Also of interest in "The PTA Disbands" was how it reflected the high degree of community involvement in Springfield Elementary despite the school's shortcomings. Perhaps

this could be attributed to community accessibility to the school. Cantor (1999) pointed out that Springfield was not confronted by an elaborate, unapproachable, and uncaring educational bureaucracy; instead Principal Skinner and his staff were readily accessible to the people of Springfield even if they were not perfect educators (p. 743). This public accessibility to and public engagement in Springfield Elementary were consistent with Springfield's high degree of civic involvement, and also interesting aspects of the school, given neoliberalism's negative conceptions of bureaucracy.

Kantor et al.'s (2001) analysis of Springfield Elementary also considered how more than just regular-stream school programming had been targeted on *The Simpsons*. Illustrating this premise was their recounting of a particular event in "Bart the Genius" (Vitti & Silverman, 1990), an episode that addressed advanced learning programs. After Bart switched his completed standardised test with a higher-achieving student—a test that both Kantor et al. (2001, p. 197) and Delaney (2008, p. 330) noted was introduced by Mrs. Krabappel as having no bearing on grades but would instead determine the students' future social and financial success—Bart was moved from regular-stream programming to an exceptional-learner classroom that encouraged learning through discovery. Kantor et al. pointed to the hypocrisy of the self-identified "learning coordinator" teacher who encouraged students to "discover" their desks and make their own rules, yet who was appalled to find a comic book hidden in a shelf of literary classics. Not only did "Bart the Genius" strike out against standardised testing, a performativity staple of neoliberalism, but it also portrayed advanced programs in public education as being as shallow and misguided as contemporary classrooms.

Perhaps most troubling for public education's purpose was Kantor et al.'s (2001) belief that *The Simpsons* challenged the liberal viewpoint of education as the great mobilizer. Springfield Elementary's mediocre reproduction model for learning appeared to merely lead students to mediocre outcomes in life. Kantor et al. pointed to several examples where Springfield Elementary was merely preparing students for a bleak future: Mrs. Krabappel and

Ms. Hoover discussed how a school assembly would provide fond memories for the students in their adult careers as gas station attendants; Superintendent Chalmers commented that school uniforms would prepare the students for future positions in mills and factories; and Principal Skinner outright stated that the school's students had no future (p. 192). Other intriguing examples brought forth by Kantor et al. were found in Principal Skinner pointing to a bus boy in a restaurant and noting that standardised testing never lies (p. 192), and the razor-sharp denouement of "The PTA Disbands" when one of the school's cloak-room prisoners pointed to the spot where he used to sit in Mrs. Krabappel's class (p. 194). Yet perhaps the most telling example of *The Simpsons'* discounting of education as a great mobilizer could be found in Kantor et al.'s observation regarding how past educational and life experiences have tainted Springfield Elementary's staff. Mrs. Krabappel, when administering the Career Aptitude Normalising Test—or CANT—began with a self-reflective preamble that stated:

In spite of your Masters from Bryn Mawr, you might end up a glorified babysitter to a bunch of dead-eyed fourth-graders while your husband runs naked on a beach with your marriage counsellor. (p. 197)

The message was clear: education holds little value, educators do not believe in the value of their profession, and the results of education are skills with low self-actualising value.

Literature regarding *The Simpsons'* episodic portrayal of public education appeared to illustrate Springfield Elementary as a failed institution. Although ample opportunity exists to consider this portrayal negative, viewers cannot be entirely unsympathetic to the school, nor was it necessarily clear in this literature what caused the failures of Springfield Elementary. Given the available literature, it would appear the forces of neoliberalism may be putting public education under siege in Springfield, but it also appeared that neoliberal rhetoric regarding the shortcomings of public schooling—especially with regard to the shortcomings of teachers and labour—had footing in Springfield. What is abundantly clear is that Springfield Elementary satirically indicated that there were fundamental problems in public education, and this research

will build understandings of these perceptions of Springfield Elementary by further exploration that aims to understand how the influence of neoliberalism on education is being reflected in this portrayal.

### *Use Value and Exchange Value in Springfield*

Even if education adds little to the marketplace value of Springfielders, the concept of the marketplace itself as portrayed on *The Simpsons* appeared rife with folly, thus indicating a possible tilt in the show's attitudinal stance on neoliberalism. A pointed example of *The Simpsons'* satire of the marketplace was found in Koenigsberger's (2004) analysis of "Bart Sells His Soul" (Daniels & Archer, 1995), an episode that was testament to the ambivalence of the marketplace to the human condition. In this episode, Bart fooled the First Church of Springfield congregation into performing Iron Butterfly's "In A-Gadda-Da-Vidda." Required to clean the church organ's pipes as punishment, a frustrated Bart proclaimed that there was no such thing as a soul, and sold his to Milhouse for five dollars. Soon, events indicative of Bart no longer having a soul took place: his dog became hostile towards him, his breath no longer condensed on display freezers, and automatic doors no longer opened for him. Realising he needed his soul back, Bart approached Milhouse, who asked for more than Bart could afford: fifty dollars. Unwilling to simply return the soul and later tired of possessing it, Milhouse instead exchanged it for ALF pogs at The Android's Dungeon and Baseball Card Shop. It took Lisa to bring an end to the soul's commodification by repurchasing it for Bart.

The episode's sub-plot also examined the danger of market forces through its exploration of Moe's pursuit of profits. To increase business at Moe's Tavern, Moe took on the false persona of "Uncle Moe" and converted his tavern into "Uncle Moe's Family Feedbag." Koenigsberger (2004) noted that further reenforcing the episode's premise of everything being for sale was Homer's suggestion that the tavern be renamed "Chairman Moe's Magic Wok": evidence of an extreme level of consumer culture where the "American viewing public . . . turns

Mao Zedong into exchange value, commodifying his image” (p. 52). Living the false persona of Uncle Moe proved too much stress for Moe to handle, and he reverted his restaurant to Moe’s Tavern.

Koenigsberger (2004) found “Bart Sells his Soul” illustrative of how use value can be converted to exchange value in the marketplace, as seen with Bart’s sale of his soul, and how commodity culture can control an individual’s persona, as seen with Moe’s assumption of a personality foreign to his true self. Koenigsberger pointedly illustrated the cause of these undertaking’s failures:

Both projects—the circulation of Bart’s soul and the commerce that Moe stakes upon marketing himself as “Uncle Moe”—fail because Bart and Moe come to understand too late the nature of the market to which they are proffering themselves as commodities. (p. 52)

This episode thus served to illustrate the “ethical laziness and irresponsibility that characterize the show’s version of capitalism” (Wood & Todd, 2005, p. 218).

Intended to address the nature of markets, “Bart Sells His Soul” has great application to and great warning for the educational community. Just as Moe’s primary interest was in being a tavern proprietor, a school’s primary interest is in providing education: venturing into a market for which Moe was ill-suited resulted in failure. Yet perhaps even more ominous was Bart’s experience: just as Bart was unable to return his soul to his domain once it became a market good, education could be difficult to return to the public domain as it further becomes a market good. It seems that if *The Simpsons* has portrayed markets as having fundamental flaws, this research may be able to reveal fundamental flaws of pursuing neoliberal directions in public education.

### Summary

While there are not yet volumes of literature detailing the intricacies of political and

educational satire on *The Simpsons*, what does exist evidenced several common themes: *The Simpsons* is a valid satirical provider, it portrays satire through caricature and localisation, it gives forums for marginalised voices, and it is ideologically antagonistic towards a multitude of viewpoints. In regard to political portrayals, the show appears to exhibit most individuals as engaged in self-maximising behaviour. In regards to education, the show is virtually unexplored but the literature indicates that the show does contain a large pool of satirical discourse from which one interested in education and political theory can analyse, and this pool does appear highly critical of the state of public education. This portrayal of broken public education could be reflecting neoliberalism's influence, but this exploration has not yet taken place.

It is argued that "neoliberal policies . . . aim to 'desacralize' institutions that had formerly been protected from the forces of private market competition, such as education" (Mudge, 2008, p. 704). Springfield Elementary is clearly an embattled institution, and the political will of Springfield's citizens and leaders appeared to be marred by incompetence and disinterest in anything beyond utility self-maximising. However, as perhaps best evidenced in Koenigsberger's study of "Bart Sells His Soul," *The Simpsons* also demonstrated that "desacralizing" for the objective of profit can bring about disastrous consequences. These considerations provide warning about the directions neoliberalism is taking society and incentive to further explore how *The Simpsons* can shed light on neoliberalism's impact on publicly-funded education. The forthcoming chapter explicates the process this study used to understand exactly how *The Simpsons* illustrated neoliberalism's impact on public education.



CHAPTER THREE:  
THE CONCEPTUAL CONTENT ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

*“The answers to life’s problems aren’t at the bottom of a bottle.  
They’re on TV.”*  
Homer Simpson

The objectives of this research grew out of the belief that the satirical portrayal of education on *The Simpsons* has relation to the current dominant political ideology of neoliberalism. Not only did the literature indicate that *The Simpsons* had potential to address neoliberalism, but a closer reading of existent analyses of the program appeared to reinforce the validity of this belief. However, *The Simpsons* had not yet been analysed using a framework that delved into neoliberalism’s role in education. Therefore, this thesis more deeply explored neoliberalism and public education as satirically portrayed on *The Simpsons* through exploration of its research question:

- How does *The Simpsons*’ satirical portrayal of education reflect neoliberalism’s influence on public education?

This question was pursued using a theoretical approach to neoliberalism rooted on the works of Michael W. Apple. Data gathering was structured around Krippendorff’s (2004) model of conceptual content analysis. Because the conceptual content analysis was of a qualitative nature, understanding of the resultant data—built around an Apple-based taxonomy—required elements of Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) naturalistic inquiry in order to better understand and validate the emergent data.

### The Research Method

#### *Data Making Procedure*

To reduce the examination to relevant episodes of *The Simpsons*, a form of relevance sampling was used consistent with Krippendorff’s (2004) prescription of a multistage process (p. 119). The first step was the creation of a data pool using Groening (2002). All episodes with

education as a main plot were identified from the 258 *Simpsons* episodes aired from its inception until the January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001 introduction of *No Child Left Behind*. The resulting inventory of education-related episodes was clustered into seasons, and a random selection of one episode from each season created the data pool for analysis. Admittedly, this was not a true random sample of education's appearances over these twelve seasons. The number of education-related episodes varied between seasons and those episodes with minor occurrences of education were not considered. However, this method ensured a data pool "conceptually representative of the set of all possible units of data" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 84) with respect to engaging in an education-intensive consideration of the program that was also an even-handed chronological representation.

Each episode in the data pool was viewed to identify the education-related circumstances, and each instance of education was considered a recording unit. These instances were examined against an analytical construct built on four neoliberal categorical distinctions based on Apple (2001a): privatisation, marketisation, performativity, and the enterprising individual. A fifth "fail-safe" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 132) category made note of situations where neoliberal concepts appeared but the circumstances did not appear to fit into the four categories. This category, however, found little application.

As Krippendorff (2004) noted, "for a content analysis to be replicable, the analyst must explicate the context that guides their inferences" (p. 24). The context—explicated in the final section of this chapter—was used as the basis to rationalise how each recorded portrayal was a hegemonic articulation of neoliberal philosophy, or counterhegemonic criticism of neoliberal philosophy. Each category of Apple's taxonomy prescribed two specific points for observation. Data was subjected to what can be best characterised as an "if-then" (+ how) analysis against these points. For each portrayal, it was asked if the instance reflected a point being observed. When the answer was yes, then the instance was noted in the appropriate category. Finally, the rationale as to how the instance fit into the category was recorded and determined to be either a

hegemonic portrayal that reinforced neoliberal beliefs about public education, or a counterhegemonic portrayal that challenged neoliberal beliefs about public education. This recording process provided a record of the inferences that guided data-making decisions.

Context units for evaluating data were broad, enveloping each episode at hand. Such a scope is meaningful in that it respected that each episode of *The Simpsons* was developed by a unique team of individuals, it avoided concern with cross-episode considerations, and it acknowledged the “holistic qualities of texts” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 88).

### *Analytical / Representational Techniques*

Through a series of four chapters—each dedicated to one of Apple’s categories of privatisation, marketisation, performativity, and the enterprising individual—data are presented through theme-based narrative. Data is further grouped in each chapter into sub-topics that were found reflected on *The Simpsons*. Such narration served two purposes: it disclosed the basis for the data’s categorisation, and it worked to weave a discussion of neoliberalism’s tenets into the recounting of their familiar representations on *The Simpsons*. The narrative is topical rather than chronological to respect how *The Simpsons* was and remains consumed by viewers. Not only is it a massively popular first-run program, but it is also a massively popular syndicated program with repeats running in almost every television market in North America (Ortved, 2009, p. 273). The reality is that the initial air dates have little significance for most viewers of *The Simpsons*. Therefore, the method of narration respected how the series was—and continues to be—consumed by the general public in a non-contiguous fashion.

This is not to say alternative approaches to analysing and narrating the data would be without merit. However, television programs tell rich stories and the purpose of this research was to scaffold a perceived-to-be disinterested public into greater understandings of neoliberalism. Consequently, the “how” of the research question would not be addressed as engagingly through a study enveloping quantitative data manipulation. Admittedly, it could be

meritorious to consider the data for specific writer bias comparison, for thematic trending, or for in-depth evaluation of public policy decisions against time lines, to suggest a few approaches.

It is also imperative to note that *The Simpsons* is not an intensive project in educational satire. Consequently, the study latently worked to delimit explorations of the scope of neoliberalism to elements portrayed on *The Simpsons*. For example, the lack of a school board at Springfield Elementary disallowed entrance into detailed explorations of how the emergence of neoliberalism impacted democratic school governance. What exists is a determination what data existed within the series based off Apple's (2001a) taxonomy.

Narration primarily leaned on Apple's work to expand theoretical understandings. Yet, Apple is more philosophical than determinist, so often the data found itself wanting anchors to better justify how the conclusions related to Apple's beliefs. As such, the narration included outside sources addressing neoliberal intrusions into education in order to articulate how the portrayals answered the research question. Of prominence were Whitty, Powers, and Halpin (1998) due to their research on marketisation of public education, and Ball (2003) for his understandings on performativity and middle-class advantage. Further, Chapter 5 on privatisation, and Chapter 6 on marketisation also took into consideration Chubb and Moe (1990) to illustrate points, given that their work is widely regarded as the framework upon which the neoliberal reform agenda to education has relied (Apple, 2004, p.17). However, as Chubb and Moe (1990) disavowed performativity requirements as a necessary part of a neoliberal agenda (p. 225) and simply assumed that individuals are enterprising in exercising choice without account for the hidden effects of such an ethic (p. 32), the applicability of their work is substantially diminished for the final two data chapters.

Because the purpose of this research was to understand *The Simpsons*' reflection of neoliberalism's impact on public education, and then make use of the findings to scaffold a disinterested public into conceptual understandings of neoliberalism, it is the familiar representations on *The Simpsons* that are intended to be the building blocks that scaffold readers

into these conceptual understandings. Admittedly, due to the inherent economic deterministic nature of a framework built around neoliberal concepts, the analysis found itself largely centred on economic issues. This is despite—but with full acknowledgment of—Apple’s (2001b) concern that such frames prevent seeing the education process as a whole (p. 20). This research is not a pan-Apple approach to education, but rather an examination of neoliberalism as framed by Apple.

### *Trustworthiness*

Because this study was not a quantitative undertaking, an alternate means to reliability discussed by Krippendorff (2004) was required. Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that naturalistic inquiry had a “certain kinship with the conventional content analyst” (p. 338). Given this, the trustworthiness of this research as a qualitative work was established through Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria.

Because of the stable and undisturbable nature of *The Simpsons* universe as a site of study, credibility was established through two routes. First, persistent observation took place to obtain the data set. This is consistent with Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) suggestion of finding “those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focussing on them in detail” (p. 304). Each episode was viewed numerous times, with a formal Apple-based taxonomy guiding the process of determining and understanding the data in a non-superficial way.

*First viewing.* Each chosen episode was initially viewed to allow a scope of the episodic context unit.

*Second viewing.* A second viewing was used to break down and record the episode into an inventory of its scenes, including the time, setting, characters, and premise. This built a database while it allowed the opportunity for initial scene-by-scene considerations of the episode in how portrayals reflected neoliberalism.

*Third viewing.* With its third viewing, each episode was observed with the accompanying DVD commentary. This allowed for deeper understanding of the episode as a context unit due to revelations of the various producers, writers, and actors who took part in the episode's creation. There was no effort to apply content analysis to the accompanying commentary. It was approached with the understanding that *The Simpsons* is a collective creative project (Turner, 2004, p. 22), while the commentary is generally given by four or five people. This commentary could not be considered holistic insight, but merely an opportunity to expand understandings of the context unit.

*Fourth viewing.* The initial data recording took place with the fourth viewing. Data was processed using the "if-then" (+ how) analysis. The how aspect of the "if-then" logic explicated the decision to place the data in the particular category and was based in Apple. Data was also labelled as hegemonic or counterhegemonic based the portrayal either reinforcing or critiquing neoliberal beliefs. Often, extra viewings took place to ensure thorough processing of the data.

This process was repeated for all twelve episodes, providing the data required for an "information dump" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 215) to aggregate the data found in the twelve episodes into four individual data chapters. Reviewing and sorting the data allowed the opportunity for further consideration and for formal peer debriefing with the research advisor as described by Guba and Lincoln (1985, p. 308). Further, it began the weaving of the data into a cohesive narrative. At this juncture outside literature was brought in that was applicable to the emergent themes, to better explain, verify, and understand how the data specifically represented the broader ideas put forth by the Apple framework. Because this research project has been completed in part-time studies, this process of collecting and analysing data place over 10 months, from August 2010 to May 2011.

As a last step of verification of the data set, a second "if/then" (+ how) viewing and data recording was done against the final narration. This was undertaken as a process of an internal confirmability audit of data category placement and the logic flow that led to the conclusions

about the data. The data sheets are included in Appendices A through L. Combined, these steps in the data-making and writing process provided an audit trail to aid in dependability and confirmability.

Despite these assurances of trustworthiness, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted, claims of trustworthiness are open-ended: trustworthiness does not guarantee an inquiry is unassailable (p. 329). However, reasonable confidence should exist as all the findings are anchored in the works of Apple. Further, the belief in the overall trustworthiness of this study borrows from Griffin (as cited in Woodhouse, 2009) in that the analysis was created through building argument strands with the data that lead to the final conclusions. These strands built a cable supporting the argument rooted in Apple's theories, and "[s]hould the evidence supporting any of the individual strands not hold, the cable does not break" (p. 10). So while there may be room to pull apart particular aspects of this work, the overall argument that unfolded should still stand to both expose and explain neoliberalism's impact on education, as portrayed on *The Simpsons* and explicated through the lense of Apple.

#### Rationale of the Framework for Analysis

The use of Michael W. Apple (2001a) for the foundation of the analytical construct is largely based on his philosophical beliefs, his style of writing, and his ideological linkage to Robert McChesney (1999). With regard to Apple's philosophical beliefs, his rooted influence of Paulo Friere linked well with satire's goal to expose folly. Apple (2001b) noted that:

Education must both hold our dominant institutions in education and the larger society up to rigorous questioning, and at the same time this questioning must deeply involve those who benefit the least from the ways these institutions now function. Both conditions were necessary, since the first without the second was simply insufficient to the task of democratizing education. (p. 218)

Given that *The Simpsons* is a critical analysis of American hegemony (Broderick, 2004, p. 258),

Friere's first condition is filled because the program acts to "hold our dominant institutions in education and the larger society up to rigorous questioning." Friere's second condition is approached by then using a framework of analysis whose pillars are built by an individual who deeply considers those who least benefit from neoliberal institutions. It is hoped that the temperament of the analysis should then form a basis for the reader to consider neoliberalism's impact in a manner that both includes and brings potential to go beyond economic deterministic perspectives.

With regard to Apple's style of writing, there is a short but significant passage from Apple (1993) that further contributed to his suitability for framing this discourse. When discussing the nature of conservative influences on public education, he put forth the admission that "I digress here and some of my anger begins to show" (p. 230). While this is only one passage from a substantial library of work, such admission is telling of Apple's composed—rather than inflammatory—style of discourse. Given the propensity of this thesis' writer towards an inflammatory writing temperament, such framing will impart a rational tone in the inferring and narration, and therefore contribute to a rational rather than reactionary study.

Finally, Apple's apparent ideological alignment with Robert W. McChesney, "considered by many to be America's leading media historian" (Cumiskey, 2005, p. 284), is of interest given that this research used Apple's works to analyse a form of popular media. Apple (2001b) cited McChesney's definition of neoliberalism (p. 17) when setting forth the current dominant political ideology, and McChesney is used in this thesis's literature review to set forth the current ideological state of the mainstream media. While not a necessary alignment, its existence does suggest a general overarching ideological congruence between the foundational media considerations and the educational aspect of this research.

#### Michael W. Apple: The Context and Analytical Construct

To Apple, schooling should strive to curtail societal inequities. Yet it is evident to him



that this is not being achieved. Rather than holding society up to rigorous questioning, schooling has followed the “defining political/economic paradigm of the age in which we live” (Apple, 2001b, p. 17): The path of neoliberalism.

Noting that Americans are likely more familiar with neoliberalism’s tendencies and effects than the term itself, Apple (2001b) put forth its definition as prescribed by Robert McChesney:

Neoliberal initiatives are characterized as free market policies that encourage private enterprise and consumer choice, reward personal responsibility and entrepreneurial initiative, and undermine the dead hand of the incompetent, bureaucratic and parasitic government that can never do good even if well intended, which it rarely is. (p. 17)

Because of this nature of neoliberalism, Apple (2001b) believed that it “transforms our very idea of democracy, making it only an economic concept, not a political one” (p. 18).

The roots of Apple’s understandings of education contextualise his views on neoliberalism. As early as 1977, in “What Do Schools Teach,” Apple and King established that the unequal distribution of cultural capital in schools echoed the unequal distribution of economic capital in society. Apple and King (1977) found curriculum to be a well-rooted form of social control (p. 344) that led schooling to be a process of uncritical acceptance of dominant ideology. To Apple and King this was problematic, and what they diagnosed hinted at an early understanding of neoliberal influences in education, yet to be articulated as such: Apple and King found schools to be succeeding in reproducing populations reflective of their society’s norms (p. 354) and as such, the corresponding value system was dominated by interests of “production, well-adjusted economic functioning, and bureaucratic skills” (p. 346). With schooling’s focus tightened from a broader consensus of social values to a simpler consensus of “economic functionalism” (p. 346), schools were left to simply produce “good workers” (p. 353) valued not for “ingenuity” but rather for obedience and discipline (p. 353). This was exacerbated by teachers following “commonsense” (p. 347) practices.

While Apple's views have evolved since 1977, the core message of how schooling manifests itself remains most salient in his examinations of its current neoliberal environment. Apple (1998) has continued to put forth a critique of the "complicated politics of commonsense now going on in which dominant groups are attempting to redefine what we actually mean by democracy, equality and the common good" (p. 4). And while Apple (2005) is not so myopic as to not acknowledge that there are "elements of good sense as well as bad sense in the criticisms that are made about schools and universities" (p. 393), he flatly pointed out that "the space of criticism [in education] has been taken up by neo-liberal claims and managerial impulses" (p. 393). In this environment "the social democratic goal of expanding equality of opportunity (itself a rather limited reform) has lost much of its political potency and its ability to mobilize people" (Apple, 1998, p. 5). This is because neoliberal ideology has dominated "the constant public and private battles over goals, over funding, over whose knowledge is or is not included in the curriculum, [and] over who should decide all this" (Apple, 1991, p. 279). While many factors have been at play to create this, Apple (2001a) would argue the problem to be circular. Schooling not only manifests itself as a product of a neoliberal environment, but also contributes to it because "the objectives in education are the same as those which guide [the conservative modernisation's] economic and social welfare goals" (p. 410). And it is apparent that Apple has not solely pinned all blame on the neoliberals, as his use of the umbrella term "conservative modernization" would indicate.

What Apple (2001b) called the "conservative modernization" of the educational environment are four interwoven and sometimes disparate factions leading the discourse around education's economic and social welfare goals: neoliberals, neoconservatives, authoritarian populists, and the new managerial middle class (p. 37). This power block has an overall aim of "providing the educational conditions believed necessary both for increasing international competitiveness, profit, and discipline and for returning us to a romanticized past of the 'ideal' home, family, and school" (2001a, p. 410). While Apple (2009) has devoted much discussion to

the “contradictory impulses” of this “hegemonic umbrella” (p. 90), Apple (2001b) unequivocally proclaimed neoliberals to be “the most powerful element within the alliance” (p. 38). In their lead role, the neoliberals have pushed forth their ideals on public education, framed around four broad yet intertwined characteristics: privatisation, marketisation, performativity, and the enterprising individual (Apple, 2001a, p. 409). It is these four characteristics that Apple (2001a) believed form “some of the most important dynamics surrounding globalisation in education” (p. 409) and as such, these four characteristics form the categorical distinctions to unitise portrayals of neoliberal influence on public education on *The Simpsons* in this study. Although Apple (2001a) admitted that these concepts can be contradictory while at the same time reinforcing one-another (p. 411), for the purpose of this research each following densely-explicated category was designed to be mutually exclusive consistent with Krippendorff’s (2004) desire for clearly conceptualising data (p. 132).

### *Privatisation*

To establish the principles of privatisation as desirable in education, Apple (1998) stated that neoliberals work to portray that “what is public is bad and what is private is good” (p. 6). Part of the underlying neoliberal disdain for publicly-funded education is based on a view that schools are viewed to be functioning under producer capture, a concept that suggests public education responds to teacher and state bureaucratic needs rather than what are conceived of as the needs of the consumer (Apple, 2001b, p. 38). Such a mantra fuels deep suspicions of the motives and competencies of teachers (Apple, 2001b, p. 51). With such suspicion established and privatisation accepted as a superior form of service delivery, neoliberal policy advocates—ignoring the social democratic nature of schooling (Apple, 1993, p. 229)—are empowered in their claims that publicly-funded education has been taken over by elitist forces (2001b, p. 53). These forces are alleged to have left schools no longer locally controlled nor an extension of the home (Apple, 2001b, p. 54). With a locally-removed progressivism portrayed as

the dominant ideology in education, “a claim that has almost no historical or empirical warrant” (Apple, 2009, p. 91), blame for faults in the education system can be assigned to progressivism (Apple, 2001a, p. 412).

Assigning blame for all of schooling’s perceived problems on progressivism allows the dominant neoliberal groups to shift educational discourse back to their terms in order to “right” the direction of public education (Apple, 1998, p. 5). Neoliberals put forth that by dismantling public education in favour of privatised models, society could then “reduce the possibility that government institutions would be subject to political pressure from the electorate and from progressive social movements,” and instead “ensure that the state served business interests” (Apple, 2005, p. 382). This proliferation of neoliberal education policies that promote privatisation and other marketisation plans are perceived by groups such as the mobile middle class and the Christian right to be to their benefit by allowing consumer “choice” in education (Apple, 2001b, p. 56). Unfortunately, such beliefs ultimately work “to push breakaway needs back into the economic, domestic, and private spheres” (Apple, 2001b, p. 57), thus damaging the collective nature of schooling and undermining the broader advancement of society. And such privatisation discourse leads to the belief—to be elaborated upon in the marketisation category—that “nothing can be accomplished—even the restoration of awe and authority—without setting the market loose on schools so as to ensure that only ‘good’ ones survive” (Apple, 2001a, p. 412).

This framing of privatisation necessitated the specific observation of *The Simpsons* for scenarios that addressed:

- the motives and competence of teachers; and
- the privatisation of schools and school services.

### *Marketisation*

To push forth marketisation methods to shape public education’s direction, Apple (1996)

found that “current neo-liberal attempts at reorganizing schooling around its ideological and economic agenda has stimulated a return to an emphasis on economic arguments” (p. 135) in discussion of educational issues. This is due to the neoliberal vision of schools as:

connected to a marketplace, especially the global capitalist market, and the labor needs and processes of such a market. They also often see schools themselves as in need of being transformed and made more competitive by placing them into marketplaces through voucher plans, tax credits, and other similar marketizing strategies. (Apple, 2001c, p. ii)

Advancing marketisation schemes in education, while perhaps helping to produce what Apple and King (1977) had referred to as “good workers,” does not, overall, improve education. Power, Halpin, and Fitz (1994) have pointed out that “rather than leading to curriculum responsiveness and diversification, the competitive market has not created much that is different from traditional models so firmly entrenched in schools today” (as cited in Apple, 2001a, p. 413).

Despite evidence to the contrary, neoliberals believe that schooling delivered under marketised choice systems are self-regulating and lead to better schools due to the forces of “that eloquent fiction, the free market” (Apple, 2001a, p. 410). Apple (2001b) cautioned about the myopia of such beliefs, because “the use of market categories and concepts prevents us from seeing the process as a whole” (p. 20). It “delegitimated more critical models of teaching and learning” (2001a, p. 417) while “choice” stratifies educational access based on access to capital (1993, p. 235). Concurrently, Ball, Bowe, and Gerwitz (1994) noted “commercial issues become more important in curriculum design and resource allocation” (as cited in Apple, 2001a, p. 413). Of course, this should come as no surprise given the “growing pressure to make the perceived needs of business and industry into the primary goals of schools” (Apple, 1993, p. 227).

Perhaps counter-intuitively, unleashing marketisation schemes upon schools does not necessarily result in reduced education expenditures. Apple (2001b) has also pointed to a second-variant neoliberalism that endorses more investment in schools, but “if and only if schools meet the needs expressed by capital” (p. 41). Given Whitty’s (1997) observations that “a

large portion of current reform initiatives are partly justified by wanting to enhance the connections between education and the wider project of ‘meeting the needs of the economy’” (as cited in Apple, 1998, p. 6), such “investments” in education would be a logical variant of the ideology.

As a whole, turning to Whitty (1997), Apple cautioned that research from a number of countries has indicated that it is a false hope to assume that so-called choice plans “will enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of schools, as well as give disadvantaged children opportunities that they currently do not have” (as cited in Apple, 2004, p. 19). Arguments claiming so are often based on Chubb and Moe’s “quite flawed” 1990 research (p. 17). Yet, neoliberals believe that such an approach will not only improve education, but also act as a market cull for “underperforming” schools (Apple, 2001a, p. 412). And such marketisation discourse leads to the shift—to be discussed in the performativity category—to reliance on standardised curriculum and testing to “actually provide the mechanisms for comparative data that ‘consumers’ need to make markets work as markets” (Apple, 2001b, p. 84).

To envelop these marketisation concepts while avoiding overlap of its relation to privatisation and performativity, the framing of marketisation in this analysis necessitated specific observation of *The Simpsons* for scenarios that addressed:

- the efficiency of public school operations; and
- corporate intrusions into school.

### *Performativity*

Apple (2001b) has ascertained that performativity measures have become the primary determiners of what constitutes a good school. This is because “neoliberals demand measurable, results-based performance through standardized testing and accountability regimes . . . [and] the most widely-used measures of the success of school reforms are the results of standardized achievement tests” (p. 74). Billed as “steerage at a distance” (Apple, 2001b, p. 84), the

standardised test “tacitly defines what counts as legitimate knowledge as only that which can be included on such reductive tests” (Apple, 2007, p. 111). These standards have been shown to “specify, often in distressing detail, what students, teachers, and future teachers should be able to know, say, and do” (Apple, 2001b, p. 188).

More disturbingly, performativity’s implementation allocates “resources away from students who are labelled as having special needs or learning difficulties, with some of these needed resources now being shifted to marketing and public relations” (Apple, 2001a, p. 414). This is because the market’s focus on performance indicators has meant schools are now “looking for ways to attract ‘motivated’ parents with ‘able’ children” (Apple, 2001a, p. 413) to bolster their published rankings. This shifts school cultures from “student needs to student performance and from what the school does for the student to what the student does for the school” (Apple, 2001a, p. 413). With this shift in educational purpose, those with existent societal advantages can further their position, because existent “economic and social capital can be converted into cultural capital in various ways” (Apple, 2001b, p. 73): they are better equipped to “shop” for schools “through their knowledge and material resources [and] these are the families who are most likely to exercise choice” (Apple, 2001b, p. 78). Meanwhile, poorer students and students of colour find themselves further disadvantaged as “white flight” enhances the relative stature of certain schools while concurrently leaving schooling for “others” in a downward spiral (Apple, 2001b, p. 79).

The consequence of such performativity-driven schooling not only alters the nature of students’ relationships with the school, but also alter the nature of staffing within a school. The problems of perceived producer capture re-emerge because “concern for external supervision and regulation is . . . connected to a strong mistrust of producers (e.g., teachers)” (Apple, 2001b, p. 90). With the deprofessionalising of teachers, “more, not less, power is actually consolidated within an administrative structure” (Apple, 2001b, p. 75), done so to ensure simplistic performativity measures are achieved. The principal’s role shifts from focussing on pedagogic

and curricular substance to “maintaining or enhancing a public image of a ‘good school’” (Apple, 2001a, p. 416). The teacher’s role is deskilled by taking “teaching methods, texts, tests, and outcomes . . . out of the hands of the people who must put them into practice” (Apple, 1991, p. 281). As a result, “teachers seem to be experiencing not increased autonomy and professionalism, but intensification” (Apple, 2001b, p. 75). Meanwhile, atomised schools competing in the market find new difficulties when having to compete against higher-scoring schools to recruit the “best” and most academically talented teachers (Apple, 2001a, p. 414).

Ironically and perhaps most counter-intuitive to neoliberal rhetoric about market choice, the implementation of performativity measures helps to explain the earlier discussion of how marketisation fails to diversify education. To facilitate consumer use of performativity measures to evaluate schooling options, “schools themselves become more similar, and more committed, to standard, traditional, whole-class methods of teaching and a standard and traditional (and often monocultural) curriculum” (Apple, 2001b, p. 75). These narrow, publicised performance indicators determine the relative worth of a school in the marketplace, and “only those schools with rising performance indicators are worthy” (Apple, 2001a, p. 414). Consequently, such performativity discourse leads to the belief—to be discussed in the enterprising individual category—that “only those students who can ‘make a continual enterprise of themselves’ can keep such schools going in the ‘correct’ direction” (Apple, 2001a, p. 414).

This framing of performativity necessitated the specific observation of *The Simpsons* for scenarios that addressed:

- standardised and reductive testing as an educational method; and
- standardised and reductive testing impacting on school operations.

### *Enterprising Individual*

The individualistic and economic deterministic nature of neoliberalism results in placing a high value on enterprising individuality in education. Citing Whitty, Edwards, and Gerwitz



(1993), Apple noted that “current calls for educational reform surrounding the ties between education and (paid) work” are part of a larger movement designed to “encourage members of a market economy to think of themselves as individuals in order to maximize their own interests” (as cited in Apple, 1998, p. 6). Because the marketised environment that frames education is supposedly neutral and natural, solely governed by the effort and merit of rational choices made by individual actors (Apple, 2001a, p. 413), enterprising individuals that make up the players in this market are solely in control of and solely to blame for all that happens within their environment. As Apple (2001a) noted, this is part of a process where “the state shifts the blame for the very evident inequalities in access and outcome it has promised to reduce, from itself on to individual schools, parents, and children” (p. 416) as collectivity is marginalised.

However, as Apple (2001b) has pointed out, gaining access to wealth—the benchmark of success in a neoliberal environment—is wrought with deep-rooted race- and gender-based oppression issues (p. 14). The “complex relationships between economic capital and cultural capital” (Apple, 1993, p. 223) are ignored since freedom and choice in education is designed for those who are enterprising enough to afford it (Apple, 1993, p. 236). Further, with access framed and stratified around those individuals able to best make an enterprise of themselves in this environment, the neoliberal education system then also works to “creatively erase historic memory and the specificities of difference and oppression” (Apple, 2001b, p. 207). White people perceive themselves as the “new ‘losers’” (Apple, 2001b, p. 207): victims who suffer because “the barriers to social equality and equal opportunity have been removed” (Apple, 2001b, p. 208). With education considered an individual—not a collective—responsibility (Apple, 2001b, p. 39) in what is perceived to be an egalitarian society (Apple, 2001b, p. 208), the values of the poor become those values that are questioned instead of an introspective of the values of the rich (Apple, 1998, p. 7). By avoiding introspection, dominant groups are thus able to export blame for the consequences of their own decisions upon others (Apple, 1998, p. 11). With collective interests ignored in favour of individuality, schooling works to undermine its

social democratic roots in favour of social Darwinism.

This framing of the enterprising individual necessitated the specific observation of *The Simpsons* for scenarios that addressed:

- individuals acting in a manner that makes an self-maximising enterprise of themselves;
- and
- the exporting of blame.

#### *Apple's Theoretical Beliefs in Summary*

In light of McChesney's (1999) stance that neoliberalism resulted in atomized and socially powerless people (as cited in Apple 2001b, p. 19), Apple argued:

Even with these effects, it is still possible to argue on the grounds of efficiency that corporate models should dominate our societies. After all, they do allow for choice. Yet to valorize this vision of democracy as the correct one is to neglect one simple but crucial point. Most major corporations are anything but democratic. In many ways, they are more totalitarian than is admitted openly. Thus, jobs are cut ruthlessly. Profits are much more important than the lives, hopes, and well-being of employees who have given their working lives to these organizations. In general, no level of profit ever makes these jobs secure; profits must be constantly increased, no matter what the cost to families and employees. One must question if this is the ethic we should be introducing as *the* model for our public institutions and our children. (p. 19)

Clearly there are substantial considerations to be made with regard to neoliberalism in education. As Apple (1993) pointed out, in the belief of being "free" economically, many in the developed world have become socially controlled to meet neoliberal doctrine (p. 229). The narrow focus on neoliberal reforms to schools continues as the route to educational and societal improvement, despite Apple's (1993) observation that this is simply "reform on the cheap" (p. 234). Blindly implementing neoliberal reforms to education does not benefit schools, students, teachers, or

society.

### Summary

As a satirical vehicle in a neoliberal society, *The Simpsons* must be both art and consumer product to achieve marketplace success. Thus, the show's satire rarely appears to be an outright chastisement of its viewership or a fearful call to protest. Instead, consistent with Fiske (1987), *The Simpsons* demonstrated flaws of a neoliberal society through familiar and co-opted representations of that society. Yet, Savage (2004) indicated that satire assumes a norm that must be opposed and so artistically exaggerates things as they are in order to have political effect (p. 200). Thus, select but exaggerated examples stemming from the Apple framework are to be expected given that *The Simpsons* is a 22-minute package meant to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. With this in mind, *The Simpsons*' familiar representation of society should both reflect neoliberalism and provided the scaffolds to introduce a disinterested public to its influence on public education. How these representations manifested themselves in the context of privatisation, marketisation, performativity, and the enterprising individual are the purpose of the following four chapters.

## CHAPTER FOUR PRIVATISATION

*“When public schools drop the ball, it’s up to the private sector  
to fall on that fumble and run for the end zone.”*

Jim Hope, Kid First Industries

To establish principles of privatisation as desirable for education, Apple (1998) put forth that neoliberals work to portray “what is public is bad and what is private is good” (p. 6). With the establishment of such a belief, the dismantling of public education is enabled so that it can be redeployed largely through private means. This involves using “quasi-market” restructuring in order to “introduc[e] market forces and private decision-making into the provision of education” (Whitty et al., 1998, p. 3). Underlying this restructuring towards private provision is the neoliberal tenet that operating schools as directly democratic institutions is a fundamentally flawed proposition (Chubb & Moe, 1990, p. 2), because “the ‘public’ is out-of-control, messy, heterogenous” (Apple, 2001b, p. 206). Markets, on the other hand, are claimed to be unquestionably natural arbiters that temper these “messy” democratic means. According to Menter, Muschamp, Nicholls, Ozga, and Pollard, this is due to a belief that:

Markets are marketed, are made legitimate, by a depoliticising strategy. They are said to be natural and neutral, and governed by effort and merit. And those opposed to them are by definition, hence, also opposed to effort and merit. Markets, as well, are supposedly less subject to political interference and the weight of bureaucratic procedures. Plus, they are grounded in the rational choices of individual actors. Thus, markets and the guarantee of rewards for effort and merit are to be coupled together to produce ‘neutral’, yet positive, results. (as cited in Apple, 2001a, p. 413)

With private markets widely accepted as the most suitable method for shaping all societal structures—despite their subversive effects, especially for minorities and low-income earners (Apple, 2001a, p. 413) and despite the absence of that perfect information markets require to fairly and efficiently operate (Stiglitz, 2010, p. 244)—the state is relegated to the role of the

facilitator for markets (Baez, 2005, p. 73). With the state prescribed to be merely a market facilitator, the conceptions “that school-based vocational programs would improve schooling, society, and the economy; and that education and business were basically alike so that business principles could improve inefficient schools” (Cuban, 2004, p. 10) proliferate.

This shift in education’s function and purpose found peculiar position within Springfield Elementary’s closed, fictional environment. Reforms towards privatisation are dabbled in at Springfield Elementary, but *The Simpsons*’ propensity to “reset” at each episode’s conclusion meant that successful, permanent systemic reforms were an impossible proposition. Within the educational satire addressing concepts of privatisation as framed in this study, *The Simpsons* was both hegemonic and counterhegemonic in its portrayal of public education, but resisted providing a new educational utopia.

Because the undermining of organised labour is key to the privatisation process, explorations surrounding privatisation first examined how organised labour and teachers as practitioners were reflected on *The Simpsons*. Next, due to the neoliberal-perpetuated belief that publicly-funded education has been taken over by elitist forces that have left schools no longer locally controlled nor an extension of the home, the portrayal of progressivism was examined. Finally, models of education delivered through the private sphere in Springfield—including home schooling, religious schooling, and private schooling—were explored for their reflections of neoliberal reforms to education.

### Professionalism and Producer Capture

Apple (2001b) pointed out that neoliberals claim producer capture has overtaken schools. Relying on a very cynical conception of teachers as professionals, producer capture purports that “schools are built for teachers and state bureaucrats, not ‘consumers.’ They respond to the demands of professionals and other selfish state workers, not the consumers who rely on them” (p. 38). This view is fuelled, Apple (2001b) believed, by “the constant attention given in the

media and in public pronouncements to ‘incompetent’ teachers who are overpaid and have short working days and long holidays” (p. 180). Reform advocates Moe and Chubb (2009) contended that indeed “[teacher unions] use their power to promote their own interests” (p. 33), interests that are “not aligned with the interests of children” (p. 35). Therefore, a necessary condition for actualising neoliberal educational policies that give private stakeholders ultimate say in how schools operate involves de-powering teachers as organised labour. De-powering teachers would reduce this perceived teacher stranglehold on the public school system so that “their interests no longer stand in the way of [market reform] change” (Moe & Chubb, 2009, p. 180).

It appeared that *The Simpsons*’ “selfish state workers”—teachers such as Bart’s sarcastic Grade 4 teacher Edna Krabappel, Lisa’s disinterested Grade 2 teacher Elizabeth Hoover, and Springfield Elementary’s impotent Principal Seymour Skinner, alongside a host of minor characters—most often performed their jobs poorly. Yet, *The Simpsons*’ approach to teachers and other labour within schools can best be described as multifarious and at times contradictory, even within episodes. For example, *The Simpsons* gave ample suggestions that teachers were generally incompetent, yet gave little suggestion that teachers were beneficiaries of any largesse from producer capture. Further contributing to this contradictory nature were a handful of instances that held out hope for teachers as professionals. Thus, by being both hegemonic and counterhegemonic in its approaches, through the lense of Apple these portrayals served to reflect neoliberal rhetoric about public education and the consequences of the neoliberal policy for public education.

Undoubtedly, teachers and other Springfield Elementary employees were not enjoying any aspect of producer capture with regard to compensation. In fact, teaching as a chronically-underpaid profession appeared to be a running theme. Some hints were subtle, such as teachers in the staff room drinking “coffee-flavoured bevarine” whitened with “creamium” (Keeler & Moore, 1997). Some hints were direct, such as Skinner’s annual salary being only \$25,000 (Long & Kramer, 2000) while Miss Hoover’s was only \$18,000 (Meyer & Lynch, 1992). This

suggestion of underpaid school staff was furthered through the depictions of the staff's homes. Principal Skinner lived with his mother; Mrs. Krabappel lived in an unremarkable walk-up apartment; and Groundskeeper Willie lived in a shed on the school yard. Despite these clear indications of low pay, when Springfield's teachers took labour action, they never brought forth outrageous wage demands. Rather, they only demanded a cost-of-living adjustment (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). In fact, the only example of producer capture-related allocation of public funds was made when the state comptroller said that a \$250,000 school grant would go towards a light bulb in every classroom and a high-definition TV for the teachers' lounge (Maxtone-Graham & Anderson, 1998). Hardly existent at Springfield Elementary were "selfish" and "overpaid" state workers.

When compensation was taken out of the producer capture equation, though, *The Simpsons* appeared less sympathetic to teachers. This was especially true when involving organised labour. Several instances suggested that Springfield Elementary's staff were, as neoliberals purport, "selfish state workers" disinterested in the "consumers" who rely on them. Throughout the series was a peppering of hints to this effect. Principal Skinner wore a barbecue apron that read "Principals do it 9 Months a Year" (Oakley, Weinstein, & Anderson, 1994); Lunch Lady Doris performed double duty as the school nurse because she "gets two paycheques this way" (Swartzwelder & Lynch, 1993); and the teachers' union "emergency caucus" was nothing more than a conga line at a ski lodge (Long & Kramer, 2000). When issues relating to teachers' roles emerged during the teachers' strike, however, teachers were somewhat contradictory with regard to selfish actions. First it was suggested that teachers were student-centric in their concerns, given their strike motivation of inadequate learning conditions. Yet once the strike began, many actions became more teacher-centric. Upon learning of the strike Mrs. Pommelhorst left a student stranded on gymnastics equipment and Miss Hoover ran out of her class; picket signs seemingly contradicted teachers' meager wage demands, reading "2 + 2 A Raise is Due," "A is for Apple, B is for Raise," and "Gimme Gimme Gimme"; and Lisa was told

to “get lost” when she asked a picketing Miss Hoover what she would be learning if in school. Adding to this was the suggestion of a manipulative teachers’ union, with Mrs. Krabappel holding up a picket sign that read “Honk if you love cookies” to create an illusion of support to school management inside the building (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). Consistent with the show’s contradictory nature, this long list of negative portrayals played into Moe & Chubb’s (2009) contention that teachers as organised labour do not act in the interests of children (p. 35).

The strike was not the only time that teacher behaviour could be construed as not in the interests of children. A laundry list of Springfield Elementary’s staff acting in a manner unbecoming to the profession was found, reflective of the neoliberal tendency to focus constant attention on incompetent teachers (Apple, 2001b, p. 180). Principal Skinner, fully aware that Bart’s IQ test result was suspect, rescinded his desire to have him retested upon discovering that Bart would be transferred to a new school (Vitti & Silverman, 1990); he remarked that he loved elementary school because “the children will believe anything you tell them” (Pulido & Dietter, 1997); and Skinner was unable to hide Lisa’s identity when telling the class about an “anonymous student. Let’s call her Lisa S. No wait, that’s too obvious. We’ll say L. Simpson” (Cohen & Kirkland, 1995). Mrs. Krabappel fared no better. She ignored Martin’s show and tell presentation in favour of petting Bart’s dog (Oakley et al., 1994); at a school assembly she laughed at Ned Flanders’ suggestion that everyone was anxious to get back to class (Oakley et al., 1994); and Krabappel aborted a fire safety lesson in favour of picking wild flowers (Pulido & Dietter, 1997). If Krabappel was bad, Miss Hoover was awful. She told Ralph to “sit quietly while the other children are learning” (Cohen & Kirkland, 1995); when marking tests over lunch Miss Hoover spilled liquor on them (Maxtone-Graham & Anderson, 1998); and Hoover suggested that it was “your funeral” when Lisa offered to work with hapless Ralph on a school project (Keeler & Moore, 1997). Even Miss Hoover’s Grade 2 students questioned her mental health, labeling her as either crazy or faking lyme disease (Vitti & Moore, 1991). Further, the staff often acted together when acting incompetently. Krabappel and Hoover smoked in the



school (Vitti & Moore, 1991, Oakley et al., 1994); Skinner and Krabappel bargained away Bart's permanent record in exchange for his silence about their romance (Pulido & Dietter, 1997); and Principal Skinner and Groundskeeper Willie conspired to lock underachieving students in the school's basement (Swartzwelder & Lynch, 1993).

As a whole, these portrayals may both reflect and then further feed into the neoliberal perception that teachers are incompetent, and operating under some elements of producer capture. But the question of why Springfield's teachers act in such a manner should also be considered. Apple (1993/2000) noted that a major source of teacher demoralisation and under-performance is the result of industrial management techniques foisted upon education. Centrally planned and systemised workloads for teachers have meant that "instead of professional teachers who care greatly about what they do and why they do it, we have alienated executors of someone else's plans" (p. 118). Thus, *The Simpsons*' portrayal of demoralised teachers may be partly reflective of "the negative effects of tight systems of management and control and the accompanying loss of skill, autonomy, craft, and pride that results" (p. 118).

Despite this incompetence of Springfield's educators and regardless of its origins, the portrayal of teachers at Springfield Elementary was not all negative. Sparse instances reinforced the professional strengths of Springfield Elementary's staff. One sequence had Principal Skinner reminiscing over several student successes (Oakley et al., 1994), and there was the occasional speaking out against the inadequate learning conditions at Springfield Elementary—notably regarding the aforementioned motivation for the teachers' labour action. More strikingly, amongst the perpetual inadequacy emerged a one-off teacher who engaged the students and respected the profession: Mr. Bergstrom, a substitute teacher whose motivations were "the children I love" (Vitti & Moore, 1991). As a source of contrast to Springfield Elementary's roster of largely incompetent teachers, though, Bergstrom's portrayal may be more problematic than beneficial to the reflection of the profession on *The Simpsons*. To understand Bergstrom's role, his tenure at Springfield Elementary requires elaboration.

Beginning with his unorthodox entrance—dressed as a cowboy, he kicked open Miss Hoover’s classroom door and fired a toy pistol in the air—Mr. Bergstrom provided contrast to the regular staff of Springfield Elementary. Principal Skinner, filling in for Ms. Hoover, asked Bergstrom if he was insane, but upon being told that he was the substitute teacher Skinner handed over the classroom reins. The entrance in itself could be read as a peculiar reflection of Skinner’s incompetence given that Skinner so readily left a person he accused of insanity alone with a group of children. Alternatively, Skinner’s quick handing over of the reins with little concern may have reflected the neoliberal belief that the “licenced autonomy” of teachers needs to be tempered (Apple, 2001b, p. 51). Yet the viewer was quick to learn that Bergstrom was a highly competent teacher who effectively used unique methods to reach his students. Bergstrom’s class sat in a circle and listened intently to him read; he broke down stereotypes as he taught about the United States’ pioneer history; and he found ways to inspire learning about geology during recess. Bergstrom’s portrayal of professionalism thus invalidated neoliberal claims that the only way to ensure students are learning is by “regulat[ing] the only appropriate methods of teaching” (Apple, 2001b, p. 51) through “interventionist movements” (1993/2000, p. 118).

Bergstrom’s reflection as a professional, however, did not find itself congruent with the portrayal of Springfield Elementary’s staple teachers. Consequently, his competence may have potential to harm some of the collective aspects of teaching as a profession. Bergstrom’s comparative brilliance as a teacher—a tenure that was brought to an end with the return of the unprofessional Miss Hoover—could be reflective of the problem of how, as neoliberals contend, “all [teachers] (even the bad ones) have a right to stay in the classroom” (Moe & Chubb, 2009, p. 135). The students were far better served by him than by Miss Hoover, yet Bergstrom had to leave the school upon her return. Springfield Elementary thus reflected the neoliberal criticism of how schools can be “saddled with a number of teachers, perhaps even several teachers, whom they regard as bad fits” (Chubb & Moe, 1990, p. 152). In this context, it is fair to point out that

even Apple (2001b) noted that “a number of these criticisms [regarding “incompetent” teachers] may be partly accurate” (p. 181). Thus, Bergstrom’s exit lent credence to critiques of tenure policies of organised labour.

But *The Simpsons* is contradictory. Even if Bergstrom’s exit lent credence to dominant critique of the tenure policies of public education, those protections afforded public employees with regard to collective labour and their right to remain in the classroom were not shown to be overly strong. This quite possibly reflected Apple’s (2001c) observations about the weakened state of organised labour in the United States. Periodic dismissals of staff took place at Springfield Elementary that tended to lack process, contradicting Chubb & Moe’s (1990) claim that public schools are saddled with a bureaucratised personnel system (p. 52). When Principal Skinner and Mrs. Krabappel lost their jobs due to sensational rumours regarding their romance, they had to resort to staging a lock-in at the school so that they could take their case to the town because no due process was provided (Pulido & Dietter, 1997). Further evidencing this was when Skinner found himself fired due to a botched attempt to retrieve a dog from the school vents, Superintendent Chalmers revealed his problem was not so much the dog in the vents as it was that “Skinner really bugged me” (Oakley et al., 1994). In these instances, the seeming perception of public education workers as having elaborate employment security did not manifest itself. However, while it is noteworthy that these particular dismissals lacked process, it is equally noteworthy was that these dismissals were rare events in an environment plagued by failing education. Perhaps then, existent was a latent validation of Chubb & Moe’s (1990) contention that bad teachers are virtually unremovable.

The contention that school privatisation would cure perceived school staffing problems by allowing the removal of “bad” teachers also found reflection on *The Simpsons*, and the portrayal was equally critical. After a botched wheelchair ramp scheme drained Springfield Elementary of funds, the school was put into the private ownership of Kid First Industries (KFI). KFI’s first order of business was to dismiss the entire school staff, offering them nothing but a

basket of Valencia oranges as a “generous severance package” (Martin & Nastuk, 1999). This mass dismissal pointedly reflected Apple’s (2001b) broader concern that for most major corporations, “profits are much more important than the lives, hopes, and well-being of employees who have given their working lives to these organizations” (p. 18); and in specific regard to education, it served as an extreme reinforcement of Whitty et al.’s (1998) observations of how quasi-market reforms to education systems were resulting in “the reduc[tion] of the core of established and costly teachers” (p. 71). The seeming reflection was that private providers will downsize expenditures on established, “costly” staff, with no process whatsoever.

Considered as a whole, Springfield Elementary’s staff portrayals were extremely contradictory. At times producer capture existed, at times it did not. At times teachers were professional, at times they were not. At times the teacher’s union advanced student interests, at times it did not. The only definitive conclusions to be made are that *The Simpsons*’ propensity to attack anything it deemed worthy of ridicule was most evident when considering teacher portrayals, although as a whole teachers were primarily portrayed as inadequate. Such portrayals likely seem reflective of and contributing to Apple’s (2005) contention that “the decades of attacks on state employees have . . . had the predictable effects of lost employment and worsening working conditions” (p. 387). Even if “it is clear that teachers as well as headteachers are experiencing heavier workloads as a result of [neoliberal] reforms” (Whitty, et al., 1998, p. 67), Springfield Elementary’s staff were not seen suffering “the chronic sense of work overload that has escalated over time” (Apple, 1993/2000, p. 119). Overall, the portrayal lent credence to neoliberal critiques of teachers as professionals, and this critique carried over into considerations of progressivism at Springfield Elementary.

#### Progressivism and Elitism

According to Apple (2001b), neoliberal advocates—ignoring the social democratic nature of schooling—claim that public education has been taken over by elitist forces who favour

progressive learning techniques (p. 54). Using this claim to assign blame for schooling's faults (p. 54), neoliberals work towards "tightening control over curriculum and teaching (and students, of course), restoring 'our' lost traditions, [and] making education more disciplined as they are certain it was in the past" (Apple, 2001b, p. 68). Consequently, progressivism in public schools is on the decline because "the impact of standards-based curriculum and accountability has weakened progressive teaching practices where they occur while hardening traditional classroom patterns" (Cuban, 2004, p. 65). *The Simpsons* seemed somewhat reflective of this although its satire noticeably shifted over the course of the series. Portrayals of progressive concepts having influence in schooling were existent, but primarily in the earliest seasons. In later years, the portrayal shifted to a critique of schools lacking innovation and progressive thinking.

Early episodes of *The Simpsons* were eager to claim that progressivism was invalid for student discipline and for student learning. Regarding discipline, Homer called Marge's suggestion to correct Bart's misbehaviour at school through extra-hard hugs "exactly the kind of crapola that's lousing him up" (Vitti & Silverman, 1990) and when Ned Flanders—acting as Springfield Elementary's Principal—offered snacks to students sent to his office and implemented the honour system for detention, the result was increased frequency of Bart's office visits and school discipline sliding into complete entropy (Oakley et al., 1994). Regarding education techniques, when Bart found himself in an advanced classroom where students were encouraged to self-direct learning through "discovering" their desks and choosing their subject matter, Bart continually failed to understand concepts while his teachers were daft to Bart's ill fit for the environment (Vitti & Silverman, 1990). Other instances suggested incompetent elitism being demonstrated by Springfield Elementary's staff. When school psychologist Dr. Pryor believed Bart to be of high IQ, he likened Bart's return to a regular-stream classroom to Jane Goodall and the chimps (Vitti & Silverman, 1990). More nuanced was Mrs. Krabappel's endorsement of Martin over Bart when running for class president (Vitti & Moore, 1991), an action counter to the democratic process she was teaching and possibly reflecting a nanny state

school where elitists believed they are better able to identify the interests of those below them.

Later years saw the virtual disappearance of portrayals of school progressiveness. Springfield Elementary became more notorious for archaic leanings, such as its lack of compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1975* (Martin & Nastuk, 1999). Best exemplifying Springfield Elementary's archaic state was both Miss Hoover and Lunch Lady Doris dismissing Lisa's vegetarianism, then activating their Independent Thought Alarms. Wired into Principal Skinner's office, these alarms brought about concern that "the students are over-stimulated." As remedy, Skinner had all coloured chalk removed from the classrooms and showed students the corporate propaganda film *Meat and You: Partners in Freedom*. It was not until Lisa met like-minded vegetarians in the community did she come to learn about acceptance of diverse viewpoints (Cohen & Kirkland, 1995).

That Springfield Elementary was working to stifle independent thought—and that the school's best equipment to foster independent thought was coloured chalk—certainly countered hegemonic rhetoric that public schools continue to move towards "trendy (and overly multicultural) subjects" (Apple, 2001b, p. 2). The shutting down of Lisa's independent thoughts was also consistent with Apple and King's (1977) long-held belief that schools are preparing nothing more than "good workers" given that it seemed in this instance "obedience was more highly valued than ingenuity" (p. 353). Because the most biting satire of progressiveness was found in early seasons before shifting to suggest the opposite, *The Simpsons* appeared to reflect Cuban's (2004) observation that "progressive practices such as portfolios, project-based teaching, performance-based assessment, and other student-centred approaches that blossomed from the mid-1980s until the early 1990s, for example, have since shriveled and gone underground under the unrelenting pressure for higher test scores" (p. 65). This shift evidenced *The Simpsons'* proclivity to mock anything deemed worthy of ridicule: the hegemonic attack on progressivism inverted with a similar time-line to Cuban's observations. The overall portrayal of Springfield Elementary and its staff was negative, and as will be seen with consideration to local

involvement in and control of Springfield Elementary, these portrayals of inadequacy were not limited to the actions of school staff.

### Local Control

Although neoliberals put forth the belief that schools are no longer locally controlled nor an extension of the home (Apple, 2001b, p. 54), this concept could be considered at odds with portrayals of local involvement in Springfield Elementary. A hallmark feature of the school was the involvement of or consideration given to the community. Well-attended meetings or general assemblies were put forth to mediate the teachers' strike (Crittenden & Scott, 1995); for celebrating Principal Skinner's twentieth anniversary of employment (Keeler & Moore, 1997); to announce Principal Skinner's resignation (Keeler & Moore, 1997); for the debut of Springfield Elementary's wheelchair ramp (Martin & Nastuk, 1999); to discuss Springfield Elementary's closure (Martin & Nastuk, 1999); and for disbursing Springfield Elementary's state assistance grant (Maxtone-Graham & Anderson, 1998). Further, a ceremony—also broadcast on local television—took place at the town square to welcome Principal Skinner's replacement (Keeler & Moore, 1997), and virtually the entire town of Springfield showed up to hear out Principal Skinner and Mrs. Krabappel when they staged a lock-in at Springfield Elementary to protest their firing (Pulito & Dietter, 1997). These assemblages of townfolk generally included a wide array of community members, including childless characters.

While this involvement would counter the neoliberal suggestion that schooling is not locally controlled, closer attention here is required of Chubb & Moe's (1990) criticism of schools as democratic organisations. This is because they took issue with what they believed to be the unequal power amongst groups interested in schools, fearing that "what [schools] are supposed to be doing depends on who controls them and what those controllers want them to do" (p. 30). Allan Hunter noted that the perception existed that "taken over by alien, elitist forces, schools now interpose themselves between parents and children" (as cited in Apple, 2001b, p. 54).

Springfield Elementary contrasted this, though. Special interests did not interpose themselves between parents and children, nor were community members seemingly left disenfranchised by the school's governance. Springfielders as a whole took a surprising degree of involvement in the school.

This is not to mean that local involvement was always successful involvement. Two instances of involvement by the Springfield Elementary Parent Teacher Association suggested otherwise. In both of these instances, community members took on professional educational positions with disastrous results. While the professional skills of educators that Apple (1993/2000) put forth, "setting relevant curricular goals, establishing content, designing lessons and instructional strategies, 'community building' in the classroom, individualizing instruction based on an intimate knowledge of students' varied cultures, desires, and needs, and so on" (p. 118) were seldom portrayed by Springfield's teachers, these skills were demonstrably absent in common Springfielders. The townsfolk all failed as substitute teachers during the school strike, evidenced by such ordeals as Jasper catching his beard in the pencil sharpener and Professor Frink hogging toys (Crittenden & Scott, 1995); and Ned Flanders failed as principal in Skinner's absence, as evidenced by the school losing all discipline (Oakley et al., 1994). In both episodes, without education professionals in place, Springfield Elementary's conditions degenerated to the point where a common realisation was arrived at amongst the townsfolk: the *status quo* must be returned. While these instances were a back-handed acknowledgment of the professional skills of teachers and administrators, community members' failed efforts in Springfield's education system also served to contradict Apple's (2001b) belief that "the government has assumed all too often that the only true holders of expertise in education, social welfare, and so on are those in positions of formal authority" (p. 184).

Further, the wide swath of characters involved in Springfield Elementary may have reflected Chubb and Moe's (1990) concerns that "citizens everywhere, whether or not they have children in the school and whether or not they live in the local school district or even the state,



have a legitimate hand in governing each and every local school” (p. 30). Confidence in local involvement is hardly exuded by the sight of childless Moe discussing the school’s financial woes while wearing bread bags for shoes (Martin & Nastuk, 1999). Yet the participation of even such off-colour characters should find validity through Apple (1993/2000), given his notion that schooling is a democratic undertaking in a connected and interdependent society (p. xiv).

Springfield Elementary’s high degree of local involvement was then a double-edged sword in its reflection of neoliberal influence on public education. While the democratic involvement counterhegemonically suggested schooling was locally controlled rather than in the hands of elitists who were out-of-touch with the community, its disastrous state opened up another flank for attack by reflecting the neoliberal belief that the democratic nature of local schools is problematic in itself. This high degree of local involvement in an era of the state exporting responsibility (Apple, 2005, p. 416) related to Apple’s (1993/2000) concerns about democratisation of schools:

I say this . . . to ask us to focus realistically on the question of whether more local control of schools, finance, and curricula can compensate for [conditions affecting schooling but outside its jurisdiction, such as job creation, housing, and health care]. If the schools cannot overcome these problems, and achievement scores (usually and unfortunately the primary measure of the quality of the school experience) do not markedly rise, then it is possible that powerful groups will blame the more democratic policy itself. (p. 39)

Much like Apple’s concerns, the democratic and inclusive nature of Springfield Elementary often contributed to failure. This could work as a latent reflection that endorses marketised alternatives where “despite the formal dominance of owners, however, markets work to ensure that parents and students play a much more central and influential role in private sector education than they do *when democracy gives them formal rights to govern* [italics added]” (Chubb & Moe, 1990, p. 30). This “central and influential role” is alleged to grow from the incentive of private providers to please clientele, the freedom of choice for participants in the market, and the natural

selection of markets that will purge underperforming institutions (Chubb & Moe, 1990, p. 31). To Whitty (1997), the problem with such beliefs lies in how “atomized decision-making in a highly stratified society may appear to give everyone equal opportunities but transforming responsibility for decision-making from the public to the private sphere can actually reduce the scope for collective action to improve the quality of education for all” (Apple, 2001b, p. 41). *The Simpsons* did reflect that collective deliberation and participation in public schools can be problematic, but it was also notable in how it reflected that education was a community responsibility, not a private responsibility. In fact, when private sphere models of schooling were specifically put forth, success was often elusive.

#### Private Delivery Alternatives

Apple (2001b) noted that in the minds of privatisation advocates, “the \$700 billion education sector in the United States is ripe for transformation. It is seen as the ‘next health care’—that is, as a sphere that can be mined for huge profits” (p. 7). While privatisation of education takes many forms, those private alternatives put forth on *The Simpsons* were at best given a mixed review, with profit motives consistently seen as damaging to education. Four forms of schooling as a private realm were found on *The Simpsons*: private tutoring, home schooling, religious schooling, and the outright privatisation of Springfield Elementary. Each deserves specific discussion.

#### *Private Tutoring and Home Schooling*

Apple (2001b) connected home-based schooling to authoritarian populist, neoconservative, and neoliberal desires to move schooling from collective to individual control (p. 173). Schooling at home as portrayed on *The Simpsons* was schooling of last resort, used after other options were exhausted. However, even though public schooling was Springfielder’s preferred option, learning consistently improved when it moved into the home. Hints of this

were dropped during the teachers' strike, when Milhouse's private tutor advanced his language, science, and historical knowledge, and Lisa's self-directed learning resulted in the construction of a perpetual motion machine (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). A more thorough examination of home schooling was put forth after Bart was expelled from Springfield Elementary (Swartzwelder & Lynch, 1993).

The Simpson family was left with no other option than to home-school Bart following his expulsion from Springfield Elementary and rejection from Springfield Christian Academy. It could be argued that Bart's expulsion moderated conservative perceptions that "temptations and godlessness were everywhere within [public schools]" (Apple, 2001b, p. 181) by demonstrating limits on student misbehaviour at Springfield Elementary. However, as a whole the portrayal was a more pointed consideration of how home schooling "gives individuals a new ability to 'personalize' information, to choose what they want to know or what they find personally interesting" (Apple, 2001b, p. 176). Marge made learning personally interesting for Bart by sharing one of her favourite books, *Johnny Tremain*. She bridged this into an interest in colonial history, which resulted in Bart exposing an impossibility in Fort Springfield's legends about town founder Jebadiah Springfield. Because of the nature of how home schooling paved the way for perennially-underachieving Bart to deconstruct hegemonic societal narratives, Apple's concerns about home schooling were put forth in a somewhat contradictory light. Apple (2001b) noted that home schoolers believed that in this "time of seeing cultural disintegration, when traditions are under threat and when the idealised family faces ever more externally produced dangers, protecting our families and even our children are key elements in returning to God's grace" (p. 175). Home schooling in this instance was not protecting from but rather contributing to "cultural disintegration" by deconstructing Springfield's historical narratives and thus putting traditions "under threat." However, this instance of home schooling empowering individuals to deconstruct knowledge considered "official" (Apple, 2001b, p. 173) worked to reflect home schooling as a sight of resistance for those distrustful of the public education establishment.

Either way, Bart's home-schooling success was yet another of *The Simpsons'* indictments of public schooling's effectiveness in teaching children.

*Privatised Schools and Authoritarian Populists*

Apple (2001b) put forth that “the authoritarian populist religious right believes *they* are under attack. Their traditions are disrespected; the very basis of their understanding of the world is threatened” (p. 111). They perceive public schooling to be a sight of immense danger because of its lack of biblical values (Apple, 2001b, p. 54). This belief not only motivates their efforts to influence curriculum policy and practice (p. 55), but it also drives a desire to expand privatised school options such as charter schools and voucher plans, in order to create schools that envelop their moral values (p. 56). Religion's role in schooling did not find frequent mention on *The Simpsons*. However, the portrayals that were put forth did suggest a lack of biblical values and thus encouraged privatisation through reflections of public schooling as a godless institution.

While there were no episodes specifically dealing with education and religion, a handful of events reflected the perceived godlessness of public schooling: Mrs. Krabappel and her class were in awe upon learning Bart's dog drank all the holy water in a church (Oakley et al., 1994); Principal Skinner believed Yom Kippur was a fictional holiday (Oakley et al., 1994); and in perhaps one of *The Simpsons'* most bizarre displays of the perceived immorality embedded in public schooling—albeit put forth with a caveat of a fear of god—Groundskeeper Willie embraced his garden tractor and stated that “if it was not a violation of god's law, I'd make you my wife” (Meyer & Lynch, 1992). But the most damning indictment of public education for its perceived godlessness and lack of religious tolerance was put forth with Ned Flanders' firing as principal. His dismissal was not because the school had slipped into complete chaos under Flanders' leadership, but instead the rage Superintendent Chalmers was driven into when hearing Flanders “Thank the lord for another beautiful school day” over the intercom. In heated fury, Chalmers fired Flanders, proclaiming:

Thank the Lor... thank the Lord? That sounded like a prayer. A prayer. A prayer in a public school! God has no place within these walls, just like facts have no place within organized religion. (Oakley et al., 1994)

Given that Apple (2001b) has pointed out that many religious conservatives “feel as if secular society has in essence declared war on Christians,” (p. 114), Chalmers’ outright prohibition and discounting of religion reflected a public school system prohibiting and discounting religious beliefs. While Apple (2001b) has taken issue with the particular visions of religious truth, he has also suggested that the complete absence of religion in public schools is not healthy and a liberal religious education should be part of the study of multiple perspectives (p. 24). Thus, it stands to reason that *The Simpsons* is reflecting Apple’s (2001b) belief that public schools disenfranchise those of organised religion through its outright shuttering of the concept (p. 24).

The alternative of private religious schooling found only brief mention, when Bart was sent to the private Springfield Christian School upon expulsion from Springfield Elementary. It only took minutes for Bart to be chased out of this school, with the teacher warning “Careful students. He may take on other forms” after Bart recited “Beans the Musical Fruit” as a psalm. That devilish Bart would be chased out of a Christian school for befouling psalms, yet won approval in a public school for bragging about his dog drinking holy water reflected the contrast of values between “godless” public schools and the “proper morality” of Christian schools (Apple, 2001b, p. 146). The higher standard of behaviour also suggested an ability of religious schools to instate the middle-class values of control (Apple, 1993/2000, p. 33). However, this portrayal of private schooling was short-lived. It was not until Springfield Elementary found itself privatised that deeper considerations of privatisation were found. And unlike Springfield Christian Academy’s religious values, when Springfield Elementary was guided by corporate values, privatisation’s portrayal did not fare well.

### *Privately-Operated Schools*

As should already be evident, Springfield Elementary suffered failures as a public institution. However, when Springfield Elementary was privatised (Maxtone-Graham & Anderson, 1998) it completely failed in its purpose. The motivations of private enterprise involvement in public schooling on *The Simpsons* were deconstructed in line with Apple's (2005) observation that "rather than school being aimed at creating critically democratic citizenship as its ultimate goal . . . the entire process [of privatized schooling] can slowly become aimed instead at the generation of profit for shareholders" (p. 385). Taken over by Kid First Industries (KFI) following a funding shortfall, Springfield Elementary devolved from an institution of learning into nothing more than a research sight for a toy company.

Chubb and Moe (1990) claimed that privatised schooling featured strong incentives to please parents and students by providing what "consumers" want (p. 32) and Kid First Industries immediately embraced this by proclaiming it would "find out what [the students] are passionate about and teach to that." Before long, a questionable curriculum of book-kicking, selecting fabric swatches, and brainstorming toy names emerged. As a result, Bart's vocabulary diminished and Lisa was disciplined for doing math. It appeared what students wanted lacked curricular substance, and most curricular changes were designed to accomplish market research. Further, Marge and Homer encouraged Bart and Lisa to kick books, suggesting parental inadequacy in navigating educational markets.

The problems with the privatised Springfield Elementary extended beyond curriculum. Contrary to Chubb and Moe's (1990) suggestion that privatised schooling would improve personnel conditions by creating a team of "right thinking" teachers (p. 52), the new Grade 2 teacher was just as impatient with hapless Ralph as was Miss Hoover. Her threat of "if you don't pipe down, I'm giving you an F" seemingly vindicated Hoover's lack of professionalism as a problem not exclusive to public sector employees. Further, the staff coalesced around KFI's organisational goal to generate profits, justifying their shift in the school curriculum because of the pressure they were under to produce the next hit toy. Starkly apparent in this was Apple's

(2001a) citation of Ball, Bowe, and Gerwitz’s concern about how “commercial issues become more important in curriculum design and resource allocation” (p. 413) when neoliberalism influences education. “The perceived needs of business and industry”—that being the development of a hit toy—became “the primary goals” (Apple, 1993, p. 227) of Springfield Elementary. Under corporate ownership, Springfield Elementary’s students were left devoid of knowledge and manipulated in order to fulfil corporate profit goals over educational goals.

Kid First Industries’ ownership of Springfield Elementary fulfilled Apple’s (2001b) observation that when schools privatise, “[students] and their schools are left in even worse condition than before” (p. 215). What was reflected was a school more concerned with the goals of its corporate owners than the education of its students, a staff equally inadequate for teaching students, and a curriculum devoid of substantive knowledge. Despite the shortcomings of Springfield Elementary, privatising the school was certainly not presented on *The Simpsons* as the panacea neoliberal advocates claim it would be. It was even worse.

### Summary

*The Simpsons* put forth mixed messages regarding privatisation-related concepts in education. While it became apparent through the presentation of staffing that teachers do enjoy a degree of producer capture, this was not absolute. The suggestion that teachers may have a degree of incompetence that goes unchecked was countered by portrayals of the same teachers suffering poor compensation. Divergent standpoints were also existent in the portrayals of local control at Springfield Elementary. Even if local involvement was not always successful, the community had a deep involvement and relationship with their school. Most interesting, though, were the forces of private-sphere schooling. While religious and home schooling seemed to have virtue, what began to emerge with specific examination of corporate-run private schooling was an element of distrust: *The Simpsons* suggested that the interests of corporations were not at all congruent with the interests of learning. Ultimately, the preferred option for Springfielders was

the continuance of Springfield Elementary as a public institution. Public schooling may be flawed in Springfield, but it almost always proved better than the alternatives. In the forthcoming analysis of marketisation, two themes continue with *The Simpsons*' reflections of neoliberalism: public bureaucracy was subject to further hegemonic critique, but strengthened were reflections of how corporate interests are incongruent with the interests of education.



## CHAPTER FIVE: MARKETISATION

*"I am a public servant and not permitted to use my judgment in any way."*  
Superintendent Chalmers

Apple (2005) viewed public institutions as "the defining features of a caring and democratic society" (p. 386). Neoliberals, though, see these institutions as "in need of being transformed and made more competitive by placing them into marketplaces" (Apple, 2001c, p. ii). Yet, by moving public education into a marketised environment its nature would be jeopardised because marketised goods are provided "in radically unequal ways, with class, gender, and especially race being extremely powerful markers of these inequalities" (Apple, 2005, p. 386). *The Simpsons* addressed many concerns surrounding marketisation, with a notable absence of class and race issues, likely stemming from Springfield being a predominantly white, middle-class community. In its school satire connected to marketisation, *The Simpsons* continued to put forth a peculiar mix that reinforced much neoliberal doctrine regarding perceived shortcomings of public education, while market intrusions into education were given equally critical portrayals.

Because of the belief that bureaucracies are inherently inefficient and drag down public sector organisations, explorations surrounding marketisation first examined how bureaucracy was reflected on *The Simpsons*. Next, due to the neoliberal-perpetuated belief that public education is inefficiently delivered, the portrayal of funding and operational inefficiencies at Springfield Elementary was examined. Finally, corporate intrusions into public education were explored for their reflections of neoliberal reforms to education.

### Bureaucracy

The neoliberal attack on public education is based in part on the perception of a cumbersome and expansive bureaucratic nature of government, a claim not wholly disputed by Apple. Apple voiced some agreement with the argument that governments have ever-expanding

spheres of interest, noting conservative-leaning professor of law Ian Hunter's (1987) claim that in striving to maintain organisational legitimacy and evidence needs for programs and services, government must demonstrate its own failures in order to open up further tracts of life to bureaucratic knowledge and intervention (as cited in Apple, 1998, p. 6). Apple's agreement was tempered, though. He considered Hunter's argument valid in that "not all of these forms of knowledge and intervention are necessarily in the long-term interests of those who are the subjects of them" (p. 6), but he did not view government regulation as necessarily a threat to freedoms. Instead, Apple considered Hunter's claim a reminder of "the connections among resources, power, institutional interests, failure, and hence, continued bureaucratization and expansion" (p. 6). Chubb and Moe (1990) more myopically rooted blame for bureaucratic growth with progressive politicians looking to implement their desires through democratic means (p. 47), albeit with the claim that bureaucrats "hardly have to be dragged along when groups of politicians insist on creating highly formalized structures that entangle the schools in bureaucratic constraints" (p. 46). They put forth that de-linking schools from democratic means and subjecting them to the whims of the market would eliminate bureaucracy and allow worker discretion because "the market requirement of pleasing clients would tend to grant substantial autonomy to schools and their personnel" (p. 47). Apple (2001b) countered that realising de-bureaucratization through marketisation is nothing more than "rhetoric" (p. 226), a concept ratified by Whitty et al.'s (1998) citation of evidence that suggested the neoliberal claim of reducing bureaucracy through marketising learning environments was "highly problematic" (p. 128).

Regardless, Whitty et al. (1998) fingered perceived shortcomings of bureaucracy as having "helped to legitimate the current tendency to treat education as a private good rather than a public responsibility" (p. 133). Thus neoliberal condemnations about the problems of bureaucracy endure: Chubb and Moe (1990) put forth that "bureaucratic control and its clumsy efforts to measure the unmeasurable are simply unnecessary for schools whose primary concern

is to please their clients” (p. 189). While Springfield Elementary’s staff were largely autonomous in their work, Springfield Elementary’s administration was occasionally guilty of seemingly pointless or useless actions with no seeming relation to actualising learning. Principal Skinner roamed Springfield Elementary’s halls inspecting for dust, checking the bell with a tuning fork, and measuring the distance between the garbage can and the wall (Keeler & Moore, 1997); and Superintendent Chalmers labouriously justified to a school assembly why a cake-cutting was occurring on a day not formalised as Springfield Elementary’s cake day (Keeler & Moore, 1997) and he measured the inconsequential by counting the stars on a flag during a school inspection (Oakley et al., 1994). Of these instances, the star counting finds particular irony with its reflection of neoconservative pursuits of patriotism (Apple, 2001b, p. 47) being subjected to neoliberal demands for measurement (Apple, 2001b, p. 65).

Suggestions of the expansive nature of bureaucratic organisations were also extremely limited. Springfield Elementary’s central division office was revealed to be “One School Board Plaza” (Swartzwelder & Lynch, 1993), a name implying a large and opulent central organisation. As well, one instance seemed to weakly reflect the core neoliberal critique that “the imposition of higher-order values is what democratic control in the public sector is all about, and this, in the final analysis, is why the public schools themselves are so heavily bureaucratic” (Chubb & Moe, 1990, p. 62): Principal Skinner was said to have once led a “fight to outlaw teenage rudeness” (Keeler & Moore, 1997). While these instances were amusing, as a whole education’s portrayals on *The Simpsons* were absent of substantive reflections of the debates surrounding educational bureaucracy. This is likely related to the local nature of schooling in Springfield, where only two central office staff—Superintendent Chalmers and his assistant Leopold—were ever put forth. Admittedly, those few instances that could be considered reflective of bureaucracy did paint public education as cumbersome or inefficient, in a seeming extension of Apple’s broader view that neoliberals have worked to put forth that “public servants are inefficient and slothful while private enterprises are efficient and energetic” (Apple, 1993, p. 229). But when considering all

of Springfield Elementary's problems, bureaucratic issues were not substantial. Yet, they did fit into the larger puzzle of how efficiencies and funding played out at Springfield Elementary.

### Efficiencies, Inefficiencies, and Funding

As Apple (2001b) pointed out, marketisation “radically redefines the boundaries between public and private” (p. 29). Ignoring differences between the purposes in public and private good provision, redefining these boundaries is intended to create an environment where “rigorous competition between institutions is sponsored so that public institutions are constantly compared with supposedly more efficient private ones” (Apple, 2001b, p. 29). Springfield Elementary is in a peculiar position for considering marketised education environments because the nature of schooling in Springfield was limited: alternative schools were not permanent fixtures in the show. That being established, within the series existed a single comparative portrayal of Springfield Elementary to Shelbyville Elementary—a school not specifically revealed to be a public or private institution.

The contrasts were stark when Springfield Elementary and Shelbyville Elementary both arrived for a field trip at the newly privatised Diz-Nee Historical Park, branded with the slogan “Sorry. There's profit to be had” and charging an admission fee (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). Shelbyville Elementary's bus was a sleek, modern coach while Springfield Elementary's bus had no brakes and leaked exhaust; Shelbyville's Principal Valiant—said to have swept the “Princy Awards”—paid the students' admission and tipped the gatekeeper to “see to it that the children get some extra learning” while Principal Skinner was unable to pay the admission fee and asked bus driver Otto Mann to siphon gas from Shelbyville's bus; and Shelbyville Elementary's students watched battle reconstructions in the park while Springfield Elementary's students peered over the park fence until being chased away by park staff who angrily proclaimed “they're trying to learn for free!” This juxtaposing revealed how Shelbyville Elementary had resources that Springfield Elementary did not, thus exploring Apple's (2001a) observation that wealth

disparity is an obstacle to education, with the privileges of those less advantaged traded off for those who are more advantaged (p. 418). The profit motives of the park meant educational opportunity was now rationed based on user ability to pay, resulting in lost opportunity for poorer Springfield Elementary. Money bought access to marketised learning, and Springfield Elementary did not have money. It also cannot go unnoticed that the external factors that may have brought about Shelbyville Elementary's privilege were not portrayed, congruent with Apple's (1993/2000) concerns about the little attention paid to factors outside a school's control when passing judgment on them (p. 39). Shelbyville Elementary had more resources and thus appeared to be the better school, but what was not known was why.

Although Whitty et al. (1998) noted that there has yet to be conclusive data about school resourcing and its relation to optimal learning (p. 114), what can be ascertained from not only this but from nearly all of Springfield Elementary's portrayals was that the school's underfunding left it abound with deplorable resources and deplorable spaces for education: Springfield Elementary's walls were filled with asbestos (Vitti & Moore, 1991); a cinder block was used as a tether ball (Maxtone-Graham & Anderson, 1998); and the only books the school could afford were ones banned by other schools, including *Tek War*, *Theory of Evolution*, *Sexus*, *40 Years of Playboy*, *Steal This Book*, *Hop on Pop*, and *The Satanic Verses Junior Illustrated Edition* (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). The school's abject lunch program was also frequently targeted, serving horse testicles (Oakley et al., 1994), vitamin R-fortified Malk, shredded gym mats and newspapers (Crittenden & Scott, 1995), and possibly-meatless meatloaf (Cohen & Kirkland, 1995). Sadly, the use of substandard foods was justified by Lunch Lady Doris who claimed "more testicles mean more iron" and Principal Skinner who claimed "shredded newspapers are source of essential inks and roughage." Given that it cannot be established that producer capture resulted in an inordinate amount of resources being directed to teacher compensation at Springfield Elementary, these portrayals seemed to suggest overall inadequacy in school funding. In fact, Principle Skinner said as much with his complaint that ongoing school budget cuts left

him helpless to meet school needs (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). It would seem that the consequences of a neoliberal environment that has marshalled tax reductions and cutbacks to public schools (Apple, 1993/2000, p. 93) was being reflected by Springfield Elementary.

Despite the obvious under-funding of Springfield Elementary and despite Springfielders' involvement in their school, the town appeared unwilling to invest tax dollars into it. This came to be understood at the community forum addressing Springfield Elementary's teachers' strike (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). Mrs. Krabappel put forth the teachers' position of a cost-of-living increase and better equipment to teach children to which the community seemed amenable. Their attitude changed, though, when Principal Skinner countered that Krabappel's demands would require a tax increase. That Springfielders were unwilling to see taxes rise to improve education reflected the success of anti-tax movements (Apple, 2001b, p. 186). Without a mandate to raise taxes, Skinner and Krabappel had to resort to renting Springfield Elementary's unused cloak rooms to the overcrowded prison system as makeshift cells, thus putting into question the patches required when public funding falls short.

It would seem plausible that the problem facing Springfield Elementary may not be funding but rather inefficient management, given the rise of managerialism ethic that demands public services be operated in an efficient, "business-like" manner (Apple, 2001b, p. 30). Indeed there were incidents that suggested public schools were incapable of properly managing funds. Principal Skinner—strongarmed to the point of helplessness by Springfield's organised crime ring—oversaw the construction of a wheelchair ramp system so elaborate the bill bankrupted the school. Adding to the failure, the ramp system collapsed at its unveiling, and the school's only wheelchair-bound student recovered before its completion (Martin & Nastuk, 1999). The debacle raised questions about the financial burden that accommodation places on public institutions, perhaps reflecting an economic-determinist concern about progressivism just as much as it reflected the inability of school officials to efficiently allocate funds. More damning was how, with Chalmers' approval, Skinner purchased a giant scoreboard and outdated Coleco

computers that required rust-proofing when in receipt of a \$250,000 state assistant grant (Maxtone-Graham & Anderson, 1998). The evaluation process for the Career Aptitude Normalising Tests was also rife with inefficiency. The tests were airlifted by uniformed guards from Springfield Elementary to the National Testing Center where they were marked by a dated, room-sized computer that required an elderly custodian to periodically strike the failing machine with a broom (Meyer & Lynch, 1992). The test-marking portrayal of excessive procedures, outdated technology, and preposterous staffing quite directly suggested public schools do not fulfil the neoliberal priorities of efficiency, speed, and cost-control (Apple, 2001a, p. 87). These inefficiencies considered as a whole directly reflected the perceived need for “importing business models and other tighter systems of accountability into education and other forms of public services” (Apple, 2001b, p. 30), since:

one of the key characteristics of managerial discourse is in the positions it offers to managers. They are not passive, but active agents—mobilizers of change, dynamic entrepreneurs, shapers of their own destinies. No longer are the organizations they inhabit ploddingly bureaucratic and subjected to old-fashioned statism. Instead, they and the people who run them are dynamic, efficient, productive, “lean and mean.” (Apple, 2001b, p. 30)

Springfield Elementary was the antithesis of neoliberal doctrine: not dynamic, not efficient, not productive, not “lean and mean.” Consequently, Springfield Elementary appeared undeserving of public investment. This left corporate-sponsored materials one of the few alternatives for Springfield Elementary to backfill funding shortfalls. However, this was revealed to be equally problematic for education.

### Corporate Intrusion

Apple’s (2001a) concern that in marketised environments “commercial issues become more important in curriculum design and resource allocation” (p. 413) found reflection through

the intrusion of corporations into Springfield Elementary. While this premise was most boldly put forth with the outright privatisation of Springfield Elementary, these intrusions arose in the day-to-day learning and they were consistently portrayed as detrimental to public education. For example, Oscar Meyer promotional periodic tables resulted in Mrs. Krabappel's class being drilled on the atomic weight of Bolognium: acceptable answers were "Delicious" and "Snacktacular" (Maxtone-Graham & Anderson, 1998). Given that Principal Skinner specifically cited these periodic tables for replacement if the school was to obtain a state assistance grant, directly reflected were the specific concerns of Whitty et al. (1998) that promotional curriculum items are particularly appealing for schools with funding constraints (p. 91) even though these resources may be factually inaccurate and ultimately work to meet business interests (p. 92). Centrepiece to this problem was the portrayal of a corporate-lobby produced educational film *Meat and You: Partners in Freedom*, showed to Lisa's Grade 2 class when she raised questions about vegetarianism (Cohen & Kirkland, 1995). Because of its detailed nature, the film's viewing requires elaboration.

*Meat and You: Partners in Freedom* was introduced by Principal Skinner telling Miss Hoover's class "In the interests of creating an open dialogue, sit quietly and watch this film." Such an approach was reflective of Apple and King's (1977) belief that obedience is more highly valued than ingenuity in schooling. But perhaps best explaining what this film reflected was Saltman (2004), who surmised that corporations had the objective to ensure that "schooling should principally be about making disciplined consumers, workers, and soldiers who are good at following orders, and less about students developing the skills of intellectual inquiry necessary for a vibrant participatory democracy" (p. 162). That the film's title equated meat with freedom, yet its purpose was to stifle Lisa's freedom to raise moral objections suggested as much. Admittedly, Apple (2001b) noted that the concepts of freedom are subject to wide ideological debates (p. 12), however the video—labelled "Number 3F03 in the Resistance is Useless Series"—worked strictly to facilitate corporate desires through manipulated facts and outright



falsehoods. The slaughterhouse was dubbed “Bovine University”; those who questioned eating meat were judged as crazy, ignorant, and grade-A morons; and the claim was made that “If a cow ever got the chance, he’d eat you and everyone you care about.”

Although absurd, the film achieved the goals of the Meat Council. It stifled broader debate and Springfield Elementary succumbed to the “growing pressure to make the perceived needs of business and industry into the primary goals of schools” (Apple, 1993, p. 227). Evidencing the film’s success, when Lisa protested that “You can’t expect us to swallow this tripe!” Principal Skinner responded “Now courtesy of our friends at the Meat Council, please help yourself to this tripe.” The class rushed to eat the tripe while calling Lisa a “grade-A moron” and stating desires to attend Bovine University. Further suggesting discipline and obedience, the students—not surprisingly—appeared revolted by the tripe but continued to eat. The sequence strongly indicated the folly in corporate-sponsored learning resources, and through its obfuscation of open classroom debate it even hinted at how “freedom in a democracy is no longer defined as participating in building the common good, but as living in an unfettered commercial market, with the educational system now being seen as needing to be integrated into the mechanisms of such a market” (Apple, 1993/2000, p. 111).

### Summary

*The Simpsons* continued to put forth mixed messages with its portrayals of marketisation-related concepts in education. Indeed, Springfield Elementary’s educational bureaucracy was cumbersome while the school suffered hegemonic shortcomings, operational inefficiencies, and inabilities to properly manage finances. However, the neoliberal values of reduced public spending and lower taxes were portrayed as having had a role in financially hobbling Springfield Elementary, making it unable to fulfill its core educational purposes. Further, when these neoliberal-induced shortfalls were backfilled through corporate-sponsored curriculum, *The Simpsons* continued its counterhegemonic suggestion that corporate interests were not congruent

with the interests of learning. In the forthcoming analysis of performativity, the hegemonic deconstruction of public education still finds reflection, albeit as a continuance of *The Simpsons'* critique of teachers as professionals. Concurrent to this, though, is an unequivocally hostile portrayal of testing as a means to evaluate learning.

CHAPTER SIX:  
PERFORMATIVITY

*“These tests will have no effect on your grades.  
They merely determine your future social status and financial success.”*  
Edna Krabappel

Apple (2001b) argued that “a national curriculum and especially a national testing program are the first and most essential steps toward increased marketization” of education because “they actually provide the mechanisms for comparative data that ‘consumers’ need to make markets work as markets” (p. 84). Such use of standardised, test-driven data to accommodate the marketisation of education is not without risk. With performativity processes reducing learning to standardised outcomes with measurable indicators, legitimate knowledge becomes what is included on reductive tests and what counts as good teaching is evaluated by improving scores on these tests. Such a process shows a complete misunderstanding of the complexity of the act of teaching (Apple, 2005, p. 381) and creates data that is merely “used inappropriately for comparative purposes” (Apple, 2007, p. 110). Ball (2003) ratified this, putting forth that performativity measurement was “misleadingly objective and hyper-rational” because “central to its functioning is the translation of complex social processes and events into simple figures or categories of judgment” (p. 217). Even Chubb and Moe (1990), when prescribing their framework of neoliberal reforms to public education, appeared to have some reservation about performativity as they explicitly put forth that the information parents required to make informed choices in an education marketplace should not necessarily include reporting of standardised test scores to the public (p. 225). The irony of them having used standardised scores for their research is not lost. Regardless of their drawbacks, standardised testing results have become the most commonly-used measure of school success (Apple, 2001b, p. 74). *The Simpsons* addressed many aspects related to performativity, albeit with some key attributes notably absent. When performativity was present, *The Simpsons* was critical.

Because of the embrace of standardised and reductive tests as a means of measuring

learning, explorations surrounding performativity first examined the make-up of such tests as reflected on *The Simpsons*. Next, due to the impact these tests have on learning environments, the portrayal of students in performative environments was examined. Finally, standardised and reductive testing's impact on Springfield Elementary's management and operation was explored for its reflections of neoliberalism's impact on public education.

### Standardised and Reductive Tests

Springfield Elementary seemingly embraced standardised and reductive tests, with all instances of testing on *The Simpsons* using such means of evaluation. Admittedly, the portrayals had certain inconsistencies with how these tests are used in the current neoliberal environment: testing data was not made public to facilitate choice for education “consumers”; only one test was state-sanctioned; and no test that was administered on the program appeared to directly impact curriculum. Even if they were not a perfectly holistic reflection of performativity in a neoliberal environment, much of their structure, implementation, and repercussions still served to reflect standardised and reductive testing as a flawed method for collecting data and for evaluating learning.

Three particular tests were portrayed, each illustrating fundamental flaws. Examining reductive testing was a fill-in-the-blank *Wind in the Willows* test that asked detailed and de-contextualised questions such as “Mr. [blank] needs a [blank] in order to [blank] his [blank]” (Maxtone-Graham & Anderson, 1998). Converse to minimal context, a standardised IQ test given to Mrs. Krabappel's class put forth so much mathematical data that Bart was left completely overwhelmed (Vitti & Silverman, 1990). Finally, the standardised Career Aptitude Normalising Test—or CANT—given to all Springfield students lived up to its abbreviated name's implications. The CANT's narrowly slotted questions included “If I could be any animal I would be: a) a carpenter ant, b) a nurse shark, or c) a lawyer bird” and “I prefer the smell of: a) gasoline, b) french fries, or c) bank customers” (Meyer & Lynch, 1992). The limited and detailed

nature of these three tests illustrated Gipps & Murphy's (1994) point that "tests that include only multiple-choice type or short-responses to printed stimulus materials are very limited in what they can assess" (p. 112). By holding this true, they reflected Apple's (2001b) concerns that testing as a process of emphasising memory and decontextualising abstraction pulls the educational process in pre-prescribed directions that serves limited needs (p. 86). Respectively, these tests asked for the regurgitation of facts with limited context in the *Wind and the Willows* test; for the processing of numbers with little application to lived experience in the IQ test; and for overly-simplistic answers that lead to predetermined prescriptions in the CANT.

Through the perspective of students, the two summative assessments—the *Wind in the Willows* test and the IQ test—reflected Apple and Beane's (2007) concern that the standardised testing that fuels performativity is a high-stakes undertaking (p. 35). Mrs. Krabappel introduced the IQ test by telling her students that "these tests will have no effect on your grades. They merely determine your future social status and financial success." She then used a tension-filled starting-block approach to commence the test writing. With the stakes high and Bart overwhelmed, he switched his answer sheet with that of class genius Martin.

Cheating due to high stakes was more broadly explored with Lisa's experience writing Miss Hoover's *Wind in the Willows* test. Because of the intricate details, the circumstances require elaboration. Unprepared for this test and convinced that a low score would prevent her from attending Harvard, Lisa stepped out of class to gather her wits. In the hallway she shared her dilemma with Bart, who was skipping Mrs. Krabappel's class thanks to a latex dummy he "whipped up" in shop class. Bart's reaction to Lisa's dilemma was to simply take the zero. Because a zero was not amenable to Lisa, Bart brought his sister into the boys' washroom to buy an answer key from Nelson. At first conflicted about the purchase, Lisa's mind was changed upon witnessing Groundskeeper Willie unclogging a toilet with his bare hands while proclaiming "I took a zero once and my life turned out just fine."

In this sequence existed several reflections of the high-stakes nature of performativity.

For Willie, his academic failure relegated him to a career of bare-handed toilet unclogging. For Bart, his willingness to take a zero suggested a fate similar to that of Willie, given the series' portrayal of future Bart as a drifter (Meyer & Lynch, 1992) and a tester of dangerous products (Swartzwelder & Lynch, 1993). For Lisa, her immediate fear of disqualification from Harvard due to a zero overrode more complex moral conflicts regarding cheating. Illustrated here was Apple's (2005) concern that "only what is measurable is important" (p. 382): test results—a measurable construct—were the authors of the fate of Lisa, Willie, and Bart. Considering that such tests were portrayed as a limited if not flawed means of obtaining data about learning, this was a most negative appraisal of the high-stakes of testing.

Bart's portrayal in this encounter more elaborately illustrated how standardised and reductive testing was a limited measurement of intelligence. Apple (2001b) noted that for those disadvantaged by dominant systems, "collective bonds, informal networks and contacts, and an ability to work the system are developed in quite nuanced, intelligent, and often impressive ways" (p. 74). Mirroring this, underachieving Bart helped his sister through his ability to network with a black-market seller of answer keys, and he was available to do so by constructing an elaborate latex dummy that allowed him to skip class. Such intelligence would be immeasurable by those standardised and reductive means put forth at Springfield Elementary. This suggestion of Bart's inherent disadvantage is somewhat tempered, though, by Bart's status as a middle-class "coded as white" (Brookes, 2005, p. 178) student. Bart's disadvantage was rooted in his perpetual label as an underachiever and not the cultural inequities upon which Apple based this claim. Regardless, his "immeasurable" intelligence remains noteworthy.

The writing experience of the CANT—unlike the *Wind in the Willows* and the IQ tests—was less stressful and without cheating. Instead of high stakes, its portrayal worked to further reflect Apple's (2001b) concerns that standardised and reductive testing is geared towards those more dominant in society (p. 58). The CANT prescribed Bart to be a future police officer and Martin to be a systems analyst, however, despite Lisa being "probably the least gender-

stereotypical character on *The Simpsons*” (Heath & Brown, 2005, p. 154) she was still determined to be best-suited as a homemaker. This slotting of Lisa into a gender-typified and “traditional” role evidenced Apple’s (1993) concern that national curricula and standardised testing regimes are “part of an attempt to recreate hegemonic power that has been partly fractured by social movements” (p. 232). This point seems especially true given that the CANT concurrently kept Bart and Martin in dominant positions. A second means for considering the flawed results of the CANT also emerged. The unfair results could be alternately considered as indicative of development flaws in standardised and reductive testing. Gipps and Murphy (1994) noted that “the speed of test development is so great, and the curriculum and assessment changes so regular, that [there is] little time to carry out detailed analyses and trialing to ensure that the tests are as fair as possible to all groups” (as quoted in Apple, 2001b, p. 87). The flawed CANT results could simply reflect inadequate design. Regardless if the CANT is argued as reflective of purposeful or inadequate design, either consideration leads to the conclusion that the standardised and reductive CANT covertly worked to recreate hegemonic power. And further to be considered in the case of the CANT was how its flaws did not terminate with the test. *The Simpsons* also reflected how negative effects can spill into school communities when testing isolates and marginalises.

Admittedly, in considering spillover effects of the CANT, it could be argued as having a positive impact in its hegemonic affirmation of Bart. After all, it nurtured an interest in policing and hall monitor work by prescribing him as a police officer. However, Bart’s success was juxtaposed by the CANT’s sidelining of Lisa. By prescribing her as a homemaker, it caused Lisa a great deal of disappointment and anger. Feeling isolated and arbitrarily slotted into this role, she transformed from an engaged student into a disengaged trouble-maker. Lisa redirected her intelligence into diabolical schemes such as vandalising the school mascot and stealing the teachers’ editions of textbooks. This rejection of the school system that prescribed her into a stereotyped role reflected Apple’s (1993) argument that myopic nationally-dictated system of

standards, testing, and curricula will not result in the improvement of schools' cultural and social cohesion, but rather "differences between 'us' and the 'others' will be socially produced even more strongly and the attendant social antagonisms and cultural and economic destruction will worsen" (p. 231). With Lisa disenfranchised by the CANT, she caused this antagonistic destruction Apple feared. Springfield Elementary's property was destroyed and Springfield Elementary was brought to a halt when the school's inadequate teachers were left helpless without their teachers' editions. Putting aside the further exposure of the already-established inadequacy of Springfield Elementary's staff, what was seemingly reflected through Lisa's isolation and subsequent reaction was how performativity regimes can cause damage to learning environments and communities.

Overall, the CANT, the *Wind in the Willows* test, and the IQ test reflected aspects of how "such reductive, detailed, and simplistic tests 'had the potential to do enormous damage'" (Apple, 2001b, p. 86) through their inadequate, exclusionary, and high-stakes natures. Even so, it should be noted that these portrayals of testing did not delve into Apple's (2001b) concern about how such tests pull curricula in arbitrary, inflexible, and overly prescriptive directions (p. 86) shaped by the conservative modernisation alliance (p. 64). Instead, the suggestion put forth by *The Simpsons* was that curricula was marred by teacher incompetence or corporate intrusion. The show even went so far as to once validate the centralised control shaped by performativity when Lisa observed that "without state-approved curricula and standardised testing, my education can only go so far" (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). Yet as a whole, *The Simpsons* put forth negative portrayals of standardised and reductive tests, and these portrayals were not limited to their consequences for students. The teachers of Springfield Elementary reflected further reaches for performativity's negative aspects.

### Performativity and Teaching Practice

Performativity's ill-suited nature for learning found reflection in how it had an impact



teachers' attitudes towards their practice at Springfield Elementary. Not surprisingly, this also had repercussions for students. Apple's (2001b) discussion of David Gillborn and Deborah Yodell's *Rationing Education* (2000) revealed that implementation of neoliberal policies intended to raise standards, increase test scores, guarantee accountability, and make schools more competitive damaged the least advantaged, because the need to meet test results caused teachers and administrators to:

harden their sense of which students are "able" and which ones are not. Tracking returns in both overt and covert ways. And once again, black students and students in government subsidized lunch programs are the ones most likely to be placed in those tracks or given academic and career advice that nearly guarantees that they will have limited or no mobility and will confirm their status as students who are "less worthy." (p. 92)

*The Simpsons* did not touch on race, but did put forth that staff were disrespectful or apathetic toward those who were not "able." Miss Hoover was habitually dismissive of Ralph. When he spotted a dog in a heating vent, she countered "Ralph, remember the time you said Snagglepuss was outside?" (Oakley et al., 1994). When Ralph ate his worm intended for dissection, he was told that there were no more so he should just sleep while the other children are learning (Cohen & Kirkland, 1995). Dr. Pryor reflected the notion that students will be given self-perpetuating career advice, telling Bart that he had him pegged as a drifter (Meyer & Lynch, 1992). While not all these examples directly linked to testing portrayed on the series, these instances did suggest that teachers do believe that specific students are less "movable" and therefore less worthy of attention. Given Apple's belief that performative environments harden these senses of who is "able," such portrayals of teacher behaviour could be argued as reflecting the consequences of the neoliberal embrace of performativity. However, the portrayals appeared to be more easily linked to the series' habitual prescription of teachers as unprofessional than to performativity. This being understood, such instances still do form building blocks for a case to connect such

portrayals to performativity's impact on public education.

Further reflections of unprofessional behaviour were found in how Springfield Elementary's staff acted contrary to Apple's (2001b) optimistic recounting of teachers who protested the introduction of reductive tests. The teachers who Apple lauded spoke out against performative reforms because they "pulled the national curriculum in a particular direction—that of encouraging a selective educational market in which elite schools with a wide range of resources would be well (if narrowly) served" (p. 86). The teachers at Springfield Elementary, on the other hand, appeared naive to this and actually exacerbated the high stakes of high-stakes testing. Krabappel's starting-block introduction to the IQ test suggested as much, as did her telling Bart that "there are students in this class with a chance to do well. Will you stop bothering them?" as he struggled with his test. More interesting was the visualisation sequence Bart experienced as he tried to answer a math question on this IQ test. In the visualisation, Principal Skinner rather than being a helpful figure obscured answers that appeared before Bart. On the surface, these portrayals contributed to *The Simpsons'* negative reflection of the high-stakes for students experiencing high-stakes testing while further cementing the image of Springfield Elementary's teachers as disinterested in their professional purpose. Yet, much like the previous instances and their link to teachers' hardened senses of who is "able," the teachers' actions surrounding the IQ test could also be linked to latent consequences of performativity altering teacher behaviour. In a final instance framed by testing, *The Simpsons* more directly suggested that there were performative-based reasons behind such unprofessional behaviour.

Apple (2001a) linked educator dissatisfaction to performativity and its association with neoliberal and neoconservative policy shifts (p. 417). Ball (2003) compellingly ratified this, noting that the requirements of narrow-scoping performativity resulted in:

inauthentic practice and relationships. Teachers are no longer encouraged to have a rationale for practice, account of themselves in terms of relationship to the meaningfulness of what they do, but are required to produce measurable and 'improving'

outputs and performances (p. 222)

Such teacher malaise was compellingly displayed by Krabappel in an instance framed by the standardised and reductionist CANT. When introducing the test, she told her students that:

Some of you may discover a wonderful vocation you'd never even imagined. Others may find out life isn't fair, in spite of your Masters from Bryn Mawr, you might end up a glorified babysitter to a bunch of dead-eyed fourth graders while your husband runs naked on a beach with your marriage counsellor. (Meyer & Lynch, 1992)

Even though it may be difficult to consider instances such as Principal Skinner obscuring answers as anything beyond a portrayal of deficient professionalism, there is an arguable link between the de-professionalising embrace of neoliberal initiatives and some of the unprofessional teacher behaviour that the series so frequently satirised. Krabappel, a Seven Sisters-educated teacher, revealed herself to be professionally unrewarded by the crumbling welfare state that no longer provided teachers with “irreducible autonomy based on their training and qualifications” (Apple, 2001b, p. 179). In its place has evolved a performativity-based environment where certain “beliefs are no longer important—it is output that counts” (Ball, 2003, p. 223) for the “glorified babysitters” of public education. *The Simpsons*, then, appeared to be reflecting an environment where teachers are demoralised in part by a performative environment that has shifted their professional purpose to enacting prescribed curricula. More troubling is how such unbecoming shifts in schooling did not terminate with staff. *The Simpsons* also reflected how image management trumped pedagogic concern when performativity guides education environments.

### Performativity and School Management

As Apple (2001a) has noted, performativity shifts not only teacher priorities, but also school priorities as administrative roles shift from facilitating pedagogic and curricular substance to managing school images (p. 416). Changing school administrators' purposes from focussing

on inward educational issues to focussing on outward appearances has much damaging potential. Ball (2003) verified this, claiming that in a performative environment truthfulness is not the point when managing school images (p. 224). Rather, schools reframe their purpose to one of meeting tight performativity guidelines, and this reframing becomes embedded in the organisational culture (p. 225).

Several instances on *The Simpsons* appeared to touch on school priorities shifting to image management. Principal Skinner hid trouble-making Bart, Nelson, Jimbo, Kearny, and Dolph in the school basement and disallowed Ralph to answer a question in favour of Lisa during an inspection by Superintendent Chalmers (Swartzwelder & Lynch, 1993). While this had no direct association to external performativity measures as this was an internal inspection whose truthfulness was being engineered, hiding underachieving students reflected the “straightforward misrepresentation” that Ball (2003) surmised would become ingrained as part of the “everyday life” (p. 225) of schools in a performative environment. In fact, this propensity to do “*whatever it seems necessary* in order to survive” (Ball, 2003, p. 225) was also portrayed in the unscrupulous upper-level management techniques used to manipulate Springfield Elementary’s public image. Superintendent Chalmers dropped geography requirements because of low test scores and reduced the three Rs to two (Swartzwelder & Lynch, 1993). Such decisions reflected how performativity-based image management reduced opportunities for learning, and thus lead to an overall decline in educational standards by discouraging diversity in curriculum and delegitimizing critical models of teaching and learning (Apple, 2001a, p. 417). Springfield Elementary not only marginalised geography, but also modified curriculum through the outright eliminate an entire traditional category of education due to low test scores.

While the elimination of an “R” was reflection of the unsound consequences of performativity, the shift of priorities to managing school images and public impressions (Apple, 2001a, p. 414) at Springfield Elementary was not strictly limited to measurable academic areas. *The Simpsons* went even further in its attack on obsession with school images, with

Superintendent Chalmers complaining that he had “had it” with Springfield Elementary not only due to the low test scores, but also due to the “class after class of ugly, ugly children” (Oakley et al., 1994). Perhaps this was *The Simpsons*’ ultimate reflection of the superficiality created by obsession with school images over educational substance. Overall, given the immense damages to education’s purpose realised when Springfield Elementary attempted to manipulate its image, *The Simpsons* reflected folly in the neoliberal belief that for schooling “the only reforms that work involve a commitment to high-stakes testing” (Apple & Beane, 2007, p. 35).

### Summary

Unlike *The Simpsons*’ mixed portrayals of privatisation and marketisation, concepts related to performativity were primarily critical of neoliberalism’s impact on public education. Standardised and reductive testing at Springfield Elementary was said to be a flawed means for obtaining data about student learning, and measures surrounding performativity were shown to have damaging effects for students, for teachers, and for the school. However, the major incidents of testing were not explicitly portrayed as being used to meet requirements of an education marketplace. As well, suggestions of control and de-professionalisation of teachers that were rooted in neoliberal reforms—first identified in analysis of privatisation—again emerged, hinting at the impacts of performativity and of the broader neoliberal shifts in education. The largely negative portrayals of neoliberalism’s influence on public education continues in the analysis of the enterprising individual. In this area, *The Simpsons* gives what is perhaps its harshest reflection of the incongruence between neoliberal priorities and education’s purposes.

CHAPTER SEVEN:  
ENTERPRISING INDIVIDUAL

*“If you don’t like your job, you don’t strike.  
You just go in every day and do it really half-assed.”*  
Homer Simpson

To Apple (2005), “once audit cultures discredit the very idea of public schooling, if all problems are simply ‘solved’ by individual choices in a market, then collective mobilizations tend to wither and perhaps even disappear” (p. 391). In such a neoliberal society, the enterprising individual—as opposed to collective society—must negotiate individualised solutions to problems that have been individuated, rather than collectively seeking solutions to societal issues. Undermined are those collective struggles over schooling that “have provided a crucible for the *formation* of larger social movements towards equality” (Apple, 2005, p. 391). With individual choices framed by economic determinism demobilising collective social movements, the responsibility of the state is shrunk, the citizen’s role is shifted to that of consumer, and the family is relegated to all the tasks of information gathering and evaluation in the marketplace (Apple, 2005, p. 391). Such an environment ratifies social Darwinism (Apple, 2001a, p. 410), a claim verified by Ball (2003) who noted that “Within the regime of choice the failings of the system become lodged within the shortcomings of individuals or families” (p. 150). The outcome for society is a myopic environment where “all people are to act in ways that maximize their own personal benefits” (Apple, 2001b, p. 39).

Because a neoliberal environment ratifies individuated decisions about school selection rather than schooling being a collective undertaking, reflections with relation to school choice on *The Simpsons* were first explored. Next, due to the neoliberal belief in practising self-maximising behaviour in an environment framed by corporate values, portrayals of Springfielders’ self-maximising actions in situations with relation to Springfield Elementary were examined. Finally, enterprising individuality and its relation to educational values were explored for its reflections of neoliberalism’s impact on education.

### Choice in Schooling Beyond Springfield Elementary

Apple (2001b) felt that too much emphasis has been put on school choice programs as the cure for problems with education (p. 198). Methods of school choice are most often built around introducing market elements into education delivery, through facilitating private schools or introducing quasi-market reforms such as vouchers and school choice initiatives that make public schools behave like private-sector organisations (Whitty et al., 1998, p. 3). Generally, choice models are embraced by the middle class who often believe that they can “minimize risk by deploying their economic capital to buy educational advantages in the private system . . . [and] that some families are able at moments of crisis or key moments of transition to ensure access to privileged trajectories or avert calamity” (Ball, 2003, p. 152). Yet, this individualistic approach suffers drawbacks. School choice has tended to not improve student achievement (Whitty et al. 1998, p. 92); and most troublesome for societal cohesion is how it functions as a societal sorting mechanism that regroups school populations based on lines of race and wealth (Ball, 2003, p. 34). This has the added effect of further disadvantaging of the already-disadvantaged, because funding follows students who exit lower-class areas to already-wealthy schools (Ball, 2003, p. 34).

Parents acting as enterprising individuals by exercising school choice were not prevalent on *The Simpsons*. Consequently, these issues found little representation. Instead, schooling in Springfield was largely a collective undertaking with Springfield Elementary being the town’s preferred education institution. When Springfield Elementary failed to live up to community expectations, parents did not exhibit market-centric “rational choices of individual actors” (Apple, 2001a, p. 413) but rather sought resolution by aforementioned exercising of local control within the community and within the school’s collective environment. Thus, the satire put forth on *The Simpsons* was contradictory to the hegemonic desire to exercise choice. This was not surprising, because the central role the school played on *The Simpsons* and each episode’s tendency to situationally reset meant that Springfield Elementary-centric portrayals were to be

expected. However, Springfield Elementary's central role did not entirely prohibit portrayals of educational choice: alternative schooling options were existent. These instances of schooling beyond Springfield Elementary, though previously discussed, require review within a choice context.

Forthright examples of choice were put forth when Marge sought out private Catholic schooling then home schooling when Bart was expelled from Springfield Elementary (Swartzwelder & Lynch, 1993) and when Milhouse's parents sought out a private tutor when Springfield's teachers entered into labour action (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). These decisions, exercised out of last resort, suggested that choice could hold potential to improve learning for Springfield students. The formal teachings of Milhouse's private tutor increased his knowledge; Springfield Christian Academy had no tolerance for Bart's misbehaviour; and home schooling's individualised lessons greatly advanced Bart's critical thinking skills. Indeed this list only envelops a handful of schooling's features, yet the features were principally positive in comparison to Springfield Elementary. Thus, put forth was Apple's (2001b) concerns about how educational discourse has focussed on organisational features of "successful" schools while the exogenous socioeconomic features are ignored (p. 81). Absent from these successful portrayals were considerations regarding the financial requirements involved in obtaining Milhouse's private tutor; the type of families that sent children to a high-discipline religious school; and the trade-offs and family flexibility required to engage in home-schooling.

Continuing this theme were two other schooling portrayals—Shelbyville Elementary's comparative wealth (Crittenden & Scott, 1995) and Springfield Elementary's failed privatisation (Martin & Nastuk, 1999). Neither portrayal involved an alternative being sought by parents, however, their portrayals did link to the concept that schooling options existed beyond Springfield Elementary. Shelbyville Elementary's better-resourced portrayal that gave no consideration to the school's surrounding socio-economic factors continued the suggestion that education could be superior to what was publicly offered in Springfield. Conversely, though,



Kid First Industry's profit-driven privatisation of Springfield Elementary suggested that private schools' corporate motives were incompatible with educational goals.

Adding to these considerations was one rather nuanced reflection of the superiority of other schools to Springfield Elementary. When highly-successful substitute teacher Mr. Bergstrom departed to teach in inner-city Capitol City (Vitti & Moore, 1991), *The Simpsons* again suggested inadequacy in public education supplied to Springfield's middle class. What made this instance stand apart was how the portrayal indirectly blamed the least-advantaged for Springfield Elementary's failing state. "That's the problem with being middle class," Bergstrom told a devastated Lisa as he boarded a train for Capitol City. "Anybody who really cares will abandon you for those who need you more." Bergstrom's statement spoke to Apple's (2001b) notion that the white middle-class perceive themselves to be the "new losers" in the current era of individualism (p. 207). Programs intended to support minorities are believed to be unfair because a supposedly egalitarian and colour-blind market neutrally arbitrates merit, and removes barriers to social equality and opportunity (p. 208). Admittedly, Bergstrom's departure was not a product of any program designed to remove barriers to social equality, but it cannot be ignored that it left Springfield's white middle-class students as "losers" and Capitol City's inner-city students "winners." And much like what Apple (2001b) said, Bergstrom's words suggested that a poor advantage is somehow existent and systemic, and works against the needs of the middle-class.

While not forthright in its relationship to choice, *The Simpsons* put forth several situations that almost always reflected that education elsewhere was superior to Springfield Elementary. Given the neoliberal propensity to view education as "simply one more product like bread, cars, and television" (Apple, 2001b, p. 39), such portrayals suggested that several education "products" superior to the Springfield's traditional public model were there to be chosen from by an enterprising individual. Problematic in these portrayals, though, was the lack of consideration of any background of these options or negative consequences that would arise

from exercising choice. Negative consequences of individualism, though, were much more easily identified in the context of exporting blame.

#### Export of Blame and Individualism

Blame shifting is more broad and complex than just the dominant middle-class shifting blame onto the poor: it is a systemic aspect of neoliberalism (Apple, 2001b, p. 39). While not a prevailing theme on *The Simpsons*, the portrayal of schools shifting blame and shifting responsibility for their actions found presence in a peculiar yet compelling instance where Principal Skinner relied on permission slips when Springfield Elementary's students went missing from a field trip (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). When considered in detail, what emerged was reflection of how Springfield Elementary pushed down its responsibility for students to the level of the individual child and their family.

Chased by angry Diz-Nee Historical Park staff incensed by students "trying to learn for free," Springfield Elementary's students jumped into the school's fleeing bus. When Mrs. Krabappel sarcastically congratulated Principal Skinner for returning from a field trip with the "fewest students yet," Skinner pushed the responsibility away from himself by claiming "God bless the man who invented permission slips." Apple (2001a) believed that this phenomenon of downloading of responsibility was pervasive in public education:

In essence, we are witnessing a process in which the state shifts the blame for the very evident inequalities in access and outcome it has promised to reduce, from itself on to individual schools, parents, and children. This is, of course, also part of a larger process in which dominant economic groups shift the blame for the massive and unequal effects of their own misguided decisions from themselves onto the state. The state is then faced with a very real crisis in legitimacy. Given this, we should not be at all surprised that the state will then seek to export this crisis outside itself. (p. 416).

It would be a stretch to contend that Skinner's reliance on permission slips explicitly traced how

the broader neoliberal environment has resulted in a school system that exports all crises onto individuals. However, the events did reflect public schooling's shift away from holding a collective responsibility. Perhaps what made the circumstances regarding Skinner exporting the crisis of missing students even more disturbing were the rather dark and Darwinistic events surrounding the missing students. Too slow to catch up to Springfield Elementary's fleeing bus, German exchange student Üter was caught and beaten by the historical park's mob. Permission slips, though, exported Üter's plight out of the scope of the school's responsibility. While such an example only loosely reflected the broader downloading of responsibility with which Apple takes concern, a school bus abandoning a beaten student while the Principal inside hugged a stack of permission slips certainly illustrated dangers of diminishing collectivity. With the school having exported responsibility for its students outside of itself, Üter as an atomised individual was left to fend for himself. This ethic of irresponsible individuality was equally critiqued when *The Simpsons* approached ethics related to money, and while the results were not deadly they were still devastating.

#### Maximising Personal Benefits in a Business Values Environment

The neoliberal atomisation of society is coupled with a shift so that “values, procedures, and metaphors of business dominate” (Apple, 2001a, p. 416). In this system, “efficiency and an ‘ethic’ of cost-benefit analysis are the dominant norms” (Apple, 2001b, p. 38). As has been earlier demonstrated, the values of business reflected within contexts of education on *The Simpsons* tended to be critical of neoliberal hegemony. However, corporate interests were not the only portrayals critiquing maximisation based on self-interest.

Springfield's citizens also portrayed a self-maximising enterprising individuality. When it appeared Lisa was caught cheating on the *Wind in the Willows* test, Nelson—who profited from the sale of the answer key—abdicated further responsibilities by backing away from Lisa and telling her “You don't know me” (Maxtone-Graham & Anderson, 1998). In a related but more

elaborate fashion, Springfield Elementary's failed wheelchair ramp scheme (Martin & Nastuk, 1999) explored the ethics of self-interested cost-benefit analysis. Out of money, Springfield Elementary orchestrated a play to demonstrate how a donation to the school would personally benefit Mr. Burns. The play, *The Nice Man Giveth*, depicted community members deprived of an education. The play's uneducated and hapless characters accidentally caused harm to a Burns puppet to illustrate why Burns should donate money to the school. Given the play's direct appeal to Mr. Burns' own well-being, the play's content was a hyper-personal demonstration of Apple's (2001b) point of how neoliberals are only willing to put money into schooling if it meets the needs of capital (p. 41). Burns initially refused, though, and only had a change of heart after being visited by three ghosts in a dream, in an allusion to *A Christmas Carol*. More pointedly, though, after his change of heart Burns found the money Springfield Elementary needed by simply digging through his coat pockets. Though the obvious critique was that school funding was a relatively small cost to the already-wealthy, what cannot go unnoticed was how Burns' initial ignoring of the play's message reflected Apple's (1993/2000) concerns of how the conservative mind set has allowed an ethic of greed to blind long-term considerations of the purpose of schooling (p. 42).

Such reflections of greed-induced individuality in Springfield were also pervasive in Homer's mentality when he brought Lisa to Springfield's Natural History Museum under Mr. Bergstrom's suggestion. Homer ridiculed the museum's donation-based admission, refusing to pay and encouraging Bergstrom to do the same. Homer's rational, self-interested cost-minimising actions of not paying for what he could obtain for free reflected Apple's (2001b) critique of neoliberal values emphasising economic rationality (p. 38) in how Homer failed to recognise or understand the more social-democratic goal of basing museum access on ability to pay. Given that the museum was slated to close, it appeared that also reflected was a suggestion that enterprising individuals looking to maximise personal benefit were "enterprising" themselves out of a knowledge-based society.

This self-interested enterprising individuality of Homer was further explored in his reaction to the teachers' strike (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). His and Lisa's discussion about the labour action briefly but richly explored further concerns Apple (2005) has with neoliberalism's highly individualised society. Homer summarised the strike as "lousy teachers trying to palm off our kids on us." Such a labelling of striking teachers as "lousy" fit with Apple's observation that:

when the people who work in public institutions fight back and argue for more respectful treatment and for a greater realization that simplistic solutions do not deal with the complexities that they face every day in the real world of schools, universities, and communities . . . they are labeled as recalcitrant and selfish, and as uncaring. (p. 384)

Lisa countered Homer's criticism by remarking that "by striking they're trying to effect a change in management so they can be happier and more productive." While somewhat of a simplification, in essence what Lisa put forth was consistent with Godard's (2003) point that strikes as a collective voice occur to rectify worker discontent over managerial policies and the nature of work (p. 355). Homer responded with a standpoint consistent with overly individualistic forms of citizenry by stating "if you don't like your job, you don't strike. You just go in every day and do it really half-assed. That's the American way." This approach reflected the marginalisation and abandonment of the "needs and values that were originally generated out of collective deliberations, struggles, and compromises" (Apple, 2005, p. 382). In the context of labour action, collective concerns and collective maximisation were of little interest to self-interested Homer.

Though Springfield Elementary's staff most often did not reflect individual and business-valued behaviour that maximised personal benefits, this trait was found in relation to Springfield Elementary. Nelson's abandonment of his "customer," the need to justify school funding around Mr. Burns' personal benefit, and Homer's selfish individuality all suggested a value system where "for neoliberals, one form of rationality is more powerful than any other—economic

rationality” (Apple, 2001b, p. 38). This belief and the associated collective dangers, though, were most powerfully reflected with the way it had an impact the behaviour of Springfield’s larger community when Springfield Elementary sought to resolve its funding problems.

#### Enterprising Individuality, Truth, and Education’s Purpose

When issues of school funding were addressed on *The Simpsons*, all other pedagogical considerations were thrown out the door. Two events most pointedly reflected this concept, bringing forth negative effects neoliberalism has had on education. First, to resolve the teachers’ strike without a mandate to raise taxes, Principal Skinner and Mrs. Krabappel realised they could rent the school’s unused cloak rooms as prison cells (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). Krabappel dismissed student concerns about her new prison-classroom, telling them to “never mind the murderer.” This transformation of Springfield Elementary into a make-shift prison reflected Whitty et al.’s (1998) citation of Bernstein’s concern with the myopia of market identities, because “an emergent ‘decentred market’ identity embodies the principles of neoliberalism. It has no intrinsic properties, and its form is dependent only upon the exchange value determined by the market” (p. 92). The financial benefit of renting the cloak room negated concern for any ill consequences of placing murders mere feet from students. These actions of Skinner and Krabappel may have been an enterprising way to raise revenue for Springfield Elementary, but lost with this transformation of the school were the values of student well-being. While this was certainly not a flattering portrayal of enterprising behaviour and economic rationality, an even more significant reflection of this concept was put forth in the actions surrounding the fallout from Lisa cheating on the *Wind in the Willows* test (Maxtone-Graham & Anderson, 1998). The circumstances surrounding how Lisa’s cheating first enabled, then jeopardised Springfield Elementary’s state assistance grant require elaboration, because of how it pointedly struck at the core of critique of neoliberalism as put forth by Apple.

When Lisa’s unprecedented test score raised Springfield Elementary’s GPA to the point

where the school qualified for a basic state assistance grant, Lisa confessed her cheating to Principal Skinner and Superintendent Chalmers. She believed the money would be tainted, and therefore it should not be accepted. With the grant in peril, Skinner and Chalmers secured Lisa's silence by explaining the school's desperate needs. Even with Lisa's agreement, Skinner still feared that her conscience was a "ticking time bomb." Thus, a fake cheque-granting ceremony was orchestrated to take place just before the real ceremony, with the entire community present and aware of its fallacious purpose. Just as Skinner predicted, at the fake ceremony Lisa confessed. However, State Comptroller Atkins—actually school bus driver Otto in a mask—proclaimed that Lisa's confession indicated courage, and because such a trait was valued Springfield Elementary was allowed to keep the cheque. Lisa left the ceremony with the satisfaction of having made a morally proper choice. Upon her departure, the assembled community regrouped for the second ceremony with the real State Comptroller, who disbursed the actual cheque. While an amusing if not cynical sequence, within these actions were revealed very problematic tendencies.

In the preamble to Lisa's confession, she proposed to the assembled community that "education is the search for the truth." Principal Skinner, in fabricated panic due to his desperation to keep the underfunded school's grant, rebutted "No, no it isn't! Don't listen to her! She's out of her mind!" The fittingness of Skinner's rebuttal was tremendous. The entire school and community had assembled with the sole purpose of obscuring the truth. Undoubtedly, this was an enterprising scheme to secure funding for beleaguered Springfield Elementary, even if it was ethically void. Thus, it seems that Skinner, not Lisa, more accurately represented the state of education in a neoliberal environment. Lisa's foundational observation about education's purpose was of little interest to a school administration and a school community determined to obscure truth in order to access basic funding. This narrowing of education's purpose in the actions of Springfield Elementary's administration, staff, and greater school community to a process of gaining access to money strongly reflect Apple's (2001b) observation about the

current frame of education and educational discussions. It is worth quoting in its entirety:

Even though much of my own and others' research recently has been on the process and effects of conservative modernization, we should be aware of the dangers in such a focus. Research on the history, politics, and practices of rightist social and educational movements and "reforms" has enabled us to show the contradictions and unequal effects of such policies and practices. It has enabled the rearticulation of claims to social justice on the basis of solid evidence. This is all to the good. However, in the process, one of the latent effects has been the gradual framing of educational issues largely in terms of the conservative agenda. The very categories themselves—markets, choice, national curricula, national testing, standards—bring the debate onto the terrain established by neoliberals and neoconservatives. The analysis of "what is" has led to a neglect of "what might be." Thus, there has been a withering of substantive large-scale discussions of feasible alternatives to neoliberal and neoconservative visions, policies, and practices, ones that would move well beyond them. (p. 95)

Reflected in this sequence was how "what is"—Springfield Elementary's operational priorities framed around economic considerations—led to the neglect of "what might be"—Lisa's philosophical question about the purpose of education. The educational environment in Springfield had devolved into a community using their "enterprising" abilities to defraud the state while concurrently denying the truth to one of its students. Lisa's question was tossed aside as coming from a student who was "out of her mind" as the neoliberal environment transformed the school and the community's energies and actions into single-minded quest for funds. Left withering was any consideration of the purpose of education.

### Summary

In its reflections of enterprising individuality, *The Simpsons* tended to demonstrate folly in neoliberal societal values and their impact on public education. While the presentation of



learning options beyond Springfield Elementary suggested that school choice may have merit, such an option was rarely pursued by Springfielders and auxiliary issues surrounding school choice were left unexplored. Other aspects of executing self-maximising behaviour, such as the export of blame, were found in portrayals of schooling and in portrayals of middle-class perceptions, and were largely critical of these values due to their lack of collective responsibility. Yet most significant to the portrayal of education was *The Simpsons'* consideration of how enterprising individuality and Springfield Elementary's pursuit of funding obscured broader purposes of education. In Springfield, foundational issues in education ceased to be of concern when issues of money emerged. Such a portrayal warrants another consideration of Apple's (2001b) previously-introduced query about neoliberalism's dominance in education: "One must question if this is the ethic we should be introducing as *the* model for our public institutions and our children" (p. 19). The significance of this negative reflection on *The Simpsons* finds itself enveloped into the final chapter's considerations of the broader understandings that have been gained about neoliberalism's influence on public education.

## CHAPTER EIGHT CONCLUSIONS

*“I’m learnding.”*  
Ralph Wiggum

Apple (2004) put forth that dominant imagery of schooling has changed over the years, noting McCulloch’s (1997) observation of its shift from appearing safe and progressive to appearing threatening, estranged, and regressive (as cited in Apple, 2004, p. 16). In pursuing the research question of “How does *The Simpsons*’ portrayal of education reflect neoliberalism’s impact on public education,” the program held McCulloch’s premise true. Through exaggerated and satirical representations of the impact of Apple’s (2001a) four categories of neoliberal influence on public education—privatisation, marketisation, performativity, and the enterprising individual—*The Simpsons* has revealed how public schooling is regressive, estranged, and threatening under neoliberal watch. This reflection worked on two fronts. At times the program hegemonically reflected how neoliberal rhetoric has taken hold, most predominantly displayed through teachers as lacklustre professionals. Equally often, the program counter-hegemonically reflected how neoliberal policies being pursued in education are rife with folly, most predominantly displayed through an unwavering cynicism towards testing regimes and corporate interests.

This contradictory combination of hegemonic and counterhegemonic school satire both within episodes and across seasons suggested *The Simpsons* was not simply a left-wing satire. Rather, the satire was rooted in distrust of established interests. However, its nature did shift over time. When considered chronologically, *The Simpsons*’ satire unfolded consistent with Cuban’s (2004) observation that educational progressivity declined after the early 90s (p. 65). First seasons were concerned with teachers, testing, and progressivity. Critiques of teachers continued throughout the series, but by mid-decade the critique of progressivity vanished and the critique of testing became linked to funding. Concurrently, what emerged as the series developed were attacks on corporate interests. Given the ideological variance of the satire, it seems that

proven true was Gray's (2006) suggestion that *The Simpsons* will attack anything it deems worthy of ridicule (p. 147).

The series' early rearticulation of neoliberal rhetoric before expanding to include attacks on neoliberal hegemony helps explain *The Simpsons*' initial survival as a forum for subversive cultural messages on a neoliberal medium. When broken down to its portrayal of education, *The Simpsons*' early satire was conducive to encouraging neoliberal reform. The ubiquity of teacher incompetence and failed progressivism proliferated the message that "anyone who works in these public institutions must be seen as inefficient and in need of sobering facts of competition so that they work longer and harder" (Apple, 2007, p. 113).

*The Simpsons*' explorations of education also revealed how the series was not an intensive project in educational satire, even if Springfield Elementary was an omnipresent institution on the program. Topics rarely critiqued the minutia of public education, as revealed by the surface-level portrayal of many educational issues. However, what *The Simpsons*' critique lacked in depth was compensated by its breadth, touching on numerous aspects with application to neoliberal influence. A dynamic inventory of educational satire understood through Apple's theories has emerged: teachers as organised labour, standardised and reductive tests, school privatisation, school funding, corporate influence in curriculum, community involvement, and ethical issues surrounding individuality were all found within the program. As revealed, there were diverse opportunities for use of *The Simpsons* as a launch-point to raise critical questions about public education and the role neoliberalism has played in framing the current educational environment.

While important themes of neoliberalism's impact of public education emerged, the framework was not omniscient. Interestingly, even though portrayals of teachers were predominantly negative and played into hegemonic rhetoric, as Kantor et al. (2001) noted, Springfield Elementary's teachers were sympathetic characters with likeable traits (p. 188). In fact, *Simpsons*' writer David Mirken noted in the accompanying DVD commentary to "The PTA

Disbands” that he felt a great deal of sympathy for the disadvantaged state of public schools (Crittenden & Scott, 1995). Unfortunately, the strictly education-related framework of analysis provided no opportunity to factor in teachers’ human qualities outside of direct school circumstances. This limitation in the framework can be diagnosed by Apple (2001b), who cautioned that “the use of market categories and concepts prevents us from seeing the process as a whole” (p. 20). What can also be taken from this observation is that the frequent satire with relation to corporate interests may then actually be relatively harsher than the framework revealed. While not functionally noted in the research, cursory observation seemed to indicate an apparent lack of countervailing sympathetic portrayals of corporate interests.

Also of significance were how issues of race and minorities—groups Apple (2001b) believed were substantially damaged by neoliberal reforms—were largely absent in education’s portrayals. Given that Beard (2005) found that *The Simpsons*’ characters were coded as white and tended to reinforce stereotypes (p. 274), the mere absence of a critical mass of minorities and the overall yellow “whiteness” of Springfield makes validity of *The Simpsons* as a vehicle for understanding minorities in public education difficult. This in itself is significant, as the absence of diverse communities in Springfield Elementary reflects an isolated “whiteness” of middle-class communities.

Perhaps most disappointing in *The Simpsons*’ portrayal of education is how it may be demonstrating helplessness or pointlessness in involving oneself in the public sphere. Indeed, much like Mayor Quimby’s propensity to get re-elected because he proved better than the alternatives (Considine, 2006, p. 225), public education often proved better than or was at least preferred to private alternatives. However, Springfield Elementary was far from an ideal institution and even though citizens were empowered to participate in its directions, their efforts reeked of inadequacy and most often ended in failure. Thus, similar to Springfield’s failed efforts to actualise middle-class upward mobility through public means with the monorail (Wood & Todd, 2005, p. 216), Springfield Elementary was rarely portrayed as actually enhancing public

good. With Springfield's public sphere suffering this inadequacy, little positive reinforcement of public directions were provided for an audience living in a neoliberal environment hostile to all things public.

It is fair to say that overall, *The Simpsons*' reflections of neoliberal influence on public education held true Apple's (2005) notion that there are "elements of good sense as well as bad sense in the criticisms that are made about schools" (p. 393). After all, even Apple (2007) acknowledged that organised labour had made several unwise decisions over the years. However, he determined that "anti-union sentiment, at a time when so much of the organized business community is bent on destroying the collective bodies of as many workers as possible, is one of the least attractive positions I can imagine right now" (p. 109). So while some validity must exist in *The Simpsons*' hegemonic critiques of schooling—it would be intellectually specious to only claim *The Simpsons*' critiques that fit into a progressive lens have truth—the point to be taken from this research is that the series provided ample room to critically consider neoliberalism's many negative aspects. Given that the series provided such intense criticism of corporate influence and private alternatives and each episode always determined the status quo was preferred if not better, *The Simpsons* reinforced Apple's (2001b) belief that "recognizing the problems [with public education] . . . does not mean that conservative 'solutions' are correct" (p. 9). The public sphere may be broken in Springfield, but fixing it through the private sphere was almost always a far worse alternative.

#### Recommendations for Discursive Application

Giroux (2001) asserted that a general apathy towards the impact of neoliberalism on public education exists (p. 2). Because the purpose of this research was to address this apathy by exploring neoliberalism's portrayals in a product of popular culture, policy recommendations *per se* do not emerge from this research. Rather, this research—while concurrently revealing an aspect of popular culture's messaging—is meant to use *The Simpsons*' familiarity to create

awareness of neoliberalism. In fact, to use this research as such is imperative, given that Apple (2009) put forth that “I am convinced that it is important to interrupt rightist claims immediately, within the media, in academic and professional publications, and in daily life” (p. 93). Reflecting on the success of the conservative alliance engineering their value dominance over the past three decades, Apple asked “*If the right can do this, why can't we?*” (p. 88). Because of *The Simpsons*' place in cultural lexicon, much opportunity exists to use its familiarity to interrupt rightist claims of common sense. While it is hoped that this research can be adapted into a scholarly paper in with the intention of finding broader reading, many of the concepts explored within this paper also hold potential to be studied or discussed in any number of settings. Because of the sheer volume and wide variance of portrayals, it may be desirable to break down such findings into themes or episodic case studies to ensure accessibility.

Considerations of this research's application for educational administration first requires a revisit of Apple's observations about the new managerial middle class. Apple (2001b) took concern with how managerialism has affected the roles of managers within the state—including educational administrators—because it imported business models and tighter systems of accountability into education (p. 30). He noted that some educational administrators have come to “fully believe that such control is warranted and ‘good’” (p. 58). However, this allure of being an “efficient and business-like manager” (p. 30) suffers shortcomings for the field of education. There is a lack of empowering qualities in middle-class managerialism of public services because it fails to roll back state power, it fails to give voice to those least-advantaged, and it fails to be rooted in a model concerned with quality but rather finds its roots in profit (p. 30). These incongruencies further evidence the problematic nature of linking business priorities with educational practice, given that the objective of public schooling is to advance not merely business interests but rather societal objectives (Baez, 2005).

If Apple is correct, then this research not only provides opportunity to deconstruct folly of neoliberal pursuits in education from the perspectives of privatisation, marketisation,

performativity, and the enterprising individual. It also provides opportunity for administrators to critically reflect upon the purpose of their role. It is worth repeating that Skinner's desperate silencing of Lisa's observation about education's purpose (Maxtone-Graham & Anderson, 1998) reflected how in a neoliberal education environment:

the analysis of "what is" has led to a neglect of "what might be." Thus, there has been a withering of substantive large-scale discussions of feasible alternatives to neoliberal and neoconservative visions, policies, and practices, ones that would move well beyond them. (Apple, 2001b, p. 95)

Skinner's servile focus on neoliberalism's performativity-based funding reflected educational administration undermining the foundational purpose of education. Without critical consideration of foundational issues, has *The Simpsons* suggested that educational administration has relegated itself to being the managerial middle class for the neoliberal agenda?

Problems with uncritical approaches to education also emerged in the portrayals of Springfield Elementary's demoralised, unprofessional teachers. Those reflections provide opportunity for teachers to critically reflect upon their role. While Apple (1993/2000) found many links between teacher morale and the managerial embrace systemised labour, the sheer volume of portrayals of demoralised teachers acting in an unprofessional manner on *The Simpsons* would suggest more was at play. Perhaps best exemplifying that some teachers, too, have subscribed to self-interested neoliberal doctrine were the single-issue picket signs used during the Springfield Elementary teachers' strike. Reading "2 + 2 A Raise is Due," "A is for Apple, B is for Raise," and most salient to this point, "Gimme Gimme Gimme" (Crittenden & Scott, 1995), teachers on *The Simpsons* reflected the growth of the "privatized consciousness" that has become pervasive in society (Apple, 2001b, p. 175). Without critical understandings of organised labour and political consciousness, has *The Simpsons* suggested that teachers are losing their claims to professionalism and public intellectualism?

The populace in Springfield was also reflected to be ignorant to the complexities of

issues, especially with regard to education. These reflections provide opportunity for the general public and those who involve themselves in their schools to critically reflect upon their role. Citizens' well-intentioned but generally disastrous interventions in Springfield Elementary—be it in securing funding, managing staff, or acting as substitute educators—suggested that, as Paul Cantor said, in Springfield “the local is more stupid than evil” (as quoted in Carson, 2003). To transpose this statement verbatim to a satirical representation of the general population would be cynical and unconstructive. Yet, this holds some validity in how *The Simpsons* reflected Apple's (1993/2000) point that popular consciousness has been organized by and exists on the right (p. 31). Without greater understandings of the environment facing public education, has *The Simpsons* suggested that the general public is ill-equipped to critically approach problems facing education?

Fiske (1987) speculated that television acts as a gauge of society's ideals. As reflected on *The Simpsons*, it seems then that administration, teachers, and the public are generally complacent with or unknowing of the problems that arise from societal embrace of neoliberalism. Yet Fiske also pointed out that “the resistive readings of television do not translate directly into oppositional politics or social action” (p. 329). Thus, to deconstruct these follies then requires understanding that the “language of privatization, marketization, and constant evaluation has increasingly saturated public discourse. In many ways, it has become common sense—and the critical intuitions that something may be wrong with all of this may slowly wither” (Apple, 2005, p. 386). Proposing discourse counter to common sense is destined to be wrought with difficulty. This is the argument for using the familiar representations on *The Simpsons*, as they work to provide reflection that something is wrong with public education and demonstrate how neoliberalism has played a role. Salient to this premise is to understand how Apple sees television playing out in public discourse. Apple put forth Fiske's (1987) belief that television does not so much have effects but rather works as a polysemic potential of meanings to connect with the social life of the reader (as cited in Apple, 1993/2000, p. 106). If a connection with *The*



*Simpsons* is already existent for many, and if schooling is a common experience for most in society, then tremendous opportunity exists to scaffold viewers into considering neoliberalism as part of this polysemic potential. It is the familiar representations of education on *The Simpsons* and their ability to be deconstructed in a way that exposes neoliberal policy that provides the scaffolds to elevate a disinterested public into broader understandings. And while the use of a cartoon to actualise learning may seem tawdry if not gauche, in the words of Principal Skinner, “every good scientist is half B. F. Skinner and half P. T. Barnum” (Stern & Reardon, 1993).

### Recommendations for Further Research

This research brings about numerous possibilities for future explorations of *The Simpsons* both as a program and as a reflection of a broader neoliberal environment. The role of teachers as professionals deserves far greater exploration. In Springfield, all teachers are childless, unmarried, drive second-rate vehicles, and live in unremarkable homes. An understanding of the teacher as a member of the community and as a professional as portrayed on *The Simpsons* would be warranted, perhaps using the research of Susan Robertson (2000) as a backdrop to better understand the degrading role of teachers in society as the Keynesian welfare state crumbles. Further studies in a similar vein could include the state of the Springfield Elementary cafeteria using Carolyn VanderSchee (2008) as a backdrop given its bizarre portrayal of failing school lunch programs. As well, an intensive deconstruction of corporate education resources used at Springfield Elementary using Alex Molnar (2005) as a backdrop would be valuable given the creep of corporate influence into Springfield Elementary.

Also worthy of study would be a similar undertaking to this research to explore the portrayal of education on *The Simpsons* post-*No Child Left Behind*. Given the prominence of this educational reform, it would be a valuable to understand if or how the focus of the satire on *The Simpsons* shifted further to reflect the priorities of NCLB. This seems a possibility, in light of the indications that the educational satire shifted within the first seasons on the show to exclude

progressivity and include corporate penetration into schools.

Likely the most noteworthy delimitation with this study is that it created an understanding of *The Simpsons* based on the works of Michael W. Apple. It does not reflect what was received by viewers due to any number of factors from viewing habits to viewer worldviews. Therefore, what may be the most interesting follow-up research to this work would be a study similar to Gray's (2006) research on reactions to and understandings of *The Simpsons* based on national origins. As Fiske (1987) pointed out, personal, polysemic meanings emerge from television. Breaking out viewer reactions of educational satire on *The Simpsons* would be valuable, to better understand the meanings, effectiveness, and possible impacts of the show's satire. While Apple, for example, handily exposed the profit motives surrounding Springfield Elementary's privatisation, it is not prudent to expect that the public would view this in the same manner. This proposed study could reveal how far the concepts of market-centric common sense have been ingrained in elements of society. Obtained understandings could speak to the challenge that is faced by those who wish for citizens to evaluate their role in the global market system, and consequently build a framework for effecting public discourse through popular means.

Of course, as Apple (2001b) has noted, much like Lisa's seemingly futile search for the truth, "the analysis of what is has led to a neglect of what might be" (p. 95). Regardless of what future studies stem from this work, in keeping with Apple it would be imperative that those studies that have a market-centric focus should be conducted under the pretense that "public institutions are the defining feature of a caring and democratic society. The market relations that are sponsored by capitalism should exist to pay for these institutions, not the other way around" (Apple 2005, p. 386). More importantly, any future study should keep in mind Apple's (2001b) Friarian view of education's purpose. It is worth re-quoting in its entirety:

During one of the times I was working in Brazil with Paulo Friere, I remember him repeatedly saying to me that education must begin in critical dialogue. These last two words were crucial to him. Education both must hold our dominant institutions in

education and the larger society up to rigorous questioning and at the same time this questioning must deeply involve those who benefit least from the ways these institutions now function. Both conditions were necessary, since the first without the second was simply insufficient to the task of democratizing education. (p. 219)

### Summary

A subject search of “neoliberal” or “neoliberalism” on the ProQuest Education Journals database revealed a steady rise in its mention. Found were five records of publications dated 1994, 78 records dated 1999, and 284 records dated 2010. The “invisible hand” is no longer invisible. Its guiding body has been identified, labelled, and cannot hide from public scrutiny. Within popular art forms such as *The Simpsons* exists the potential to bring accessible scrutiny of neoliberalism to the forefront of public discourse. It is simply a matter of unlocking this potential, and this research opens numerous possibilities to use *The Simpsons* to accomplish such critique and reasoned debate.

With public education faltering at the hands of the neoliberals, as has been long contended by Apple, and with recent entrenchment of neoliberal reforms to public services, as has been pointedly demonstrated in Wisconsin and Greece, the importance of building such understandings of the current political environment facing education and society has never been greater. Yet, it seems imperative that if neoliberalism is to be deconstructed, it must be done so in a manner that envelops a broad and inclusive public consciousness. To undermine neoliberalism for purely self-interested reasons will only perpetuate its shortcomings under a different structure of power.

APPENDIX A  
Vitti and Silverman (1990) - Bart the Genius

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 1:32	Simpson dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Family plays Scrabble	-	-
2 - 2:59	Springfield Elementary playground	Skinner, Bart, Martin, Milhouse	Bart is caught spray painting Skinner caricature on wall	-	-
3 - 4:40	Krabappel's classroom	Krabappel, Bart, Martin, others	Krabappel introduces IQ test to students by stating "Now I don't want you to worry class. These tests have no bearing on your grades. They merely determine your future social status and success. If any."	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Negative indication of the power of reductive tests in shaping future paths of students.
			In a visualisation sequence, Bart visualises a complex math equation of trains departing and meeting. The question becomes increasingly complex and soon numbers become jumbled. Bart is overwhelmed and overrun by both numbers and passengers.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Indicative of the distressing detail that performativity measures require.
			During visualisation sequence, Skinner is seen spray-painting over the distance to a city on a road sign, obscuring a number apparently relevant to the equation.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Indicative of producer capture through school staff's motives not being with student interests
			Krabappel tells Bart "there are students in this class with a chance to do well. Will you stop bothering them?"	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Indicative of school not being interested in lower-achieving students, as Apple indicated that "other students" abilities are seen as increasingly fixed and less worthy of attention in performative environments.
				Privatisation Hegemonic	Indicative of producer capture through school staff's motives not being with student interests.
			Bart switches his test sheet with that of class genius Martin.	Privatisation Hegemonic	That Krabappel concerned herself with "naughty dogs" in the schoolyard over proper class supervision suggests low-quality public sector employees.
4 - 6:35	Springfield Elementary playground	Homer, Marge	Walking to the school for a meeting with Principal Skinner, Marge states "He's a good boy now and he's getting better. And sometimes even the best sheep stray from the flock and need to be hugged extra hard." Homer replies "That's exactly the kind of crapola that's lousing him up."	Privatisation Hegemonic	"Progressive" discipline is assigned blame for Bart's faults.
			Homer looks at spray-painted picture of Skinner on school wall and states "Hey look at this. 'I am a weiner.' Hehe. He sure is!"	Privatisation Hegemonic	That the parents are also degrading school staff works to undermine teaching as a profession.
5 - 6:53	Skinner's office	Skinner, Bart, Marge, Bart, Dr. Pryor	As Skinner meets with Homer, Marge, and Bart to discuss the \$75 in damage Bart has done to the school, he states "We think it's terribly unfair that other taxpayers should have to foot the bill." Homer responds "Yeah, it's a crummy system but what are you going to do?" Marge and Skinner make Homer aware that it is he who should pay the bill.	Enterprising Individual Hegemonic	Principal Skinner acts in a manner seeking individual responsibility and exports financial responsibility for Bart's misbehaviour onto the individual parents.
			Dr. Pryor reveals that Bart scored 216 on his IQ test. Skinner suggests retesting Bart, but Pryor instead suggests moving Bart to a different school.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner is aware of the suspect nature of this test but let it pass to get Bart out of his school, indicating a lack of professionalism in educators.
				Performativity Counter-Hegemonic	Skinner's eagerness to jettison underachieving students speaks to school desires to retain lesser-achieving students.
				Privatisation Hegemonic	Pryor's misdiagnosis would suggest a lack of understanding of the children he serves, suggesting lack of professional competency and a locally-removed nature of school administration.
6 - 9:37	Simpson dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Maggie, Lisa	Family eats breakfast and Bart prepares for first day of advanced schooling.	-	-
7 - 10:22	Simpson car	Homer, Bart	Driving to Enriched Learning Center for Gifted Children	-	-

8 - 10:31	Enriched School hallway	Homer, Bart	Homer wishes Bart goodbye	-	-
9 - 11:06	Ms. Milan's classroom	Bart, Ms. Milan, others	Bart is introduced to new class	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	That an advanced school exists within Springfield's school system suggests that choices do exist within public systems.
10 - 13:28	Enriched school lunch room	Bart, others	Bart is outsmarted in lunch item trades and is described by his peers as "a rather mediocre genius."	Privatisation - Hegemonic	Students have already diagnosed Bart as less than a genius, unlike Pryor and Milan. That students have identified what the professionals have not suggests a lack of competency and/or lack of proper action from Skinner and Krabappel.
11 - 14:09	Bart's bedroom	Bart, Homer, Marge, Lisa	Bart relaxes after first day of school, and is then invited to watch opera.	-	-
12 - 14:59	Opera hall	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, others	Family watches opera	-	-
13 - 16:41	Milan's classroom	Bart, Milan, others	Bart does not understand math equation	-	-
14 - 17:09	Springfield Elementary playground	Bart, Milhouse, others	Bart returns	-	-
15 - 17:26	Simpson dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Bart attempts to confess to his cheating during dinner but is unable to.	-	-
16 - 17:56	Simpson back yard	Homer, Bart	Bart and Homer play catch	-	-
17 - 18:18	Enriched school lab	Bart, Milan, others	Ms. Milan states that "I'm still trying to get you a lab partner, Bart" as it seems other children will not partner with him. She warns Bart of the dangers of mixing acids and bases.	Privatisation-Hegemonic	Further indication of the students having identified what Ms. Milan has not - that Bart is not a genius. Indicates inability of school staff.
18 - 18:43	Dr. Pryor's office	Dr. Pryor, Bart	Dr. Pryor asks Bart why he is having so much difficulty in the enriched school. While being questioned, the wall behind Pryor is shown to have a picture of Einstein and a picture of Bart.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The blind faith Pryor has put in the IQ test suggests not only a blind faith in performativity regimes, but more importantly reflects on the competence of school professionals.
				Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Indicative of blind faith in reductive testing.
			Under Pryor's suggestion, Bart proposes to go back to old classroom to study his regular classmates. Dr. Pryor describes it as "Like Jane Goudall and the chimps."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Indicative of the elitist forces that appear to have taken over schools, given that "regular" students are likened to chimpanzees.
			When reading confession, Dr. Pryor points out that "You know you misspelled confession?"	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Indicative of the inability of standardised tests to measure understandings.
19 - 20:39	Simpson house	Homer, Marge, Bart, Maggie, Lisa	Bart returns from explosion and confesses	-	-

Privatisation H=10, C=1  
 Marketisation -  
 Performativity C=6  
 Enterprising Individual H=1

Total H=11, C=7

APPENDIX B  
Vitti & Moore (1991) - Lisa's Substitute

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 0:24	Hoover's classroom	Hoover, Skinner, Lisa, others	Hoover is escorted by Skinner into classroom in tears. Lisa comments "God. She's been dumped again."	Privatisation Hegemonic	This "pathetic" (Kantor et al) portrayal of a seemingly regular problem undermines teachers as professionals.
			Skinner, upon Hoover's exit, takes over the class and states "Open your primers to page 32. Ah- subtraction."	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	Skinner's entrance into a lesson straight out of a text portrays traditional, not progressive, methods of teaching.
2 - 1:19	Krabappel's classroom	Krabappel, Bart, others	Bart's show and tell, "How Cats are Born: The Ugly Truth" shows video of kittens' birth. Krabappel then announces class election	-	-
3 - 1:40	Hoover's classroom	Skinner, Bergstrom,, others	"Are you insane?" asks Skinner after Bergstrom enters shooting a toy gun. "No, it's my way of getting attention." responds Bergstrom, to which Skinner capitulates: "Well alright."	Privatisation Hegemonic	That Principal Skinner so easily allows a teacher whom he has never met and whom he has accused of being "insane" to take over a grade 2 classroom would indicate lack of professional judgment and school mismanagement on behalf of Skinner. Alternatively, this could also be indicative of the power of producer capture in the school system if Bergstrom's simple explanation is sufficient for Skinner to capitulate.
			Bergstrom begins a lesson on pioneer history.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	Bergstrom counters the conception that teachers lack professional ability by engaging the class with a lesson that notably breaks down misconceptions about Jewish people.
4 - 3:14	Krabappel's classroom	Krabappel, Bart, Martin, others	Krabappel's blackboard has notes on "The Election Process" and the calendar reads April. She announces the class will elect a president, then attempts to influence students to vote for Martin.	Privatisation Hegemonic	While the endorsement could be seen as concern for the welfare of her class, her endorsement runs counter to a democratic process. Further, that the "democratisation" of her class is taking place in April of the school year further suggests her election is illusory democratisation. This relates to teachers lacking professional skills.
5 - 3:46	Hoover's classroom	Bergstrom, Lisa, others	Bergstrom teaches students about "Home on the Range" by singing the song and deconstructing it through discussion of the "wasteful" cowboy as opposed to the "efficient" Aboriginal people.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	Bergstrom's lesson fills Apple's desire for the schooling to critically examine institutions dominant in society in a portrayal of successful, progressive teaching.
6 - 4:50	Krabappel's classroom	Krabappel, Bart, Milhouse, Sherri, Terri	Twins nominate Bart for class president.	-	-
7 - 5:26	Hoover's classroom	Bergstrom, Lisa, others	Bergstrom completes reading of Charlotte's Web, with him and Lisa both having tears in their eyes.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	Students are further engaged in Bergstrom's teachings, thus challenging conceptions of teachers as incompetent.
8 - 5:49	Hoover's classroom	Bergstrom, Lisa, Ralph, Janie, others	Bergstrom encourages students to share their talents	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	Students are further engaged in Bergstrom's teachings, thus challenging conceptions of teachers as incompetent.
9 - 6:22	Hoover's classroom	Bergstrom, Krabappel, Lisa, others	Mrs. Krabappel tries to seduce Mr. Bergstrom. He points out "This profession can put a lot of strain on a marriage," and then states "It's the children I love."	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter-Hegemonic	Bergstrom's demeanor and referral to teaching as a profession indicates professional status of teachers, while Krabappel counters this by sitting on a desk smoking and trying to seduce Bergstrom.
10 - 6:59	Hoover's classroom	Lisa, Bergstrom	Bergstrom hears Lisa playing saxophone on school grounds and gives her a round of applause, carrying on his encouragement of student talents.	Privatisation Counter-Hegemonic	Bergstrom's success in building up Lisa's self-esteem suggests teachers acting out their professional purpose.
11 - 7:21	Simpson home	Homer, Marge, Lisa, Bart, Maggie	Lisa talks up Bergstrom's abilities as Marge does household chores.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	This positive discussion of Bergstrom's attributes outside the classroom suggests the level of engagement Bergstrom has with his students..
12 - 8:15	Hoover's classroom	Bergstrom, Lisa, others	Bergstrom tells students to find rocks during their break, and holds back Lisa to discuss her homework.	Privatisation Counter-Hegemonic	Bergstrom's professional portrayal deepens with his discussion with Lisa about her homework and her father, while encouraging students to learn about geology during their break.
13 - 8:42	Krabappel's classroom	Krabappel, Martin, Bart, others	In an election speech, Martin warns that "In a sample taken in this very classroom, a state inspector found 1.4 parts per million of asbestos." Proclaiming "that's not enough - we want more asbestos," Bart leads the students to chant "More asbestos! More asbestos!"	Privatisation Hegemonic	The first direct recorded example of the poor condition of Springfield Elementary. This contributes to the portrayal of what is public is bad while also suggesting poorly-educated public schoolchildren. This thus lends itself to privatization.

14 - 8:58	Simpson living room	Homer, Bart	Homer shows interest in Bart's campaign and helps create campaign materials for Bart, shown in conjunction with Bart on campaign trail.	-	-
15 - 10:00	Hoover's classroom	Bergstrom, Lisa, others	Through a window, Lisa and Mr. Bergstrom watch while Bart gains the approval of his classmates by wiping his backside with a Martin Prince election poster. Lisa laments the situation, but Mr. Bergstrom reminds Lisa that she will go on to great places and miss her brother's antics. Lisa responds "Places where my intelligence will be an asset and not a liability?"	Privatisation Hegemonic	Although Bergstrom's contribution is noted, that the current structure of public schooling is holding back the intelligent speaks to the perception that what is public is bad. Plays into privatisation and marketisation schemes, as it is believed that schooling delivered under market schemes leads to "better schools." Falls under privatization due to its general undermining of public schools
16 - 10:21	Hoover's classroom	Bergstrom, Lisa, others	Bergstrom announces the Springfield Natural History Museum is to close and encourages students to visit.	-	-
17 - 10:45	Simpson living room	Homer, Marge, Bart	Marge encourages Homer to take Lisa to museum.	-	-
18 - 11:24	Springfield Natural History Museum	Homer, Lisa, Bergstrom, door attendant	Homer ridicules the museum's donation-based admission fee, refusing to pay and encouraging Bergstrom to do the same.	Enterprising Individual - Counter-Hegemonic	Given that the museum is slated to close, Homer's self-maximising behaviour suggests an inability to understand the learning not being restricted by pay.
			Bergstrom explains a handful of displays to Homer and Lisa	Privatisation Counter-Hegemonic	Bergstrom's tour with Lisa and Homer indicates a teacher taking an outside interest in their students, suggesting public intellectualism and high professionalism.
			Bergstrom and Homer discuss Lisa's school work and their father-daughter relationship.	Privatisation Counter-Hegemonic	Bergstrom's desire to take an interest in their role as a teacher in a venue outside of school reinforces teacher professionalism.
19 - 13:08	Simpson hallway	Marge, Lisa	Lisa complains about Homer's behaviour at the museum so Marge suggests inviting Bergstrom to dinner at the Simpsons home.	-	-
20 - 13:33	Springfield Elementary hallway	Lisa, Hoover	Lisa rehearses dinner invitations, only to discover Hoover has returned.	-	-
21 - 13:55	Hoover's classroom	Hoover, Lisa, Ralph, others	Hoover reveals the psychosomatic nature of her illness as students speculate whether she was crazy or faking it, then complains that her lesson plan was not followed.	Privatisation Hegemonic	That Hoover's students speculate on her inept and pathetic nature, followed by her complaint about Bergstrom reflects Hoover's inadequacy as a professional.
22 - 14:26	Krabappel's classroom	Krabappel, Martin, Bart, others	Krabappel reveals that the polls will be opened until recess.	-	-
23 - 14:45	Bergstrom's apartment	Lisa, neighbour	Bergstrom's neighbour tells Lisa that he has left for the train, then shares knowledge about the train that Bergstrom taught her.	Privatisation-Counter-hegemonic	Bergstrom's ability to inspire his neighbour to learn re-enforces professional role of teachers by suggesting they are public intellectuals.
24 - 15:15	Springfield Elementary playground	Bart, Nelson, Milhouse, Terri, Sherri	Bart hands out congratulatory cupcakes only to learn his supporters never bothered to vote.	-	-
25 - 15:37	Krabappel's classroom	Martin, Wendell	Bart demands a recount upon learning he lost.	-	-
26 - 15:58	Springfield train station	Bergstrom, Lisa	Bergstrom departs, telling Lisa "That's the problem with being middle-class. Anybody who really cares will abandon you for those you need you more"	Enterprising Individual Hegemonic	This casts blame on the poor for being the recipients of "good" teachers, leaving the worst of the education system for the white middle class.
27 - 17:47	Simpson dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Homer laments Bart's loss as president, but fails to understand Lisa's disappointment.	-	-
28 - 20:34	Simpson house	Homer, Marge, Bart, Maggie, Lisa	Homer resolves issues with Bart, Lisa, and Maggie.	-	-

Privatisation H=7, C=12  
Marketisation -  
Performativity -  
Enterprising Individual H=1, C=1  
Total H=8, C=13

## APPENDIX C

### Meyer & Lynch (1992) - Separate Vocations

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 0:54	Krabappel and Hoover's classrooms	Krabappel, Hoover, Lisa, Janie, others	Krabappel announces to class that a test will be taking place.	-	-
			Miss Hoover introduces class to the test by name as the Career Aptitude Normalising Test.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	The name CANT implies a limiting nature of standardised and reductive tests.
			Krabappel notes how test may introduce students to their future. "Some of you may discover a wonderful vocation you'd never even imagined. Others may find out life isn't fair, in spite of your Masters from Bryn Mawr, you might end up a glorified babysitter to a bunch of dead-eyed fourth graders while your husband runs naked on a beach with your marriage counsellor."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Krabappel's opinion about her profession portrays demoralised and unfulfilled teachers.
			Test question "I prefer the smell of a) bank customers, b) french fries, or c) gasoline."	Performativity Counter-Hegemonic	Test question reveals the reductive and predefined nature of standardised testing.
			Test question "If I could be any animal I would be a) a carpenter ant, b) a nurse shark, c) a lawyer bird"	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Test question reveals the reductive and predefined nature of standardised testing.
			Upon test completion, Hoover instructs class to stare at the front of the room for 15 minutes.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Teachers making poor use of instructional time reflects professionals not properly fulfilling their purpose.
2 - 2:18	Various locations	Unknown	Tests are picked up from Hoover's classroom, airlifted to a central agency, and go through an antiquated marking computer.	Marketisation Hegemonic	Inefficient nature of correcting tests from the labour-intensive manual process to the outdated computer suggest inefficiency in public school operations.
3 - 2:53	Dr. Pryor's office	Dr. Pryor, Lisa, Bart, Martin, other students	Martin is told his prescribed future - as he hoped - would be a systems analyst.	Performativity Hegemonic	Test reinforces Martin's male dominance by being suited to his needs.
			Bart is told he prescribed future is that of law enforcement officer.	Performativity Hegemonic	Testing reinforces Bart's male dominance by prescribing him into such a role.
			Lisa is prescribed as a homemaker.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Lisa's poorly-fitted test result implies something is wrong with standardised testing and marginalises her.
4 - 3:48	Simpson living room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa	Family discusses test results	-	-
5 - 4:33	L'Ill Ludwig's Music School	Marge, Lisa, music instructor	Lisa asks if she has the skills for a jazz musician, only to learn she does not because her fingers are too stubby.	-	-
6 - 5:29	Simpson home, streets of Springfield	Homer, Eddie, Lou, Bart, Simpsons' neighbour, Snake, Apu, others	Bart is picked up for a police ride-along. He asks question, then a pursuit of Snake begins.	Performativity Hegemonic	Standardised test inspires Bart to learn about a career path.
7 - 9:19	Simpson kitchen	Marge, Lisa	Lisa laments inability to have a future path due to the prescription on the CANT.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Standardised testing process demoralised Lisa, suggesting negative effects of such processes.
8 - 9:50	Simpson house	Marge, Bart, Maggie	Brat practices being a police officer by fingerprinting Maggie and investigating a missing cake in the house"	Performativity Hegemonic	Standardised test inspires Bart to take initiative in learning about his prescribed career path.
9 - 10:20	Lisa's bedroom	Marge, Lisa	Lisa reveals that she has quit the school band.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Standardised testing process has further demoralised Lisa, suggesting negative effects from such processes.
10 - 11:20	Springfield Elementary hallway and "bad girls" washroom	Lisa, Janie, others	Lisa enters the "bad girls" washroom where she plants the idea with other students to vandalise the school mascot.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Demoralisation resulting from test has led Lisa into acting in a manner contrary to the school's interests, thus negatively exacerbating her already-strained relationship with the institution.
11 - 12:03	Springfield Elementary hall and yard	Skinner, Groundskeeper Willie, Lou,	Skinner sees vandalised Puma, then sees Willie being arrested for burning leaves without a permit.	Performativity Hegemonic	Bart puts his affinity for law and order brought about from test into action, thus crediting the test for creating a responsible citizen.



		Eddie, Bart			
12 - 12:51	Skinner's Office	Skinner, Bart	Bart is offered a position as a hallway monitor.	Performativity Hegemonic	The test has resulted in Bart being rewarded with official responsibility, suggesting the career track of the test has been actualised to a degree.
13 - 13:32	Springfield Elementary hallway	Bart, others	Bart begins his work as hallway monitor.	-	-
14 - 14:04	Homer and Marge's bedroom	Homer, Marge	Homer and Marge discuss how Bart's grades are up while Lisa's are down.	Performativity-Hegemonic/Counter-Hegemonic	The standardised tests, while improving Bart's grades, are working to set tracks for both the Simpsons children suggesting both positive and negative aspects of standardised and reductive testing.
15 - 14:24	Hoover's classroom	Hoover, Lisa	Lisa refuses to participate in art class.	Performativity Counter-Hegemonic	Prescriptive test has further contributed to Lisa's abandonment of embrace of school system, suggesting negative effects.
16 - 14:54	"Bad Girls" washroom	Lisa, bad girls	Bad girls express admiration for Lisa	Performativity Counter-Hegemonic	Lisa seeks out and receives validation from a different segment of her group since the test has left her no longer validated by school.
17 - 15:16	Skinner's office	Skinner, Bart	Skinner shares his pleasure with Bart's work, referring to the school as a "police state."	Performativity Hegemonic	Bart has come full-circle to be on the side of the school administration due to the path set out by the CANT, suggesting a complete turnaround due to the testing process.
18 - 17:00	Hoover's classroom	Hoover, Lisa, others	Lisa scratches a picture in her desk, refusing to answer a question.	-	-
			Hoover is unable to answer the question without checking the answer key.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Teacher inadequacy is presented by Hoover's inability to answer a question.
			Lisa comments that Hoover is "earning your 18 grand a year."	Privatisation-Counter-hegemonic	Teacher compensation at Springfield Elementary is very low, suggesting little if no degree of producer capture with regard to salary.
19 - 17:29	Hoover's classroom	Lisa	Lisa gets idea to steal teachers' editions of texts while performing detention.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Performativity means brought about Lisa's rebellion against school system, indicating a propensity for them to isolate and exacerbate differences.
20 - 17:58	Teacher Lounge	Hoover, Krabappel, Skinner, others	Teachers sit in staff room in panic due to missing teacher's editions that have rendered them helpless.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The inability of teachers to perform their role without teachers' editions of texts suggests school teachers are poorly equipped for their role.
21 - 18:20	Springfield Elementary classrooms	Hoover, Krabappel, other teachers	Teachers face their classrooms with alternative plans that mask their inability to teach.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The inability of teachers to perform their role without teachers' editions of texts suggests teachers are poorly equipped for their role.
22 - 19:20	Springfield Elementary hallway	Skinner, Bart, Lisa	Skinner and Bart's search reveals the texts, but Bart takes the blame to save Lisa.	-	-
			Skinner comments that finding the texts saved the school \$120.	Marketisation Hegemonic	The time and lost labour seen from not immediately replacing \$120 worth of texts suggests an inefficiency in school operations.
23 - 20:48	Skinner's Office	Skinner, Bart	Bart discusses his crime and rescinds his hallway monitor status.	-	-
24 - 21:34	Krabappel's classroom	Bart, Lisa	Bart writes "I will not expose the ignorance of the faculty" while Lisa plays her saxophone outside.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The line Bart writes summarises the ignorance of Springfield Elementary's staff, reflecting incompetence of teachers.

Privatisation H=6, C=1  
Marketisation H=2  
Performativity H=8, C=12  
Enterprising Individual -  
Total H=16, C=13

## APPENDIX D

### Swartzwelder and Lynch (1993) - Whacking Day

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 0:54	Springfield Elementary classrooms	Skinner, Bart, Milhouse, Nelson, Jimbo, Kearny	Skinner announces Chalmers is coming for an inspection of the school as scenes shifted through dilapidated classrooms at Springfield Elementary.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Dilapidated condition of Springfield Elementary, especially with piles of garbage, suggested that what is public is bad, thus leaning to the neoliberal argument of privatisation.
			Skinner fails to turn off intercom, refers to Bart, Nelson, Jimbo, and Kearny as "suckers" then enters into fit of evil laughter	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner's display of incompetence in making the school announcement suggested inadequacy of public school staff.
2 - 1:50	Springfield Elementary basement	Skinner, Groundskeeper Willie, Bart, Nelson, Jimbo, Kearney	Students enter civil defense shelter to claim mountain bikes promised by Skinner.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner's hiding of certain students during inspection links strongest with unprofessional behaviour, although it could find counterhegemonic connection to performativity's impact on school image management.
3 - 2:25	Springfield Elementary hallway	Skinner, Chalmers	Chalmers arrives at Springfield Elementary and Skinner walks him through the halls. Chalmers finds the welcome banner tawdry and Skinner claims it was the children's idea and he tried to stop them.	Privatisation Hegemonic	While the export of blame could be seen as enterprising individualism, more strongly reflected here was an impotent school administrator reflecting professional incompetence.
			Skinner asks how things are at One School Board Plaza.	Marketisation Hegemonic	The name "One School Board Plaza" implies an opulent school headquarters, suggesting misappropriation of public funds.
			Chalmers informs Skinner that the geography requirement will be dropped because children are testing poorly, and the three Rs will be reduced to two.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Indicative of the negative impact that performative environments have on curriculum, as tests become geared towards generating scores for public images and steer curriculum in new directions.
4 - 3:00	Springfield Elementary basement	Bart, Nelson, Jimbo, Kearney	Students discuss plan to escape from utility closet.	-	-
5 - 3:30	Springfield Elementary lunch room	Skinner, Chalmers	Skinner offers Chalmers a jello brick.	-	-
6 - 3:51	Springfield Elementary playground	Groundskeeper Willie, Scottish woman	Willie tunes up his garden tractor, claiming he would make it "his wife" if it were not against god's laws. Willie is then taken away by a Scottish woman looking for a place to bathe.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Willie's bizarre overtures to his garden tractor indicate incompetence of public employees alongside a bizarre immorality, both disparaging reflections of the public sector.
7 - 4:26	Hoover's classroom	Skinner, Chalmers, Lisa, Ralph	Chalmers counts stars on flag.	Marketisation Hegemonic	Chalmers overly bureaucratic inspection suggests inefficiency in public operations.
			Chalmers attempts to randomly ask a question. Skinner disallows Ralph the chance to answer in favour of Lisa.	Performativity Counter hegemonic	Much like Skinner's hiding of students in the basement, his disallowing Ralph to answer suggests teachers will attempt to engineer their performances when under scrutiny. This appears to more strongly link with performativity than it does professionalism though an argument could exist for both.
8 - 5:05	Springfield Elementary playground	Skinner, Bart, Chalmers	Bart takes Willie's abandoned garden tractor for a ride.	-	-
9 - 6:03	Springfield Elementary nursing station	Skinner, Chalmers, Lunch Lady Doris, Bart	Lunch Lady Doris bandages up Chalmers, claiming she gets two paycheques by doing double-duty as a nurse and a cafeteria worker.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Lunch Lady Doris's ability to collect two paycheques suggests an element of producer capture with public employees, thus undermining public organisations.
			Due to incident, Skinner is turned down for a promotion in favour of a drunk and "pill popper."	Privatisation Hegemonic	The promotion of an individual with a chemical problem suggests a lack of competence within public education and its administration.
10 - 6:40	Simpson living room	Homer, Bart, Lisa	Eye on Springfield show discusses Whacking Day as Bart reveals he was expelled from school.	-	-
11 - 8:04	Springfield Christian School	Marge, Bart	Marge drops Bart off at Christian School and is immediately chased out for sharing "Beans the Musical Fruit" as a psalm.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The lack of tolerance for Bart's misbehaviour at Springfield's Christian Academy suggests private schools have a higher standard of behaviour than what is tolerated at Springfield Elementary, thus validating a higher standard at private institutions.
12 - 8:45	Simpsons dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart,	Bart laments that he will never be educated.	-	-

		Lisa, Maggie			
13 - 9:57	Simpson living room	Marge, Lisa, Bart	Marge announces that she is home schooling Bart.	-	-
14 - 10:17	Simpson garage	Marge, Bart, Grandpa Simpson	Marge takes on the role of home school teacher, inviting Grandpa to as a guest speaker.	-	-
15 - 11:48	Simpson living room	Homer, Marge, Lisa	Homer shows off his Whacking Day snake whacking stick.	-	-
16 - 12:00	Simpson garage	Marge, Bart	Marge gives Bart Johnny Tremain to read.	-	-
17 - 12:20	Simpson living room	Bart	Bart is engaged in Johnny Tremain even though Itchy and Scratchy, his favourite cartoon, is on the television	Privatisation Hegemonic	Suggests that home schooling has potential to individualise student learning and thus engage students.
18 - 12:57	Simpson yard	Homer, Lisa	Homer hones whacking skills while Lisa looks on disapprovingly	-	-
19 - 13:37	Olde Springfield Towne	Marge, Bart, Barney, Squeaky-voiced Teen others	Bart is kicked out of Olde Springfield Park when pointing out an inconsistency in their history of Springfield.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Although Bart is breaking down Springfield's hegemonic societal narratives, more salient is how his learning and thinking capabilities are expanding under home schooling, thus putting into question the value of public education in favour of private.
20 - 14:43	Kwik-E-Mart	Apu, others	Apu announces his Whacking Day promotion.	-	-
21 - 15:10	Firing range	Chief Wiggum, Lou, Eddie	Officers fire at snake outlines.	-	-
22 - 15:18	Reverend Lovejoy's office	Reverend Lovejoy, Lisa	Lovejoy tells Lisa that God endorses Whacking Day.	-	-
23 - 15:38	Public park	Choir	Children sing Whacking Day carol.	-	-
24 - 16:07	Simpson yard	Homer, others	Homer sells parking by the axle.	-	-
25 - 16:19	Public space	Barney, Lenny, Mayor Quimby, others	Barney hits at imaginary snakes while Quimby double-checks for his pre-whacked snakes.	-	-
26 - 16:41	Simpson living room	Homer, Marge, Lisa	Lisa begs Homer to not attend Whacking Day.	-	-
27 - 17:14	Public park	Mayor Quimby, Barry White, Miss Springfield, others	Whacking Day is officially kicked off.	-	-
28 - 18:26	Simpson living room	Bart, Lisa	Bart and Lisa discuss how to save snakes.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Bart's reading of a book to independently learn about Whacking Day is contrary to his character and indicative of success of private home schooling option.
29 - 18:56	Simpson front yard	Bart, Lisa, Barry White, townsfolk	Lisa convinces Barry White to play music to attract snakes. Snakes are driven into Simpsons house. Bart is granted re-entry into Springfield Elementary for his independent learning initiative.	-	-
30 - 21:36	Springfield Elementary basement	Nelson, Jimbo, Kearney	Boys are still locked in basement, resolving their anger issues.	-	-
19 - 21:47	Roadway	Skinner, Groundskeeper Willie	Willie and Skinner race to the school with bikes to bribe the locked away students for their silence.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner's incompetence in forgetting students locked away in basement indicates inadequacy of public employees.

Privatisation  
Marketisation  
Performativity  
Enterprising Individual

H=12  
H=2  
C=2

Total

H=14, C=2

APPENDIX E  
Oakley and Weinstein (1994) - Sweet Seymour Skinner's Baadasssss Song

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 0:32	Simpson Kitchen	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Grandpa	Bart views old family films he plans to use for Show and Tell.	-	-
2 - 1:33	Lisa's Bedroom	Bart, Lisa	Bart looks for an item for Show and Tell	-	-
3 - 1:52	Simpson Front Yard / School Bus	Bart, Lisa, Martin, Otto, Santa's Little Helper, others	Bart sees everybody on bus has the same geod he has for Show and Tell, panics, and grabs Santa's Little Helper	-	-
4 - 2:10	Krabappel's classroom	Krabappel, Bart, Milhouse, Martin, Nelson, Sherri, Terri, Groundskeep er Willie, Santa's Little Helper	Nelson presents a can of tomato paste.	-	-
			Bart presents Santa's Little Helper, and notes how it ran into a church and drank all the holy water.	Privatisation Hegemonic	This reinforces the argument for a privatized school system, as it plays into the authoritarian populist image of schooling being devoid of god
			Krabappel and the students ignore Martin's presentation on the volcanic origins of the geod in favour of Bart's dog. Krabappel offers the dog Martin's cookies.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The disinterest in academic topics and instead the coddling of a dog, including Krabappel, indicates both the devoid control over curriculum and teaching in public schools and the lack of professionalism of Krabappel.
5 - 4:07	Krabappel's cloakroom / Springfield Elementary Cafeteria	Santa's Little Helper, Lunch Lady Doris	Santa's Little Helper smells food through the vent, which leads to cafeteria kitchen where Lunch Lady Doris prepares lunch with a giant drum of "Assorted Horse Parts - NOW with More Testicles." She picks out what appears to be horse testicles and states "More testicles mean more iron."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Lunch Lady Doris justifies the use of such ingredients in school lunches on a nutritional basis. While this could be argued as a portrayal of the underfunded state of schools, thus linking to counterhegemonic marketisation efficiency issues, the disgusting display is on the surface hegemonic attack on public school lunch programs thus undermining public schools.
6 - 4:30	Hoover's classroom	Hoover, Ralph, others	Ralph claims to see a dog in the vent. Hoover discounts him, bringing up the time he said he saw Snagglepuss outside.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Hoover's dismissive nature of Ralph reveals professional disinterest, thus undermining organised labour.
7 - 4:40	Skinner's office	Skinner, Groundskeep er Willie,	Principal Skinner, on the telephone with Superintendent Chalmers, explains that he understood Weinstein's parents were upset, but believed his absence was a phony excuse, as Yom Kippur sounded made-up.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner's lack of understanding of religion indicates both a godlessness of public schooling and a professional incompetence.
			Over the intercom, Skinner tells students to remain calm after Willie informs him there is a dog in the vents. Upon hearing this, student mayhem begins.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner's poor handling of the situation indicates an inability of public school workers to manage students.
8 - 5:36	Springfield Elementaria cafeteria	Lunch Lady Doris, Groundskeep er Willie	Willy demands to be greased up by Lunch Lady Doris so he can enter the school vents to fetch the dog.	-	-
9 - 5:47	Springfield Elementary vents, furnace room, hallway	Skinner, Groundskeep er Willie, Santa's Little Helper	Willy chases dog through vents while Skinner supervises from outside. Skinner enters hall to tell teachers and students to return to class, but is laughed at by students and staff, including Hoover and Krabappel who are smoking.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Teachers standing in hallway smoking and laughing at Skinner, ignoring his demands, are indicative of professional incompetence.
10 - 7:05	Springfield Elementary gym	Skinner, Groundskeep er Willie, Chalmers, Krabappel, Chief, Santa's Little Helper, Wiggum, Lou, Eddie, others	Chalmers proclaims his frustration with Springfield Elementary due to its "low test scores [and] class after class of ugly, ugly children."	Performativity Counter hegemonic	The importance placed on images and test scores suggests a misplaced priority on school image management, which links to the problems of performativity.
			Out of anger, Chalmers fires Skinner on the spot.	Privatisation Counter-	The lack of process afforded Skinner suggests that school staff are easily removed from their

				hegemonic	positions.
11 - 8:15	Simpson kitchen	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Bart discusses previous day's events.	-	-
12 - 9:04	Springfield Elementary auditorium	Chalmers, Leopold, Krabappel, Flanders, others	Chalmers announces that Flanders will be taking over as school principal. In addressing the school, Flanders says he knows they are anxious to get back to class, to which Krabappel is heard in the background laughing "Hah!"	Privatisation Hegemonic	Krabappel's disinterest in schooling and mocking of the new leader can be seen as reflection of a lacking professionalism.
13 - 10:46	Kwik-E-Mart	Apu, Milhouse, Bart, Skinner	Bart spots Skinner and apologises. Apu expresses his anger with Skinner for his plans to write a book like Jurassic Park.	-	-
14 - 11:38	Flanders' office	Flanders, Bart	Flanders expresses his disappointment that Bart has been sent to the office 11 times in less than a week: the frequency having increased since Flanders placed peanut butter cups on his desk and started serving soda.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The reflection of progressive practices at Springfield Elementary are ridiculed as worsening, not helping maintain order.
				Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	This scene is also a back-handed admission of the professional competence of Skinner, given that he kept the school under better order.
15 - 12:04	Springfield Laundromat	Skinner, Bart, Jimbo, Dolph, Kearney	Skinner makes arrangements to later meet with Bart.	-	-
16 - 13:10	Skinner's house	Bart, Agnes Skinner, Skinner	Skinner shares with Bart his time in Vietnam.	-	-
17 - 14:06	Skinner's back yard	Skinner, Bart	Bart tells Skinner how the school is falling apart under Flanders' leadership. He has implemented the honour system for detention, and teachers are afraid to leave the lounge.	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter-hegemonic	Flanders' progressive policies are failing to bring Springfield Elementary under control, suggesting both the inability of progressiveness in managing a school thus speaking to teacher motives. This also serves as a back-handed endorsement of Skinner's professional skills.
			Skinner's b-b-q apron reads "Principals do it 9 months a year."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Apron suggests that those in education have an easier work load than do the regular public, hence the producer capture that schools are alleged to operate under.
18 - 14:38	Beach, Luigi's	Skinner, Bart	Skinner and Bart walk along the beach then go for dinner as their friendship grows.	-	-
19 - 15:13	Krabappel's classroom	Bart, Martin, Milhouse, others	Krabappel's classroom is in complete chaos, with her nowhere to be seen. Milhouse, spreading ketchup on himself, claims "Not only am I not learning. I'm forgetting stuff I used to know." Martin is in a cage, calling out "My water dish is empty."	Privatisation Hegemonic Counter-hegemonic	A mirror of the critique put forth in Scene 17, in how Flanders' progressivism is failing Springfield Elementary while a backhanded acknowledgement of Skinner's professional skills.
20 - 15:40	Springfield Elementary entrance	Skinner	Skinner reflects on student successes.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	Skinner's passion for his job and his recounting of success speak to his professional skills as an educator.
21 - 16:00	Skinner's House	Bart, Agnes Skinner	Bart learns Skinner has rejoined the army.	-	-
22 - 16:23	Luigi's	Bart, Luigi	Bart returns for a meal alone.	-	-
23 - 16:40	Fort Springfield	Skinner, others	Skinner is dismayed at the new army recruits.	-	-
24 - 17:10	Flanders' office	Ned, Homer, Marge	Homer and Marge share their concerns about the operations of the school.	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter-hegemonic	While the local accessibility of Springfield Elementary is noted as contrary to privatisation advocates who claims schools are not responsive to individuals, the further critique of progressive leadership is put forth through Marge and Homer's concerns of how the school is being operated.
25 - 17:49	Fort Springfield	Skinner, others	Skinner cleans up army march chants.	-	-
26 - 18:16	Simpson living room	Bart, Lisa	Bart claims he misses Skinner, and Lisa points out he needs a nemesis.	-	-
27 - 18:46	Fort Springfield	Skinner, Bart, others	Bart bikes to Fort to convince Skinner to return to his old position.	-	-
28 - 19:55	Bart's bedroom	Homer, Skinner, Bart	Plans are hatched to have Flanders fired.	-	-

29 - 20:58	Krabappel's classroom	Chalmers, Bart, Martin, Flanders, others	Chalmers enters Krabappel's classroom. Bart points out that he fired Chalmers for less than this, but Chalmers counters "Yeah, but Skinner really bugged me."	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	The lack of process afforded Skinner is indicative of a lack of producer capture and flexibility of school management in making staffing decisions.
			Chalmers adds "Besides, the way America's schools are sliding they'll all be this way in a couple of months. I say lay back and enjoy the toboggan ride."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Chalmers chastisement of the school system and his submissiveness in its direction is a critique of the competency of the system in general, thus lending credence to arguments for privatisation.
			Ned Flanders states on the intercom "Let's thank the lord for another beautiful school day." Chalmers, in a rage, states "Thank the lord. Thank the lord. That sounded like a prayer. A prayer. A prayer in a public school. God has no place within these walls, just like facts have no place within organized religion. Simpson. You get your wish. Flanders is history."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Strongly linking to the godlessness of schools, Chalmers' statement goes to the perceived godlessness of schools, thus linking to calls for privatisation.
19 - 21:23	Springfield Elementary hallway	Flanders, Skinner, Chalmers, Bart, Groundskeeper Willie, others	The school is re-normalised under Skinner's return.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	That the school returned to normalcy and appears clean and under control is acknowledgement of Skinner's professional skills..

Privatisation H=15, C=7  
 Marketisation  
 Performativity C=1  
 Enterprising Individual  
 Total H=15, C=8

APPENDIX F  
Crittenden and Scott (1995) - The PTA Disbands

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 0:32	Springfield Elementary school bus	Skinner, Krabappel, Otto, Bart, Milhouse, Ralph, others	Students are being taken on field trip to Fort Springfield. The bus has an exhaust leak, no brakes, and holes in the floor so big seats fall through it.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Negative portrayal of public school suggests inadequate conditions for learning in public institutions.
			Krabappel criticises the bus, but Skinner counters the school's budget has just been cut, and speculated that the exhaust leak may be causing low test scores.	Marketisation Counter hegemonic	The direct suggestion that public schools are under-funded and consequently impacted student achievement also works to directly portray the impact of the low-tax demands of neoliberals.
2 - 1:30	Fort Springfield entrance	Skinner, Otto, tour guide, others	School bus crashes into a cannon as Springfield Elementary arrives. Skinner gives Otto a siphon for gas, calling it the school "credit card."	Marketisation Counter-hegemonic	While slotting into marketisation critiques of efficiency of public school operations under limited funds, the "enterprising" manner is also worthy of note.
3 - 2:09	Fort Springfield admission booth	Skinner, booth attendant, Principal Valiant, others	Skinner leans that the admission fee for Fort Springfield is \$5 and protests that there was no fee the previous year. Attendant points to a sign that reads "Diz-Nee Historical Park. Sorry, but there's profit to be had."	Privatisation Hegemonic	The reduction of access to Fort Springfield for the middle-class students due to privatisation critiques the motives of private enterprise in learning.
			Skinner claims no school could afford \$5 per student. Then Principal Valiant from Shelbyville Elementary pulls up in a modern coach bus. He tips the attendant to see to it that the students get some extra education.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Because of the appearance of schools other than Springfield Elementary being able to afford learning, the scene overall suggests that superior options exist for public schooling, thus validating choice programs.
4 - 2:42	Fort Springfield grounds	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart, Uter, others	Springfield Elementary students look over a fence from afar to watch battle re-enactment. Park employees spot them, and cry out "They're trying to learn for free. Get 'em!"	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	A multifarious event that best slots into the diminishing access to learning based on wealth when public services privatise.
			Staff and students flee to bus, leaving Uter behind. Skinner claims "God bless the man who invented permission slips" when Krabappel comments on missing students.	Enterprising Individual Counter hegemonic	Illustrates the negative results when there is lack of collective responsibility and the exporting of blame in an individualised environment.
5 - 4:15	Springfield Elementary cafeteria	Skinner, Krabappel, Lunch Lady Doris, Bart, Lisa, others	Krabappel and Skinner argue over the state of the school. Krabappel criticises school lunches that contain shredded newspapers, "malk," and ground gym mats.	Privatisation Hegemonic	A strong suggestion of the inadequacy of public services, although a strong link also could exist to efficient use of funding as Skinner justifies inadequate resources.
			Skinner proclaims the students have no future.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner's proclamation undermines the value of public schooling, given its suggestion that the school is not preparing them for a future.
6 - 5:20	Krabappel's classroom	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart	Krabappel and Skinner continue to debate the state of the school. Worn pointers and substandard books are noted.	Privatisation Hegemonic	A strong suggestion of the inadequacy of public services, although a strong link also could exist to efficient use of funding as Skinner justifies inadequate resources.
7 - 5:59	Skinner's office / Springfield Elementary hallway	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart	Bart eggs on strike.	Privatisation Counter hegemonic	The strike being motivated by poor learning conditions suggests that teacher concerns are with students and learning.
8 - 7:05	Springfield Elementary	Skinner, Krabappel, Hoover, Ralph, others	Strike is announced over the intercom. Hoover abandons her classroom and drives away throwing papers in the air, Pommelhorse leaves student on gym equipment, Ludwig leaves music room.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The improper winding down of classes with little or no regard for students suggests the selfish motivations of organised labour.
9 - 7:33	Springfield Elementary entrance	Others	Students stampede out of school entrance	-	-
10 - 7:37	Simpson living room	Marge, Bart, Lisa	Bart and Lisa return to tell Marge about the strike. Lisa has prepared a strike kit, but points out that without state-approved curricula and standardised testing, her education can only go so far.	Performativity Hegemonic	Reinforces value in standardised and reductive test.
11 - 8:14	Van Houten home	Kirk, Luann, Milhouse	Milhouse comes home to learn that his parents have already hired a tutor to keep him up-to-date during strike.	-	-
12 - 8:26	Springfield	Bart, others	Children run into streets and disrupt traffic, line up at arcades, Bart disrupts construction sight and unsuccessfully plays three games	-	-

			of chess		
13 - 9:23	Simpson dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Family discusses strike. Homer states "Lousy teachers. Trying to palm off our kids on us."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Homer speaks to the disrespect that organised labour receives in the current political environment.
			Lisa counters "But Dad. By striking they're trying to affect a change in management so they can be happier and more productive."	Privatisation Counter hegemonic	Lisa points out the purpose of collective labour action.
			Homer replies "Lisa, if you don't like your job you don't strike. You just go in every day and do it really half-assed. That's the American way."	Enterprising Individual Counter-hegemonic	Homer articulates both the "enterprising" manner that individuals will act in an environment of self-maximisation.
14 - 10:27	Springfield Elementary entrance and Skinner's office	Krabappel, Hoover, Bart, Lisa, others	Teachers picket the school with signs reading "2 + 2 a raise is due," "A is for Apple, B is for Raise" and "Gimme Gimme Gimme."	Privatisation Hegemonic	The suggestion is that teachers's strike action is motivated by their compensation and not learning needs.
			Hoover tells Lisa to "Get lost" when she asks what she would be learning if in school.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Teacher concerns in labour action are not aligned with students.
			Hoover holds sign that reads "Honk if you love cookies." Inside Skinner's office, Chalmers expresses anger at Skinner because of what he perceives to be public support for strike.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Reflects union using manipulative tactics.
15 - 11:07	Van Houten house	Bart, Milhouse, tutor	Milhouse is sent for recess where he reads. He uses sophisticated language and shows advanced knowledge of facts.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Milhouse's advanced learning suggests superior educations are available outside what Springfield Elementary offers.
16 - 11:30	Various Springfield locales	Jimbo, Kearney, Dolph, Bart, Moe, Marge, Lisa	Jimbo and his mother spend time together watching soap operas, Dolph and Kearney play arcade games, Lisa demands to be graded and evaluated.	-	-
17 - 12:45	Homer and Marge's bedroom	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa	Homer and Marge discuss impact of strike on family. Bart is flying a kite during the night, while Lisa has created a perpetual motion machine.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Lisa demonstrating advanced independent learning without her teachers puts the competence of public school teachers into question.
18 - 13:24	Springfield Elementary auditorium	Skinner, Krabappel, Ned Flanders, others	Skinner and Krabappel debate the needs of the students. Krabappel demands a cost-of-living increase and better equipment for teaching, while Skinner counters that the costs require a tax increase.	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter hegemonic	Krabappel's stance indicates that teachers as organised labour are interested in the advancement of educational causes. Skinner's rebuttal and the town's resistance to raising taxes suggests success of anti-tax movements.
			At a deadlock, the PTA pulls out a plan to have people from the neighbourhood act as teachers.	Privatisation Counter hegemonic	That the community is both involved at the meeting and willing to participate in the school suggest schooling is locally controlled.
19 - 14:56	Springfield Elementary	Skinner, Leopold, Marge, Jasper, Professor Frink, Moe, Lisa, others	Jasper lays out classroom rules with all actions punishable with a paddling, Professor Frink explains physics of toys to young children and hogs them, Moe is bullied out of the classroom by the students. Marge is brought in to replace Moe.	Privatisation Counter hegemonic	The failure of the community to teach the students reflects that they lack the professional skills of teachers.
20 - 17:39	Simpson dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Jasper, Grandpa	Failures of the school day are discussed. Marge notes difficulties in children locating Canada on the map, Lisa tells how Jasper caught his beard in the pencil sharpener.	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter-hegemonic	While Marge's experience could be seen as indicative of a failing public school system, it is countered by Jasper's difficulties in teaching.
21 - 18:57	Springfield Elementary playground	Marge, Bart, Jimbo, Nelson, Kearney, Dolph, Milhouse	Bart realises the teachers need to be returned after being bullied while under the watch of Marge in the playground.	Privatisation Counter hegemonic	Bart's demands for the teachers to return suggests a need for the professional skills of Springfield's educators.
			Milhouse compares Skinner and Krabappel to the forces of two positively-charged ions.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Milhouse's advanced understandings through a private tutor suggest schooling can be superior to what is offered publicly in Springfield.
22 - 19:58	Springfield Elementary hallway	Skinner, Krabappel, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Milhouse,	Skinner and Krabappel are locked in Skinner's office and told they may not exit until a resolution to the strike is found. Skinner and Krabappel devise a plan to end the strike.	-	-
23 - 21:00	Krabappel's classroom	Skinner, Krabappel, Snake, Bart, others	Skinner and Krabappel rent unused cloak rooms as makeshift prison cells for the overcrowded prison system. Snake asks Bart to help break him out.	Enterprising Individual Counter-hegemonic	The folly of enterprising schemes to backfill school funding shortfalls is put forth with the lack of consideration beyond money in this scheme. This also speaks to the damage of anti-tax movements.



			Snake points to a seat where he used to sit.	Privatisation Hegemonic	An attack on the public school system, suggesting it is turning out criminals.
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Privatisation H=18, C=8  
Marketisation C=2  
Performativity H=1  
Enterprising Individual C=2  
Total H=19, C=12

APPENDIX G  
Cohen and Kirkland (1995) - Lisa the Vegetarian

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 0:33	Simpson car	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Grandpa	Family drives to Storytown Village	-	-
2 - 1:07	Storytown Village	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Grandpa	Family arrives at Storytown Village and visits attractions of the Three Little Pigs, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and the Toddleville Trolley.	-	-
3 - 2:21	Storytown Village Little Bo Peep's Petting Zoo	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Family falls for a small lamb.	-	-
4 - 3:16	Simpson yard	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Ned, Maude, Rodd, Todd, others	Family returns to discover a Flanders' family reunion barbeque at their neighbour's home.	-	-
5 - 4:20	Simpson dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Homer plans a barbeque party during dinner, while Lisa realises she has an objection to eating meat following her experience at the petting zoo.	-	-
6 - 5:58	Hoover's classroom	Hoover, Lisa, Ralph, others	As class begins, Lisa remarks that "My family doesn't understand my newfound vegetarianism. Compared to them, the public schools are a haven of enlightenment."	Privatisation Hegemonic	A direct attack on the public school environment as a place of learning.
			Ralph eats his worm intended for dissection and asks for a new one. Hoover tells Ralph that there are no more, so he should just sleep while the others are learning.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Hoover's disinterest in Ralph's learning suggests public school teachers disinterested in their purpose.
			Lisa states that she cannot dissect an animal because she believes it is wrong. Hoover responds that she respects her moral objection, yet presses an "Independent Thought Alarm" button on her desk.	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter hegemonic	This can be seen as both a reflection of public school teachers failing to fulfil their professional purpose, while also serving to counteract the perception that public schools are teeming with progressivity.
7 - 7:00	Springfield Elementary cafeteria	Lunch Lady Doris, Lisa	Lunch menu items include Giblet McNiblets, Salisbury balls, and cow legs. Lisa asks if there is anything without meat in it, to which Lunch Lady Doris responds "Possibly the meatloaf." She receives a hot dog bun and is told it is "rich in bunly goodness."	Marketisation Counter hegemonic	The inadequate school lunch program is a portrayal of under-funding of public schools, although it should be noted that the Giblet McNiblets seems to indicate corporate intrusion into lunch programs that has reduced food quality.
			Lisa asks Lunch Lady Doris "Do you remember when you lost your passion for this job?" She sounds an "Independent Thought Alarm." Scene shifts to Skinner's office, who expresses concern that the students are over-stimulated and requests that Groundskeeper Willie remove all coloured chalk from the classrooms.	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter hegemonic	While Lunch Lady Doris and Skinner's actions suggest a lack of proper education practice (and also lack of funding for resources, leaning on marketisation), they also suggest that progressivity is not the problem it is claimed to be, given the stifling of independent thought and that coloured chalk is their most exciting teaching tool.
8 - 7:41	Simpson living room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa,	Bart and Lisa watch Itchy and Scratchy, then Lisa is taunted with a "You Can't Win Friends with Salad" song.	-	-
9 - 9:26	Hoover's classroom	Skinner, Hoover, Lisa, Ralph, Janey, others	Skinner tells Hoover's class that "a certain agitator—for privacy's sake let's call her Lisa S. No, that's too obvious. Let's say L. Simpson" has raised questions about school policy.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner's inability to hide Lisa's identity suggests professional incompetence.
			Skinner introduces film "Meat and You - Partners in Freedom" by telling students "In the interests of creating an open dialogue, sit quietly and watch this film."	Marketisation Counter hegemonic	The film's introduction suggested motives of corporate curriculum are to create disciplined and obedient workers and consumers.
			The film "Meat and You - Partners in Freedom. Number 7F03 in the Resistance is Useless Series" is shown.	Marketisation Counter hegemonic	The film sequence exposed many perceived shortcomings of the meat industry, yet used misinformation to validate eating meat and ridicule critical thinking about these concepts, thus creating disciplined consumers.
			Lisa states "They can't seriously expect us to swallow that tripe" when film closes. Skinner adds "Now as a special treat from our friends at the meat council, please help yourself to this tripe." Lisa protests "Stop it! Don't you	Marketisation Counter hegemonic	The behaviour of the classroom has changed in the manner intended by the film, thus exposing the dangers of corporate-sponsored curriculum.

			realise you've just been brainwashed by corporate propaganda" as students parrot lines from the film.		
10 - 12:21	Simpson yard	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Ned, Chief Wiggum, Dr. Hibbert, Barney, Moe, Grandpa, others	Homer hosts barbeque while an enraged Lisa retreats to her room.	-	-
11 - 13:29	Springfield various locations	Homer, Marge, Bart, Chief Wiggum, Ned, Mr. Burns, Smithers, others	Lisa pushes Homer's barbeque pig out of the yard with a garden tractor leading Homer and Bart on a chase across Springfield.	-	-
12 - 15:41	Simpson back yard	Homer, Bart, Lisa	Homer and Lisa fight over his ruined barbeque party.	-	-
13 - 16:06	Simpson dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Homer and Lisa continue their fight.	-	-
14 - 16:57	Springfield street	Lisa, Janey, Ralph, Sherry, Terry	Lisa is teased and accused of wanting to marry a carrot.	-	-
15 - 17:21	Springfield streets, Kwik-E-Mart	Lisa, Apu, others	Lisa sees various meat temptations across Springfield, ends up in the Kwik-E-Mart where she orders a hot dog. Apu reveals that it is tofu.	-	-
16 - 18:35	Kwik-E-Mart	Lisa, Apu, Paul and Linda McCartney	Apu reveals a secret rooftop garden where Paul and Linda McCartney are hanging out. Apu brings Lisa to understand the ideas of tolerance rather than forcing beliefs on others when she learns he is vegan. Lisa realises she may have been hard on other people who were not vegetarian.	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter-hegemonic	That Lisa does not learn about "Open Dialogue" regarding vegetarianism until meeting with Apu indicates that public schooling is not a place of open dialogue, but rather controlled by non-progressivism and corporate propaganda. Thus this serves to both invalidate public schools and their teachers, while also challenging the tenet that these places are besieged with progressivism.
17 - 20:36	Springfield streets	Homer, Lisa	Homer and Lisa make amends.	-	-

Privatisation H=6,C=3  
 Marketisation C=5  
 Performativity  
 Enterprising Individual

Total H=6, C=8

APPENDIX H  
Pulido and Dietter (1997) - Grade School Confidential

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 0:33	Krabappel's classroom	Krabappel, Skinner, Martin, Nelson, others	Skinner's monotone announcements leave class tired and not paying attention. Krabappel lights fire crackers and throws them into the aisle to awaken students. Martin asks to make an announcement as well, to which Krabappel asks if it can wait until she retires.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The general inability shown of public school teachers to engage students or treat them with respect fuels suspicion of teacher competencies.
2 - 1:15	Simpson yard	Homer, Bart, Milhouse	Bart and Milhouse decide to attend Martin's birthday party out of boredom.	-	-
3 - 1:52	Prince yard	Krabappel, Bart, others	Bart and Krabappel meet at birthday party but have little in common.	-	-
4 - 2:27	Prince yard	Ralph, Bart, Lisa, others	A "Mathemagician" fails to properly divide 7 into 28	Privatisation Counter hegemonic	Much like the replacement teachers in The PTA Disbands, this individual is unable to perform his task of educating, creating a back-handed validation of teachers' professional skills.
5 - 2:55	Prince yard	Skinner, Krabappel, Agnes, Skinner	Krabappel and Skinner converse about how poorly their lives turned out. Krabappel discusses collecting matchbooks from night clubs, Skinner discusses putting out his clothes for the coming week.	Privatisation Hegemonic	While a notable reinforcement of the "pathetic" teachers in Springfield and thus degrading of teacher competence in general, the lack of direct context to education makes does the link to education tenuous.
6 - 4:06	Prince yard	Bart, Lisa, Milhouse, Ralph, Nelson, Martin, Martin Prince Sr., Martha Prince, others	Children become ill from oysters and are whisked away by an ambulance.	-	-
7 - 5:01	Prince yard	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart	Skinner and Krabappel kiss, not knowing that Bart is witness.	-	-
8 - 5:55	Springfield Elementary cafeteria	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart, other students	Bart attempts to tell classmates about the kiss he spotted, but is interrupted by Skinner.	-	-
9 - 6:16	Skinner's office and Permanent Record Depository	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart	Concerned about a perceived conflict of interest, Skinner and Krabappel agree to buy Bart's silence by switching his permanent record with that of another student's (Milhouse)."	Privatisation Hegemonic	The portrayal of teachers bargaining with a student to hide perceived professional discrepancies puts the motives and competence of teachers into question.
10 - 7:32	Krabappel's apartment	Skinner, Krabappel	Skinner and Krabappel eat a romantic dinner together.	-	-
11 - 8:20	Springfield Elementary entrance	Skinner, Wendel, Ralph, Janie, Jimbo	Skinner, with no tie, happily greets incoming students.	-	-
12 - 8:32	Krabappel's classroom	Krabappel, others	A lovestruck Krabappel says "The only way to survive a deadly blaze is... oh the heck with it. Life's too short for fire safety. Let's go outside and pick wild flowers."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Krabappel's aborting of the fire safety puts into question the competence of teachers.
13 - 8:48	Skinner's office	Skinner, Bart	Bart is asked to bring a personal note to Krabappel.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Although weak, this is a reflection of the professional competence given the use of Bart for personal means.
14 - 9:15	Aztec movie theatre	Skinner, Krabappel, Chalmers, Bart	Skinner and Krabappel are caught in the theatre, so Skinner claims they are on a field trip with a student. He rushes out and fetches bart.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner and Krabappel's use of Bart and Chalmers' inability to see what is going on suggests public sector employee incompetence.
15 - 10:26	Skinner's house	Skinner, Agnes, Skinner, Bart	Skinner makes Bart keep his mother company so she can be distracted while he goes on a date with Krabappel.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Continuing to use Bart to cover up the relationship puts into question the motives and competence of teachers.
16 - 11:21	Krabappel's classroom	Krabappel, Skinner, Bart, others	Bart is sent to Skinner's office under false pretenses. He returns and is forced to say "I love you, Edna Krabappel."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Continued use of Bart for a personal relationship puts into question the motives and competence of teachers.
17 - 12:23	Springfield Elementary hallway	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart, others	Bart leads a march down the school hall to expose Skinner and Krabappel kissing in the janitorial closet.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner and Krabappel kissing in the closet puts into question the motives and competence of teachers.

18 - 12:49	Springfield households	Milhouse, Kirk Van Houten, Luann Van Houten, Homer, Marge, Lisa, Ralph, Chief Wiggum, Sarah Wiggum,	Students come home and tell exaggerated stories about what happened in the closet. Wiggum calls Chalmers.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	The high degree of scrutiny of public teachers and the ability of Wiggum to directly call Chalmers indicates schooling as locally controlled.
19 - 13:44	Skinner's office	Skinner, Chalmers	Chalmers gives Skinner the option of ending the relationship or being fired due to the "sleazy shenanigans" going on in the school.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	The relative lack of process and unilateral decision of Chalmers reflected a school system able to remove teachers and not saddled with bureaucratic rights to a job.
20 - 14:24	Krabappel's classroom	Krabappel, Nelson, Bart, others	Krabappel tells students she will miss them.	-	-
21 - 14:45	Skinner's office	Skinner, Bart	Skinner apologises to Bart and Bart insists Skinner must learn to stand up for himself.	-	-
22 - 15:35	Springfield Elementary roof	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart, Groundskeeper Willy,	Skinner and Krabappel barricade themselves in the school and call the media in an effort to keep their jobs.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	The extreme effort that must be made to stand up for job security is indicative of a weak (and non-present) teachers' union, thus invalidating producer capture.
23 - 16:05	Springfield Elementary	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart, Groundskeeper Willie, Chalmers, Marge, Homer, Kent Brockman, others	Bart succeeds in having news media come to cover story. Townsfolk follow suit.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	The arrival of most townsfolk to see what is happening at the school suggests a high degree of local involvement in schooling.
24 - 16:38	Springfield Elementary	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart, Chief Wiggum, others	Wiggum tries various techniques to force Skinner, Krabappel, and Bart out of the school.	-	-
25 - 17:44	Springfield Elementary	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart, Chalmers, others	Telephone is thrown into school and Skinner makes his case with Chalmers. Chalmers claims that "I am a public servant and not permitted to use my own judgment in any way."	Marketisation Hegemonic	This most strongly links to the concepts of efficiency due to the shackles that Chalmers claims exists in public service work.
			Krabappel asks to take their case to the assembled townsfolk. Chalmers asks "Who do you want to hear first? The guy in the bumblebee suit or the one with the bone through his hair?"	Privatisation Hegemonic	Chalmers' discounting of local opinion works to suggest schools are taken over by elitist forces.
			Skinner and Krabappel come out of the school and make their case to the assembled townsfolk. Once the nature of what has happened is better understood, the town seems onside and Chalmers allows them to keep their jobs.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	The involvement of local citizens in determining Skinner and Krabappel's fate suggests local control is existent in schools.
26 - 20:51	Springfield Elementary hallway	Skinner, Krabappel, Bart	Skinner and Krabappel dupe Bart into thinking that they are ending their relationship. Skinner tells Krabappel "That's why I love elementary school. The children will believe anything you tell them."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner's statement puts into question the motives and competence of teachers.

Privatisation H=11,C=6  
Marketisation H=1  
Performativity  
Enterprising Individual

Total H=12, C=6

APPENDIX I  
Keeler and Moore (1997) - The Principal and the Pauper

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 0:26	Springfield Elementary hallway	Skinner, Chalmers	Skinner roams the halls of Springfield Elementary, inspecting for dust, measuring the distance between the wall and a garbage can, and checking the bell with a tuning fork.	Marketisation Hegemonic	Skinner is portraying an inefficient manner in which public servants approach their work.
2 - 1:04	Springfield Elementary faculty lounge	Chalmers, Krabappel, Groundskeeper Willie, others	Krabappel offers Chalmers coffee-flavoured bevarine with creamium as he discusses plans for a 20 <sup>th</sup> anniversary party for Skinner.	Privatisation Counter hegemonic	Although a small instance, the substitute coffee offered to the teachers at Springfield Elementary suggests the lack of workplace perks, hinting at a lack of producer capture.
3 - 1:34	Hoover's classroom	Hoover, Lisa, Ralph, others	Hoover looks for volunteers for Skinner's 20 <sup>th</sup> anniversary event. When Lisa offers to work with Ralph, she tells her it is "your funeral."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Hoover's lack of professionalism in disparaging Ralph puts the competency of teachers into question.
4 - 1:59	Simpson kitchen	Homer, Marge, Bart	Bart makes dog food balls to give to Skinner at the tribute.	-	-
5 - 2:23	Skinner's house	Skinner, Agnes Skinner	Skinner is duped by his mother to come to the car for a change from their usual Friday night routine of drawing silhouettes of each other.	-	-
6 - 2:57	Springfield Elementary entrance	Skinner, Agnes Skinner	Skinner and his mother pull up to school for the tribute where much of the community awaits.	Privatisation Counter hegemonic	The high turnout suggests a great deal of local involvement and control in schools.
7 - 3:06	Springfield Elementary auditorium	Skinner, Krabappel, Hoover, Mr. Ludwig, Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Ralph, Milhouse, Agnes Skinner, real Skinner, others	Celebrations include Ralph and Lisa delivering a tribute to Skinner, and a song being sang in his honour. Chalmers labouriously introduces a cake by stating "Now I know the school serves cakes only on Thursdays, and I'm also well aware that today is Friday. Nevertheless, I have a surprise for you." A mysterious man arrives and claims he is the real Skinner.	Marketisation Hegemonic	Skinner's labourious way of introducing the cake, surrounded by rules, indicates that the efficiency and responsiveness of schools is not ideal.
8 - 5:41	Skinner's office	Chalmers, Skinner, Homer, Marge, Bart, Agnes Skinner, real Skinner	Skinner and real Skinner explain background stories, elaborating on how Skinner took real Skinner's role during the war. Skinner makes reference to his "fight to outlaw teenage rudeness" in his preamble to the explanation.	Marketisation Hegemonic	The expansive nature of bureaucracy is suggested through Skinner's attempts to legislate morals.
9 - 10:43	Skinner's office	Skinner, Bart	Bart is sent to the office and he and Skinner have a conversation about him being an imposter.	-	-
10 - 11:10	Kwik-E-Mart	Skinner, Apu, Marg	When writing a cheque, Skinner pines over what name to use.	-	-
11 - 11:52	Springfield Elementary auditorium	Chalmers, Skinner, real Skinner, others	An assembly is called by Skinner to announce his retirement from Springfield Elementary.	Privatisation Counter hegemonic	The high turnout suggests a great deal of local involvement and control in schools.
			Skinner hands over the reigns of the school to the real Skinner. His qualifications are summarised that being principal has been his "lifelong ambition. And if a man pretending to be me can do it, well then logically the real me must be far more qualified." Chalmers responds "Good enough."	Privatisation Hegemonic	The inept way in which the hiring of the new principal was put forth suggests issues with the personnel policies of public schools, thus bringing staff competence into question.
			The community applauds the new hire of real Skinner for the role of principal.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The community applauding this poor decision suggests communities at large are not best equipped to manage schools.
12 - 13:46	Krabappel's apartment	Skinner, Krabappel	Skinner announces he is leaving Springfield forever.	-	-
13 - 14:13	Stor-U-Stuff	Skinner, Bart, Milhouse, Martin	Skinner takes belongings from a storage bin and drives away.	-	-
14 - 14:43	Channel 6 Newscast	Kent Brockman, new Skinner, Mayor Quimby, Chalmers,	As broadcast on the local news, a ceremony takes place at the town square to welcome the new Principal Skinner with residents cheering on.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	The community again involved with a school event suggests a great deal of local involvement in the school.

		others			
15 - 15:11	Simpson living room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Family comments on the new Skinner situation.	-	-
16 - 15:34	Krabappel's classroom	Chalmers, new Skinner, Krabappel, Bart, Nelson, others	Bart is asked to give a pledge of allegiance and recites it to "Oh Mickey."	Privatisation Hegemonic	Bart's bastardised pledge of allegiance suggest a lack of control and patriotism in public schools.
17 - 16:22	Streets of Capitol City	Skinner, others	Skinner arrives in his old neighbourhood and takes a job at a strip club.	-	-
18 - 16:50	Skinner's house	New Skinner, Agnes Skinner	New Skinner avoids silhouette night in lieu of going to the bar.	-	-
19 - 17:47	Grocery Store	Marge, Maggie, Krabappel, Agnes Skinner	Ladies discuss how they miss Skinner.	-	-
20 - 17:57	Simpson car	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Krabappel, Agnes Skinner, Jasper, Grandpa	Townfolk embark upon trip to Capitol City to entice Skinner to return.	-	-
21 - 18:40	Ritz Carlton Hotel for Transients	Skinner, Krabappel, Agnes Skinner, Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Grandpa, Jasper	Agnes makes demands that Skinner return to Springfield. He acquiesces.	-	-
22 - 19:34	Springfield Elementary	Chalmers, Homer, Skinner, Mayor Quimby, real Skinner, others	Car returns, announcing Skinner's return to Springfield.	-	-
23 - 20:35	Springfield train station	Skinner, Judge Snyder, Homer, real Skinner, Agnes Skinner, others	Real Skinner is sent out on rails and Principal Skinner resumes his role in Springfield and at Springfield Elementary.	-	-

Privatisation H=4, C=4  
Marketisation H=3  
Performativity  
Enterprising Individual

Total H=7, C=4

APPENDIX J  
Maxtone-Graham and Anderson (1998) - Lisa Gets an A

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 1:22	First Church of Springfield	Reverend Lovejoy, Homer, others	Community runs out of church at sermon conclusion.	-	-
2 - 1:48	Simpson car	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Family complains about hunger and pulls into Eatie Gourmet for their "traditional Sunday brunch."	-	-
3 - 2:09	Eatie Gourmet	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, others	Family has Sunday brunch of food samples.	-	-
4 - 3:59	Simpson living room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Pinchy	Homer places lobster he purchased at Eatie Gourmet in fish. Lisa shows signs of a cold.	-	-
5 - 4:35	Simpson kitchen and living room	Homer, Marge, Lisa, Pinchy	Homer feeds lobster and Marge forces Lisa to stay home due to illness.	-	-
6 - 5:09	Lisa's bedroom	Lisa, Marge	Marge convinces Lisa to play a video game rather than watch educational television.	-	-
7 - 6:12	Lisa's bedroom	Lisa, Ralph	Lisa is involved in the video game, but is interrupted by Ralph who brings a copy of Wind in the Willows for Lisa's homework.	-	-
8 - 6:44	Simpson bathroom	Homer, Pinchy	Homer weighs Pinchy.	-	-
9 - 6:59	Lisa's bedroom	Marge, Bart, Lisa	Lisa feigns illness to continue playing game.	-	-
10 - 7:24	Lisa's bedroom and Springfield Elementary entrance	Marge, Lisa	3 days on, Lisa is still feigning illness. Marge drops her off at school.	-	-
11 - 7:45	Hoover's classroom	Hoover, Lisa, others	Hoover asks Lisa to take test, given that Ralph dropped off her homework.	-	-
12 - 8:02	Hoover's classroom	Hoover, Lisa, Skinner, Otto, others	Hopelessness sinks in as Lisa realises that she cannot answer multiple choice questions such as "Mr. Toad has a red [blank]" and "Mr. [blank] needs a [blank] in order to [blank] his [blank]."	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	The distressing and myopic detail of reductive tests is exposed in this sequence.
			In an imaginary sequence, Hoover announces "And the lowest grade in the class... Lisa Simpson. Zero." Skinner then tells Lisa that the President of Harvard is there to see her. He tells her that Harvard is now closed to her, but he will pass her file on to Brown.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	The threats of low test scores jeopardising students' futures can be seen as a statement about negative results of high-stakes testing in schools.
13 - 9:00	Springfield Elementary hallway	Lisa, Bart	Lisa leaves to get a drink of water. She stumbles across Bart who is skipping class. Sitting in Bart's desk is a latex dummy he "whipped up" in shop class.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	The brilliance of Bart's dummy combined with his perpetual underachiever character can be seen as indication of the inability of standard school measures to quantify intelligence.
14 - 9:25	Springfield Elementary boys' washroom	Bart, Lisa, Nelson, Groundskeeper Willie	Nelson offers to sell Lisa an answer key to the test. After she sees Groundskeeper Willie digging through a clogged toilet and proclaiming "I took a zero once and my life turned out just fine" she purchases the key.	Performativity Counter-Hegemonic	This reinforces the high-stakes nature of school testing. That Willie's zero has left him digging through toilets as part of his career emphasises the high-stakes of school testing.
15 - 10:24	Simpson living room	Homer, Pinchy	Homer bonds with Pinchy, feeding him sausage links.	-	-
16 - 10:53	Hoover's classroom	Hoover, Lisa, Ralph, others	Hoover hands back Wind in the Willows tests she marked over lunch. Liquor is spilled on them.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Teachers drinking over lunch is an attack on the professionalism and competence of teachers.
			Hoover congratulates Lisa on her high grade, an A+++ with the extra plus signs accounted for by questions she answered correctly that were cut off by the photocopier.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The clear evidence of Lisa cheating not being spotted by Hoover suggests teacher incompetence.
17 - 11:22	Simpson	Homer,	Marge boils water to prepare Pinchy, but	-	-



	kitchen	Marge, Pinchy	Homer is unwilling to throw him in.		
18 - 11:53	Simpson dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Family eats steamed cabbage, Marge brings out Lisa's test.	-	-
19 - 12:44	Springfield Elementary school bus	Bart, Lisa, others	Lisa discusses her moral dilemma of cheating.	-	-
20 - 13:00	Springfield Elementary hallway	Lisa, Nelson, Skinner	Nelson tries to sell Lisa more answer keys, but skulks away when Skinner comes on the intercom to ask Lisa to come to the office to discuss the results of the test.	Enterprising Individual Counter-hegemonic	Nelson skulking away suggests a lack of ethic attached when relationships are built on enterprising actions of sales transactions.
21 - 13:22	Skinner's office	Skinner's office	Skinner reveals that Lisa's test has brought the school's GPA up to a point where Springfield Elementary qualifies for a basic state assistance grant. Lisa admits she cheated.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	That the notoriously-underfunded school has been disallowed funding due to GPA levels suggests performance-based school funding schemes do not necessarily address school needs.
22 - 14:20	Skinner's office	Skinner, Lisa	Skinner believes that the matter of cheating should be handled in a "mature and above all quiet manner" so the school can keep the grant money.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Skinner's willingness to allow academic dishonesty indicates schools will compromise principles to secure funding indicates that dishonesty can result from performative funding regimes.
			Skinner says he has already begun to spend the grant money, and points to a giant scoreboard. Skinner appears and is excited about the scoreboard.	Marketisation Hegemonic	That the chronically-underfunded school invested in an advanced scoreboard suggests inefficiency in spending public money by school officials.
23 - 15:45	Springfield Elementary - various locations	Chalmers, Skinner, Krabappel, Lisa, Nelson, Milhouse, Ralph, Gil	Skinner and Chalmers take Lisa on a tour of the school to convince her to stay silent about the cheating. Chalmers comments "Good lord what a dump" as her and Skinner look out a broken window into a schoolyard with an abandoned car, broken playsets, a broken fence, and tipped garbage cans.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	While these scenes can be seen as indicative of the inferiority of public schools, the link to performative funding in order to rectify the situation is a critique of what happens when school funding is linked to test scores.
			Nelson and Milhouse are shown playing tetherball with a cinder block as Lisa is asked "Don't you think those youngsters deserve a regulation tether ball?"	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	The damages of underfunded schools to sports programs is suggested with the poor-quality sports equipment Skinner and Chalmers have pegged for replacement.
			Skinner notes "We can buy real periodic tables instead of these promotional ones from Oscar Meyer" as Krabappel asks students to name the atomic weight of Bolognium. Acceptable answers included "Snacktacular" and "Delicious."	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	The folly-filled corporate-supplied periodic table was the only option for the underfunded schools are substandard resources.
				Marketisation Counter-hegemonic	The compromised curriculum that is realised from corporate resources negatively reflects corporate intrusion into schools.
			Lisa is told "And for the first time ever, our computer lab has a computer in it." Lisa sees Ralph playing on a Coleco computer that, as Gil notes, will require rust-proofing.	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Another instance of the starvation of resources for schools that cannot meet basic testing requirements.
				Marketisation Hegemonic	That Skinner and Chalmers are about to purchase outdated computers that require rust-proofing puts into question the ability of public employees to efficiently manage public dollars.
			Lisa agrees to keep the secret, stating that "I guess I don't have much choice."	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	That Lisa had to compromise her principles to ensure school funding suggests the downside of performative regimes when they encourage cheating.
24 - 17:18	Beach	Homer, Marge, Pinchy, Sea Captain	Homer and Marge take Pinchy for a walk, and Captain McAllister offers to school Pinchy.	-	-
25 - 18:06	Springfield Elementary auditorium	Skinner, Chalmers, Krabappel, Otto, State Comptroller Atkins, Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, others	Auditorium is filled with community members. When the cheque is about to be given, Lisa confesses to her action, stating "Education is the search for truth" to which Skinner responds "No, no she isn't. Don't listen to her. She's out of her mind."	Performativity Counter-hegemonic	Skinner's silencing of Lisa's suggestion of education's purpose suggests that performativity regimes work to move education from complex foundational arguments to simplistic reductive tests designed to secure funding.
			Comptroller - who is Otto in a mask - decrees the school may keep the cheque because of Lisa's courage in confessing. She leaves satisfied with her actions, then the auditorium audience regroups for the real State	Enterprising Individual Counter-hegemonic	The enterprising nature in which the entire community conspired to defraud Lisa of knowing the truth while concurrently defrauding the state of money suggested truth and self-maximising behaviour were not

			Comptroller Atkins to give the cheque.		necessarily compatible concepts.
				Privatisation Counter- hegemonic	That the community banded together to defraud Lisa and the state for funding still suggested a high degree of local involvement in Springfield Elementary.
			Real Comptroller arrived to hand out cheque to school, noting that it would allow for a "light bulb in every classroom and a high-definition TV for the teacher's lounge."	Privatisation Hegemonic	An element of producer capture is suggested here with the state money being portrayed as primarily going towards the personal benefit of the teachers.
			Skinner states "I know a liquor store where we can cash this right now" when the cheque is awarded.	Marketisation Hegemonic	This statement is rich, in that it could be seen as indication of the comparative wealth of private sector to the public schools, or a statement of the inability of the public to oversee public organisations given their cheers. However, most salient is the portrayal of public funds once again being inefficiently used, given the rush to cash the cheque.
26 - 20:36	Simpson kitchen	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Homer mistakenly puts Pinchy in a hot bath, where he is cooked.	-	-
27 - 21:03	Simpson dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Pinchy	Homer eats Pinchy.	-	-

Privatisation H=3, C=1  
Marketisation H=2, C=3  
Performativity C=12  
Enterprising Individual C=2

Total H=5, C=18

APPENDIX K  
Martin and Nastuk (1999) - Grift of the Magi

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 1:21	Simpson living room	Bart, Lisa, Milhouse, Kent Brockman	Brockman announces that the ozone hole is wintering in Springfield. Milhouse is chased by a ray of light.	-	-
2 - 1:55	Simpson living room	Simpson living room	Bart and Milhouse complain about boredom while Lisa suggests board games.	-	-
3 - 2:25	Homer and Marge's bedroom	Homer, Bart, Milhouse	Homer walks in on Bart and Milhouse playing dress-up in Marge's clothes.	-	-
4 - 3:08	Simpson General Hospital	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Dr. Hibbert, medical students	Bart is fitted with a cast on his coccyx.	-	-
5 - 3:42	Springfield Elementary entrance	Skinner, Bart, Lisa, Fat Tony, others	Bart is unable to roll his wheelchair into the school. Lisa points out that "I thought public schools were supposed to have access ramps for the disabled" and Skinner responds "Technically yes, but the building costs would be astronomical."	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter- hegemonic	The portrayal of public schools being underfunded works to undermine what is public although the lack of a wheelchair works to counter suggestions of progressivity overwhelming public schools.
6 - 4:27	Springfield Elementary entrance	Skinner, Bart, Fat Tony, townsfolk	A crowd forms for Skinner's ceremony to open the school's new wheelchair ramp.	Privatisation Counter- hegemonic	The concept of teachers overtaking schools would be countered by the local involvement demonstrated at the opening.
			Skinner announces to the crowd that Springfield Elementary is closer than ever before to being in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1975.	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter- hegemonic	Like above, the portrayal of public schooling being an inadequate place for learning is suggested in this portrayal, thus undermining what is public, while concurrently the lack of compliance suggests schools are not overrun by progressivity.
			Bart is introduced as the first of what Skinner hopes will be many disabled students. He has healed during the construction process, and the ramp is unnecessary.	Marketisation Hegemonic	While an attack on progressivity, the immediate suggestion appears to be that public schools are not operated in an efficient manner given the lack of need for the ramp.
			The overly-elaborate ramp system collapses.	Privatisation Hegemonic	While difficult to slot as this overlaps privatisation and marketisation issues, it appears that the ramp failure best exemplifies an inability of public officials to manage public projects.
				Privatisation Counter- hegemonic	It suggests that private sector intrusion into public schools is of questionable quality.
7 - 5:39	Springfield Elementary entrance	Skinner, Fat Tony, students, staff	Skinner announces that the school no longer has to fear mob reprisal, but due to a lack of funds Springfield Elementary is closing forever.	Marketisation Hegemonic	Skinner's mismanagement in allowing the ramp to be strong-armed into existence by Fat Tony has resulted in the closure of the school, suggesting inept schools management but also underfunded public schools.
				Privatisation Counter- hegemonic	The role of the private sector in constructing the faulty ramp and still demanding payment critiques private sector intrusion into public projects.
8 - 6:06	Skinner's house	Skinner, Dr. Hibbert, Marge, Homer, Ned, Moe, others	A meeting is held at Skinner's house to determine how to raise funds. Ned offers to raffie off his camper which is shouted down by Homer, Moe suggests selling liquor and claims he is doing well although he is wearing bread bags for shoes.	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter- hegemonic	The local involvement in the school suggests schools are locally controlled, although the critique local involvement as being wrought with failure is also suggested.
				Marketisation Counter- hegemonic	That public schools have to seek out funding beyond what is publicly provided suggests efficiency is not the problem as much as underfunding is in public schools.
9 - 7:02	Mr. Burns' mansion	Skinner, Burns, Smithers, Nelson, Bart, Ralph, Lisa, Milhouse, Martin	Children put on a play "The Nice Man Giveth" in a private performance for Burns. The premise is that uneducated children cause the death of Mr. Burns, demonstrating the need for a donation to the school. Burns refuses.	Enterprising Individual Counter- hegemonic	Burns' inability to understand the connection between funding the school and his own interest suggest a disconnect between greed and self-maximising individuality.
10 - 8:15	Simpson	Bart, Lisa,	Watching Spanish daytime TV in lieu of going	Other	That television is able to teach a language to

	living room	Kent Brockman, Jim Hope, Skinner	to school, Bart comments that "Daytime TV is muy estúpido."	Hegemonic	scholastically-underperforming Bart is a seeming validation of the medium over public schooling.
			Kent Brockman states that "I'm with Jim Hope of Kid First Industries which has generously stepped in to educate our children." Hope responds "You know when public schools drop the ball, it is up to the private sector to jump on that fumble and run for the endzone."	Privatisation Hegemonic	The private sector stepping in to fix flaws in the public education system puts forth the belief of what is public is bad and what is private is good..
				Other Hegemonic	The language of the media in stating that Kid First Industries has "generously" stepped in to educate "our children" may suggest the relationship between media and corporations.
			Hope claims that he will be replacing the current teachers but they have received a generous severance package. Skinner is shown receiving a basket of oranges.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	The provision of a bag of oranges as a severance package suggest the privatisation of schools will result in inadequate compensation for long-term employees.
11 - 9:05	Krabappel's classroom	Jim Hope, Bart, Nelson, Martin, others	Hope explains the school previously failed because it was not responsive to student needs. He wants to find out what the kids are passionate about and teach to that, then begins kicking books.	Privatisation Hegemonic	The student-as-consumer framed program that disregards previous methods reinforces neoliberal rhetoric about non-responsive public institutions.
12 - 9:42	Simpson living room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	Bart is in the living room kicking books (at a sixth-grade level, he claims) while Homer roots him on.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	Homer and Marge's encouragement of book-kicking suggests parental inadequacy in identifying effective learning programs, thus putting educational choice into question.
13 - 10:04	Krabappel's classroom and broom closet	Jim Hope, Milhouse, Suzie, Nelson, Bart	Students discuss their favourite toys. It is revealed that they are being spied on for market research.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	That the curriculum of the school is overtly designed to meet the needs of the private sector indicates commercial issues being schooling's focus.
14 - 11:07	Hoover's classroom	KFI teacher, Ralph, Lisa, others	As the class brainstorms toy names, Ralph repeatedly suggests poor examples. He is told to be quiet or he will get an F, to which Ralph responds "The before teacher yelled at me too."	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	That the private-sector teacher exhibited the same impatience as Hoover suggests the same flaws are existent in private employees as public ones, working as a vindication— but not justification— of Hoover's behaviour as a public school teacher.
			Lisa is disciplined for doing math in class rather than contributing to toy design.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	Further critique of the motives of private sector schooling designing education for commercial needs.
15 - 11:37	Hoover's classroom	Lisa, Bart	Lisa writes lines on board that read "I will not do math in class." as she complains the day was spent selecting fabric swatches and Phil from marketing was the guest speaker.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	The chastisement of private sector motivations in gearing schooling towards private ends is continued.
			Bart laughs at Lisa's punishment, claiming the "ironing" is delicious, and noting "Alls I know ks I'm getting straight As and that ain't not all bad."	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	Contrary to Bart picking up language watching television, the decay of his language use suggests private-sector schooling is ineffective.
16 - 12:12	Springfield Elementary broom closet	Lisa	Lisa discovers the market research lab that monitors classrooms.	-	-
17 - 12:33	Springfield Elementary halls	Homer, Marge, Lisa, Chief Wiggum	Lisa leads Wiggum to broom closet but finds the market lab gone.	-	-
18 - 13:24	Simpson living room	Bart, Lisa, Krusty	While watching Krusty the Clown show, a Funzo ad appears on TV. Lisa realised it is the toy they designed from research at school. She says "Bart, they lied to us. Instead of giving us an education, they tricked us into designing a toy. Aren't you outraged?"	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	Lisa's summarised the motivation of KFI thus putting into question private-sector involvement in schooling.
19 - 14:39	Kid First Industries	Bart, Lisa, Gary Coleman, Ms. Nagel, Jim Hope	Lisa and Bart confront Nagel and Hope, who rationalise their actions because they are under pressure to produce the next hit toy.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	The commercial—not educational— motive of the private sector is exposed as the overriding motivation behind privatising school.
20 - 16:10	Simpson living room	Bart, Lisa	Bart looks for Funzo accessories for Christmas gifts.	-	-
21 - 17:03	Try-N-Save	Bart, Lisa, Ned Flanders, Carl, Lenny, Moe, Ms. Nagel, Jim Hope	A mob breaks open the store before it is open to purchase Funzo dolls.	-	-
22 - 17:47	Simpson car	Homer, Bart,	Lisa and Bart explain to Homer that he will	-	-

		Lisa	break into homes while they sing carols to steal Funzo dolls so they do not destroy other toys as they are pre-programmed to do.		
23 - 18:07	Various Springfield homes	Homer, Bart, Lisa, Chief Wiggum, Sarah Wiggum, Dr. Hibbert, Julius Hibbert	Homer breaks into homes to steal toys while Bart and Lisa sing Christmas carols.	-	-
24 - 18:45	Springfield Tire Fire	Homer, Bart, Lisa, Gary Coleman	Homer throws Funzo dolls into fire. Gary Coleman arrives from KFI and is invited to dinner.	-	-
25 - 21:00	Simpson dining room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, Gary Coleman, Mr. Burns, Smithers, Moe	During Christmas dinner, Burns shows up to announce he is funding the school. Burns was visited by three ghosts at night who gave him a change of heart.	Enterprising Individual Counter-hegemonic	That the money required to fund public education is mere pocket change to the wealthy would be indicative of the irrationality of greed that can be associated with self-maximising behaviour.

Privatisation H=5, C=15  
Marketisation H=2, C=1  
Performativity  
Enterprising Individual C=2  
Other H=2  
Total H=11C=16

APPENDIX L  
Long and Kramer (2000) - Skinner's Sense of Snow

Scene/ Sequence and Time	Setting	Characters	Premise	Apple Categorisation	Rationale
1 - 1:21	Simpson living room	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	While watching football, Homer is encouraged by family to attend circus.	-	-
2 - 2:25	Cirque de Puree	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie, others	Circus comes to an end due to a flash storm.	-	-
3 - 4:35	Simpson car	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, Maggie	As family drives home, Bart hopes school will be cancelled due to weather.	-	-
4 - 4:54	Simpson kitchen	Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa	Bart and Lisa listen to the radio to learn that Springfield Elementary is opened, regardless of the inclement weather.	-	-
5 - 5:35	Springfield Elementary school bus	Bart, Lisa, others	Students complain that school is open while people outside play in a park.	-	-
6 - 6:04	Krabappel's classroom	Skinner, Lisa, Milhouse, Nelson, others	In a nearly-empty school, Milhouse asks "Hey. Where are the teachers?" to which Skinner replies "Their union has called an emergency caucus." The scene shifts to a conga line at what appears to be a ski lodge with teachers singing "Caucus, caucus, caucus and Krabappel holding a martini glass."	Privatisation Hegemonic	The illustration of the union caucus illustrates the perception that teacher unions act in their own interest and not the interest of schools.
			As a treat, Skinner shows dated Christmas film about "a grinchy little character that tries to steal Christmas." Student excitement is subdued the movie is revealed to be a very boring feature from 1938.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner's inability to please students suggests incompetence in teacher practice.
7 - 8:22	Simpson living room	Homer, Marge, Kent Brockman, Mr. Burns, Smithers	News reports reveal extent of the storm.	-	-
8 - 8:54	Springfield Elementary cafeteria	Skinner, Bart, Martin, Kearney, Nelson, Sherri, Terri, others	Skinner informs students that they cannot leave the school.	Privatisation Counter-hegemonic	Skinner's act shows a high degree of competence because he is trying to mitigate potential harm to students.
9 - 9:33	Flanders' car	Homer, Ned	Homer and Ned sit in a makeshift plow, preparing to rescue students from snowed-in school.	-	-
10 - 10:02	Springfield Elementary cafeteria	Skinner, Groundskeeper Willie, Nelson, Martin, others	Skinner feeds children rations of relish and mayonnaise. Children demand to be let out of the school. Skinner refuses.	Privatisation Hegemonic	Skinner's lack of emergency preparedness reflects professional incompetence.
11 - 10:42	Skinner's office	Chalmers, Skinner, others	Skinner formulates a plan to deal with revolting children.	-	-
12 - 11:35	Springfield Elementary cafeteria	Skinner, Groundskeeper Willie, Nelson, others	Skinner arrives in his army uniform and demand children pay attention to his demands.	-	-
13 - 12:11	Flanders' car	Homer, Ned	Homer and Ned drive towards school.	-	-
14 - 12:23	Springfield Elementary cafeteria	Skinner, Bart, Lisa	Bart threatens to dig himself out of school.	-	-
15 - 12:54	Flanders' car	Homer, Ned	Homer hits a fire hydrant which freezes the car in place.	-	-
16 - 13:17	Springfield Elementary cafeteria	Skinner, Groundskeeper Willie, Bart, Ralph, Nelson, others	Bart attempts to tunnel out but is caught. Skinner instructs Willie to destroy the tunnel. Willie points out that Bart did a good job of the tunnel. Skinner refuses to listen to Willie, so Skinner destroys tunnel on his own.	Privatisation Hegemonic/ Counter-hegemonic	Skinner's choice to wait for professional rescue rather than rely on the makeshift tunnel that Willie claims to be adequate could be indicative of the inflexible nature of public organisations, or conversely be seen as Skinner exercising caution.

17 - 14:47	Springfield Elementary cafeteria	Skinner, Bart, others	Skinner is tied in a dodge ball bag by students.	-	-
18 - 15:10	Springfield Elementary cafeteria	Bart, others	Bart declares that school has been taken over by students, and they cause mayhem.	-	-
19 - 15:34	Flanders' car	Homer, Ned	Homer and Ned note exhaust fumes leaking in car.	-	-
20 - 15:52	Krabappel's classroom	Skinner, Bart	Bart makes Skinner write lines.	-	-
21 - 16:04	Springfield Elementary gym	Skinner, Bart	Bart forces Skinner to climb a rope.	-	-
22 - 16:19	Skinner's office	Skinner, Lisa, Bart, Milhouse, Nelson, others	Students root through school's permanent records and discover that Skinner's annual salary is \$25,000.	Privatisation-Counter-hegemonic	Skinner's low salary suggests a lack of producer capture for teachers.
23 - 17:42	Springfield Elementary science lab	Skinner, Nelson	Skinner sends Nibbles the Hamster out of school in hamster ball with a rescue note.	-	-
24 - 18:17	Flanders' car	Homer, Ned	Fumes fill car while Homer has dream sequence. Nibbles' ball breaks through glass and frees car.	-	-
25 - 19:26	Springfield Elementary library	Skinner, Bart, others	Students burn books. Skinner protests that he spent hours crossing out the "sass" in Huckleberry Finn.	Marketisation Hegemonic	Skinner's use of time censoring books would suggest an inefficient bureaucracy.
26 - 19:35	Flanders' car	Homer, Ned	Homer hits a salt silo at a cracker factory.	-	-
27 - 19:53	Springfield Elementary library, entrance	Homer, Ned, Skinner, Chalmers, Bart, Lisa, Nelson, Milhouse, others	Crashing noise outside leads students to discover the salt silo crashed outside the school and melted the snow.	-	-

Privatisation H=4, C=3  
Marketisation H=1  
Performativity  
Enterprising Individual  
Other

Total H=4 C=3

APPENDIX M  
Data Counts

	Privatisation Hegemonic	Privatisation Counter- hegemonic	Marketisation Hegemonic	Marketisation Counter- hegemonic	Performativity Hegemonic	Performativity Counter- hegemonic	Enterprising Individual Hegemonic	Enterprising Individual Counter- hegemonic	Other Hegemonic	Other Counter- hegemonic
Vitti and Silverman (1990)	10	1	-	-	-	6	1	-	-	-
Vitti and Moore (1991)	7	12	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Meyer and Lynch (1992)	6	1	2	-	8	12	-	-	-	-
Swartzwelder & Lynch (1993)	12	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Oakley and Weinstein (1994)	15	7	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Crittenden and Scott (1995)	18	8	-	2	1	-	-	2	-	-
Cohen and Kirkland (1995)	6	3	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pulido and Dietter (1997)	11	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Keeler and Moore (1997)	4	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maxtone-Graham and Anderson (1998)	3	1	2	3	-	12	-	2	-	-
Martin and Nastuk (1999)	5	15	2	1	-	-	-	2	2	-
Long and Kramer (2000)	4	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	101	61	13	11	9	33	2	7	2	-

Total H=127  
Total C=122



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