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# The Exploiting Business

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- individual disciplines, see Kathy Hytten, "Cultural Studies of Education: Mapping the Terrain," *Educational Foundations* 11, no. 4 (1997): 39-60; and Kathy Hytten, "The Promise of Cultural Studies in Education," *Educational Theory* 49, no. 4 (1999): 527-543.
30. Wayne J. Urban, "Wayne's World: Growing Up in Cleveland, Ohio, 1941-1963 (AESA Presidential Address—1995)," *Educational Studies* 26, no. 4 (1995): 303; 303-4.
  31. *Ibid.*, 304.
  32. *Ibid.*, 318.
  33. John Dewey, *The Sources of a Science of Education* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 1929), 13-14.
  34. *Ibid.*, 49; 52-53.
  35. Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Hugh Mackay, and Keith Negus. *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman* (London, UK: Sage Publications, 1997), 3.
  36. Maxine Greene, "Multiple Voices and Multiple Realities: A Re-Viewing of Educational Foundations," *Educational Foundations* 4, no. 2 (1990): 7.
  37. *Ibid.*, 7
  38. *Ibid.*, 15.
  39. Trinh, T. Minh-ha. *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 74.
  40. Clifford Geertz, "Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought," in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 19-35.
  41. Anna Yeatman, *Postmodern Revisionings of the Political* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 31.
  42. Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998), 6; 7. This text will be cited as *TM* in subsequent references. I thank Jim Garrison for bringing this fine book to my attention.

## The Exploiting Business

By Deron R. Boyles

**ex.ploit** (eks/ploit) *n.* [ME. & OFr. *exploit* < L. *explicitum*, neut. pp. of *explicare*: see EXPLICATE] an act remarkable for brilliance or daring; bold deed. **vt.** **1.** to make use of; turn to account; utilize productively. **2.** to make unethical use of for one's own advantage or profit; specif., to make profit from the labor of (others).<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

In virtually every neighborhood grocery store, one will find a program where a percentage of sales will be "donated" to local schools. In Michigan, Glen's Markets has a "Save-Share 2000" plan. The store, like most others, provides a "value card" and customers "swipe" their card at a machine located at the register. From the total bill, one percent will be "donated" to a school the shopper designates. Interestingly, the store does not keep track of the individual contributions so that those who shop at the store have no idea whether their contribution was actually made.<sup>2</sup> Harris Teeter has a similar program. They boasted, in a letter to River Eves

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Elementary School (Roswell, GA), that they “gave away \$500,000 to 1,955 schools” in 1998.<sup>3</sup> Each school, in other words, received \$255.75. Like Glen’s (and Kroger, Publix, Acme, Bruno’s, Stop-n-Shop, etc.), Harris Teeter uses schools as no-cost marketing tools for their stores. In the letter to River Eves Elementary, Harris Teeter informed the school that it had only \$8.78 earmarked for its school. Since the company will not cut a check for an amount less than \$250 (but keeps the interest accrued on such funds), the school was sent a list of ideas “to increase [their] dollars earned.” The suggestions included posting the Harris Teeter account number on the school’s marquee as well as in sight of the car pool line. The suggestions also included advertising the program in the school newsletter, announcing the program at school events and PTA meetings, and copying reminder cards to be distributed to parents. For \$250, Harris Teeter gets free advertising in a variety of ways (the school marquee, newsletters, handouts, and announcements) and the school spends money and time on paper, printing, and “human hours” devoted to advertising. The “River Eves Eagles Newsletter” did, indeed, include a “front page” headline proclaiming “Hooray for River Eves Business Partners.”<sup>4</sup>

Lakeside High School, in Atlanta, Georgia, participates in a program that many other schools also adopt. They have “The Student Planner,” which is a calendar for students. Distributed by the American Student Activity Planner, LLC, 1,650,000 copies are handed out nationwide. The copies are free because “sponsors” underwrite the cost of the calendar by including advertisements throughout the document. Sixteen pages—out of one hundred and sixty pages—are given over the Lakeside High School’s listing of policies, phone numbers, the alma mater, discipline code, etc. The rest of the spiral booklet has calendars on the right page, while the left side has full page advertisements. One hundred forty-two pages (out of one hundred sixty) include some form of advertisement. Advertisers include Paramount Pictures, which uses the slogan “We rule after school” to promote its lineup of television shows (7<sup>th</sup> Heaven, Sabrina, Moesha, and Clueless). Other advertisers include AT&T, BarraQuda.com, Roxy Watches, OTB (“One Tough Brand” for “young men & boys,” “One Tuff Babe” for “juniors and girls”), DKNY Jeans, SeanJohn.com, PacSun, Muddjeans.com, Gellyroll pens, Toyota, Best Buy, T.J.Maxx, U.S. Coast Guard, Quiksilver, etc. Each page that lists weekly dates and times also has at the top of the page a smaller advertisement. Certain dates within the weekly calendar listing encourages students to “Let Madame Clizia predict your future @ Muddjeans.com.”<sup>5</sup> SAT and ACT registration deadlines and test dates are noted, as is the promise to “Win Cool Prizes—Today Only @ www.gellyroll.com.”<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, one advertisement by PNB Nation (a clothing web site) explains its initials. “PNB nation stands for ‘post no bills.’ The term [sic] ‘post no bills’ means, ‘do not put up advertisements.’ We have used this term as a metaphor for individuals to not put up false images of themselves, but to represent whoever they are. . .”<sup>7</sup>

Coca-Cola has a summer “economics” institute program to promote competitive business practices. Nissan automobile dealerships participate in “automotive

services apprenticeships.” CiCi’s Pizza sets aside one night per month when students and parents from participating schools come to the restaurant. A percentage of the net (not gross) sales is “donated” to the school. Subway provides “free” subs to a local school and a representative from the store, in order to make an “educational” link, comes to the school as a guest speaker on “health occupations.” McDonald’s secures itself as part of a cafeteria “choice” program in a Colorado school and offers business credit to students who “intern” as cooks and servers. Channel One is connected to thousands of classrooms, providing students with a news program and commercials for jeans, candy, makeup, and other “targeted” products. Tucker Federal Bank and Wachovia Bank participate in an “Academy of Finance” program which claims to prepare junior high and high school students for “rewarding careers” in the financial services industry. In August 2000, National Public Radio reported the case of a father in Ohio who was suing his local school to stop the school from giving student information to local banks who contact students about setting up savings accounts. The principal of the school interpreted the suit as a nuisance and he defended the bank as being a “friend to the school.”

The General Accounting Office (GAO) recently came out with a report warning of the increase in commercialization in schools. As noted in a *New York Times* article,

The G.A.O. report cites textbook covers distributed by Clairol, Ralph Lauren, and Philip Morris with company names and logos fully displayed. In New York City, the Board of Education is considering a plan that would provide computers for all of its students, starting in the fourth grade. The computers might carry ads and possibly encourage shopping on a particular Web site.<sup>8</sup>

The Cobb County (GA) Chamber of Commerce lists the benefits of school-business partnerships as follows: “Present firsthand requirements, satisfactions, and expectations of the business world.... Alert teachers to the job skills applicants need and help them find ways to develop these skills.... Help develop career awareness geared to specific local job-market needs both now and in the future.... Gain understanding of the school systems, whose health is vital to the economic well being of the community.... Become known as a community involved company which adds to your public relations efforts.”<sup>9</sup>

Note the slant. The benefits are for businesses, but schools are referred to in ways that assume them to be beneficiaries as well. It does not follow, in this particular example anyway, that the benefits for the schools are anything more than residual and they appear linked to the kind of fiscal policies that primarily favor businesses. Teachers are supposed to teach their students what businesses desire in terms of “job skills.” Businesses benefit from learning more about schools, but for the purpose of the “economic well-being of the community.” To the possible question “Why should my business get involved?,” the chamber of commerce already provides the answer: so your business will be *perceived* as being involved in the community, “which adds to your public relations efforts.”

Far from being limited to supermarket programs, school-business partnerships are increasing in number and variety and arguably represent a larger, exploitative agenda. The agenda is a pro-business, pro-capitalist, pro-careerist one that excludes questions about whether business is exploitative of workers and consumers (and schools), whether capitalism is the only or best economic theory, and whether elementary school students should be forced to consider their future based *not* on “What do you want to *be* when you grow up?” questions, but “What do you want to *do* when you grow up?” questions.<sup>10</sup>

### Historical Considerations

It was not always this way. School-business partnerships grew out of a historical context that ultimately saw business interests deeply penetrate pedagogical interests. Before widespread industrialism, schools were places where students would go, just long enough, to learn necessary information to further their purposes. Early American schooling expanded and reflected general education and literacy at a time when schooling was also seen as a means for social mobility, only not in terms of consumer materialism. Regarding the general-education purpose of schools, Cremin notes that “As almanacs, newspapers, pamphlets, and books dealt with matters of topical interest, especially after the Stamp Act crisis of the 1760s, a premium was placed on literacy in segments of the population where illiteracy had long been [stigmatized].”<sup>11</sup> Kantor further clarifies that “prior to 1880, schools were seldom seen as mechanisms to prepare youths for jobs.... Nor, by and large, did people expect that schooling beyond the elementary and grammar grades would influence one’s chances for employment.”<sup>12</sup> McNeil adds, “While having school-supplied skills (geography, accounting, literacy) might help a person find an apprenticeship, there was no notion of going to school in order to get a job or be trained for one, or to obtain a certificate of attendance.”<sup>13</sup> Reading and ciphering learned, students would apply this knowledge as *they* intended it, or found utility for it. Literacy and economic achievement were linked. That is, those who were functionally illiterate had less earning potential on average than those who were literate, but the argument for schools as sites for specific forms of literacy (math and science achievement, industrial- and computer-oriented vocational training, etc.) is a mid- to late-nineteenth-century and twentieth-century development.<sup>14</sup> These arguments also lay the foundation for consumer materialism by recasting schools as reductionist institutions whose purpose it is to compartmentalize and transmit bits of information deemed “marketable.”

Spring suggests that an inherent tension here is one between cooperation of a particular kind and the agrarian individualism of the late nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> The cooperation to which he refers was the result of immigration, urbanization, and the rise of industrialism. “Early American society was conceived of at a time when growth and progress resulted from everyone working for his own self-interest as an indepen-

dent economic unit without the restraints of a tightly knit social organization. By the end of the century many Americans believed this conception of society was no longer relevant to the urban and industrial world of the post-Civil War period.”<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the roots of the push toward consumer materialism can be traced to arguments given in the nineteenth century by Horace Mann in favor of common schools. He advanced the “wealth position”: individual wealth depends upon the general wealth of the community and schools are places where the traits that make productive workers can best be instilled.<sup>17</sup> Mann’s position should not sound strange to contemporary ears, partly because the success of consumer materialism has dulled sensibilities about what is primarily pedagogic—not economic—about schools, and partly because the sensibilities that are dulled are easily dulled. That is, without a thoughtful position regarding the various purposes of schools (social, political, economic, pedagogic, etc.), Americans hear appeals to their materialist fears about jobs, productivity, and competition. By linking these concerns to schools, conversation about the purpose of schools is slanted. Mann understood the power of this link, but not quite for consumer materialist purposes. Mann’s position was offered to sway voters in favor of common schools, but was also the way to have people swallow a bitter pill—funding in the form of taxes to support common schools. What he did was successfully argue that those who should pay for school are not only those who have children attending school. This way, more people pay because, according to the “wealth argument,” it was in everyone’s interest to see to it that schools succeeded in producing productive members for society.<sup>18</sup> One of the problems with Mann’s position, given modern times, is that corporations have come to negotiate reduced taxes in order to locate or re-locate in various communities. Then, with only some of the money they would ordinarily have to pay in taxes, they use schools to promote themselves and their wares. What results is the nefarious use of schools, otherwise known as exploitation.

### The Point: Exploitation

Referring to the definition at the beginning of this article, the primary claim here is this: that school-business partnerships exploit schools in the sense that they “make unethical use of [schools] for [their] own advantage or profit” insofar as school-business partnerships promote consumer materialism, thwart critical transitivity, and negatively alter what it means to be a citizen. The intention of this paper is to champion the other definition of the term in order “to make use of, turn to account, [and] utilize productively” school-business partnerships as object lessons for students’ critical analysis. One way to overcome the negative impact of business partnerships, however, utilizes the partnerships themselves. This paper intends to show why exploiting business partnerships (in the first sense of the definition) is as important to do as it is difficult to achieve. To understand why, let us look at two key concepts: consumer materialism and critical transitivity.

### Consumerism on One Hand and Transitivity on the Other

Consumer materialism is the focus only or primarily on goods and ends. Perhaps best characterized by students wanting to know how little they have to do in order to “get” a passing grade or whether they are going to “get” their “money’s worth” for a course, consumer materialism circumvents process in favor of product. Consumer materialism is also the valuing of easy answers over difficult investigation. Linked to convenience, consumer materialism manifests itself in schools via business partnerships when the ends or goods (e.g., exclusive cola contracts, “free” pizza, trips to amusement parks, rewards for promoting “partner” logos, etc.) become the focus and where the focus is not analyzed or investigated. Said differently, consumer materialism commodifies existence by reducing searching, being, and thinking to objectified and reductionistic particulars. For schooling, it means, in part, that students see their roles as seeking “right” answers to questions instead of searching for meaning by questioning and contesting. Similarly, teachers see their roles as seeking preordained procedures that will allow the efficient transfer of information from them (or the adopted texts/curriculum) to their students.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, teachers demonstrate consumer materialism when they participate in school-business partnerships without questioning and analyzing the ideological, symbolic, and practical consequences of partnering with the private sector in overtly commercial ways.

Critical transitivity is best understood when compared to two other levels of awareness—intransitivity and semitransitivity. The phrases come from Paulo Freire and intransitivity means “noncritical (in)action.” He clarifies that intransitivity repudiates the power of individuals to change their existences when, for example, teachers claim “I can’t speak out about school-business partnerships because my school might lose funding...that’s the ‘real world’ and I can’t do anything about it.”<sup>20</sup> Differently, semitransitivity is characterized by individuals who see the world as changeable, but see the world in unrelated segments such that semitransitivity is two-dimensional and short term. Business groups may donate money, time, or materials, for example, but teachers do not ask whether businesses are getting tax credits, free advertising, or other “perks.”<sup>21</sup> While intransitivity and semitransitivity are visible in schools, Freire’s ultimate goal—critical transitivity—is rarely evidenced. Critical transitivity is demonstrated when individuals make, according to Shor, “broad connections between individual experience and social issues.... In education, critically [transitive] teachers and students synthesize personal and social meanings with a specific theme, text, or issue.”<sup>22</sup> Students and teachers who critique school-business partnerships rather than seek them out and/or participate in them without question, are demonstrating, in minor form, what critical transitivity entails.

The point of connecting consumer materialism and critical transitivity in relation to school-business partnerships is to engage students and teachers in

debates and arguments over, for example, the motives for business involvement in schools, the benefits from partnerships for schools versus the benefits for businesses, and what is gained and lost in specific partnerships. Are businesses altruistic in their “support”? How much time and money is spent by school districts in “human hours” securing and maintaining partnerships? If businesses paid non-reduced taxes (i.e., many businesses get tax reductions for locating in particular areas), would the dollar amount of their “contributions” to schools be greater or smaller than what they would have paid if they had not received a tax break? These are the kinds of questions that critical transitivity requires and are also questions that, by virtue of their being formed and asked, challenge consumer materialist assumptions regarding easy answers and convenient, simple conclusions.

Critical transitivity utilizes processes of investigation that do not accept the impervious realities that Maxine Greene calls the “givens” of an imposed “real world.”<sup>23</sup> In this sense, students would be better off being young philosophers of education: questioning their own schooling at the very time they are engaged in it. Unfortunately, formal opportunities for questioning are limited as testing, grading, and preparation for future life-oriented curricula (i.e., pro consumerism, job and workforce preparation, skills-oriented approaches) are overly plentiful. The concern here is that business partnerships inherently inhibit questioning and instead help develop uncritical consumers rather than critically transitive citizens. This happens, in part, by their institutionalized nature. Accepted by schools and reinforced in society, business assumptions including consumer materialism and *intransitivity* become “beyond question.” Unwilling or unable to raise questions (for fear of losing funding?), teachers and school leaders often demonstrate for their students what it means to accede to the “given” of commercialism and consumer materialism, e.g., “Coke Day,” advertisement-soaked school calendars, candy and candle sales, etc. One result is that schools harbor non-criticality and confer diplomas to students (and employ teachers and administrators) who are unable (and/or unwilling?) to raise questions about motive, meaning, and the consequences—both positive and negative—of supporting business influences on and in schools. A cycle is established, then, where business expectations for schools beget schools that push products, provide free advertising, and “produce” future consumers who, in turn, favor and support business interests and corporate involvement in public schooling. Some call this a “win-win” situation, but who wins what? Who wins how much? Who wins in the long run?

While a compelling case might be made to get rid of school-business partnerships altogether, this paper (A) assumes school-business partnerships are not going away and (B) argues that, therefore, schools should exploit their “partnerships” by engaging in critically transitive investigations of the partnerships themselves. A surreptitious way, perhaps, to slow the 303 percent increase in the number of school-business partnerships since 1990,<sup>24</sup> it is asserted here that not investigating school-business partnerships is the surest way to conflate consumerism with citizenship.

Such a conflation portends increased inaction and the *ipso facto* support of an oligopoly.

### Partnerships Exploited: An Example

Schools, then, are faced with programs connecting them with businesses while also having outside forces further the idea that schools and businesses should become even more closely aligned.<sup>25</sup> The problem here is that students and teachers become subsumed in a market logic that, in part because of its pervasiveness, appears impervious to critique.<sup>26</sup> Fortunately, there are examples of those working to thwart further corporate encroachment.

In university communications departments, students study television and print advertisements for their symbolism, hidden messages, overt messages, aesthetics, etc. Guided by experts in the field, meanings intended by advertisers—as well as meanings other than those intended by advertisers—are identified, revealed, and debated. Much like in textual analysis, literary criticism, and hermeneutics, the ads become fodder for investigation. School-business partnerships offer the same opportunity. Consider one example.

After studying school-business partnerships, critical transitivity, and a variety of other related topics during a recent summer term, a middle school music teacher returned to her classroom. Her intention was to explore the possibility that her fifth grade students might alter the climate of their classroom by questioning the school-business partnership program she operated to fund set production for school musicals. Relating her experiences, the student wrote the following:

I had to let you know about several classroom conversations today.... I introduced my fifth graders to a new concept—critical transitivity! I shared with them my dilemma regarding the “Box Tops for Education” [General Mills initiative whereby tops from cereal boxes are collected for money] fundraiser for the coming year. We talked about the large profit margin for General Mills and the free advertising I’d provided for the past two years. I then asked them why General Mills would want to “help” schools like this. After a brief silence, one little boy said, “They want to control schools.” Another little girl corrected him and said, “they want to manipulate schools!” I almost fell over in amazement. From the mouths of babes! “We” decided, collectively, not to continue the Box Tops campaign.<sup>27</sup>

Only anecdotal evidence, and only in one classroom, the example nonetheless gives us a glimpse of the challenge. Forget for the moment that the teacher considered the change a success. One might, for example, justifiably wonder whether the teacher is accurate in her assessment that the students actually “learned” or “demonstrated” critical transitivity. They might have been led to the conclusion the teacher wanted and thus void the larger claim. Yet, there might be enough of a glimpse in what the teacher wrote to suggest that she really did demonstrate the larger point being made here. Including the students in the consideration is key, even though the set-up was

suggested (that the teacher had a dilemma regarding the “Box Tops for Education” program). Their responses, little cynics though they may appear, indicate a level of sophistication and understanding that, should schools provide the opportunity for their development, would go a long way toward developing critical consumers and more discriminating citizens.<sup>28</sup>

Getting the teacher to consider a critical stance regarding school-business partnerships was not an easy process, however. This particular teacher was not initially willing to consider that the business she courted could be seen as anything other than helpful. It took a variety of examples and corresponding analyses to move the student from intransitivity to critical transitivity. Indeed, the revelation and refutation of her pre-existing beliefs—her *elenchus*, if you will—resulted in her proclaiming, as though she just realize she had been “had” or “taken,” that she had been a “Captain Crunch pimp” for years.

To help teachers (and others) look at school-business partnerships differently, some (only some) guiding questions might include the following:

- (1) What is the primary reason for entering into the school-business partnership?
- (2) Whose interests are being served? Who benefits most? Who benefits in the long run?
- (3) How much time is given to the business part of the school-business partnership? What amount, in terms of teacher (or administrator) salary, does the time equal on an hourly basis?
- (4) What is learned as a result of the partnership? In addition to the claims associated with specific projects, what is the larger message or meaning being conveyed to students?
- (5) Are business partners willing to share financial information with teachers and students regarding their benefits from the partnership?
- (6) Can individual teachers or classes opt out of partnership programs?

These and other questions form the basis of an initial critique of school-business partnerships. The student in the example asked at least some of these and used them to guide her actions.

The point here is to illustrate how using school-business partnerships as object lessons goes toward (even if not fully achieving) critical transitivity and critical consumerism. The teacher noted, in fact, that “one small effort has been made in developing critical transitivity.” It is not a complete package to be “had” just because one program was thwarted, even though the teacher and the students came to the conclusion collectively. What other programs, inside or outside the specific school in the example, might also offer opportunities for further critique? Such a

question goes to the Deweyan point that problems solved only reveal other problems to be solved in such a way that habits of the mind are formed from educative experiences. The example is not (yet) educative in the sense that we do not know whether further learning and further educative experiences obtained. Still, Dewey would have to be pleased that students were engaged, actions were taken, and a problem was identified and (temporarily?) solved.

One caution from the suggestion, of course, is that teachers have plenty of curriculum mandates to keep them chasing objectives, goals, and testable material. Adding to the curriculum is not the intention here. Instead, the point is to take what is already a part of school life—and an increasing part of school life—and raise questions about it. The not-so-covert intention here is to reveal how school-business partnerships are pushing uncritical consumerism into what businesses no longer consider schools, but markets.<sup>29</sup> For the utilitarianism and reductionism of such a viewpoint to go unchallenged will mean giving over to businesses the markets they so eagerly crave. Businesses exist to make money, schools do not. By carefully examining school-business partnerships, such distinctions may help to reveal larger social concerns, namely, the reification of oligarchical power, i.e., corporate interests directing and controlling government. Recall Dewey in *Reconstruction in Philosophy*:

In spite of its interest in a thoroughly social aim, utilitarianism fostered a new class interest, that of the capitalistic property-owning interests, provided only property was obtained through free competition and not by governmental favor. The stress that Bentham put on security tended to consecrate the legal institution of private property provided only certain legal abuses in connection with its acquisition and transfer were abolished. *Beati possidentes*—provided possessions had been obtained in accord with the rules of the competitive game—without, that is, extraneous favors from government. Thus utilitarianism gave intellectual confirmation to all those tendencies which make “business” not a means of social service and an opportunity for personal growth in creative power but a way of accumulating the means of private enjoyments.<sup>30</sup>

Schools, as extensions of government, are being delivered to corporations as the favor to which Dewey refers. Accordingly, the “social service” and “personal growth in creative power” that schools *can* offer is consistently subjugated under commercial interests. This, again, is the second definition of “exploit”—“to make unethical use of for one’s own profit; specifically, to make profit from the labor of (others).” Combating the second definition is the first definition: “to make use of; to turn to account; utilize productively.” In terms of school-business partnerships, teachers and students should demonstrate the first definition by investigating—in critically transitive ways—the impact and effect school-business partnerships have on their classrooms, schools, and lives outside of school.

## Notes

1. David B. Guralnik, ed., *Webster's New World Dictionary* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 494.
2. Glen's Market flyer, “This Year, We Plan to Share,” 30 August 2000.
3. Carol Trout to Eve Neumeister, letter dated 27 October 1999, in author's possession.
4. “River Eves Elementary School Newsletter,” November 5, 1999, 1.
5. “2000-2001 Student Planner,” Lakeside High School, Atlanta, Georgia, 70.
6. *Ibid.*, 97.
7. *Ibid.*, 146. The irony of this advertisement is at least two-fold: (1) “post no bills” is not a term, but a phrase; and (2) the claim is self-refuting of the advertisement itself. While the calendar includes maps, the periodic chart, a grammar page, two pages for mathematical formulas, and a variety of “in case of emergency, call \_\_\_\_\_” listings of important contacts, the sheer volume of the advertisements represents commercialism run amuck.
8. Constance L. Hays, “Commercialism in U.S. Schools is Examined in New Report,” *The New York Times* (14 September 2000): C1, C25.
9. “Benefits of School Partnerships to the Business and School,” Cobb Chamber of Commerce (Education Department), p. 3. For a detailed treatment of a state-wide business initiative (Michigan) to reform schools, see John W. Sipple, “Institutional Constraints on Business Involvement in K-12 Education Policy,” *American Educational Research Journal* 36, no. 3 (Fall, 1999): 447-488. See, also, “Market Research in the Classrooms,” *Consumer Reports* (June 2000): 6.
10. To be clear, capitalism *may* be the best economic theory (“at least compared to all the rest,” as the oft-cited proviso goes), but the claim here is not to have the assumption accepted (and furthered) without investigation.
11. Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience 1607-1783* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), 545. Cremin notes three main purposes: (1) personal advancement in an expanding economy; (2) religious denominational influence; and (3) growing participation in public affairs. (1) and (3) are more closely connected than are “general education” and “specialized training for economic production” noted in the chapter. Cremin underscores the meaning behind social mobility/personal advancement by recalling Thomas Smith's observation in 1583 that “whosoever studieth the laws of the realm, who studieth in the universities, who professeth liberal sciences, and to be short, who can live idly and without manual labor, and will bear the port, charge and countenance of a gentleman, he shall be called master...and shall be taken for a gentleman.” The connection, therefore, is made between social mobility and a deeper understanding of the world. This is in contrast to the similar-sounding argument for schools to provide the necessary skills for students to compete in an advanced world market. The former, while connected to social mobility and economic life, is not narrow or limiting in the same way as the latter.
12. Harvey Kantor, “Vocationalism in American Education: The Economic and Political Context, 1880-1930,” *Work, Youth, and Schooling*, Harvey Kantor & David B. Tyack, eds., (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982), 15.
13. Linda McNeil, *Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 3.

14. See Gordon Law, "Practical Schooling of the Nineteenth Century: Prelude to the American Vocational Movement," *Preparation for Life? The Paradox of Education in the Late Twentieth Century*, ed., Joan Burstyn (Philadelphia, PA: The Falmer Press, 1986), 19-34. See also R. Collins, *The Credential Society: An Historical Sociology of Education and Stratification* (New York: Academic Press, 1979); and Michael B. Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1968).
15. See Joel Spring, *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1972), 2-21.
16. *Ibid.*, 2.
17. See, for example, Jonathan Messerli, *Horace Mann: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972); and Joel Spring, *The American School: 1642-1985* (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1986).
18. Arguments similar to Mann's predated him, but Mann is responsible for the national push evidenced in the common school movement. For arguments prior to Mann, see Benjamin Rush, "A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools and the Diffusion of Knowledge in Pennsylvania; to Which Are Added, Thoughts upon the Mode of Education, Proper in a Republic" [1786], in Frederick Rudolph, ed., *Essays on Education in the Early Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 3-23. See, also, Arthur Wirth, *Education in the Technological Society: The Vocational-Liberal Studies Controversy in the Early Twentieth Century* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980).
19. Peter McLaren uses a similar phrase, "consumer capitalist culture," to make a connection between what he calls postmodern pathologies and the constitution of the body/subject. See Peter McLaren, *Critical Pedagogy and Predatory Culture: Oppositional Politics in a Postmodern Era* (New York: Routledge, 1995). See, also, Deron Boyles, *American Education and Corporations: The Free Market Goes to School* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2000), 33ff.
20. See Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (New York: Seabury, 1973); and Ira Shor, *Empowering Education* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 127-128. The quotation marks indicate an illustrative hypothetical question, not a direct quote.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Shor, op. cit.
23. See Maxine Greene, *The Dialectic of Freedom* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988), 22ff.
24. The Center for the Analysis of Commercialism in Education (CACE) at <<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CACE/>>.
25. See Alex Molnar, *Giving Kids the Business: The Commercialization of America's Schools* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), 166-184.
26. See Pam Bettis, "Corporate Discourses in School: Adapting to the Prevailing Economic Climate," *Educational Foundations* (Winter, 2000): 23-49; Abe Feuerstein, "Selling Our Schools? Principals' Views on Schoolhouse Commercialism and School Business Interactions," paper presented to the American Educational Studies Association, November 1-5, 2000, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
27. Shelly Hall to author, e-mail dated 17 August 2000, in author's possession.
28. There are those who argue that students are able to discern quite well businesses' intentions. These researchers refute the argument that businesses have the kind of power alluded to or assumed in this paper. See, for example, Kathleen Knight-Abowitz, "Civil Society as

- a Site for Building Educational Publics: Possibilities and Limitations," *Educational Studies* 31, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 375-393.
29. See Michael Engel, *The Struggle for Control of Public Education: Market Ideology vs. Democratic Values* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2000); See, also, Richard Brosio, *A Radical Democratic Critique of Capitalist Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994) and Daniel P. Liston, *Capitalist Schools: Explanation and Ethics in Radical Studies of Schooling* (New York: Routledge, 1988).
30. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1920), 182-183.