MARKING A LIMIT OF NEOLIBERALISM: DEMOCRATIC THEORY, ADVERTISING, AND THE CLASSROOM

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
The School of Continuing Studies
and of
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Liberal Studies

By

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Washington, D.C.
November 30, 2011
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ABSTRACT

This study is a theoretical exercise in the practical use of democratic theory applied to a paradigmatic case of advertising in the public school classroom. It is practical in the sense that it addresses and frames a contemporary public policy and practice via the question, should we care about this, and if so why? Democracies have historically concerned themselves with the purpose and structure of education since their flourishing and continuation depends upon the attributes of democratic citizens. The contemporary neoliberal environment has fostered and spread the market model to shape public institutions, their functioning and purpose, and it is neoliberalism and its intersection with the democratic function of schools and classrooms that is the focus of this study. Advertising has penetrated American society deeply, up to and including advertising in the classroom during required school time. There are empirical and theoretical critiques and concerns about advertising and the young generally, and in the schools specifically, but these have not substantively affected the practice. This study will establish the historical connection between American democratic thinking and education (Chapter 1), the presence of advertising in the schools (Chapter 2), and the
empirical and theoretical critiques of advertising *vis-à-vis* the young (Chapter 3). The study will then turn to three resources within democratic theory in order to more deeply interrogate the practice (Chapter 4): Tocqueville (section 4.1), communitarianism (section 4.2), and deliberative democracy (section 4.3). The study concludes with an analysis (Chapter 5) of why this practice is of continuing concern, and may even be extended and protected under neoliberal logics.
Acknowledgements

Conventions such as thesis acknowledgement pages can be exercises in tedium for the reader, so I will try and spare at least some of that by moving quickly from the general to the specific. Boswell said that “A man will turn over half a library to make one book.” We now no longer limit that to “a man,” and we have such substantial resources available to us routinely in good libraries (let alone in research libraries) that we don’t turn half of them over. Nevertheless, what we research and think is shaped by the context in which a library situates the resources we discover, and it is as important what we decide not to include as what we do. Deciding to include something (or not) means it has to be there in the first place. The future of libraries, seemingly ever at issue, was never far from my mind—right along with their enveloping context of education. My goal is that we not distort either beyond recognition in their roles in a democracy.

I am grateful to the Liberal Studies committee that accepted my application, and for the support I received along the way here at Georgetown. This thesis had its genesis in the work of many teachers over the years. I would especially like to acknowledge Richard Brosio, Phyllis O’Callaghan, and my committee members Vincent Miller, Francis Ambrosio, and Gerald Mara. I learned a tremendous amount from them, and I could not have asked for better or more incisive guidance than I received from Gerry. He accepted and worked with my premise, and made every page better.
Finally, phrases like “could not have done this without the love and support…” do not suffice in this case. Simply put, the opportunity, the ability, and the reason to write this would not exist without Dorothy, to whom this thesis is dedicated, of course.
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Introduction

[Political philosophy] cannot, from the very nature of its interests, avoid evaluation; it is thoroughly committed not only to the analysis of, but to conclusions about the validity of, ideas of the good and the bad, the permitted and the forbidden, the harmonious and the discordant problems which any discussion of liberty or justice or authority or political morality is sooner or later bound to encounter.

How do we know what is not an adequate programme for human beings in given historical circumstances?

--Isaiah Berlin, Does political theory still exist?

Advertising in the schools is very prevalent: over 80 percent of American public school students at all levels are subjected to some overt form of advertising directed at them during the school day (Moore 2007). What form does the practice take? Broadly, there are three types: direct advertising (an ad appearing on school walls, book covers, posters, athletic scoreboards, etc.), sponsored educational materials (Exxon’s lesson plan and video on the re-flourishing of Prince William Sound, or Scholastic Inc. sending teaching units on Puerto Rico sponsored by that government to stimulate tourism), and contests, samples and incentive programs (the familiar cereal box-top programs) (Center for Commercial-Free Public Education; France 1996). The practice is expanding: school districts in Minnesota now allow the surfaces of lockers to be used as ad space, and along with Colorado, Arizona, Florida, Tennessee, and Texas, the outside of school buses (Draper 2010; Blankinship 2010). The reason it is happening is universally acknowledged: the schools need the money in a flat or shrinking budget environment (Draper 2010; Blankinship 2010; Macedo 2010; Moore 2007). Moreover, the practice is
defended by both businesses and the schools on the basis of the good that funding does, that the information updates and enriches curricular materials and equipment (like updated software), the information (now) promotes healthy behaviors, the materials are heavily filtered by the teachers, and that with these examples in front of the students the schools are probably the best place to teach media and advertising literacy (Macedo 2010; Moore 2007; Austin et al. 2006; Kane and Wynns 1999; France 1996). The arguments against the practice are straightforward: it is marketing, not philanthropy and “advertising in schools exploits a captive audience of schoolchildren; exposure to marketers’ messages should not be compulsory” (Golin in Macedo 2010). Furthermore, the schools are not even getting a good return for the privilege (Blakinship 2010; Moore 2007). Should this state of affairs bother us, and if so why?

The question is not as easy to answer as it might seem on its face. The popular argument questions the harm: after all, aren’t American children and adolescents immersed in an environment saturated with advertising already? “It doesn’t offend me, but it’s sort of stupid. They’re ugly” as a high school student put it when questioned about ads on her school’s walls and buses (Weschler 1997, 69; Hoffman 1991). Advertising is simply their environment; its occurrence in the schools represents a mere drop in the bucket. Eliminating it would have little meaningful effect. Conversely, the popular arguments that make the claim that the practice represents a positive good in the form of better services/resources for students at lower costs broadly follow the ascendant neoliberal argument that “markets co-ordinate society more efficiently and effectively than states … can ever hope to because they are dynamic and responsive” (Clarke et al.
A recent survey of American mothers found support for an array of advertising practices when it provided materials or support for the school, and opposition only in clear cases where the practice was “intrusive and inescapable” (Dolliver 2009).

Those who have critiqued advertising and consumption\(^1\) have in turn been critiqued as elitist: “the baubles of consumerism buy off discontent,” and in “dismissing them as baubles” empty of any aesthetic or political or cultural content, critics assume a “higher” moral or intellectual stance (Schudson 1999, 351-352; 1001; Kahan 2006). The broad phenomena have been defended as the sign of a healthy society or as liberating individualism. Consumer goods can be “authentic sources of both utility and meaning” (Schudson 1999, 352; Twitchell 2000; Wilson 2000; Fiske 2000; Lasch 1993, 1388). The opposite position seems to be arguing “as if it were not a good thing for ordinary men and women to possess useful and beautiful objects (as the rich and powerful have always done)” (Walzer in Schudson 1999, 353). Media, consumption, and advertising have been identified as historically intertwined both politically and economically with the very beginnings of America. Newspapers (and their advertising of goods to consume) and consumption both grew exponentially in the colonial period, hand in hand: “cheap print was public policy in America” (Starr in Zaret 2008; Wood 2004; 1994; 1991). Thus when “the revolutionaries became the first in a long line of Americans to link consumption—or its withdrawal—and politics” in the form of wearing homespun, drinking coffee instead of tea, resisting the Stamp Act, etc., newspapers and pamphlets

\(^1\) Though the focus of this thesis is advertising in the schools, it is not always possible to refer to one part of the marketing-advertising-media-consumption nexus without reference at some point to the others. The relationship among them will be spelled out at the beginning of Chapter 2.
were instrumental in spreading those political arguments (Glickman 1999, 2; Wood 2004).

And, it is argued that consumer choice is neither inferior to political choice nor apolitical itself: a vote can be entirely self-interested while boycotting grapes or driving a hybrid car can be as much political statements as voting; consumption (or the desire to consume) helped knit together formerly disparate identities enabling political action as in the 1930s American labor movement or 1980s Eastern Europe (Schudson 2007; 2006; 1999). Political marketing and advertising can be helpful to political voice, choice, and discourse: they carry with them the “capacity for enlightened responsiveness to the rise of citizen consumers” in offering “alternative ways to do political business, to deal with consumers as citizens, to value members and communicate with voters” (Scammell 2003, 134). Minimally, it is seen as a simplistic mistake of analysis to identify the workings of the market as the enemy of democracy (Crick 2007; 2002). After all, “trade was the principle of Liberty; … trade planted America and destroyed feudalism; … it makes peace and keeps peace” (Emerson in Salkever 1990, 177). Maximally, the claim is that the combination has in fact triumphed: “the content of the universal homogenous state [is] liberal democracy in the political sphere combined with easy access to VCRs and stereos in the economic” (Fukuyama 1989, 8).

Critiques of advertising face uncertainty on a more fundamental level. Like any other human endeavor, democracy lacks ultimate foundations, is historically contingent and indeterminate, and “never has been and never will be more than a shifting battleground of competing opinions” (Bernstein 1983, 15, 73, 155, 223-231; 1992b;
1987). The meaning of the term itself is nowhere close to agreed-upon: “democracy” has meant different things at different times, been realized through different institutions and by different means, with greater or lesser participatory inclusion (Crick 2002). Therefore no appeal is possible to unchanging foundations of democracy to support an argument against advertising in the classroom as harmful to it. This also obviates any clear and stable dichotomies or categories as a basis of analysis: educating citizens vs. consumers; the public interest vs. private; the political vs. the economic. The categories bleed into one another (e.g. states shape markets with legislation and markets influence state policies), so in the end no meaningful or defensible categorical distinctions can be made representing a clear need or interest of democracy (Clarke et al. 2007, 1-22).

Further, there are empirical assertions that the categories have changed, mandating different responses. That was certainly the implicit argument concerning the purposes of education in A Nation at Risk:

> History is not kind to idlers. The time is long past when American's destiny was assured simply by an abundance of natural resources and inexhaustible human enthusiasm, and by our relative isolation from the malignant problems of older civilizations. The world is indeed one global village. We live among determined, well-educated, and strongly motivated competitors. … America's position in the world may once have been reasonably secure with only a few exceptionally well-trained men and women. It is no longer. (U.S. Department of Education 1983, 5-6)

That conditions now demand that education be made much more responsive to and imitative of the economy is the argument that still holds sway as a template for educational policy analysis and reform (Hursh 2007; Bracey 2003; Apple 1987). That the expectations and category of “recipients of health care” (and public services generally)
had undergone fundamental alteration was the core justification for neoliberal market-
style reforms of that system in the UK (Clarke et al. 2007; Clarke 2004). We would seem
to be in a cul-de-sac with scant means to answer the question: should this state of affairs
(of advertising in the schools) bother us and if so why?

**Beginning to Work out of the Cul-de-Sac**

There are theoretical resources available to help begin to answer our question, and
the first step in successfully identifying and using them is to recognize some relevant
contemporary empirical realities. The first of those is the third historical expansion of
democracy with the fall of the former Soviet Union. Democratization—the process of
moving to a more democratic political regime—can be highly varied across numerous
political cultures and histories: from an authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regime or
political system to a full democracy, a semi-democracy, or a political system that
accommodates democratic influences (Dalton 1996; Whitehead 1996; Beym 1996, 526-
528). Nevertheless, Warren notes that the number of democratic governments in the
world quintupled in the one hundred years since 1900, and the majority of those “count”
as legitimate liberal democracies that respect the rule of law and basic human rights
(2002, 677). The last twenty years of about the same period saw major movement away
from authoritarianism to democracy in eighty countries, not just those in the former
Soviet bloc (Shapiro 2003, 2). Those changes challenged and spurred the development of
theory, and democratic theory has since become dominant—even hegemonic—within
political theory: “It is now virtually axiomatic that constructive theorizations about
politics must take their bearings from an acceptance of the priorities and principles of
democratic theory” (Mara 2008, 1; Dryzek, Honig and Phillips 2006; Shapiro 2003, 1-2;
Dalton 1996; Beym 1996, 526-528). At the same time, long-established democracies
face challenges that require theoretical response. The polity has shifted: structural
changes to industrialized economies mean that large tranches of the populace now find
themselves displaced in a service and finance economy; cultural diversity has challenged
established social and political patterns (gay marriage, Turkish workers in Germany,
Latin American immigrants in the US, the status and loyalty of Muslims, etc.); global
environmental changes have brought on domestic and political challenges to patterns of
energy consumption and the political arrangements that support them (Dalton 1996, 336-
337). Meanwhile:

… the broad citizenry is becoming increasingly uneasy about “the
direction the nation is heading,” about the role of big money in politics,
the credibility of the popular news media, and the reliability of voting
returns. …Increasingly one hears ordinary citizens complaining that they
“no longer recognize their country,” that preemptive war, widespread use
of torture, domestic spying, endless reports of corruption in high places,
corporate as well as governmental, mean that something is deeply wrong
in the nation’s politics. (Wolin 2008, xx)

The second empirical reality is to recognize the aforementioned dominance of
neoliberalism as an intellectual and policy force. Neoliberalism is a set of interlocking
propositions which contend that “human well-being can best be advanced by the
maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework
characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets, and
free trade” (Harvey 2007b, 22). Neoliberalism favors the market as the “one form of
rationality that is more powerful than any other” combined with the “empirical claim that this is how all rational actors behave,” the view of people as human capital who “must be given the requisite skills and dispositions to compete efficiently and effectively” (Apple 1998, 6), the “reduction of government responsibility for social needs [and] the reinforcement of intensely competitive structures of mobility” (Apple 2004, 15; Webster 2000, 71-74; Bourdieu 1998). Begun in roughly the last quarter of the twentieth century and generally acknowledged to have been greatly accelerated by Thatcherism and Reaganism, neoliberalism has a strong and fluid cultural aspect (in parallel to the global flows of capital) in which consumption is important both to the economy and the formation of contemporary self identity (Bone 2010, 730-732; Harvey 2007b; 1990; Dean 2006, 758-769; Bauman 2001; Webster 2000; Jameson 1998; 166-168; 1984).

Neoliberalism is and has been a dominating discourse (even if only as a set of background assumptions) in policy and economic discussions (Harvey 2007b; Fairclough 2006; Webster 2000; Bourdieu 1998). Within democratic states the environment of neoliberalism creates both power outside formal democratic state control (the influence of transnational capital) and forms of focused power within it (well-funded lobbying and policy influencing efforts). This tends to limit democratic individual and group influence within government and on policy, often pushing political activity outside of the realm of governing into civil society, associations, and extra-governmental or quasi-political organizations (Elkin 2006, 792-796; Warren 2006, 390-391; 2001).

These two phenomena are not discreet, and are in fact embedded in a debate over their mutual compatibility. On the one hand, economic growth under a free market
undercuts older and traditional forms of power and engenders a type of equality conducive to democracy—and capitalism is the system most conducive to growth. Thus “there is a strong empirical correlation between development and democracy” that does not itself necessarily add up to causation (Fukuyama 1992, 104, 107-108). Modern economies are simply too complex to guide politically, so democratizing societies, it is argued, must undertake neoliberal reforms: “reduce state intervention in the economy, especially by eliminating or loosening different types of regulations and restrictions …. by privatizing public enterprises, and by shrinking the public bureaucracy … [moving toward] private ownership of the means of production and decentralized coordination of economic activities” (Weyland 2004, 13-14; Fukuyama 1992, 103). The result “pluralizes power”; that is, if the state does not control all economic resources “autonomous economic activity [acts] as a bulwark against despotism” in the form of interest in and capacity for opposition (Fish and Choudhry 2007, 256-257). Neoliberal reforms equal a more thorough democratization in this argument. On the other hand, many or most of these reforms have been prescribed by or advocated for by global actors (world monetary organizations and/or global corporations). Since the sacrifice and pain falls disproportionately to a less-wealthy majority to the benefit of a capitalized and technocratic minority, neoliberal reforms are frequently imposed and democratically opposed: “policy makers who are bent on market reforms must undermine representative institutions,” thus undermining democracy, as the argument goes (Fish and Choudhry 2007, 259). Added to this are cases where democracies in Latin America have in some
cases popularly supported neoliberal reforms, and in others opposed and undermined them (Weyland 2002).

**Reasons to Question**

Wolin is helpful in framing an approach that cuts through some of the to-and-fro over neoliberalism and democratization that can characterize the arguments about the contemporary empirical circumstances. Wolin has long contended that economic reasoning ideologically dominates democratic policy discourse to the extent that it is the “theater in which the destiny and meaning of society will be worked out” and the language “into which all problems have first to be converted before they are ready for ‘decision making’” (1981b, 27-28). That discourse turns moral and political questions into economic choices and masks power (Wolin 1981b, 35). Wolin constructs a richer concept of “the political” as “moments of commonality when, through public deliberations, collective power is used to promote or protect the well-being of the collectivity” (1996a, 31). In contrast, democracy is now “managed” in the sense that the deep entanglement of corporate and governmental power cannot allow too much democratic action by citizens (Wolin 2008, 47, 136-137; Wolin 1996a, 36). We now have a circumstance whereby the fluidity of culture and capital under neoliberalism enables corporate political efficacy and undercuts forms of political change and consolidation to address the social safety net, economic regulation, the environmental crisis, war, the national debt—in short, anything requiring political action in his sense (2008, xvii-xxiv). Rather than people as political actors, it is the “contemporary
globalizing corporation [that] appears as highly adaptable, poised to adjust to changing conditions,” and the “tempo of our times … has rendered obsolete … democratic and egalitarian forces” (Wolin 2005, 9). While we must avoid economic determinism, Wolin’s points are well taken. Neoliberalism undercuts the political in his sense. It would be naïve to ignore the neoliberal economic environment in light of the massive efforts to influence policies favorable to markets and the widespread ideology that markets should be the model of public reason (Apple 1996, xi-xii; Elkin 2006).

In the face of a seeming unity, Berlin contends that political philosophy recedes, becoming mere technique and empirical observation, only in a world where ends do not collide; absent this, political questions always exist in a pluralism of values and political philosophy serves to plumb a deeper thesis concerning human good and human flourishing (1962, 8-10). Adapting Berlin’s question at the beginning of this chapter captures the issue: how do we know the current settlement of neoliberalism really is an “adequate programme”? At best, the normally-operating society “has its theory in the form of the dominant paradigm” that itself is often a flattened version of reality calling out for theoretical investigation (Wolin 1968a, 151; 1969, 1064, 1081-1082). In contemporary terms, ends still collide: America’s strong neoliberal tendencies toward economic and political “control, expansion, superiority, and supremacy” (Wolin 2008, xvii), the overweening influence of corporate power within democracies, and the altered nature of democratic political activity in the neoliberal environment are at odds with the

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2 Interestingly, Wolin distanced himself from his own choice of wording: contemporary American “inverted totalitarianism” was not meant as a literal and direct linkage to Nazi Germany, but rather was “tentative, hypothetical” (2008, xvii, xxiv). The choice here has been not to use his incendiary terminology while drawing on his most recent analysis.
rule of law, self-government, and the constitutional democracy we have run roughshod over recently (Wolin 2008, xxiv; Elkin 2006, 797-807; Warren 2002). Other contemporary unities call for questioning. In Mara’s terms it is the ascendancy of democracy and the dominance of democratic theory that requires searching inquiry to maintain its continued vitality (2008, 1-29). As will be explored in Chapter 1, in such a case education becomes even more central to questions of values, ends, and human flourishing. As a practical matter the state and its functions remain important as a locus of rights and protections even in light of its diminished capacities in the face of global economic functions (Warren 2006, 395-397). We are bland about the seeming ubiquity of democracy, the justice of its functioning, and its intersection with the economic realm at our peril. Our practices of education cannot be assumed to be a mere functional utility in a democracy: that of compulsory public education simply sitting alongside the US Government Printing Office, the Postal Service, public libraries, land-grant universities, the protections of free speech and a free press (Lievrouw and Farb 2003, 505). In the terms of this thesis, the two empirical strands can be brought together with this perspective: the “naturalness” of economic reasoning to guide educational practices calls for inquiry and questioning, if for no other reason than to re-recognize education as a state function and that education can have a democratic function separate from (even oppositional to) market methods. The case in point is advertising in the public school classroom. Part of answering the question (should this practice bother us and why?) is gaining a deeper understanding of the connections between democracy and education.
Some Distinctions, Definitions, and a Pragmatic Approach

To further this project, Wolin provides some helpful and relevant distinctions and definitions. Political philosophy has historically been the systematic “attempt to render politics compatible with the requirements of order” and the analysis of the relationships among political phenomena (Wolin 2004, 8, 12). This is in contrast to political theory where “issues are addressed because of their public importance” in an “attempt to compose a coherent network of concepts and abstractions in order to analyze what is going on in the contemporary world” (Wolin 2004, 504). This study is the pragmatic use of democratic theory. In Mara’s construction, “political theory is always articulated within pragmatic and contentious political contexts” (2008, 20-21). Theory in this case makes problematic an American educational practice and policy not as an exercise of recognizing “the regrettable prices that are paid where there are no worlds without loss,” but rather as part of an “immanent critique … continuous with pragmatic deliberations about social and political arrangements,” the advantages of which “can be partially overridden or undermined for reasons that its supporters must take seriously” (Mara 2008, 4). As such, it is focused on a practice in a political institution (the public school): a public place and structure connecting decisions over its function with the people affected over space and time (Wolin 2004, 8). A helpful contrast can be found in Gutmann’s attempt at a defensible democratic theory of education. She begins with the idea that “without a principled theory of education” we cannot choose among policy

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Mara’s approach is in parallel to Wolin’s who’s definition of political theory was outlined in the context of his exploration of Dewey’s pragmatic approach.
options for the schools since “all significant policy prescriptions presuppose a theory, a political theory” (Gutmann 1987, 4, 6). And while she eschews foundations and defending a concept of human nature, she posits that we must first develop a “normative theory of what the educational purposes of our society should be” (Gutmann 1987, 22). In a democracy (operating under a democratic political theory) “political disagreement is not something that we should avoid,” but rather enact through deliberation and debate over the purposes and ends of education, and society itself for that matter (Gutmann 1987, 5). Hence her analysis of education is conducted in light of the “principles, not the practices, of the regime” (1987, 19). This analysis does not seek to glean democratic principles and then analyze practices like Gutmann, but rather looks at an educational practice (produced by policy decisions) in light of what democratic theories reveal about the kind of democratic principles that are likely to be produced as a result. Democratic theory itself is not unitary. While the theories and theorists diverge in many important ways, some are particularly germane and useful to interrogate a common focus on advertising in the public schools in a democracy.

Outline of the Chapters

Again, should the practice of advertising in the public schools bother us, and if so, why? That question cannot have an answer. Rather, a series of responses to issues raised in a dialogic process of clarification are needed to address the matter. Is there a relationship between political theory and educational ideas? For purposes here that can be narrowed to exploring the American linkage of democracy and education. How has
advertising come into American public schools, and in what forms? American schools were never free of business influences, but there are real differences between the contemporary situation and the past. How has advertising been critiqued theoretically and empirically, and have those critiques deepened our understanding of the democratic aspects of advertising in the schools? Despite vigorous theoretical and empirical questioning, in democratic theory terms those discourses have been inadequate. What are some of the relevant resources in democratic theory to reflect on the practice and what do those resources reveal? Tocqueville, the communitarians, and the deliberative democrats provide deeper theoretical insights into the practice of advertising in American public schools. Does the question this thesis addresses have continuing relevance? The trajectory of recent Supreme Court decisions seems poised to further remove the ability to politically and democratically address the issue.

I have organized the study to address these questions. Chapter 1 will establish education as a core concern within some important sources of political theory, including democratic theory. A number of important sources of political theory have taken considerable trouble to address the role of education in their thinking. Likewise, democratic and educational ideas have been historically linked in the American context, and gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between the two will add depth to the investigation of this contemporary phenomena. The questions of the constitution of a polity and the related practical considerations of education in wholly-new American environments have occupied a subset of theorists, and they are reviewed to establish the relationship. Religion has been a wellspring of political ideas in the west. Calvinism (the
Puritans) in the early American colonies responded to the challenge of founding a society in the wilderness by practical enacting of political and educational forms and practices with deep influences that continue to this day. Jefferson’s political and educational ideas were formed within the context of the Founders who were responding to specific challenges in the American context and adapting traditions to form a new sort of republic government. He closely linked his political ideas to his system of secular public education under local control—all of which continue to be influential. Dewey responded to the challenges of democracy under industrialism, a response to the practical/scientific legacy of Jefferson. His pragmatist ideas about community, knowledge, and the development of whole democratic persons in society and the school continue to be influential as a critique of the forces militating against democratic community. Reaching beyond specific American antecedents, the ancient Greeks remain a relevant political and educational resource for some contemporary American political theorists in their reflections on the new environment of pluralism and a climate that calls into question our assumptions about achieving good lives and democratic ends in educational and political contexts. This overview will establish the longstanding and important connections between political theory and educational ideas in the American context. This initial review of democratic theory opens on to a deeper look into theoretical resources which grapple more directly with the historical and contemporary conditions producing the practice of advertising in the schools.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of advertising in American public schools and how the practice came to be. For conceptual clarity the relationship between advertising,
marketing, and media will be briefly established before examining its contemporary neoliberal political and educational context. That context has introduced the related trends of privatization, commercialization, choice and the introduction of advertising into public schools. Those relationships will be examined. Channel One’s formula of ten minutes of news, with two minutes of advertising delivered first thing in the school day (in “homeroom”) via a video feed is the paradigmatic case in point. The school guarantees that the students will both attend and watch, and receives a payment in return. The content of its advertising is clearly aimed at the adolescents in high schools. Thus Channel One represents a truly captive audience for advertising in the heart of public schooling.

Chapter 3 reviews both theoretical and empirical critiques of advertising. The theoretical critiques are highly interrelated, but there are broad types of analysis which can be related to Channel One in the schools. They are: the commodification critique (that advertising continuously transforms—commodifies—culture into economic production and consumption), the manipulation critique (that wants and desires and fears are continually manipulated to fuel consumption), and the irrationalism critique (that advertising to work must use emotions and images to appeal to a deep irrationality). Key theorists in each area are reviewed. There are also empirical critiques of advertising to children and adolescents. Overviews of research on developmental issues examine the point of a child’s understanding (or not) that advertising has different purposes than conveying stories, lessons, facts, or instructions. Content has been studied for its deleterious effects on adolescent health and behaviors under the influence of advertising,
especially ads focused on tobacco, foods, and alcohol. There is research focused on the technique of playing on social insecurity, particularly female body image, gender roles and behaviors, and consumption for social acceptance. Finally advertising encourages materialism. Channel One has in fact been critiqued along both of these broad lines (theoretical and empirical), often linking the critique to the undermining of democratic practices. There is a need to go beyond empirical worries and theoretical critiques that have been easily set aside as simply anti-business. In particular the phenomenon of advertising in the public schools has not been systematically viewed from the vantage point of democratic theory and it calls for a deeper analysis of democratic outcomes.

Chapter 4 is the heart of this thesis. Three sources of analysis and critique from democratic theory have been chosen because they examine in a more fundamental way the conditions and the consequences of the phenomena under review. The focus of analysis (both historical and contemporary) of these forms of democratic theory reveal more about the democratic results at the heart of the practice of advertising in the schools. Section 4.1 is intended to identify some relevant and key historical and cultural elements at a generative period of American democracy. Tocqueville observed and theorized American democracy during a historically important time, remaining engaged with America long after his visit. His observations on the centripetal forces of a democratic society—association, trust, and self interest rightly understood—included observations on the role of schools in a democracy in this vein of analysis. At the same time, Tocqueville was keenly aware of the centrifugal forces of a democratic society in the form of the relentless pursuit of gain and the push-pull of homogenizing equality (conformity) and
the search for distinction. Though his primary focus was to analyze a society operating under the conditions of political equality, Tocqueville had a view of political economy. If not a full-blown analysis or one of his famous predictions, Tocqueville can certainly be said to have had strong premonitions of consumer society and its consequences.

Section 4.2 reviews the communitarian critique of advertising in the schools, which casts market culture as oppositional to community. This will not be a review of the communitarian-liberalism debates, although the communitarian attack on liberal democratic theory was generative of many of these ideas. There is a wide diversity of communitarian thought useful to address the case of advertising in the schools and the task here is to identify the strong arguments against this practice in schools. Communitarian thought broadly does not avoid advocating for virtues, ends, and social goods. Their resulting attack on liberal conceptions of the self and the social results of those concepts leads to the charge that the foundation of community and its role/meaning in democracy are overlooked or undermined. Schools, community, and democracy are theorized as productively entangled. Conversely community, democracy, and capitalism are also destructively entangled in their broad formulation. This allows a practical communitarian analysis to directly address the role of schools, the social and civic dysfunctions of the market, and the weakening of social bonds. This is particularly germane to an institutional analysis of advertising in classrooms and schools as an encroachment too far.

Section 4.3 concerns the deliberative democratic critique of advertising in the public schools. Their analyses provide valuable insights into the practice. Again, the
point is not to extensively review the variations of deliberative democratic thought (e.g. proceduralism or discourse ethics) or the debate over their adequacy. There are substantive shared ideas among deliberative democratic theorists about the origins and legitimate functioning of modern democracy which provide a key to their critique, particularly those of the public sphere, deliberation, and legitimacy. The modern role of the school has been explored in the theory that democratic education helps to educate autonomous, critical, and deliberative democrats and facilitates the bases needed to realize and replicate democratic society. In turn, the problems with advertising in the schools are its non-linguistic and non-rational biases. Its presence in schools has not been deliberated under reasonable conditions. Further, advertising in the schools can be seen as a manifestation of the crisis of legitimacy: the state addressing its citizens as consumers, the active substitution of discourse for the steering media of money, and the further retreat into civil privatism. Deliberative democratic theory provides a more fundamental critique of the incursions of the market into social, political, and personal life. It also provides a pragmatic purpose for schooling—creating the conditions for a critical and deliberative citizenry—and thus its process would allow practices such as advertising in the schools to be debated.

Chapter 5 is the summary and conclusion of the thesis. The tensions and contradictions among democratic theories remain unresolved in this analysis. However, the “common enemy” approach allows for a productive use of a variety of democratic theory in critiquing a clear case of the enshrinement of advertising in the space and the curriculum of public education. The matter is in no way empirically limited to the case at
hand. In the logic inherent in a series of decisions from Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad Co. (1886) to San Antonio Independent School Dist. v. Rodriguez (1973), and more recently to Lorillard Tobacco Co. v. Reilly (2001) and Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010), the Supreme Court seems poised to severely limit in constitutional terms citizen and legislative ability to restrict corporate and market speech and influence in public schools and in the democratic process. Moral critiques of this instantiation of neoliberal ideas have not been enough. The resources of a variety of democratic theories are useful in that they make clear not merely the category conflicts between public and private interests, curriculum and advertising, social bonds and self-interested cooperation, discoursing debate and manipulation, but they reveal the underlying nature of the democratic polity being shaped by such practices.
Chapter 1

Education as a Core Concern of Political Theory

Education has played a significant role within the history of political theorizing from the ancient Greeks forward: “All would agree that the legislator should make the education of the young his chief and foremost concern. In the first place, the constitution of a state will suffer if education is neglected. The citizens of a state should always be educated to suit the constitution⁠¹ of their state” (Aristotle 1962, 332). Or, to put the matter from the educational point of view as Gutmann did, an educational policy presumes a political theory (1987, 6). We may then ask what purposes are served by this educational arrangement? That question quickly brings forward fundamental ones concerning what an education is for, what it means, what defines a good life, and what social and political conditions are conducive to human flourishing. Philosophers have long thought about education, but political theorists have realized that education is among the most basic issues when dealing with the production of suitable citizens (Callan 2004, 71; Enslin and White 2003). Thus a subset of thinkers thought of as primarily or significantly political theorists have devoted good portions of their work to the subject of education: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx, and Mill are examples (Palmer, Bresler, and Cooper 2001; Rorty 1998a; Hallowell and Porter 1997; Mara 1988; Brown 1970). Put most bluntly, education was one of the foci of political

¹ The translator and editor of this edition, Ernest Barker, hastens to add in a footnote to this quotation that we need always remember that by “constitution,” Aristotle meant not only “an arrangement of offices,” but a “way of life” as well.
theory because “systematic instruction of the young was political and social power of the first magnitude” (Wolin 1981a, 40).

Educational issues and questions become more acute when we consider the tide of democratization in the post-Soviet era and that democratic theory has come to be the form of political theory during this era as noted. If, as Warren argues, public schools are a form of association, and associational life deepens the “capacities and dispositions of democratic citizenship” (2001, 2-8, 153), then what do we expect this particular form of association to do? Is education in and for a democracy necessarily to cultivate civic virtues, critical autonomy, cosmopolitanism, patriotism, or the skills to pursue rational self-interest? (Galston 2010; Callan 2004; Mara 1998; Gutmann 1987; Mara 1985)

Those are only some of the more specific questions that come out of the relationship between this particular form of political theory and education. Since this thesis concerns public education in the context of American democracy, four examples have been chosen because they form a kind of back-and-forth narrative about American democracy and American education. All grapple with the related questions of the constitution of a polity and the practical considerations of education in wholly-new American environments.

Presented chronologically, we begin with the early Puritans who, more formally and self-consciously than other American colonial outposts, struggled with the practical concerns of both governing in the wilderness and the consequences of the educational premium put on literacy. The (eventual) results in the civic culture of the New England town hall and the emphasis on literacy and a common, public school were highly influential—both politically and educationally. The founding era represents an even
clearer point of the shaping of politics and education. The Constitution set up a rather
abstract and remote form of countervailing powers and republican governing. Education
for the Founders was the practical solution to solve the tension between the principle of
the legitimacy of government resting on the consent of the people and a political system
designed to temper unruly democratic majorities, but still in need of some version of the
classical republican virtues to operate effectively (Pangle and Pangle 2000, 32-33; Wolin
1993). Education was both civic and a practical tool to enable prosperity—itself vitally
linked in their thought to republican virtues. For Jefferson—who participated fully in this
dialog—the issue was intimately linked to secular and local control. His proposed ward
republics were very similar to New England’s civic culture. Dewey represents another
reflection on education and democracy at a key point: the changes wrought by
industrialization. He was heavily influenced by both Jefferson and his New England
background in his thinking about democracy and community—both intimately tied to his
educational theories. Dewey essentially dealt with the same issues of the American
polity and the necessary education for democracy, but in the wholly-new environment of
industrial capitalism. Though he draws from Jefferson, Dewey can be read as responding
to his more practical and scientific educational ideas which had become overweening.
Lastly, a contemporary American group of political thinkers look back beyond specific
American resources and mine ancient Greek political and educational thought to reflect
on contemporary democratic practices, conditions, and problems. They read “the
Greeks” differently (and different Greeks) than the Founders did (who responded to the
“turbulence” of Greek democracy). They are dealing with a new American environment
of tension over pluralism, utility and the ends of education, and the necessary attributes for both people and contemporary democracy to flourish. These four examples represent dialogic and pragmatic theoretical responses concerning how we use the social tool of education in facing the challenges of democracy, thus establishing the relationship between the two.

**Religion as a Wellspring: Calvinism and early American Political and Educational Culture**

The historical centrality of religion in the Common Era west meant that theological ideas became sources for or wellsprings of political ideas. For Wolin “the historical contribution of western religions to the political education of ordinary and poor people is almost impossible to exaggerate” (1996a, 37). In other words, theology had political content and in turn theologians also formed educational ideas. For example, Protestant reformers were well aware that “theirs was a political as well as a spiritual contest”—Papal authority *was* political authority (Ozment 1991, 22). In Luther’s “two kingdoms,” temporal authority was separate but vulnerable, in need of repressive power (1996). So when he preached on the priesthood of all believers, he spurred on nascent peasant revolts, and as a result became extremely concerned about lawlessness, asserting broad rights to kill rebellious peasants (Wolin 2004, 161, 128-149; Ozment 1991, 21-22, 127-134; Wolin 1956, 35-36). Luther’s emphasis on an inward salvation led to educational ideas: that children must learn to read since scripture is the only source of

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2 This is a point O’Malley (2004) implicitly makes throughout his volume.
authority on religion and morality; thus schools must be set up and education of children compelled (Rorty 1998b, 5-6). Calvin was the reformer who recovered the role of institutions in religion and the political in society, and “the ends of the political order took on a loftier dignity” (Wolin 1957, 443). The political and ecclesial worked together (Calvin 1996). Civil government was to promote and police “civic conscience” and the “spiritual polity” was to be preserved under religious jurisdiction (Calvin in Wolin 1957, 434-435, 443; 2004, 146, 149-151; 1956, 432). Thus the Consistory in Calvin’s Geneva enforced Reformed morality, religious instruction, and the primacy of reading the Bible in a manner very governmental in its operation (Watt 2002). We also find tensions arising from the theology of individual conscience, the literacy to read scripture, and maintaining doctrinal control in such a potentially free-wheeling environment (Wolin 2004, 154-155; 1957, 434-435, 440; Watt 2002).

There were similar political and educational results flowing from Calvinism a hundred or more years later in the early American context. Though he is writing about the English Puritans, Walzer’s characterization is germane in the American case as well: theirs was an “intense response to the experience of social change”—one where human flourishing was cast as “collective control … transforming all society and all men in the image of their own salvation” (1966, 64). The Puritans self-consciously struggled with the practical concerns of establishing a society on the edge of a wilderness, and they enacted political and educational ideas in that effort. Early English Puritans were closely affiliated with Calvin and Calvinism, and New England Puritans were broadly Calvinist in the 17th century American context (Conforti 2006; 36-37; Baltzell 1979, 65; Walzer
Early New England Puritans faced the same pattern of tensions as Calvin’s Consistory did: they policed and enforced orthodoxy in the cases of Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams whose interpretations of scripture and religious practices took their religious and intellectual freedoms too far in the new environment (Conforti 2006, 90-97; Nash 1974, 72-76). There is an enormous variety of historical interpretation concerning the Puritans. It is thus not possible to speak of one Puritanism given variation in different places and over the considerable time before the Revolution (Couvares et al. 2009; Miller and Johnson 2009; Hall 2009; Grob and Billias 1987; Hall 1987). However, a focus on Massachusetts in the very early period reveals nascent American political and educational patterns. The argument goes that, despite European similarities and the difficulty of establishing cultural causes, early Puritanism is one key in understanding clearly different American historical outcomes (Miller and Johnson 2009, 41).

The Puritans in many ways simply enacted contemporary political and religious ideas. Initially, there was an early continuity with English preindustrial social patterns: “New Englanders once lived closer than we have imagined to the credulous word-of-mouth world of the peasant, closer to its absorbing localism, closer to its dependency on tradition” (Lockridge 1974, 15; Miller and Johnson 2009; Cremin 1970, 232-236; Miller and Johnson 1950). Despite this context, contained within the heavy-handed Puritan orthodoxy reaching back to the Old Testament was a “profoundly modern content” (Hall 1975, 182): just and equal laws and a variation of the Hobbesean covenant to self-
constitute a society and a polity (Wolin 2004, 215, 222; Conforti 2006, 54-55).

Tocqueville noted that Puritanism “was almost as much a political theory as a religious doctrine,” and he cited the Mayflower Compact as key evidence of the deep intertwining of the theological and the political, driven by a religious sense of mission (1990a, 34-35, I.2; Couvares et al. 2009, 4; Baltzell 1979).\(^4\) They did “covenant and combine” themselves “together into a civil Body Politick,” pledges to enact “just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions, and Offices” necessary for the “Ends aforesaid”—which were a blend of religious and nationalist advances (Mayflower Compact in Commager 1963, 15-16). As a result, “New England outpaced other English colonies in forging a regional identity. Most important for the region’s civic life, the covenant compelled the establishment of strong colony-wide and local governments” (Conforti 2006, 54-55). Within this framework Tocqueville saw the beginnings of secular American democratic practices: trial by jury, participation in public affairs, voting on taxation, holding public agents accountable, and personal liberty “were all positively established without discussion” (1990a, 39, I.2). This happened mostly as a

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\(^{3}\) There are now so many editions and translations of Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* that the citations to this work will follow dual conventions in Turabian: the modern publication year and page number of the edition used will be given, followed by the citation to the volume and chapter (in the case of Volume I, e.g. I.5 is volume one, chapter five), and volume, book and chapter (in the case of Volume II, e.g. II.3.V is volume two, book three, chapter five) for precision in the case of the modern edition, and for portability across editions in the second instance. This will become prominent in section 4.1 of Chapter 4, but the same reasoning will be used in citing Jefferson’s letters later in this Chapter, as well as Tocqueville’s letters later in Chapter 4.

\(^{4}\) Other examples from the time abound. John Winthrop famously linked the Puritans to the Israelites, invoked their Covenant, and then declared that they were “as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us”; failure meant bearing the burdens of God’s wrath, causing “prayers to be turned into Curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land” (1993, 15).
series of practical working conflations of the values of the covenant and their commercial charter (Conforti 2006, 54-57).

From this enacting of religious and political ideas came educational ideas, themselves enacted politically. Like Protestantism in general and Calvinism in particular, the Puritans placed great emphasis on reading the Bible which became a broader American emphasis on literacy “uncontested during the first 2 centuries of American development” (Moran and Vinovskis 1985, 30-35; Lockridge 1974; Kaestle 1985, 27-32; Resnick and Resnick 1977, 372-374). In order to accomplish this there was an early emphasis on setting up schools. The Massachusetts School Law of 1642 was the first American law on education and was specifically concerned with both encouraging the training of “children in learning & labor” and “especially of their ability to read & understand the principles of religion & capital laws of this country” (Commager 1963, 28-29). Updated in 1647, the law set up a public system: a school for every 50 households so that “learning might not be buried in the grave of our fathers in Church and commonwealth,” and thus “keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures” in order to counter the “old deluder Satan” (Commager 1963, 29). Legislating a blend of the religious and the social/practical in education set a pattern followed in the other New England colonies in the 17th century (Button and Provenzo 1989, 22-23; Tocqueville 1990a, 41, I.2). Though the connections between education and literacy, literacy and economic development, or even literacy and democracy are controversial (Gee 1989; Kaestle 1985, Buschman 2009), it is well established that by the end of the 17th century New England had developed a far higher literacy rate than in England or any other region in North America.
(Lockridge 1974; Lepore 2002; Cremin 1973). Politically and practically there was a feedback loop. John Adams saw this period and the role literacy played as generative of enlightenment and political liberty (Warner 1993, 9-13). For Tocqueville, the famous American habit of association was conducted in part through literacy and education, with New Englanders establishing numerous institutions—from print shops to schools all the way up to the collegiate level very early on, and well in advance of the rest of the country (1990a, 191, I.12; Conforti 2006, 45; Cremin 1973, 6). For instance, establishing Harvard was an act of associational cooperation up and down the social ladder (Cremin 1970, 211-212; Miller and Johnson 1950, 13), and at the same time, “no group had a livelier appreciation of the political stakes in education than the Puritans” (Wolin 1981a, 39). Early democratic and educational forms were immediately entangled in the case of the patterns established by the New England Puritans.

Jefferson as a Political Thinker and His Role for Education

The American founding represents a clear point of conscious shaping of politics and education, and Jefferson was a prime force in it, but a very different one from the religious sources of government and education found in the Puritans. The Founders—Jefferson among them—were responding to and adapting three differing traditions in the west within a wholly-new American context: the Biblical/theocratic, classical republican and liberalism married to rationalism (Pangle 1990, 148). They were both rebelling against monarchy/aristocracy (and its religious bases) and keenly aware of the downfall of republics throughout history, attempting to overcome “a widespread skepticism about
the very possibility of a large-scale republic” and adapt those principles to the American context (Pangle 1986, 13; Pangle and Pangle 2000, 22). A longer interlocking list of the principles that underlie the American Constitution (Pangle and Pangle 2000, 33) can be boiled down to the simple formulation of a “continuing dedication to popular self-government—seen partly as a means to securing rights, but partly as an additional end, as an essential additional manifestation of human dignity” (Pangle 1990, 171). Core to this are two interlocking principles, the nature of each hotly debated: a complimentarity between practical success (holding property) and virtue. This is not the classical form of virtue, but rather a variation “enabling vigilant judgment of the few representatives who are to participate in rule. What is required in the mass of the people is an appreciative understanding of how the system works and an attentive, selective, and critical partisanship” (Pangle and Pangle 2000, 26-27, 24-28). There was broad agreement among the Founders that education had a dual function: teach the practical skills necessary for self-sufficiency and to “make lively the significance of these most basic principles of political philosophy”—that is tyranny, despotism as well as the virtues of self-discipline and seeing after one’s economic and familial interests (Pangle and Pangle 2000, 24-33). Education was to bridge the gap between the populace and governing, explaining the rather abstract and remote form of countervailing powers in their new American system. Thomas Jefferson was a full participant in, and variation on, this broad theme as he struggled with issues common among a number of the Founders.

Jefferson considered himself among the Enlightenment “fraternity” pushing progress in areas from science to politics to education (Sweet 2009; Stalof 2009; Pangle
and Pangle 1993, 4-6). His principles\(^5\) have been publicly debated for well over two hundred years and a recitation of his many famous contradictions is unnecessary for purposes here (Wills 2000; Wood 1993). Scholars reinterpret Jefferson continually, contradicting one another as well. So it is unsurprising that assessments of his status as a political thinker would mirror this long running pattern: Jefferson was a systematic political thinker who drew on and adapted a wide variety of sources (Sheldon 1991); conversely, unlike John Adams he was offhand about the sources of his political thought and careless in his reading of them because he considered them historically outmoded (Siemers 2009, 46-73).\(^6\) Jefferson was a profoundly radical political egalitarian (Matthews 2004), or perhaps an increasingly conservative Southerner, skeptical of the wisdom of the common man believing their political influence and outlook needed to be shaped and leavened with a natural aristocracy (Staloff 2009). Individual scholars reverse themselves. Wills argued that Jefferson was precise in his use of language if we trace the theoretical work he drew upon (1973, 77). Later, he would declare that Jefferson “was not a rigorous thinker,” but rather a “rhetorician” who would sacrifice accuracy to “symmetry and elegance,” in arriving at his tidy conclusions (Wills 2000). Nevertheless there is some historical consensus on Jefferson’s enduring importance (even if only as a political symbol and/or cipher) and on his role in American public education.

\(^5\) This is meant in contrast to his practices such as owning slaves or his relationship with Sally Hemmings.

\(^6\) Perhaps in concert with this assessment, the anthologies on sources of political theory by Cohen and Fermon (1996), Losco and Williams (1992), and McCullough (1989) do not include Jefferson. At the same time, Jefferson’s ideas do fall well within the broad outline of classical liberalism that Conway (1995, 6-24) and McCullough (1989) describe.
Though not systematically spelled out, his ideas cohere despite the fact that he often wrote polemically or speculatively.

Jefferson’s understanding of human nature differed somewhat from the classic liberals in placing less emphasis on the isolation of and antagonism among individuals: people conclude “too hastily, that nature has formed man unsusceptible of any other government than that of force” (Jefferson\textsuperscript{7} 30 January, 1787; Jefferson 1782, 210-211; Jefferson 1805; Matthews 2004, 39). People\textsuperscript{8} in his view are largely shaped by their environment, innately social and endowed with a sense of justice (the moral faculty): “If the morality of one man produces a just line of conduct in him, acting individually, why should not the morality of one hundred men produce a just line of conduct in them, acting together?” (Jefferson in Matthews 2004, 42). It is that inherent and common moral sense that makes all men equal, and further, people and societies can develop and progress under the right conditions of political liberty “wherein the will of every one has a just influence” (Jefferson 30 January, 1787; Matthews 2004, 39-46; Sheldon 1991, 141-147; Morgan 1978). Like Locke (1996), occupancy and improvement give title right to property for Jefferson: those who freely emigrated to America established new societies and laws entirely at the risk and “expense of individuals, and not of the British public”

\textsuperscript{7} For the reasons previously stated in note 3, the convention used here will be to cite Jefferson’s letters by specific date, and his publications by their original date and then the pagination within the scholarly compilations of his works that have been used. This again will allow precision in the case of the modern edition, and portability across the numerous editions of Jefferson’s writings that have been published over the years.

\textsuperscript{8} That is to say, “people” in this instance means society in large numbers. This is in contrast to the example of American Indians in their so-called state of nature in small numbers: “It will be said, the great societies cannot exist without government. The savages, therefore, break them into small ones” (Jefferson 1782, 221)
(Jefferson 1774, 294); therefore they alone had the rights to the land and its political control (Helo 2009, 36-39; Matthews 2004, 46-48). A related key idea was the political benefit of an agrarian political economy: cities were the breeding ground of dependent hirelings in contrast to self-sufficient farmers who necessarily make their own decisions, thus preparing the active citizens needed in a democracy (Jefferson 1782, 280; Siemers 2009, 62; Sheldon 1991, 146-147). Jefferson’s most incendiary rhetoric centered on the principle that the new American government should not become ossified or tyrannical: “Get rid of the magic supposed to be in the word constitution” (Jefferson 1782, 241), and more famously (or infamously) that the “tree of liberty” needed to be “refreshed” with the “blood of patriots and tyrants” now and then (Jefferson 13 November 1787, 436; Helo 2009, 36-37; Matthews 2004, 48). The ultimate point was that the past should not dictate the political forms of the present or future (Matthews 2004, 50-57; Arendt 1965, 232-235).

In contrast to some of the Founders (and the British tradition from which most came), Jefferson was ever intent on expanding the vote and democracy. When only one in ten (white) men had the right to vote, he felt the situation was inadequate and even illegitimate. If property was the disqualification, then give men property—hence his strong support for westward expansion thereby fostering the virtues of agrarianism at the same time (Helo 2009, 41-42; Matthews 2004, 53-55; Pangle 1988, 101-103). His ward republics were self-governing units of roughly fifty to a hundred families (Jefferson 26 May 1810; 1782, 262-263). They were meant to devolve as much of political life to the local as possible well beyond mere voting in elections: give a man a taste of political
participation and responsibility and “he will let the heart be torn out of his body soon than his power be wrested from him by a Caesar or a Bonaparte” (Jefferson in Matthews 2004, 55; Morse 1999; Sheldon 1991, 142; Arendt 1965, 236). The wards were also clearly modeled on the culture of New England townships (Pangle and Pangle 1993, 118).

Finally, government was to be firmly secular—a principle he hewed to more closely than most Founders. Jefferson stated this from the very beginning with his condemnation of “dominion over the faith of others” in his statute on religious freedom (1779a, 311-312). While President he declared that the Establishment Clause built “a wall of separation between Church and State” (1 January 1802, 332), he reinforced the point in his Second Inaugural Address (1805), and he maintained this secular stance up to his very last letter (24 June 1826, 729). Thus the political utterly lacked metaphysical backing for Jefferson: “utility to man [is] the standard” (13 June 1814, 639). Politics must be practical, “all theory must yield to experience” (Jefferson in Siemers 2009, 49). The result, depending on interpretation, either meant either a flexible approach to theoretical commitments (Siemers 2009, 63, 67), or cynicism: Jefferson “quickly adduced the laws of nature as underwriting American’s desire to have a port in Spanish New Orleans” (Wills 1973, 70).

Though he was not necessarily original in it, education was a lifelong political project for Jefferson. The notion that education in the new country was to have democratic and republican purposes was simply a part of the times and others addressed similar questions and proposed structures at roughly the same time (Hellenbrand 1990, 11-12; Button and Provenzo 1989, 46-47, 70-73; Pangle 1988, 76-77; Spring 1986, 33-
Late in his life he wrote a matter-of-fact recap of his educational proposals:

... a systematical plan of general education should be proposed, and I was requested to undertake it. I accordingly prepared three bills ... proposing three distinct grades of education, reaching all classes. 1st. Elementary schools, for all children generally, rich and poor. 2d. Colleges for a middle degree of instruction, calculated for the common purposes of life, and such as would be desirable for all who were in easy circumstances. And, 3d, an ultimate grade for teaching the sciences generally, and in their highest degree. (Jefferson 1821, 49-50)

He links lower levels of schooling to the wards so that primary and secondary schools are within a reasonable proximity both for attendance and local (democratic and republican) control—teaching the skills and values of republican democracy within the community in the process (Jefferson 1779b; Jefferson 2 February 1816, 660-662; Jefferson 1821, 50; Barber 1999). These schools were as a matter of course to be public, set up “at the common expense” (1817, 233). Again and again Jefferson made this same basic proposal (with variations): most famously in the bill for the “More General Diffusion of Knowledge” (1779b, 88-93), but also in 1782 (262-271), 1814 (7 September, 642-649), in the early stages of the push for the University of Virginia in 1816 (2 February, 642-649), and a last proposal to the Virginia legislature through a colleague in 1817 (233-243). After all of these failed, Jefferson still made a public argument for a system of public education in the 1818 report to the Virginia legislature on the new university (249-250).

Jefferson’s consistently held that education should be practical as well as public, democratic, and republican. While education “will enable [the people] to know ambition
under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views” (Jefferson 1782, 265), at the same time the object of a primary education would be quite practical too:

To give to every citizen the information he needs for the transaction of his own business; To enable him to calculate for himself, and to express and preserve his ideas, his contracts and accounts, in writing; To improve, by reading, his morals and faculties; To understand his duties to his neighbors and country, and to discharge with competence the functions confided to him by either; To know his rights; to exercise with order and justice those he retains; to choose with discretion the fiduciary of those he delegates; and to notice their conduct with diligence, with candor, and judgment; And, in general, to observe with intelligence and faithfulness all the social relations under which he shall be placed. (Jefferson 1818, 249-250)

Similarly, there should be a free press (newspapers) in order that every man should get information on the operation of his government, but he should also “be capable of reading them” (Jefferson 16 January 1787, 411-412). Famously, Jefferson divided the citizenry into two classes: “the laboring and the learned. The laboring will need the first grade of education to qualify them for their pursuits and duties; the learned will need it as a foundation for further acquirements” (7 September 1814). The highest levels of education were to be equally pragmatic and political: “to form the statesmen legislators and judges on whom public prosperity and individual happiness are so much to depend” as well as to “promote the interests of agriculture, manufactures and commerce” (Jefferson 1818, 250). The professions must earn their living; the wealthy will usefully engage public life; all should study language, mathematics/sciences and philosophy, the professions further studying their specialties—law, civil architecture, economy, medicine, etc. (Jefferson 7 September 1814). There is in Jefferson both hierarchy and technicity to education the farther one goes in his system.
Above all, education was to be secular at all levels. This was a strong response to the Biblical/theocratic influences in education, embodied by the Puritans. Jefferson’s notes on the polygraph copy of a letter on the matter state that “No religious reading, instruction or exercise, shall be prescribed or practiced” in the elementary schools (9 September, 1817). The core of his argument was that democratic practices could flourish only under widespread conditions of reason, fact, and informed (i.e. non-religious) opinion (Jefferson 1782, 262-266; 24 June, 1826). His ideas were not without controversy and haunted the founding and early years of the University of Virginia, most famously in the form of the absence of religion or theology in the curriculum (Addis 2003, 59-67; Staloff 2009, 134; Honeywell 1969). His purpose was in fact to eliminate ministers as a source of education in the interests of a robust republicanism (Staloff 2009, 133). His ringing phrases on education are still justly famous: the talented “should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens, and that they should be called to that charge without regard to wealth, birth or other accidental condition or circumstance” (Jefferson 1779b, 88); “Educate and inform the whole mass of the people. Enable them to see that it is their interest to preserve peace and order, and they will preserve them. And it requires no very high degree of education to convince them of this. They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty” (Jefferson 20 December, 1787).

This being Jefferson, he was not without his contradictions or expediencies concerning education. For instance, on what has come down as the key state and local power reserved to the states (a principle he championed late in life), he entertained a
national role in education at the primary and secondary levels, and proposed a national university (Wagoner 2004, 53-70). However, he was among the first to propose an American, secular, and integrated public system of education from primary schools to the university, down to the level of proposing a library system (and a way to organize those libraries) integral to it (Jefferson 1779b; Jefferson 1779c; Jefferson 19 May 1809, 597; Jefferson 1814, 211-214; Honeywell 1969; McLaughlin 1991, 86-88). He did so within a framework of political thinking and reforms that were meant to work together. Jefferson’s political and educational thinking were both deeply enmeshed in the project of the Founders: the correct conditions for and the establishment of a polity in a large republic, and then how to educate them to maintain those conditions. His proposals did not immediately bear fruit, but his ideas were fertile enough and his contradictions fundamental enough that both remained at the center of the process of the formation American public education system.

John Dewey: Modern Democracy and Education

Dewey was heavily influenced by both Jefferson and his New England background in the value he placed on local community, participatory democracy, and education in response to the wholly-new environment of industrial capitalism (Pangle and Pangle 2000, 27; Brosio 1972, 56-60; Jefferson and Dewey 1940). Though he cites Jefferson as a productive influence, Dewey can be read as responding to the dominance of his more practical and scientific educational ideas. Dewey is perhaps the best example of the central entanglement of democratic theory and ideas about education in the
American context. He, perhaps more than any thinker, came closest to reversing the order. Education was a principle lifelong project of his, and in fact philosophy as he reconstructed it was a “general theory of education” if by philosophy we mean shaping “dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men” (Dewey 1916, 383). Dewey’s democratic theory was thus not restricted to a “properly political domain” (Asen 2003, 174) and he intellectually reestablished the significant relationship between education and democracy (Englund 2000, 305). Given his enormous output (his collected works consist of thirty seven volumes), his seven decades of activity, and his engagement with the public on issues of the day in the popular press, a fully nuanced review of his democratic and educational theories is not possible here (Wolin 2004, 503). But, like Jefferson, he begins with a series of fundamental assumptions about human nature and learning, and since so many of his ideas about democracy and educational flow from those, their interconnections are worth reviewing, even if somewhat arbitrarily divided out here.

Dewey generally shared the pragmatist hostility to metaphysics: “absolute truth exacts absolute obedience” (Dewey 1970, 51-52), and thus we would be unable to change things in the world even if the chimera of Truth were somehow discovered (Bernstein 1992b; 1987). Nature is not a unity; we exist in a benignly indifferent universe and it is purposeful human action which brings any order, sense, and continuity to the world (Dewey 1897, 10; Bernstein 1987). Philosophy had heretofore “served ideas forced into experience, not gathered from it” in a fruitless quest for certainty (Dewey 1960b, 28). Experience was a concept of Dewey’s that encompassed the social and individual
processes of thinking about problems or uncertainties, formulating ideas and responses, performing those ideas, reflecting on the results, and building up the civilizational stock of contingent solutions—the social application of the scientific method (Dewey 1916, 2-3, 396-397; Wingo 1974, 186-187). The effect is that practice is the equal of theory for Dewey (Wolin 2004, 505). Within that formulation, humans are inherently social: “society is an organic union of individuals” (Dewey 1897, 6). The individual is realized through social cooperation and community, and community is realized through the nurturing and growth of individuals (Dewey 1916, 4-7; Putnam 1996; Brosio 1972, 56-91). Growth and development in both society/community and the individual “is the characteristic of life” (Dewey 1916, 62) and requires reason/intelligence: a process of interacting with the world, solving problems and reducing uncertainty in that contingent world through experience producing an organic whole (Dewey 1916, 62; Dewey 1897; Dewey 1960b, 28-29; Putnam 1996). Dewey was thus philosophically dead set against divisions and dualisms of all stripes (Wingo 1974, 182-183, 199). While nature may not be a unity, his concept of experience was: we experience “not a combination of mind and world, subject and object, method and subject matter, but [rather] a single continuous interaction of a great diversity” (Dewey 1916, 196-197). For Dewey the job of philosophy was restoring the severed connections between the values held by people and the ends and means of society (1960a, 202).

From this stock of approaches, concepts of human nature, experience, and learning flow important observations on democracy. Dewey’s most famous statement on democracy is his most eloquent: “democracy is more than a form of government; it is
primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (1916, 101). At a stroke, he associated democracy with his concept of experience, community, and a communicative, participatory concept of democracy. His political thought was largely critical in nature, concerned with the problems of realizing modern democracy in the face of modern divisions and forms of power (Wolin 2004, 505-506; Asen 2003; Englund 2000; Putnam 1996; Bernstein 1987; Brosio 1972; Somjee 1968, 175). Dewey worked long and hard to integrate his thinking, so any pulling-apart of discreet concepts renders his thinking somewhat schematically. Three interrelated concepts central to his concept of democracy can be identified without doing too much violence to them and their interrelatedness in his thinking.

The first is Dewey’s severe critique of liberalism and the resulting atomized self. He gives due deference to the historical development (in commerce, then in freedom of mind) of classic liberalism’s laissez faire individualism. However, Dewey views liberalism’s inhering negative rights as mythical and philosophically outmoded: the individual and his rights are “nothing fixed, given ready-made” and/or “already there” (1935, 227; Dewey 1960c, 268-269; Festenstein 2005; 1997, 64-66). The result hinders, not enhances, individual freedom and self-realization. “If a man acts … upon his private judgment about the aims and measures of conduct, he is just as much a subjected part of an infinitely complex whole … [and] what he actually does is conditioned by equally blind and partial action of other[s]…. Slavery, weakness, dependence, is the outcome, not freedom, power, and independence” (Dewey 1960c, 272-273). True to his grounding concepts, Dewey attacks the resulting dualism between community and the atomized
individual. Man is inherently social: it is *cooperation* in society and in law, not the mythical absence of restraints and cooperation or the false separation of individual and collective (governmental) action in liberalism that are the foundations of freedom. That freedom is a social attainment, “not an original possession” (Dewey 1960c, 270-275; Dewey 1935, 230; Bernstein 1987, 519-521). Individualism is best “realized through the proliferation of shared interests … and a collective deployment of a critical intelligence that could only succeed through cooperative endeavor”—that is, democracy (Callan and White 2003, 104).

The second of Dewey’s cornerstones is his critique of capitalism. Put simply, classical liberalism’s wedding of political and economic freedoms emancipated a certain class with attendant interests, and “imposed new burdens and subjected to new modes of oppression the mass of individuals who did not have a privileged economic status” (Dewey 1960c, 270-271). The modern result has been a “scandal of private appropriation of socially produced values” (Dewey in Brosio 1972, 74) and an ethos of “take who take can: a deification of power” (Dewey in Bernstein 1987, 513). The specific burdens imposed by industrial life include the separation of thought from action, intelligence from work, ends from means, and making workers means of their employers’ ends—all severely damaging dualisms that hindered the social and intellectual conditions needed for intelligent cooperation in a democracy (Dewey 1916, 304; Dewey 1960a, 221-222; Brosio 1972, 72-75). “Chaotic” industrial life left workers a brutalized “fodder” (Dewey in Brosio 1972, 64, 77) under external control; it satisfied wants, but those wants represented “only prerequisites of a good life, not intrinsic elements of it” (Dewey 1960a, 221-222; Brosio 1972, 72-75).
It was nonsense to valorize the liberty of the businessman and at the same time “ignore the immense regimentation to which workers are subjected” (Dewey 1935, 230). The goal was “to transmute a society built on an industry which is not yet humanized” and to “subdue the industrial machinery to human ends until the nation is endowed with soul” (Dewey 1980, 197-198). Despite such language, Dewey was no Marxist. Conflict (class or otherwise) and violence stood in direct contrast to his philosophical valorization of cooperation and democracy. For him, democracy was the “comprehensive social interest,” and it was in that interest that he advocated industrial democracy as a more rational form of control and planning of social ends under capitalism (Dewey in Wolin 2004, 718N53, 508-510).

The divisions and dualisms of industrial capitalism fostered such a welter of indirect consequences and impersonal, contingent social connections across time and space that it undermined an essential democratic resource for Dewey: community is the third concept (Wolin 2004, 513; Wingo 1974, 189). For all his talk of “organic” connections, Dewey did not advocate a medieval notion of community. Rather, removing the dualisms noted above that he so opposed—particularly thought and action, ends and means—should produce an organic whole of experience (Brosio 1972, 65). In its ideal form democracy “is the idea of community life itself” (Dewey 1998a, 295). Community/democracy “is a way of life controlled by a working faith in the possibilities of human nature” relying on consultation, persuasion, discussion, and public opinion to “respond with commonsense to the free play of facts and ideas” in an environment of free assembly, inquiry and communication in an atmosphere of shared experience and shared
intelligence (Dewey 1998b, 341-342). Again, for Dewey individualism and community are integrally related (1998a, 294-295, 297; Bernstein 1987, 511-513). Community is both generative of and integral to a democratic social order. This is about as close as Dewey came to defining democracy *per se*. He often opposed valorizing ideas of the state and legislative or governmental processes and continued to focus on the conditions of essential democratic processes of cooperation, fusing ends and means, and collective reflection on experience to direct social life and produce whole individuals (Dewey 1998c, 71-78; Wolin 2004, 503-518).

These three key concepts in no way exhaust Dewey’s integrated thinking about democracy: hinted at above is the importance he placed on a broad definition of science as the model for social reflection and action, and he commented extensively on the entrenchments of power in philosophical and contemporary social traditions. Nonetheless, having extracted some of his core ideas concerning democracy from his broader project, it is easier to reintegrate them into his prime focus: education. He was aware of the accusation that he had a utopian faith in education and the development of intelligence (Dewey 1998b, 342). If modern life meant democracy, then democracy for him meant “freeing intelligence for independent effectiveness” through a purposeful, democratic education (Dewey 1995, 337). Dewey’s theory of knowledge and learning was thoroughly pragmatic: “never in the life of a farmer, sailor, merchant, physician or laboratory experimenter, does knowledge mean primarily of store of information aloof from doing” (1916, 216-217). Like the mythical rights of liberalism, knowledge too is not just “out there” to be fed into a young brain. A reified, rigid curriculum of separate,
fixed, and sequenced “subjects” is false and stultifying to learning: education should be fluid and social, a “continuing reconstruction of experience”—that is, reflective solving of problems (Dewey 1897, 13; Dewey 1995; Wingo 1974, 167-188). Adapted to the schools, the idea of an educative experience is “continuous with previous experience” and circumstances are structured for the child/student to “deal with the situation in an intelligent (as opposed to a random) fashion” (Wingo 1974, 183). Above all, the school is equated with “a form of community life”—and all that implies for Dewey (1897, 7). If “education is the fundamental method of social progress” (Dewey 1897, 16), then such an education cannot be defined by intellectual divisions: the separation of content and method and the isolated child as learner of discreet subjects (Dewey 1897, 6-8; Wingo 1974, 181-183).

It then follows for Dewey that an idea like an “efficient” or vocational or industrial education is “illiberal” and damaging both to the individual and the community/democracy in educating to utilitarian dualistic (means and ends separated) results (1916, 142-143, 303-305, 364-370). Real power for Dewey is intelligent self control and social integration, and that is what education in a democracy should be about: “the public school should aspire to be a microcosm of democratic community at its best” (Callan and White 2003, 104; Dewey 1897). Wolin contends that Dewey misunderstood that science was growing into big science, and his assumption that democracy and science/technology were inherently compatible was his mistake (2004, 517). As a result “Dewey never squarely associated democracy, local or otherwise, with participation in the exercise of power or self-government” and he tended to ignore differentials in actual,
functioning power in society (Wolin 2004, 517-518). Eliminating dualism and restoring unity between methods and ends would be enough. Thus Dewey did not focus on political agency to make changes and achieve democracy (industrial or political), but rather looked to the constitution of individuals to achieve communicated mutual interest by which he defined democracy, primarily through reforming education (Dewey 1916, 142-143; Brosio 1994, 503-511). In Dewey, we have perhaps the most fundamental and American entanglement of democratic and educational ideas in his response to the new environment shaped by industrialism.

The Ancient Greeks, Education, and Contemporary Democracy

The Greeks are fundamental to and generative of political theory as it has come to be understood (Wolin 1968b), so it is not surprising that there is continual vigorous examination of their legacy by political theorists. Given the role of education in political theory, their educational ideas are still discussed as well (Hogan and Smith 2003; Dunne and Pendlebury 2003; Woodruff 1998; LoShan 1998; Mara 1998). A contemporary American group of political thinkers look back beyond specific American resources to ancient Greek political and educational thought to reflect on contemporary democratic practices, conditions, and problems, very much in dialogue with some of the American traditions previously reviewed here. They construct “the Greeks” differently, often as instructively in dialogue with democracy—far different from the Founders who
responded to the “turbulence” of Greek democracy⁹ (Wolin 1993; Pangle 1988, 43-47). Or, in the case of Jefferson, he primarily valued the aesthetic virtues they would engender (vs. the political lessons): his claimed “utility” in studying the Greeks “has very precarious persuasiveness” since he continually recommended reading them in their original language for their “taste,” “luxury,” and “beauty” (Brann 1979, 84, 79-84; Pangle and Pangle 1993, 121-124). These authors are dealing with tensions over pluralism, utility and the ends of education, and the necessary attributes for both people and contemporary democracy to flourish. They mine ancient Greek political and educational thought to reflect on those circumstances. Their value lies in that they look to the Greeks for alternatives and practical answers to the challenges of contemporary democracy from outside the American tradition. In other words, they remind us that issues of contemporary democracy and education have roots—and perhaps insights and solutions—well beyond American culture. Three of them engaged in this project will be reviewed in brief here.

Brann (1979) surveys a very broad range of thought—Kant, Bacon, Jefferson, Shakespeare, etc.—to parse the paradoxes of education in the specific American context: that is, democratic, representative, and constitutional. The Ancient Greeks (primarily Plato and Aristotle) are prominent, particularly as representative of a more direct (even pure) human desire to know, or know truth through higher forms of being and thinking (Brann 1979, 23-24, 59). What she finds inherent in the American context is a series of

⁹ The Founders read and responded to classical sources and historical examples well beyond ancient Greek sources—especially the Romans (Pangle 1988), as do the American political thinkers reviewed in this section.
oppositions: popular and elite, private and public, practical and principled, reflective and worldly, etc. (Brann 1979, 12). However, in her analysis Americans have predominantly focused on utility: the Founders’ pragmatic education of citizens for the individual capability to pursue happiness, and the use of tradition in the American founding both had distinctively practical bents; thus rationality has primarily taken the form of rational utility (Brann 1979, 20-21). Brann is grappling with a version of Dewey’s core modern problem of the dominance of utility. Politically, this has meant a paradoxical tension in that “each person, each ultimate judge, may well act as an individual” while at the same time in the idea of a republic “there must be a public realm in which the thought of all coincides to form a consensus” (Brann 1979, 125). Educationally this means there can be no authoritative arrangement of knowledge, and yet “something must be taught” (Brann 1979, 126). What students end up learning is “the rationalization of an approach to a matter,” which is highly subject to utilitarian or ends-means thinking (Brann 1979, 131). Though she does not critique Jefferson on this account, the paradox for Brann is that reflective inquiry into ends and happiness has been historically neglected as a focus in American education—it is all about means, the pursuit of happiness or monetary success. A certain phase of that pursuit was coming to an end in a period marked by lessened economic expansion and post industrialism, so reflection was becoming “crucially necessary to a republic congenitally engaged in instrumental activity” (1979, 20, 61-62). This contrasts directly for her with Greek reflection on living the good life, and she

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10 Recall that earlier it was noted that she cited Jefferson as only ironically utilitarian in placing ancient Greek sources in his proposed curricula since he doted so much on their elegance, beauty, etc.
quotes Aristotle at length on the matter, summarizing his point that an “instrumental education by its very intention neglects ends, so learning done for its own sake pursues them—the good is the implicit object of wonder” (Brann 1979, 62). Her resolution of the paradox is “prepractical” liberal learning: “what is wanted is a radical review of our capacity for thought, to see if it cannot resume its station at the center of life” (Brann 1979, 138, 146). This is a perspective on liberal learning and its role in democracy very much informed by her Greek sources, traced up to the present through others who have carried the reflection through to the modern era. Nussbaum (2003; 1997; 1987) has more recently advocated this perspective, and she works from similar bases—especially Socratic education in dialogue with the Stoics—situating education in relationship to ethical challenges in a global, cosmopolitan democratic context.

Other authors have reflected on contemporary democracy’s challenges in more incendiary terms. Allan Bloom (1987) most famously castigated what he saw as the diminished moral and educational role of the university in American democracy. Though he too referenced many thinkers throughout history, it is Socrates/Plato that stands as Bloom’s model: “Only Socrates knew, after a lifetime of unceasing labor, that he was ignorant” (1987, 43). Like Brann, Bloom references many sources of reflection and thought on society, governing, and education: Aquinas, Dickens, Hegel, Locke, Hobbes, etc. Within his discussion of Plato/Socrates (along with Aristotle), he also references a broad range of Greek subjects like Crito, Achilles, and Penelope (or at least her maids) to illustrate his points. In Bloom we have a sort-of pan-ancient-Greek constructed example in opposition to American cultural and educational patterns. Pluralism, multiculturalism,
and relativism are his targets: Plato did not look to other cultures to surmount the limitations of his own. Rather, they were for the Greeks a means to contribute to the essential discovery of nature, and Socrates stands as the model thinker that helps us think about and “go beyond” those other cultures (Bloom 1987, 38). It is the university’s difficult task “always to maintain the permanent questions front and center”—that is, those essential theoretical questions raised by the Greeks since democracies inherently have a “lack of taste or gift for the theoretical life” (Bloom 1987, 252). Hence the leveling tendencies of democracies lead Bloom to quote Plato approvingly on democratic youths’ directionless gratification of desires as an accurate contemporary portrait of American university students (1987, 87-88). Furthermore, the effect of the practical bent of contemporary education—especially the dominance of business and economics—is to “corral a horde of students …, put blinders on them, [and] legislate an illiberal, officially approved undergraduate program … [where they] disappear into their required courses and are never heard from again” (Bloom 1987, 370). Becoming wealthy (versus the study of the science of wealth or its history or cultural effects) is “not the noblest of motivations” (Bloom 1987, 371). The democratically necessary American educational elite is educated carelessly, lives aimlessly, and shirks the heritage of an “unambiguous” distinguished tradition of “unbroken, ineluctable progress of freedom and equality” heroically begun in the founding (Bloom 1987, 54-55). Politics is not studied with the seriousness it warrants for Bloom, and it is the Greeks (in the form of Pericles) who first embodied the political heroism that later characterized the American founding; whereas today American politics disappears into the practical or mere surface culture (Bloom
American education in turn has evacuated the “cosmic intention of placing man in the universe,” and instead made the humanities a “merchandise being hawked”—including the serious business of studying the Greeks themselves (Bloom 1987, 369).

Mara constructs the Greeks differently, in dialogue—both with themselves and with contemporary political thought (Arendt, Habermas, and early modern political theory)—to explore what different sources reveal about the roots of American democracy and contemporary liberalism. For instance, Madison and Hamilton famously distrusted classical democracy as contentious and turbulent, and specifically they mistrusted democratic power: “truly democratic institutions may only control, not really educate, the passions” (Mara 1993, 180-181). Yet Mara notes that even in their negating political arrangement of checks and balances, “the crafting of democracies is interwoven with the crafting of character,” and it is Plato’s *Gorgias* that provides a vantage on the interactions (and conflicts) among “political institutions supportive of democracy” needed to craft character (1993, 180, 185-186). Pursuit of interest and ambition (the source of faction and turbulence in democracies) is counterbalanced in their model with virtue- or judgment-based politics (the role they assigned to the Senate is an example) as well as an “educative role for politics” and the cultivation of virtues, discernment, voice, appetites, and judgment found first in ancient Greek sources (Mara 1993, 182-187; 1998; 1985, 1046-1048). For instance, Pericles for Mara is not the example of Bloom’s political heroism. Rather, Thucydides essentially is in dialogue with Pericles in his reporting of speeches about the war, and he notes his own biases and his reliance on the reports of
others in constructing his account (casting doubt on just-the-facts claims), but these differing accounts “taken together provide a set of political responses to the events of the war. Thucydides invites his readers to reflect on the strengths, vulnerabilities, and pathologies of these responses and the particular form of political agency they signify” (Mara 2008, 25). Pericles’ rhetoric in this setting is less heroic and more positional, “monologic … ‘in name’ a democracy was in reality the rule of the foremost man” and Thucydides was inherently challenging that by offering contrasts and noting the limits of and damages caused by an aggressive democracy fueled by Pericles’ ambitions (Mara 2008, 26-27). Like Brann, Mara identifies liberal education as a resource “for citizens focused on improving democratic practice,” but roots it more specifically in a variety of Greek sources: the Nicomachean Ethics, the Socratic dialogues, and Aristotle’s Politics, along with those mentioned (Mara 2008, 27; 2001; 1998; 1993; 1985). The Protagoras reveals that different forms of education imply different forms of politics and the trust that those politics assume and operate upon. In the process, Mara complicates easy deliberative democratic assumptions about the discursive balancing of trust and mistrust (2008, 101-102). Put succinctly, democracy needs democrats and they must have certain virtues or attributes for democracy to flourish. Greek resources reveal in Mara’s readings that “fostering the goods possible and necessary within liberal society may require more than supporting the goods inherent in liberal practices,” but this seems to fly in the face of liberal practices of socialization that valorize the individual in prominent contemporary strains of liberal democratic theory (Mara 1998, 324n38, 302; Callan 2004).
Conclusion

Even this brief overview establishes the longstanding and deep connections between political theory and education. Important political thinkers have treated education as a core issue throughout history. In the American context this has taken the form of a history of reflection on the necessary constitution of a democratic polity and a turn to education (and hence educational thought) as a practical means to influence or shape the nature of the polity. Each example makes a different case for education and the political conditions for human flourishing. The Calvinism of the early American colonies enacted the covenant concept and stressed education for literacy—setting influential patterns for the nation early on. Jefferson valorized the local pattern of democracy in the New England township culture in his political and agrarian bases of a republic, but reacted strongly against its religious sources. His system of secular, public education under local control is deeply influential in contemporary debates over the control of education. Dewey represents the most significant American entanglement of democracy and education. His ideas on community are strongly tied to Jefferson’s and the culture of the New England Township. He deeply entangled that idea with learning as experience and the development of whole persons in the school continue to be important reflections on educational practices. His critique of the forces militating against democratic community within our economic and productive arrangements in a sense challenges the practical and utilitarian tradition so influential within Jefferson. Dewey’s critique continues to be of value to contemporary democratic theorists. Finally, ancient Greek
sources remain a political and educational resource to reflect on the tradition outlined, the American polity, and the quality of ends in relationship to means in educational and political contexts. They rightfully point to democratic and educational arrangements that long predate the American experience. In sum, this theoretical exercise has established the broader relationship between political theory and educational thinking: an educational policy or practice presumes a political theory, and a given political arrangement contains an interest in the shaping of its citizens and young.

Given the task at hand (analyzing the democratic results of advertising in the schools), Jefferson or Dewey could be productively brought to bear on the matter (the Puritans are too distant from the contemporary issues and their theological bases have been long undercut). Both conducted critiques of the advanced economic arrangements of their time. However, Jefferson utterly contradicted himself too much on this account: the famous simple American agrarian was a devotee of the finer things in life produced in cities and in Europe to give just one of many examples. Dewey put too much faith in educating away the contradictions and divisions of industrial capitalism, and thus did not focus on a deeper critique of its practices. Other sources of democratic theory have both engaged the issues of the tradition reviewed here and more directly grappled with the historical and contemporary conditions producing the practice. This thesis will turn to three of them to reflect on the practice of advertising in the American public schools in Chapter 4. Tocqueville arrived in America just five years after Jefferson died, and what he witnessed were realizations of Jefferson’s greatest fears (the growth of federal power) and hopes (westward expansion). He was the first in a long line to try and analyze and
understand the American “democratic rupture” (Wilentz 2005, xix), and he observed during a crucial, formative time (the Jacksonian era). Tocqueville was a source of observation from a cool distance, seeing patterns and aspects of American culture others did not. Hence amid his political observations, he also noted the culture of gain and grasp during an important period in American history. The communitarians pick up moral/religious themes found in the Puritans and the Founders—along with the issues of community found in Dewey—and they carry it into the present. Their analysis cuts to the heart of contemporary dissolving forces of market-based culture on basic forms of social solidarity. In this, they strongly link themselves to Tocqueville in valorizing types of association and strong social connections. Deliberative democrats seek to capture the dialogic and discursive bases of Greek democracy and adapt it to contemporary conditions. At the same time they engage in a more fundamental critique of capitalism than either Dewey or the American political theorists who interrogate Greek resources. Their critique of the market informs an analysis of the obstacles to deliberative informing of government and a critical and democratic education. While these three sources of democratic theory deal with some of the same themes as the theorists reviewed in this chapter, their focus (in this reading at least) is not the moral founding of a polity, the cultivation of democratic virtues, practical skills wedded to local and democratic virtues, or the strong link between experience, education, and democracy. Rather, they more directly address the conditions which have produced the practice in education to be examined, and thus are more productive resources to interrogate. With the important relationship between political and educational ideas established here, and the later turn to
other forms of democratic theory explained, the next chapter will establish the practice to be examined: advertising in the schools, narrowed to a paradigmatic and clear case.
Chapter 2

Advertising in American Public Schools:
Framing the Paradigmatic Case of Channel One

Introduction: Framing Advertising, Marketing, and Media

The rise of the modern media was coterminous with industrialization, modern forms of organization of urban space (department stores, boulevards, etc.), electricity, and particularly the development of advertising, marketing research, and marketing to specific audiences including children and adolescents (Hoechsmann 2010; 2007; Wartella and Robb 2008, 20-23; Butsch 2001; Leiss, Kline, and Jhally 2000; Leach 1993). The connection among marketing, advertising, and media is now axiomatic in American culture, but making some distinctions here would be useful. Marketing is essentially the “framing process” (Slater 2002, 246). Classically, it is the strategic plan for the mix of the variables of product, price, place, and promotion—and now, contemporary variants like building relationships in a service economy (Grönroos 1997). Marketing research is the “systematic collection and analysis of data to resolve problems concerning marketing, undertaken to reduce … risk” (Law 2009, 352). Advertising is often thought of as the creative subset of marketing, the “institutionalized system of commercial information and persuasion” (Williams 1980, 170) within an overall marketing plan guided by the research. It primarily concerns the specifics of how to promote the product to sell it (the content and design of the ad) and where the advertisement will be placed. Originally much more limited, there is now a substantial choice of media (and combinations of
media)—television, magazine, website, social networks, etc.—which feeds back to the methods, content, and design of the advertisements (Calvert 2008, 206; Grönroos 1997). The overall purpose is to “create exchange and satisfy individual and organizational objectives” (The American Marketing Association in Grönroos 1997, 322). This thesis frames and focuses on a specific practice in a specific context (advertising in American public schools).

Theorists and historians of advertising and consumption differ greatly in their interpretations of cause and effect in advertising, consumer identity, the issue of manipulation, and so on. But there is a broad consensus concerning what businesses themselves were attempting to do, and roughly at what points the fundamental methods and purposes of advertising changed.1 Initially, advertising and consumption were entangled with producing the essential needs of society in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The formula went something like this: work is a personal and social virtue; equality means equal opportunity to gain wealth and spend it; accumulation is evidence of personal merit and good character; financial growth both personally and in society is the continual goal (Spring 2003, 5-6). Advertising was the simple business of notifying a public about a good or service and describing it, and consumption came about in the resulting orientation toward increasing trade and ultimately producing surpluses and a “world of goods” (Slater 1997, 19-21; Spring 2003, 1-27; Williams 1980, 170-177). The issue was a moral one very early on. John Adams put it this way: “Manufactures

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1 Postman notes that “all theories tend to simplify. That’s the purpose of theories—to help people manage information” (2004, 5). The following framework is of course a simplified theoretical description of a broad pattern of development, and adapts the outlines of a number of theorists and historians of advertising (Leiss, Kline, and Jhally 2000).
cannot live, much less thrive, without honor, fidelity, punctuality, and private faith, a sacred respect for property, and the moral obligations of promises and contracts” (Adams in Ewen 1976, 52). With industrialization came a sea change. Essentially, the problem became not actual production itself (that was mastered), but what to do with theoretically endless production. By the 1920s, a journal of advertising would write frankly that “modern machinery … made it not only possible but imperative that the masses should live lives of comfort and leisure; that the future of business lay in its ability to manufacture customers as well as products” (Ewen 1976, 53). Producing consumers essentially became the aim of businesses and the job of advertising, and working became not about accumulation but about consuming more (Galbraith 2000; Packard 2000; Slater 1997, 18). The contemporary sea change we are experiencing has been an acceleration of the process: the shift to a post-industrial economy (post-Fordism) away from mass production (Fordism) to forms of “flexible accumulation” in a service- and symbol-based economy, and the consequent consumption of experiences or events (Miller 2003, 66-71; Harvey 1990, 173-188). It is an environment wherein

... both neo-liberalism and postmodernism proclaimed ... consumer sovereignty: standards of value other than the preferences expressed by individuals in the marketplace were ... elitist, conservative, or simply ungrounded. The ideological consumerism of the 1980s then foregrounds radical individualism and privatism on the one hand, and on the other their grounding in a modality of signs and meanings. (Slater 1997, 10-11)

Advertising became integral to culture, now understood as integral to economic production (Miller 2003, 64-66; Jameson 1984). Children as economic units and a market were essentially “developed” during the time of the second and third sea
changes: businesses had long been aware of and sought to target the spending power of children and adolescents, as well as their influence on the spending of their parents (Spring 2010; Holland 2008; Wartella and Robb, 2008; Jennings and Wartella 2007; Richards et al. 1998, 148-149). Though not in a lockstep, one-to-one series of transformations, these patterns are broadly descriptive of the appearance of advertising in the American public schools.

**Schools and Business**

If democratic theory and ideas about education have a long and deep entanglement, there is another entanglement as well. Advertising did not suddenly enter the American public schools: business and commerce have long been a presence there. The needs of an industrializing economy (the factory system) for trained and dependable labor were cast as educational issues relatively early in the 19th century, easily blending with the perceived need to “Americanize” the influx of immigrants (Boyles 1998, 6-12; Spring 1986, 149-184; Bowles and Gintis 1976, 155-179; Katz 1973). “The school’s major function came to be seen as fitting the individual into the economy” (Molnar and Reaves 2002, 18). New England provided the prime example of business moralism and paternalism (the first pattern noted) as a driver of the development of public education. In 1841, a representative of the textile mills would write that he was

… perfectly satisfied that the owners of manufacturing property have a deep pecuniary interest in the education and morals of their help…. [A]s competition becomes more close, and small circumstances of more importance in turning the scale in favor of one establishment over another,
I believe it will be seen that the establishment, other things being equal, which has the best educated and most moral help will give the greatest production at the least cost per pound. (Bowles and Gintis 1976, 162)

The school’s modeling of industrial efficiency, the curricular goals of practicality and preparation for work, and the class interests of business became prevalent enough to provoke Workingmen’s parties to argue in 1831 that public education should be a “defense against not only an infringement, but a total usurpation of the native rights of the people, by the monopolizing demagogues of the land” (Spring 1986, 92). There were many responses and struggles over the purpose of the schools, the curriculum, and alternative teaching sites for the children of workers (Kliebard 1998; Teitelbaum 1998; Spring 1986, 222-255).

However, a landmark historical study in the mid-20th century found in the intervening years that business and its leaders had become the critical public to which school leaders must respond in order to keep their jobs (Callahan 1962). Frederick Taylor’s method of scientific management became an overnight sensation when his name was mentioned frequently and prominently as the source of an efficiency method in hearings before the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1910. As a result of the publicity, Taylor’s papers were solicited for national magazines (Atlantic Monthly being one), and his method was described at the time as a “magic power” akin to the shift from hand tools to machinery (Callahan 1962, 19-22). The efficiency principle became a

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2 The entire issue of the Journal of Educational Administration, volume 42, no. 2, 2004 is devoted to revisiting the implications and continuing relevance of Callahan’s classic study more than forty years after it was published.
popular, even a moral theme: “If man’s progress is slow, it is because of wastes—solely because of wastes—wastes of everything that is precious. …Wasted lives, sorrow instead of joy, painful, ignorant effort instead of glad, intelligent activity!” (Emerson in Callahan 1962, 25) In such a flood of enthusiasm, Taylor’s “efficiency” and the power of cutting waste were applied broadly: to the Army, Navy, law firms, home and family life, churches, and of course the schools at the time (Callahan 1962, 23). The educational literature of the era is dominated by efficiency methods: checklists to score and measure teachers on “promptness,” “care of routine,” “moral influence,” and “care of light, heat and ventilation”; and similar scoring for principals on “initiative,” “enterprise,” “co-operation and loyalty,” and “neatness of the buildings and grounds” (Callahan 1962, 106-107). This was soon followed by broader measures such as an accounting calculation on the promotion of students as a measure of efficiency vs. waste (Callahan 1962, 168-169). It became an ideology. Among educational administrators, the “wholesale adoption of the basic values, as well as the techniques of the business-industrial world” was nearly complete by the early 20th century (Callahan 1962, 244). A pro-business bias permeated the schools: American history textbooks, for instance, systematically downplayed the labor movement or the violence used against organizing workers well into the 20th century (Anyon 1979; Urban and Wagoner 2009, 266-268).

Enter Advertising in the Schools

Schools have always been a market themselves. *McGuffey Readers* were heavily promoted and sold to the schools: 122 million copies were sold from 1836 to 1920; the
Readers were themselves lessons in adapting to industrial practices and justifying gaps in wealth (Spring 1986, 140-146). The pattern of work-moralism-consumption initially held. However, advertising in the schools began in earnest in the 1890s with the appearance of manufactured goods and the growing influence of the efficiency movement. Home economics was first taught in American schools then, facilitating transfer of the work of the household from producing and using basic goods to spending money and deploying commodities: “What women formerly made at home and in private—foods, clothing, soap, cosmetics, and so on—was now arrayed before them in public, made available by revolutions in transportation and communications to anyone who could afford to buy it” (Leach 1984, 327; Spring 2010). In concert with the curriculum of home economics, the provision free samples of tooth paste, soap, and prepared breakfast food became common, along with other products such as color charts for art classes (which promoted paint companies); all were provided by companies and their representatives, and passed out by teachers in classrooms (Molnar 2005, 17; Harty 1979, 1; Parker 1932, 277). The means of “producing” consumers were varied. “Supplementary” teaching materials and “expert” speakers were provided to the schools in areas of interest to businesses (Parker 1932, 277). The prime example early on was power companies flooding the schools with speakers and pamphlets to counter the movement for public ownership of utilities (Norris 1929). The schools were used to marshal children en masse for public functions sponsored by businesses, and there was much inveighing against educationally disruptive contests to vie for prizes (often essay contests), ending up promoting the product which was the prize rather than the
educational benefits of the contest (Parker 1932, 277; Broome 1929, 215). Banks sponsored merit awards in the form of jobs for selected graduating students in the public schools as a way to coordinate the curriculum with the real life, practical needs of business (Propaganda 1928). Lastly, early forms of the modern media were heavily promoted as both as industries and products within the schools and as new and better forms of teaching (Cuban 1986, 11-26). Contemporary rhetoric about networked resources or hand-held devices is echoed in Edison’s 1922 prediction that “books will soon be obsolete in the schools” and that “the motion picture is destined to revolutionize our educational system” (Edison in Cuban 9, 11). Radios would replace teachers, students would learn languages from records, and textbooks would disappear (Cuban 4-5, 9). These overall practices were widespread and invasive enough that a National Education Association committee report warned against the “ceaseless and, in some instances, unscrupulous efforts of agents to get their particular product, their essay contest … before the teachers and into the classroom” (Broome 1929, 209).

This basic pattern of business advertising and promotion in the schools continued and grew for the next fifty years (roughly 1930 to 1980). Like film and radio, television (beginning in the 1950s and continuing through the 1970s) and computers (beginning in the 1970s) were heavily promoted as both products for the schools and as industries

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3 It is worth noting that these early analyses and publications referred to advertising as “propaganda”—with all that word implies. It was only with the Creel Commission’s work on behalf of public relations leading up to and during World War I that advertising began the long, slow climb from snake-oil and P.T. Barnum associations to respectability (Leach 1993, 320; Marchand 1985, 6-8). Broome notes the work of the Creel Commission and the debate at the time over the “susceptibility of the public to slogans, catch words, half truths, and shoddy thinking” vs. keeping an “open arena in which the battle for truth may be fought” (1929, 205-206).
important to the economy (Cuban 1986, 27-38, 72-78). Likewise during the same period, business and industry educational materials became more sophisticated and their distribution more thorough. One measure of growth was the rise in tax deductions taken for this “charitable public service” to the schools: from an aggregate of $252 million in 1950 to $1.35 billion in 1976 (Harty 1979, 2). The examples of business-sponsored materials in the schools from this period are almost endless: “How Banks Serve,” a classroom film produced for the American Bankers Association, “In Our Hands,” a three-part set of films on the benefits of markets and limited government, “Reddy Kilowatt’s Coloring Book on the Wonder-World of Electricity,” the “Automobile Story: Drawing to Driveway – A resource unit for elementary and junior high school teachers” prepared by General Motors, the “Mickey Mouse and Goofy Explore Energy” comic book prepared by Exxon, “Fatal Seconds,” a film on auto safety produced for Aetna Casualty & Surety, “The Mochans: A Mythical Economic Society” prepared by Amoco Oil, “Economics of the Environment: An Activity Master Program for High School Students” published by the American Iron and Steel Institute, “Joey’s World” – a “poignant” film about the “life and needs of a young boy” and “the need for nuclear power in light of the environmental ethic” distributed by Carolina Power and Light, and of course “C is for Coconut: a tantalizing tropical treat from Peter Paul candies” in the Resourcebook published by the ABC Educational Program of American Industry (Smith 1999, 147, 160-161, 164; Harty 1979, 4, 5, 10, 48, 54, 65). As obvious and ham-handed as these business advertising tactics appear, they were (and remain) familiar practices dating back to the turn of the 20th century. And, teachers often solicited the materials to make available to students:
half of them in one survey in the late 1970s (Harty 1979, 14-15). Furthermore, there were active responses among professional educators to control and shape this flow of materials as evidenced by the work of committees and studies from 1929 to 1979 already cited here.

The Dramatic Rise in Schoolhouse Commercialism

It is clear there was no “golden age” of American public education essentially free of business interests and advertising materials. “However, in the 1980s, a Rubicon of sorts was crossed. Not only did the volume of advertising reach new levels of intrusiveness, marketing efforts were also often unashamedly characterized as legitimate contributions to curriculum content” and as models of or sources to reform the schools (Molnar 1996, 17). The shift toward the conflation of the neoliberal promotion of market models and the postmodern predominance of advertising signification began to make its appearance in the schools. The aforementioned A Nation at Risk was the acknowledged turning point—then and now (Stedman and Smith 1983; Finkelstein 1984; Feinberg 1985; Apple 1987; Molnar 1996, 1-2; Bracey 2003; Hursh 2007). The report was characterized at the time as “polemical” and “propaganda,” unconnected with—or seriously distorting—facts like test scores (Bracey 2003, 617; Stedman and Smith 1983, 87). It was announced by President Reagan without much reference to its actual content (the link between poor school performance and economic competitiveness and the need to emphasize science, math, reading, and computer literacy in a “tougher,” more traditional curriculum); he spoke instead of his education agenda of vouchers, school
prayer, tuition tax credits, and abolishing the Department of Education (Bracey 2003, 617). It was widely and favorably covered in the press at the time, with few questioning how “tightly yoked the nation’s global competitiveness [was] to how well our 13-year-olds bubbled in test answers” (Bracey 2003, 617).\(^4\) *A Nation at Risk* was only one of a number of blue-ribbon education panels producing reports with similar themes at the time, and the “specific content of each … is less consequential than the overall tendencies they represent” (Apple 1987, 201).\(^5\) At the time, those tendencies were recognized as political moves toward the right and away from curricular (and thus cultural) diversity, the equalizing thrust within public education (and thus its democratizing effects), and an active attempt to rebuild and recast a consensus over education on different terms (Stedman and Smith 1983; Whitty 1984; Finkelstein 1984; Feinberg 1985; Giroux and McLaren 1986; Apple 1987). Of particular note was capturing a language of “common sense” that masked a fundamental shift in priorities: “economic rationality becomes both the referent and the ideal for change” (Giroux 1984, 188; Apple 1987, 201-202).

The prestige of private enterprise was sky high. “The 1980s were not a time to say no to business. Educators were desperate to prove their willingness to cooperate” (Molnar 1996, 17). A significant part of that cooperation was an expansion of

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\(^4\) This was not the first time that education was quixotically identified as the solution to broad social or economic problems. Perkinson (1995) has documented this longstanding American habit, and in the case of *A Nation At Risk*, educational historian Lawrence Cremin noted at the time that the problems with economic competitiveness probably had much more to do with “monetary, trade, and industrial policy, and of decisions made by the President and Congress, the Federal Reserve Board, and the Federal Departments of the Treasury, Commerce, and Labor” (Cremin in Bracey 2003, 617).

privatization in education in the form of selling off public enterprises, allowing private companies to run a service that is still paid for by taxes, charging for services formerly paid for by taxes, and removing restrictions that prevented private sector competition with public services or functions (Whitty 1984, 52). Though privatization has a long history in America, the practice greatly accelerated in the schools in the 1980s: from requiring competitive bids for services, public-private partnerships, outsourcing of food services, private companies running public schools and school systems, contracting-out curricula, instructional services, curricular materials, software systems to grade and tabulate test scores, to the more quotidian janitorial and maintenance services (Burch 2006; Clarke 2004). The effect was to turn corporate leadership of educational reform on its head: instead of looking to improve the schools for the common good—for instance, by attempting to guide the modeling of business-like efficiencies or contributing support or expertise—corporations looked to develop markets out of the schools themselves (Molnar 1996, 17-18). Privatization has been further articulated, and now routinely also includes mandates of “public bodies being required to develop markets” and “making internal markets (separating purchasers and providers)” along with “creating new conditions for competitive success”—practices now readily identifiable within education (Clarke 2004, 35-36). For instance, recruiting or fundraising in education is an instance of both developing markets and creating the conditions of competitive success. Here at Georgetown goods and services like meeting rooms or certain technology services like videoconferencing are self-supporting by being marketed internally: a service- or space-user must budget and pay for this out of institutional allocated funds. Or, public
institutions are often directed to create new markets by simply being budgeted only to select and buy services from non-public sources—like day care. Given the environment of an extended articulation of privatization, it was a simple and logical next step to view the students themselves—already gathered in the schools—as a ready-made market for services and products to be vended and advertised.\footnote{Recent measures estimate the personal purchasing power of children (in varying age cohorts) as growing from $6.1 billion in 1989 to $30 billion fifteen years later (Molnar 2005, 6). Other recent estimates put the figure at $78.5 billion annually, with an influence on another $700 billion in purchases (Molnar 2009).}

As a result, the business presence in the schools exploded. For instance, in 1984 school-business partnerships existed in 17% of the schools; by 1989-1990 the figure was 51%; and by 2002 70% of American school districts had $2.4 billion per year worth of “business relationships” (Molnar 2005, 19; Molnar 1996, 2). These relationships cover a large range of arrangements and activities. For instance, schools are located in malls for students at risk of dropping out so that they attend class, work part-time at stores for purchasing credit at the stores, eat at the food court, and walk the mall for their gym requirement (Molnar 2005, 20). In other words, the goods and services of the mall itself is considered a sufficiently structuring and motivating factor to keep students in school. In another example, a large Midwestern grocery store chain recruits teachers for summer work to send them back with “a better understanding of today’s workforce and beyond”—and as friendly ambassadors promoting the chain as a workplace for their students during the school year (Boyles 1998, 66-67). In another instance, an oil company produced an “enriched” science curriculum with hands-on activities (Boyles 1998, 83-84). These practices layer on top of simple commercial provision of services.
and advertising in the schools. Commercially-produced televised content—complete with embedded advertising—piped into the schools was taken seriously as a means of educational reform at the time:

Cable television is another source of instructional programming, which is typically noninteractive and designed to fit specific academic content areas. Millions of homes receive educational broadcasts from The Learning Channel, The Discovery Channel, and other instructional sources. … Educational video, used thoughtfully, can contribute to education reform goals, insofar as it integrates various subject matter areas e.g., history, archaeology, research methods, art, reading, literature, and mathematics and challenges students to understand the complex relationships that exist among various domains. Moreover, research on instructional television has demonstrated positive effects of viewing upon learning in a variety of domains, such as children's math problem solving and social attitudes. (U.S. Department of Education 1993, 16-17)

Advertising in the public schools—schoolhouse commercialism—likewise expanded dramatically during this time period. Measures of the practice are notoriously difficult, but there are some. The early Center for the Analysis of Commercialism in Education (CACE, at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee), its later incarnation as the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU, at Arizona State University), and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) have produced a series of studies. First, CACE and CERU identify marketing methods within the schools, the types of which have increased over the years: from four, to six, to seven, eight, and then nine, and now

\[7\] Their data is sometimes analyzed and reported in other publications cited here.
several within the digital marketing category\textsuperscript{8} in thirteen annual reports up to the present (Molnar et al. 2010a; 2009; Molnar and Reaves 2002; Larson 2002). Some of these methods drop off in use or are adapted over time. A second measure is the number of media stories that cover these methods as an index of their prevalence. CACE and CERU found that stories on schoolhouse commercialization had increased 154\% between 1990 and 1997; over 25,000 media stories on eight categories of commercialization appeared between 1990 and 2001; the occurrences of stories on privatization jumped 4,160\% and on exclusive agreements jumped 1,432\% during that same time (Molnar and Reaves 2002, 23-25). A third measure of the growth in commercial activities in the schools is the GAO and their reports. Broadly, they fall into three categories. First, the GAO itself investigated and listed broad types of commercialism in the schools and the ethical and legal issues raised by the practice (Larson 2002). Second, they found significant fiscal pressures on schools to allow less-healthful foods to be purchased from commercial vending machines in the schools to generate revenues, and so the practice grew (Molnar 2004; Larson 2002). Third, the GAO both recommended and then documented legislative response to schoolhouse commercialism in the form of the number regulations and the amount of states regulating the acquisition and use of student data for marketing purposes: thirteen more states enacted legislation and/or regulations between 2000 and 2004, and they estimate that two-thirds of the school districts in the country had or were

\textsuperscript{8} At present, the list of methods includes sponsorship of programs and activities, exclusive agreements (usually cola vending machines or sports apparel branding), incentive programs, use of school space to advertise, sponsored educational materials, privatization, fund-raising, naming rights, market research, and now digital marketing variants such as text messages, web pop-ups, the appearance of ads in social networks, commercially-based gaming, sponsored applications, viral marketing and screen savers.
developing policies on the practice (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2004; Larson 2002). Broadly these regulatory responses tended to prohibit student participation in surveys without parental permission, to regulate the collection of personal data on/from the students for marketing purposes—particularly from students under age thirteen, and to regulate direct selling and advertising to the students in the schools, though the GAO recognized the continuing expansion of the practice and the likely effect of the Internet in 2004 (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2004; Larson 2002).

Again, it is now estimated that over 80 percent of American public school students at all levels are subjected to some overt form of advertising directed at them during the school day (Moore 2007). 

Neoliberalism Further Changes the Landscape

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9 It is useful here to again note some of the specifics of the practice and its evolution in the schools with two examples. First, a cola company executive pitched to officials that the school systems profited handsomely from exclusive rights deals: “In Kansas City they were getting 67 cents a kid before, now they’re getting $27” (Hays 1999). Such exclusivity agreements are taken seriously: A Coke executive declared that “the school system is where you build brand loyalty” (Molnar 2003-2004, 81). And in fact a student who wanted to sell bottled water to raise funds for her cheerleading squad was forced off her high school campus by the exclusive “pouring rights” of the cola company contract (Molnar 2004). At the same time, the schools were sometimes quite zealous to promote consumption in order to receive their full compensation under the agreements. One Colorado school executive (who called himself the “Coke Dude”) sent out a memo to the Principals in his district suggesting they “allow students to purchase and consume vended products throughout the day” and that they “locate machines where they are accessible all day,” passing along the suggestions of the “Coke people” who surveyed the schools for prime locations (Bushey 1999). Second, digital marketing within the schools has become far more sophisticated. Ten years ago, companies provided computers to schools in exchange for placing banner advertising, along the way collecting profiles of the students (Molnar 2001, 77; Schiffman 2000). Now, handheld devices allow students to play games at any time during the school day. Those games, such as Sponge Bob: Toy Store Trial, mix in ads for candy while they are loading, or contain products placed within the game, or are simply located at sites sponsored by a company which sells to children, such as Chuck E. Cheese where they can play Chuck e-Games (Molnar et al. 2009). Along with CACE and CERU, the work of Boyles (2008, 2005, 1998) and reviews in the American Academy of Political and Social Science (Richards et al. 1998; Bachen 1998) document the variety, the prevalence, and the depth of penetration of advertising and marketing in the schools.
Within this period, another decisive turn took place. Seven years after it was issued, Chubb and Moe (1990) argued that the business community’s *A Nation at Risk*-style reforms were ineffectual and indistinguishable from those of the educational establishment. Their solution: preserve public education through market choice. “The alternative … is good public education, and choice is an essential tool in the effort to create such institutions” (Chubb 1995, 291). The best path to reform will not be democratically arrived-at (that would only replicate the same problems produced by educational bureaucracies and teachers’ unions). Rather, improvement can be achieved via the “elimination … of most top-down authority over the everyday governance of schools and its replacement by a system built around parental choice, school autonomy, [and] competition” (Moe 2000, 144). Hugely controversial then and now, their Brookings Institution study changed the terms of the debate over schools (Bridges and Jonathan 2003; Levin 1995). If *A Nation at Risk* ushered in an era where business and marketing presence in the schools grew in scope and educational legitimacy, Chubb and Moe placed the market itself as the agent that now would reform the schools by loosening state control of education and allowing choice and competition among schools, providing reliable information on school choices, encouraging “educational providers” to “free themselves” from public funds to allow autonomy, and helping parents secure their
Together, these broad strands (reforms driven by economic concerns, privatization, schoolhouse commercialism, reduced public support for education, and school choice) have been recognized and critiqued as neoliberalism in education, right up through No Child Left Behind (Hursh 2007; Giroux 2005; 2002; Apple 2004; 1998; Bridges and Jonathan 2003; Bettis 2000, 29-30). The phenomenon is not exclusively American, but rather a pattern of educational reform and restructuring across western democracies, particularly in the Anglo-American world (Bridges and Jonathan 2003; Meyer and Boyd 2001; Apple 2000). In broad terms, the critique is that “for neo-liberals, the world in essence is a vast supermarket. ‘Consumer choice’ is the guarantor of democracy. In effect, education is seen as simply one more product like bread, cars, and television. By turning it over to the market …, it will be largely self-regulating. Thus, democracy is turned into consumption practices” (Apple 2005, 273). Critics strongly link educational neoliberalism to a neoconservative and false “return” to “traditional” values, a “best-of-the-West” curriculum which is coupled with the further incursion of commercial values into the curriculum and rising inequality (Apple 2005, 275-280; 2001;

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This remains a powerful line of popular argument. In a contemporary (and amusing) analog, Republicans in the House argued that the vote on removing $5 million worth of federal funding for National Public Radio (NPR)—0.0001% of the federal budget—was a move for fiscal responsibility and a reprimand for NPRs “one ideology.” Rick Nugent, a Republican House member, called it a blow against “tyranny,” but not actually meant “to harm NPR. We are actually trying to liberate them from federal tax dollars.” The same House session voted to approve $10 billion per month for the war in Afghanistan, with another Republican House member (Ted Poe) stating that the war “should not be measured in the cost of money” (Milbank 2011).
It is this now-identified neoliberal educational environment which has flourished in the last thirty years, and in which advertising in the public schools has grown and become affiliated with positive change in/for the schools.

**Channel One**

It was in this developing environment that Chris Whittle introduced Channel One. In brief, Whittle is the charismatic founder of Whittle Communications, based out of Knoxville, Tennessee. Founded in 1970, one of his early lines of business was to provide single-sponsored magazines in enclosed circumstances (doctor’s and dentist’s waiting rooms) free of charge, with the guarantee that no other reading material would be available. Whittle expanded to posters on health issues (all of which had advertising), revenues reaching $3 million by 1976. He followed this up later with his Medical News Network to pipe advertising-supported televised health programming directly into doctor’s offices via equipment Whittle Communications provided, tuned only to that signal. Whittle made a splash in the broader media business in 1979 when he acquired the troubled *Esquire* magazine and turned it around in a short number of years (Christopher Whittle, interview by National Public Radio, June 28, 2000; Greising, 1995; Apple 1993, 98). Channel One was developed in the late 1980s in the environment of educational reform and business influences described previously. In a 1988 speech to the

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11 Though the alliance has its contradictory tensions (for instance, marketing and media titillation often collides with moral issues), the two sides “oddly reinforce each other” resulting in an ideological frame in which educational policies have been discussed for some time (Apple 2004, 15; 1998). From both perspectives, the society is falling apart: public institutions are incapable of the responsiveness and the freedom demanded by market reforms on the one hand, or the cultural imperatives of restoring intellectual and social order on the other.
Eastern Tennessee Education Association outlining what was to come, Whittle suggested that billions of advertising revenues could be diverted to the schools under his model: “If educators send a signal to the business community that they will accept advertising sponsorship of teaching tools … American teachers will soon have the best equipped, most modern classrooms in the world” (Whittle in Molnar 1996, 84). The business model of Channel One has remained remarkably stable for two decades: schools get the equipment to receive the broadcast, the installation of monitors around the school, installation and training to use and maintain the network equipment, free news programming for ten minutes (“Get the world, pay nothing” as they note in their school support website), and some payment. In exchange the schools agree to show the program in its entirety 90% of the time at some point of required attendance—usually homeroom or a set time always in a classroom—which includes two (required) minutes of commercials at the end. Channel One promotes to the schools that its audience is grades 6 through 12, though the real focus seems always to have been high school students for the advertisers (ChannelOneHelp.com; ChannelOneHelp.com FAQs; ChannelOneHelp.com Terms and Conditions of Network Participation; Wulfemeyer and Meuller 1990).

Channel One was highly controversial from the beginning, and very quickly became affiliated with the political forces pushing neoliberal-style school reforms12 in the now-familiar form of proposals for privatization, vouchers, business models in the

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12 Specifically, Molnar (1996, 85-86) cites former Tennessee governor and then-president of the University of Tennessee, Lamar Alexander as a proponent, consultant, and investor, and Whittle’s entrée to the political brokers behind neoliberal educational reforms.
schools, school competition, private provision of educational content, and the idea that the practices of the schools—not funding—were the issue and problem (Molnar 1996, 85-88). After the successful launch of Channel One, Whittle moved on to found the Edison Project: a network of private, for-profit schools which heavily relied upon a technology infrastructure in their teaching environments—essentially broadening the reach of the ideas behind Channel One (DeVaney 1994a, 3-4; Molnar 1996, 86). Along the way he signed up a high-profile group of advisors for the Project: John Chubb, Chester Finn and William Bennett (both in Reagan’s Department of Education), Lee Eisenberg (his former editor at *Esquire*), Dominique Browning (former editor of *Newsweek*), and his great public relations prize, Benno Schmidt the former president of Yale (Molnar 1996, 87; DeVaney 1994a, 3). Whittle’s Channel One business initiative styled itself as a positive reform of an educational problem (a desperate lack of knowledge of the world and current events): a 1989 full-page ad in the *New York Times* declared that “Considering the fact that teenagers in this country have actually identified Jesse Jackson as a baseball player and Chernobyl as Cher’s full name, even critics of Channel One acknowledge the dire need for exactly such a program” (Molnar 1996, 56; Apple 1993, 99-100). Likewise, the Edison Project was cast as a for-profit, private initiative to radically revolutionize education (Molnar 1996, 87).

However, Whittle’s approach on the business end of things was different. With advertisers he was very open and frank: Channel one provided a “direct pipeline to the teen market” (Whittle in Bachen 1998, 133), and “Underneath everything we do … is the concept of targeted, high-impact, proprietary media systems…. Home-based media has
dramatically declined as an environment for sending advertising messages. Place-based helps you target” (Whittle in Apple 1993, 100). Whittle cast the theme of broader educational reform (via the Edison Project) in similar terms: “Think of this as eight to ten hours of programming to a young audience … Think of generating ideas that inform and entertain in several media” (Whittle in DeVaney 1994a, 4). The advertisers themselves were equally clear: “Channel One provides an excellent targeting opportunity” (Apple 1993, 100). It initially was successful enough that Whittle raised his rates from $150,000 per thirty second ad to $200,000 in a very short time (DeVaney 1994a, 2). Channel One and the related ventures Whittle spawned was clearly a neoliberal case of turning business philanthropy in the public schools for the common good on its head. This educational benefit and reform was a means of profit by providing a window to advertise to a specific, targeted, and stable audience.

Whittle Communications, Channel One, and the Edison Project were not unrivaled successes. Whittle himself lacked the ability to follow through on his vision, and his ventures beyond Channel One lost money. The Edison Project had a very difficult time raising funds from investors, and the high salaries and lavish spending on a corporate headquarters—along with accounting irregularities and a lack of a management structure to consolidate and run the businesses rather than invent new ventures—bankrupted the company. Whittle and Benno Schmidt fought over control of the company. Channel One was sold off in 1994, and other publishing ventures were shut down; there were layoffs, and Edison was bailed out and restructured in 2004 (Moberg
2004; Molnar 1996, 89-96; Greising 1995; Elliott 1994; Stewart 1994). Why then is Channel One the paradigmatic case in point for advertising in the schools? After all, CNN provided its Newsroom to be recorded and shown in classrooms at about the same time (Erdman 1994), and BusRadio is an example of a tailored service to equip and broadcast to students on their rides to and from school when they are essentially a captive audience as well (Attick 2008).

There are a number of key differences between Whittle’s Channel One and other examples of the practice of advertising in the public schools. First, CNN’s Newsroom does not come with the offer of equipment, nor advertising. It was simply free to the schools if they chose to record it and make it available at the time and place of their choosing on relatively inexpensive VCRs (Barry 1994, 104, 112; Wulfemeyer and Mueller 1990). Channel One’s offer of equipment creates a closed system: it is fixed to their satellite frequencies only, and other content cannot be offered: “the School may use the equipment for other educational or other purposes, provided that the Equipment may not be used by the School to show any other news program, specifically designed for viewing by students and schools and which contains advertising” (ChannelOneHelp.com Terms and Conditions of Network Participation; Apple 1993, 99). Second, the proliferation of personal media (e.g. the transistor radio and earplugs) long predated anything like BusRadio, and obviated its more invasive aspects: students always had the ability simply tune out and listen to something else long before BusRadio was around. Third, the compulsory aspect of viewing Channel One is more elaborated than any other business presence in the schools. Homerooms as appropriate viewing location during
school time are specifically mentioned—and clearly preferred—in Channel One’s current terms and conditions (ChannelOneHelp.com Terms and Conditions of Network Participation). Pedagogical reasons can be given for a difficult or unpleasant reading or an activity in school, but with Channel One “the recalcitrant student who is forced to watch commercials on TV can only be told a story about the payment received from agents fundamentally unconcerned with their educational interests” (Brighouse 2005, 536). Fourth, while Whittle’s ventures failed as businesses under his control, Channel One and Edison still exist and are pursuing the same broad agendas. Channel One was sold again (from Primedia to Alloy Media and Marketing) in 2007 and NBC News now provides its news content; there is a reported commitment to reinvest in the technology and programming (Miller 2007). Edison was bailed out with the political backing of Florida Republicans in an effort to salvage the ideology of vouchers and private school reform (Moberg 2004). Initially, the new incarnation of Edison (http://www.edisonlearning.com) marketed itself as a firm to manage public school systems, but after some high-profile problems and loss of contracts (Philadelphia was the most notable), it is now cast as a diversified private educational service provider of supplemental services like tutoring, summer school and testing (Graham 2008; Glassman

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13 In contrast, the beginnings of educational television in the 1950s were funded by the Ford Foundation and through the National Defense Education Act and were done for the public good (however construed or now-contested), without a profit interest in the curricula or the equipment (DeVaney 1994a, 4).
Last, Whittle personally and professionally allied himself with the agenda of and the political personages identified with neoliberal school reform.

**Conclusion**

Channel One is paradigmatic in several senses: it was/is billed as a legitimate educational reform solving a real problem; it was/is cast as a free business benefit to the schools in the form of its content and equipment; its terms and conditions place it as a mandatory element during instructional time (and thus, minimally, in direct relationship to the curriculum if not often insinuated into it); advertising is a mandatory part of its content, and its terms and conditions maintain an exclusive advertising right to the time and the channel of communication. It is worth noting again that the audience—students in the classroom—by law in a democracy are mandated to be in present. Channel One, more than any other medium of advertising in the public schools, creates a captive audience for its programming and advertisements. Whittle’s business and personal agendas were clearly allied to the means, agenda, and the political thrust of neoliberal educational reforms. In other words, the paradigmatic case of advertising in the public schools is closely linked to the broader trend of neoliberalism and its manifestations in education.

There is a substantial body of literature interrogating advertising theoretically and empirically. Further, Whittle and the initiatives he came to personify have generated

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14 Like EdisonLearning, the new Channel One provides a suite of web services for teachers and supplemental materials for the students.
their own cottage industry of analysis and critique, along with the practice of advertising in the public schools. With Channel One established as the clearest case of advertising in the schools, Chapter 3 will review those broad critiques, and characterize the analysis of Channel One within those frames, particularly as it relates to the vibrancy and future of democracy.
Chapter 3

Critiques of Advertising: From the Theoretical to the Empirical

Introduction

There is a substantial literature theoretically interrogating consumption, advertising, and the media. At the same time, there is a large amount of parallel scholarship empirically investigating the effects of advertising—including a substantial subset which focuses on children and adolescents. The next step with this chapter is to review, in redacted form, the theoretical and empirical critiques of advertising, relate those to the extant critiques of Channel One, and assess their efficacy in relationship to the concerns of democratic theory. Since the theoretical literature is so deep and sophisticated, it must be winnowed down to three broad themes concerning advertising that are themselves highly interrelated: the commodification critique, the manipulation critique, and the irrationalism critique. This approach is taken for two practical reasons. The first, already mentioned, is the scope of that literature. But beyond a necessary winnowing, when viewing advertising aimed at children and adolescents, a series of broader issues and concerns do not yet present themselves. For instance, in Schor’s (1999) gloss on the six classic assumptions about consumers\(^1\) none apply—or apply

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\(^1\) Consumers are rational, well-informed, consistent, and independent; their choices are effect-neutral and there are alternates to markets and consumption.
comfortably—to children and adolescents.\(^2\) Without preempting the discussion to come of the empirical investigations of advertising to children and adolescents, it is precisely the development of those very behaviors and traits assumed of consumers that is the reason for the focus on advertising to them. It is important what advertised foods contain and how those ingredients affect key times of physical growth and mental development in children; it is important to look at the models of behavior in advertisements in regards to psychological maturation of teenagers and the formation of healthy relationships and identities (Molnar et al. 2010a; Calvert 2008, 218-219; Lemish 2008, 153-155). The abstract political concerns of public goods (Ver Eecke 1999; 1998), the political nature of consumer choice (Schudson 2006; Cohen 2003), lifestyle and identity formation through consumption choices (Slater 2005; Featherstone 2000), the effects of consumer-like choice on religious life (Miller 2008b; 2007), or the global and postmodern aspects of consumption (Zukin and Maguire 2004; Jameson 1998) recede in the face of worries about the chemical effects of food dyes on children (Harris 2011) or a sudden rise in eating disorders among groups of teenage girls (Rabin 2011). A review of the theoretical themes of commodification, manipulation, and irrationalism speaks to this specific context more directly.

One further qualification is in order. It is quite often claimed, particularly in the popular media, that new technologies will fundamentally change the nature of communication and learning, and thus fundamental relationships of advertising and

\(^2\) This is confirmed in the literature review on adult target marketing by Grier and Kumanyika (2010, 355-356) and in the discussion by Kunkel on the history of regulation of children’s television (2001, 385-389).
consumption.\textsuperscript{3} The “this changes everything” approach is less an argument than a bandwagon effect which has been answered by a long line of scholarship. For example, the iPod evoked sweeping claims like "playlist is character" and that it offers "an entire way of viewing the world" and the ability "to transform civilization, and with it human nature" (Sisario 2006). Segal has long documented American technological utopianism, noting that there are consistent, broad assumptions that new technologies “will make [us] healthier, happier, more efficient, more productive, and more democratic than ever before … [and] will dwarf in impact all prior technological advances, … so profoundly different will the future be from the past” that it can be safely ignored (1995, 173; 2005). Miller (2003) notes the acceleration and intensification of extant marketing and advertising practices, and Cuban (1986) has documented prior claims of fundamental learning changes made on behalf of earlier technologies. In turn, the early development of hypermedia sought to imitate the visual environment of MTV (Schlusselberg and Harward 1992). Media corporations have continued to grow, expand their reach, and merge into larger units even as the technologies of communication constantly morph (Bennet 2004; DiMaggio et al. 2001). And it is widely agreed that the effect of much of this is further market segmentation, highly targeted and personal advertising, and a globalized consumer culture (Wilson and Peterson 2002; Flew and McElhinney 2002; DiMaggio et al. 2001). It is the explicit assertion here that contemporary new modes of communication represent a variation on and an extension of existing advertising and

\textsuperscript{3} It is argued here that analyses of new communications technologies are often reifications of the marketing categories used to promote them (Buschman 2007).
marketing practices and purposes. With this background and context in place, the three broad theoretical critiques of advertising will be reviewed, followed by a review of the empirical investigations of advertising to children and adolescents, and the chapter will conclude with a review of the critiques of Channel One in light of this context.

The Commodification Critique of Advertising

The commodification critique begins, of course, with Marx. The purpose here is not to extensively review Marx’s analysis and the uses to which he—and later Marxist scholars—put the concept. That has been done, and done well many times (Miller 2003, 32-72; Slater 1997, 106-130; Zeitlin 1990, 86-123). Marx himself summarized much of the basis of his own thinking:

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of

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4 There were relevant examples in some of the illustrations given in Chapter 2, but the marketing literature itself is very explicit. It tends to read into the changing landscape fundamental social change: “There was a time when advertising was the same. Slick marketing messages conceived in Madison Avenue high-rises delivered mass-marketing style via broadcast and print were consumed and believed by the buying public” (Chaney 2009, 5). While the language is now about “conversation” and “participation” in a “community” (Chaney 2009, 41-42), the goal is precisely the same: “efficiently reach audiences in the ways most relevant to them and at unprecedented speeds. … The paradigm is no longer based on … grabbing attention for your product but on a more nuanced approach … [and] to recession-proof their brands through networks they own and control” by developing and participating in social media outlets (Mendenhall 2009) and coordinated “360-degree marketing” through all media from television through cell phones (Richtel 2011).
society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been working hitherto. (1978b, 4)

Marx held that labor produced value: the value of objects was in their utility and the labor that produced it; exchange transformed the results of production and it was these relations of production (exchange and not utility or labor) that underwrote society under industrializing capitalism (1978a, 307-308). The weaknesses of Marx’s “scientific” analysis and the playing-out of those ideas in later Marxist analyses have been extensively analyzed. For instance, the prediction that capitalism would exhaust itself and end in the contradictions of mass production has proven “anachronistic”; consumption is now deeply entangled with culture and identity, and utterly unmoored from production (Gilbert 2008, 554-557; Nava 1987; Miller 1987, 34-49). By the standards of its own analysis, Marxism failed:

[W]hen one defines a “real need” as a standard by which the “false ones” experienced by modern consumers can be judged as false [as the Frankfurt theorists did], one is making statements about the “real” or “essential” nature of the human (one is engaging in philosophical anthropology). To do so, however, is to engage in precisely the kind of reified thinking that the whole tradition is devoted to challenging. (Slater 1997, 129)

5 This is an opinion held by most 19th century Americans, particularly radical Jacksonian democrats according to Shklar (1990, 416).

6 Foner notes that the question “why is/was there no socialism in America” has been debated since Sombart raised it at the turn of the twentieth century, and that it is the central, driving issue behind the vast literature on American exceptionalism: “Marx and Engels themselves occasionally sought to solve the riddle of America, the land where, as Marx once put it, capitalism had developed more ‘shamelessly’ than in any other country” (1984, 57). Foner concludes the question is ahistorical, American exceptionalism has been overdrawn, the question privileges socialism as the alternative and asks a “Marxist question ... [of] a non-Marxist outcome” (1984, 73-74). The issue still engages scholars (Koh 2003; Leikin 1999). Shklar’s solution rests in the meaning of the persistent historical quest for citizenship: “the word slave in America was not a mere metaphor for reduced political independence”; “citizenship had from the first demanded free earners”; thus earning embodied freedom, opportunity, and the whole political purpose of full political standing (1990, 396, 428).
However, Marx hit on fundamental critical insights into the workings of capitalism that are the basis of contemporary analyses of advertising. In simple terms, the conditions of labor under capitalism produce alienation. While “the worker puts his life into the object” in producing it, the wage system separates the organic whole of worker, the materials worked with, and the environment in which work takes place (Marx 1978c, 72). This “estrangement” (alienation) of worker and the product of work objectifies the item produced: “the product of labour is labour which has been congealed in an object” (Marx 1978c, 71-72). The combination of alienation and objectification allows production (the product of work) and laboring itself to become even further abstracted as a commodity, a mystified thing (Marx 1978c, 70-71; 1978d 247). Under the social and economic relationships of capitalism, that which is commodified “assumes … the fantastic form of a relation between things”; that is, radically commensurate in the form of money (or exchange-value in Marx’s term) and torn loose from a former organic connection to human work, use-value, and society (Marx 1978a, 320-321). The Christian west is particularly susceptible to this result “with its cultus of abstract man” (Marx 1978a, 326). In the environment of capitalism commodified goods “become objects of gratification, of individual appropriation” in consumption (Marx 1978d, 227).

As has been critiqued, Marx deeply entangled production and consumption: “production produces consumption” and the person of the consumer (1978d, 230). However, Marx interlaced his more structural analyses with critical insights that still bear attention. Through the production of finish and surface, commodified products have
attributes inscribed in them and ascribed to them, and those help create needs and the motivation to consume. For instance, in a capitalist culture, art is a commodity that “creates a public which is sensitive to art and enjoys beauty” (Marx 1978d, 230). Further, Marx lyrically described the radical changes and innovations of capitalism, but also the consequences of its competitive drive. The massive expansions of productive output “requires the production of new consumption” (Marx in Slater 1997, 109; Miller 2003, 41-42) and radically extended forms of consolidation and organization: “One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation … develop, on an ever-extending scale … the economising of all means of production [and] … the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market” (Marx 1978a, 437-438). Knowledge itself is commodified: science is not conducted for human good; it has been put to the service of capital (over and against labor) and “invention then becomes a business” (Marx 1978d, 283; 1978c, 107-108).

While this is admittedly a redacted, cleaned-up reading of Marx, contemporary critiques of advertising still draw on these basic insights. Even during Marx’s era capitalism was undergoing a “control revolution” which was a response to a “crisis of control” since production, consumption, commodity flow, distribution, and the organization of labor had all outstripped the limits of personal management and organization (Beniger 1989). The response was a combination of technological

7 “What chance has Vulcan against Roberts & Co., Jupiter against the lightning-rod and Hermes against the Credit Mobilier? … [I]s Achilles possible with powder and lead?” (Marx 1978d, 245-246)
communications inventions and social science\textsuperscript{8} soon coupled with early forms of the “new control technologies” like the steam engine, open loop loom controllers, interchangeable parts, accounting, railroads, and the telegraph to harness, direct, and control the explosion in economic output (Beniger 1989, 57-61). There was in turn an extension of communication to customers on a national scale and a bleed-through in more social science research into advertising, marketing, and media to stimulate and direct consumption to snap up this production (Beniger 1989, 61-63; 1986). For Marxist scholars the analysis of this early saturation of capital expansion entangled with knowledge, information, and communication led to a key idea: the means of communication were not a second-order epiphenomena of the superstructure, but rather highly integrated into production, including that of material life: the means of communication were also a means of production (Williams 1980, 50-53). Or, put another way, the human as a “symbol-using animal” was integrally related to Marx’s grounding in the human as a working animal (Smythe 1994, 258). Several lines of analysis flowed from this, directly related to the commodification critique of advertising.

First and simplest, early industry sought to extend the Taylorist principles of production (Scientific Management, itself part of the intellectual control of work) into the “steady movement of commodities [and] … systematizing the management of consumption,” a task that fell to advertising to produce the consumer (Webster and Robins 1989, 334-335; Leiss, Kline and Jhally 2000; Miller 2003, 43-46). It would then

\textsuperscript{8} Bureaucratic rationalization (as analyzed by Weber) was the first answer to this crisis according to Beniger (1989). To be clear, Beniger’s study places these developments firmly within a Weberian rationalization framework.
come as no surprise that, as the economy became more information- and communication-based in the form of the post-industrial and then information society, Marxist analyses would stress the capital control of information, communication, and its distribution (Bagdikian, 2004; Webster 2000; McChesney, 1999; Schiller, 1989; Robins and Webster 1989). Advertising was simply an extension of economic direction and control. That analysis was then extended to the purposes and direction of cultural and educational institutions (Harris, Hannah, and Harris 1998; Buschman and Carbone 1996), and the commodification and standardization of information itself (Quinn 2000; Budd 1997). This perspective crops up in the later discussion of Channel One as a “natural” extension of this logic into the classroom in the form of advertising.

The second critique flowing from commodification looks at the consumer. Initially, the leisure produced by the move away from agriculture to a factory-and-wage system was simply and literally “free” time (Smythe 1995, 224-225). Shopping was constructed to fill some of this time, centered on the increasing centrality of fashion, the growth in the availability and variety of clothing (along, of course, with the textile industries), the single family home, and the available time of women (Leach 1984; Fine and Leopold 2001, 214-215; Miller 2003, 46-50). More broadly, leisure as a whole began to be commodified, turned into a “sphere of activity [where] it is necessary to purchase items for use in the activity rather than rely on items ready at hand or home-

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9 The clearest brief explication of this shift can be found in Harris, Hannah, and Harris (1998).

10 To be sure these new products and marketing arrangements genuinely did spare women drudgery and new urban spaces like department stores provided them reason to be in public or to be together without men (Zukin and Maguire, 2004).
made” (Butsch 1984, 217). Children’s and adult’s activities as diverse as sports, model airplanes, being a part of an audience, and camping were organized as activities needing commodity products to realize the leisure, which were then advertised and sold (Butsch 1990; 1984). Dallas Smythe theorized the audience themselves that these activities were designed for as both a commodity and as workers: the audience-as-commodity is assembled through communication (magazines, radio, television initially) and sold to the advertiser of a product, “the work which audience members perform for the advertiser to whom they have been sold is learning to buy goods and to spend their income accordingly” (1995, 222). Smythe does complicate this simple picture. However, the logical extension of his ideas is clearly the *modus operandi* of contemporary advertising as we have seen: targeted advertising delivered to ever-finer demographic slices via any medium at opportune times. Certainly children are one of those demographics with specialized advertising of tailored products aimed at their spending power (Molnar 2009; Wasko 2008). From here, contemporary Marxist analyses have identified a third form or stage of commodified information-and-work: “immaterial labor.” The first form was, broadly, the control revolution already referred to; the second the “symbolic analytic” work of management and manipulation of data to create commodified value; the third is “immaterial labor”—the “production and manipulation of affect” defined by the production a feeling of well-being and care (Hardt and Negri in Dyer-Witheford 2001, 70-72). This takes place, for instance, in the hotel, tourism, restaurant, and amusement

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11 In a complex (and he argues, stressful) process, the consumer must decide “how your life’s problems interact with the advertising” and whether or not “the class of commodities which have been produced … will really serve their advertised purpose”—often doing so by simply and mechanically limiting the amount of purchasing and time spent deciding (Smythe 1995, 223-224).
park industries. Advertising represents two stages of this work (the symbolic analytic
demographic and cultural analysis of assembling and delivering audiences, and making
those audiences feel fulfilled through consumption). This concept has been more
recently extended into capturing and re-marketing the participation (unpaid immaterial
labor) of interactive gamers (mostly children and adolescents) in shaping games and other
Web 2.0 applications to be marketed or honed as advertising venues (Dyer-Witheford
2009), and/or in capturing user feedback to shape institutions (Stevenson 2010).

The third strand of critique is the deep commodification of culture. Again, as
labor and the products of labor became more immaterial, the economy itself has become
a matter of aesthetic churn:

[A]esthetic production today has become integrated into commodity
production generally: the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh
waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to airplanes), at
ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential
structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and
experimentation. (Jameson 1984, 56)

This is largely mediated through advertising and extends to the marketing of spectacles,
events, and experiences—Super Bowl halftime shows and their commercials are good
examples (Jameson 1998, 19-20; Harvey 1990, 284-307). Products themselves (material
and immaterial) are developed as concepts, the better to integrate and organize everything
which has an effect on production, including feedback from marketing and advertising to
help shape the product (Slater 2003, 106; Mackay 1995, 48-49). The simultaneous
radical extension of advertising, marketing, and consumption all the way into identity
formation (Slater 2005, 179-181) is combined with the extraordinary polish of
presentation in advertising which produces a “second skin ... completely disembodied and ... unencumbered ... preparing the way for the real distribution of the commodity” (Haug 2000, 242). One need not be a committed postmodernist to generate a worried or pessimistic analysis that the commodification-based culture of capitalism has the “power to turn anything into a product to be packaged, sold, and consumed ... [and] any ‘content’ or belief ... into a commodity, which can then be handled according to capitalism’s laws of exchange”—up to and including dissent from and critique of capitalism (Miller 2000, 279-281). For instance, the communitarian/small town, progressive, and green lifestyles all have saleable goods (from real estate to organic produce) designed for them (Holt 1999). It is little wonder that later Marxism became pessimistic, seeing this environment as “one-dimensional” or “depthless,” effectively immune from critique (Marcuse 1964; Jameson 1984).

**The Manipulation Critique of Advertising**

The commodification critique forms much of the framework of these later critiques of advertising. The manipulation critique is one, and has two classic sources.

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12 Baudrillard’s analysis culminates in “the endless reduplication of signs, images and simulations through the media which effaces the distinction between the image and reality. Hence the consumer society becomes essentially cultural.... The overproduction of signs and reproduction of images and simulation leads to a loss of stable meaning, and an aestheticisation of reality [characterized] by the endless flow of bizarre juxtapositions which takes the viewer beyond stable sense” (Featherstone 1990, 7; Baudrillard 1988).
Chronologically, the first is the culture industry analysis from the Frankfurt School.¹³

The Frankfurt School theorists were in exile from Germany, and their work responded to the manipulations of the (then) new media forms by the Nazis (Kellner 2005; Held 1980, 426N89). This vein of their work ranged far and wide, beyond advertising *per se*: they analyzed jazz, popular music, television, horoscopes, magazines, popular literature, and radio soap operas (Kellner 2005; Held 1980, 90-104). In its essence, their argument is that capitalist production is uniform: “mechanically differentiated products prove to be all alike in the end. … What connoisseurs discuss as good or bad points serve only to perpetuate the semblance of competition and range of choice” (Adorno and Horkheimer 2000, 5; Adorno 1975, 12-13). At base, putting the output of production into the hands of consumers is a matter of manipulation, with advertising as a core function:

> The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises. The promissory note which, with its plots and staging, it draws on pleasure is endlessly prolonged; the promise, which is actually all the spectacle consists of, is illusory: all it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the diner must be satisfied with the menu. In front of the appetite stimulated by all those brilliant names and images there is finally set no more than a commendation of the depressing everyday world it sought to escape. (Adorno and Horkheimer 2000, 11)

Three interrelated problems result from this. First is the reduction of people to data—the better to measure and then manipulate them with culture industry production (Adorno and Horkheimer 2000, 5, 11; Held 1980, 91, 106-107). The second is that the “entire practice”

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¹³ Represented here primarily by Adorno and Horkheimer, the Frankfurt School was neither limited to them nor unitary as Held (1980) and Kellner (2005) make clear. These authors, along with Slater (1997) and Miller (2003), also make it clear that the Frankfurt theorists were early iterations of the critique of the commodification of culture. For instance, Adorno noted that “the cultural commodities of the industry are governed … by the principle of their realization as value” (1975, 13). It was these critiques that later authors extended into postmodern contexts.
of the culture industries “transfers the profit motive naked onto cultural forms. … Cultural entities … are no longer also commodities,” and are no longer evaluated “by their own specific content and harmonious formation” (Adorno 1975, 13). In other words, independent cultural forms of expression and resistance (art) are undermined and/or obviated by the productions and operation of the culture industry (Adorno and Horkheimer 2000). The third result is the social and psychological effect of desires stimulated by advertising that can never be fulfilled. Adorno and Horkheimer labeled the process repressive (2000, 12). It was famously captured in an epigram: “mass culture is psychoanalysis in reverse” (Lowenthal in Held 1980, 96). The bottom line for Adorno is that the process of the culture industry “impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves” (1975, 19).

The second major source of the manipulation critique comes from Galbraith. He starts out with the conundrum. Wants seem not to become “less urgent” the more they are satisfied, and he concludes there is a flaw: “If the individual’s wants are to be urgent, they must be original with himself. They cannot be urgent if they must be contrived for him. And above all, they must not be contrived by the process of production by which they are satisfied” (Galbraith 2000, 217). We live in an economy and society which is organized around and depends upon the production of wants, and “modern advertising and salesmanship” is at the core of that relationship: “the path for an expansion of output must be paved by a suitable expansion in the advertising budget” (Galbraith 2000, 219). Demand for goods for Galbraith is almost entirely manipulated and contrived (2000, 221-
It is a “revised sequence” for him: “if needs are not exogenous then markets cannot even be said to exist; and prices cannot, by definition, represent optimal allocation of resources. The very idea becomes meaningless” (Slater 1997, 50). The evidence is abundant. Galbraith and others point out that expenditures on advertising did in fact explode during the twentieth century (2000, 219; Bogart 2000, 74-78; Schiller 1995), and businesses themselves proclaimed the principle: “Our enormously productive economy … demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfactions, our ego satisfactions, in consumption…. We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever increasing rate” (Lebow in Packard 2000, 226).

This theoretical perspective has drawn serious challenges, some of which have already been reviewed here. More specifically, however slight the differences produced in consumer goods to differentiate them and/or appeal to a niche of the market and however much those minor differences are overblown in advertising, they are

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14 Vance Packard (2000) was a popularizer of this view in the mid-twentieth century. In a related (and interesting) side note, an extensive series of consumer studies was reviewed during this same time testing Riesman’s thesis on the other-directed society. Riesman concluded that industrialized society was producing a shift in orientation: “success … is not through production and hard work but rather through one’s ability to be liked by others, develop charm or ‘personality,’ and manipulate other people”—with clear implications for advertising and consumption (Kassarjian 1971, 414). While the literature review was inconclusive on the relationship between personality and consumer behavior (Kassarjian 1971, 414), one study showed that advertising itself changed during this time toward aiming at other-directed motivations to purchase (Dornbusch and Hickman 1959).

15 Slater (1997, 126-130) and Held (1980, 249-253) provide good summaries of the debates and critiques within the sphere of the Frankfurt School. Campbell (2000), Slater (2005), Gilbert (2008), and Schudson (1991; 2007) do not directly address the Frankfurt School critiques per se, but give a good idea of the influence of postmodern thought that directly attempts to counter the falseness of consumer choice, the deformation of identities, and the undiluted ability of the media and advertising to manipulate. Some of these ideas and sources were also reviewed in the Introduction in the sections concerning those who either defend consumption or question the harm.
experienced by consumers (especially women) as real differences: “denying the status of those aspirations as legitimate desires for a materially better, more enjoyable life” opens those who put forward the manipulation critique to charges of elitism and sexism (Gilbert 2008, 555). Campbell points out (contra Galbraith) that wants can be insatiable and inherent and irrational, research into manipulation has neglected looking at the individual’s receipt of messages and what they do with them, that gratification by purchasing may well be fulfilled by consuming the images and ideas linked to the product, and that this affective aspect cannot automatically be ruled out of the categories of rational thought and choice (2000, 48-62). Historically, others have challenged the newness of the phenomena of wants and consumption, for instance in noting the early and continuing demand for fashion (Fine and Leopold 2001), that there was throughout the twentieth century a persistent demand for consumer items independent of their “creation” and promotion by advertising (Martin 1999), and that divining the true merits of the goods behind an advertisement and the competition that advertising engendered has long been noted and debated (Williams 1980, 170-177).

Yet the manipulation critique persists, and for good reasons. Schor’s conclusions from her research (1999; 1998) have consistently pointed to the role of media in modeling lifestyle aspirations in selling goods. “The abominably constrictive ‘needs’ have had their day as the principle motive of consumption…. ‘The wish replaces desire as the motivating force of consumption’” (Bauman 2001, 14). And in fact advertising has long played to this more sophisticated field of forces. The broad idea of advertising’s use of market segmentation and television “narrowcasting” have been around since at least
the mid-twentieth century in promoting the consumption-intensive (and isolating) single-family home (Cohen 2003, 300-302). New communications technologies do not necessarily mean that tailored advertising and marketing efforts delivered in new media are not themselves mass-produced—that, after all, is what the technologies afford. Advertising early on “sold” the idea (life-style) of being an American (Americanization) to immigrants to induce patriotism (Ewen 1976, 64-65). And if the “life-style” of style is not realizable in life, it is nevertheless the most constantly available lexicon—available for endless churning, harvesting, exploiting, and recombining of elements by advertising to elicit everything from insecurity to desires to actual wants (Ewen 1988, 20). Advertising also manipulates by withholding and distorting information (Parenti 1988, 64). Television commercials then “invite” debunking and cynicism to sell in cool/ironic/hip ways—with the result that all attempts to analyze this type of output “does nothing but fuel the machine” (Frank 1998, 20).

Even this is nothing new. The overblown and manipulative claims of early twentieth century advertising brought skepticism, which in turn was played on advertisements: “the development of a knowing, sophisticated, humorous advertising, which acknowledged the skepticism and made claims either casual and offhand or so ludicrously exaggerated as to include the critical response. Thus it became possible to ‘know all the arguments’ against advertising, and yet accept” it anyway (Williams 1980, 181). Almost all of these themes show up undiluted in analyses of politics and the melding of advertising methods onto political communication: the “selling of consent” for policies or government action through the blending of advertising, public relations,
and even gaming (Ebo 1995; Chomsky 1993; Phelan 1991); the creation of images or “events” affecting policy, elections, and political climate (Harvey 2007b; Hitchens 2007, 6; Westbrook 1983); the degradation of the quality of news and information and the willingness to engage it for democratic purposes (Keum et al. 2004; Gandy 2002, 452-456); and the political cynicism generated by manipulation, inversion, and outright lying when politics are conducted through metaphors and means of consumption (Sunstein 2007, 119-137; Frank 1999; Boggs 1997). All of this “I-know-you-know-I-know” manipulation and winking interplay between advertiser and consumer in numerous and tailored venues may be rich fodder for postmodern analysis, but “when these tactics revolve around [children], and blur the line between advertising and entertainment, they are a source of intens[e] concern for … children’s advocates” since they are not privy to the game-within-the-game insights at play (Richtel 2011).

**The Irrationalism Critique of Advertising**

The irrationalism critique of advertising is in turn rooted in the historical processes of destabilizing meaning—often through advertising. The examples are too numerous to meaningfully tally, but reviewing a small subset is instructive. Ewen cites a Neiman-Marcus advertisement in which the image of a classic beauty accompanied by text in a classic typeface on seeking out luxurious women’s clothing (“Attitude is strolling the avenue”) is juxtaposed with the image of a reclining Middle Eastern-ish woman wearing the head scarf of a Palestinian with graffiti-like text noting that “Latitude is dressing to please yourself” and “loving the street life” (1988, 15-16). The symbols of
identity, strife, and conflict (scarf, graffiti, the street) are taken utterly out of context and sexualized—much like the “paramilitary mode” of faux camouflage and bomber jackets draped on models (Ewen 1988, 18-19). All are available for purchase alongside other goods advertised/inscribed equally differently (e.g. childhood innocence, rock-star grunge, preppy informality, evening clothes, etc.) and juxtaposed at the same shopping venue. Disney famously reproduced the form of the old fashioned small town square, placing it such that a juxtaposed view of a faux-European castle was available—all the better to promote and induce attendance at his amusement parks (Spring 2003, 197).

Religious symbols and expressions are marketed on t-shirts and as decorating accessories, or “experienced” and then captured and marketed as a series of books on a particular religious “lifestyle” (Miller 2003, 4, 89). This is no longer new: thirty years ago a famous hairstylist had a daytime television show that featured cooking demonstrations, diet and beauty hints, health information, and in one show a feature on incest (Postman 1981, 384). Even further back Lefebvre saw the early glossy graphic magazine advertisements as injecting fantasy into rural cultures and destabilizing “the consumer’s already constituted world” (Miller 2003, 57). The resulting cultural interplay is “less like deliberation than immersion” (Gitlin 1991, 16), with everything image and consumer good commensurate, consumed alike (Robins 1994). We can stop short of Baudrillard’s ecstasy of signification and still recognize that there are profound social and moral implications when what we consume is mediated through abstracted, decontextualized
Neil Postman draws out further conclusions from this state of affairs. He comes at the question both from the theoretical basis outlined here, and from a broader school of media and technology critique (Strate 2004; Barnes and Strate 1996). For Postman, ways of looking at things (theories), organizing them, and managing them are useful simplifications that help people deal with complexities (2004, 5). The written and printed word is such a tool. It framed and set the horizons of our thinking environment, and it had an epistemology and a curriculum: an “information system whose purpose, in its totality, is to influence, teach, train, or cultivate the mind” (Postman 1979, 49; 1985, 16-29). In other words, our forms of communication (media) constitute our concepts of information, knowledge, value, and ideas, and the written word “has a content: a semantic, paraphrasable, propositional content” that promotes reason as we have understood it—and democracy (Postman 1985, 49, 30-63). The new, visual-based media do away with this altogether: “pictures ask to be recognized; words ask to be understood” (Postman 1988, 46). Advertising is one of the most prominent venues erasing meaning via the stability of thought and symbols. A 1987 study led by Postman found in one month of televised beer commercials (aimed at men) fourteen different frames and uses of symbolic and cultural images for thirteen different beers (Postman et al. 1987). Children, of course, watch those commercials. A fast food restaurant

\[16\] Miller is poignant on this: there is something wrong about a toy factory system in China that works a young woman to death “making things that we try not to call shit” (2003, 16), and Pollan is ruthless exposing the depredations of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) in producing the meat we eat, purchased in sanitary packages and abstracted in convenient cuts in supermarket chillers (2006).
commercial is not a proposition or a testable assertion for Postman; rather, “it is a drama, a mythology if you will, of handsome people selling, buying, and eating hamburgers, and being driven near to ecstasy by their good fortune” (1988, 42). Advertising is a discourse “immune to truth,” in fact sweeping the building blocks of reason and truth away: such elements “are as scarce [in advertisements] as unattractive people” (Postman 1988, 42). All of this is profoundly irrational—essentially changing what it means to know and think. The process has no moral or social limits, and the search for more images to exploit is endless since their use in advertising lessens the potency of the image and more must be found (Postman 1992, 165). Rosen states the irrationalism critique succinctly: “It is not that print is dying, and with it abstract sequential thought…. These statements are true, but they fail to account for what else is happening: … the search for the ‘responsive chord’ is crowding out all other impulses” (1992, 23).

These new means of communication have profound implications for children and education (Postman 1979). Put at its most basic, television is watched during the time when unconscious learning and observation is most intense in children (1.5 to 13 years of age), and though the “lessons” of television blend with primary processes of direct development (direct social engagement—most typically the immediate family environment), television and its commercials refract and shape the myths and symbols of

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17 Imagine, Postman writes, “Jesus is standing alone in a desert oasis. A gentle breeze flutters the leaves of the stately palms behind him. Soft Mideastern music caresses the air. Jesus holds in his hand a bottle of [California Chardonnay] at which he gazes adoringly. Turning toward the camera, he says, ‘When I transformed water into wine at Cana, this is what I had in mind. Try it today. You’ll become a believer.’” He notes that if this seems far-fetched, consider the advertisement with the combination of the image of Uncle Sam pitching Hebrew National brand hot dogs with their slogan that “We have to answer to a Higher Authority” (Postman 1992, 164-165).
children’s cultural learning and their conceptual and analytical decoding of content “undifferentiated in its accessibility” (Postman 1981, 384; Postman et al. 1987, 8-10). So while beer commercials are aimed at men, they are watched by children and provide answers to questions like what is it that men do? What do they value? How do they relate to women? What are the roles of women? (Postman et al. 1987, 44) The results are profoundly and developmentally irrational for Postman: obliterating the developmental differences between adults and children and producing child-like adults and adult-like children (1987; 1983; 1981).\(^{18}\) It is yet another result of our “great uncontrolled experiment which involves submitting all of our institutions to the sovereignty of these new media” (Postman 1988, 40). Politically, it means substituting images and feelings for ideas, policy proposals, and arguments, and turning public affairs over to entertainers (Postman 1988, 43-44).\(^{19}\)

In sum, these three increasingly-specific theoretical critiques of advertising do bear on political and children’s issues: for instance, children’s leisure has been commodified, they are relative innocents in the interplay of advertising’s manipulation, and the irrational biases of media advertising undermine fundamental categories allowing teaching and learning as we have understood them. It is not as if these theoretical critiques have had no connection to empirical circumstances. After all, Postman worries

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\(^{18}\) The world-wise smart-aleck kids and the buffoonish adults of TV sitcoms are the prime examples.

\(^{19}\) As early as 1969 Postman observed that the press of all types were filled with the opinions of those “who are in no position to render informed judgments on what they are talking about: like Joey Bishop on the sociological implications of drugs, Johnny Carson on education innovation, Ronald Reagan on the Pueblo incident, David Susskind on anything, and Hugh Downs on menopause” (Postman in Strate 2003-2004, 344).
about the known developmental stages of children, and the actual statements of businessmen and advertisements have formed much of the fodder of these analyses to give two instances. But as noted, there have been empirical investigations of advertising and children which go well beyond these bases, and they form a different basis of critique. This literature is itself enormous, but the scholarly tools of handbooks and literature reviews have made the overall results accessible for our purposes here. They will be reviewed next.

**The Empirical Critiques of Advertising**

To begin our review, some context will be established at the outset and can then be assumed throughout because they are almost always repeated in some form in empirical investigations of advertising to children and adolescents. First, children are immersed in enormous amounts of media, and have been for some time now: from ten hours per week in the 1930s (mostly movies and radio), to a little over fourteen hours per week in the 1980s (of television alone), 38 hours per week in 1999 with all media such as television, movies, computers, videogames, etc., and now 6.5 hours *per day* with them (Wartella and Robb 2008, 9; Wasko 2008, 463). Second, the spending power of children and adolescents is large. Again, conservative estimates begin at $18 billion and reach $78.5 billion of direct spending annually, with influence on another $500-$700 billion in parental purchase decisions (Molnar 2009; Calvert 2008, 207; Wasko 2008, 462). Third, the media are and have been saturated with advertising. The most oft-repeated datum is that, by the end of the 20th century, children and adolescents viewed 40,000
advertisements per year on television alone (American Academy of Pediatrics 2006), and ads are saturating new media as well (Richtel 2011; Grier and Kumanyika 2010, 354; Molnar 2009; Calvert 2008; Linn and Novosat 2008, 144-147). At the same time, children and adolescents still view advertisements directed at adults. This overview will not review specific techniques of advertising20 (such as repetition, animation, viral video, or behavioral profiling) and their efficacy. Those investigations tend to be the purview of those strands of psychology and social psychology devoted to or used in marketing and its research (Jacoby, Johar, and Morrin 1998). Finally, while there is skepticism among researchers on the persuasive effects on consumers of advertising after reviewing years of research, these overall results concern adults (DellaVigna and Gentkow 2009, 6). Children and adolescents cannot be assumed to possess the basic rational bases of information, choice, etc. that marketers and the neoliberal environment make about consumers. With this context, this overview will focus on four broad themes within the empirical literature: developmental issues (when does the understanding develop that advertising has a different purpose than the program being watched or the game being played?), content (what is/has been advertised to children and adolescents and what have been the effects?), forms of socialization (what are the effects of advertising on gender roles, body image, and consumption for social acceptance?), and materialism. Each will be reviewed in order.

**Developmental Issues**

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20 These have been well covered by Grier and Kumanyika (2010), Linn and Novosat (2008), Calvert (2008, 207-212), Wasko (2008, 462-465), and Molnar (2009).
The core idea behind developmental concerns is that “children’s cognitive, emotional, and social skills develop over time. Children use, make meaning, and derive pleasure out of [media and their advertising] with the skills and tools that they acquire with age and experience. As they mature, their tastes as well as the nature of their interactions … change dramatically, along with what they take away with them in the process” (Lemish 2008, 154). This rather benign statement tends to glide over the overwhelming presence of media and advertising as an environment in which children develop. There is broad agreement that development occurs in stages: the perceptual (roughly to age six or seven dealing with how things look and sound and the idea of appearance vs. reality), the analytical (roughly to age eleven inferring time-order or causal connections, and reality vs. plausibility), and the reflective (roughly to age sixteen, developing hypothetical reasoning and reflecting on information and other learning) (Calvert 2008, 215; Wilson 2007). Therefore, children process advertisements in differing ways at differing stages of development. They recognize characters, know what stores they are sold in, make their first purchase (often without yet understanding the difference between commercials and the programs), then understand the intent of advertising, develop preferences and tastes, evaluate products and know costs, and only then develop skepticism and an awareness of advertising tactics (Jennings 2007; Jennings and Wartella 2007, 150-154, 160-164; Young 2008, 413-417; Kunkel 2001, 378-381). There is in these studies broad agreement that recognition of aspects of advertising (a character, a song, developing a want, not having the want fulfilled and the resulting
unhappiness, and influence on parents’ purchases) long precedes understanding of advertising intent (Jennings and Wartella 2007, 152; Valkenburg 2007; Buijzen and Valkenburg 2007).

More results of advertising on children and adolescents will be discussed in other sections, but developmentally a high level of media use displaces a tremendous amount of time that could have been spent otherwise on more social and healthy activities (Lemish 2008, 152-154; Story and French 2004). Children who are heavy media users are exposed to more commercials, tend to want more of the products advertised which increases pestering and conflict with parents, and growing exposure to and cognitive awareness of advertising’s manipulation can lead to cynicism (Calvert 2008, 218; Scantlin 2007; Buijzen and Valkenburg 2007). Further down the line, the developmental effects of this environment “set[s] the state for future behavioral patterns and attitudes toward media” (Lemish 2008, 156). For instance, older children or younger adolescents tend to identify with brands and the perceived role models of celebrity endorsers, or both together (Mazzarella 2007; Strasburger 2001, 421), and the more sophisticated understanding of product and advertisement among older children/younger adolescents means they tend to frame their interpretation of products through the influence of advertising (Loken 2006, 462). Finally, there are growing indications in a number of studies that there are “long-term effects on behavior, achievements at school, and even attention disorders” (Lemish 2008, 156). There are studies and interpretations of the empirical evidence which argue that the worries over media and advertising are

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21 We will see this effect show up later in empirical critiques of Channel One.
overblown, or that changes and difference do not necessarily mean a bad or worse
developmental environment for children and adolescents (Lemish 2008, 158-162;
Buckingham 2002). One analysis that makes this argument concludes that the
overarching lesson of the research is that experience with media (and advertising) really
must be age appropriate, matched to the needs (physical, emotional, cognitive, social) of
the particular child at that time, and well-mediated by family and learning environments
(Lemish 2008, 164). That seems a bit wishful, given media and advertising saturation. It
is a bit like sending a child outdoors and trying to get them to only breathe the clean air.

Content Issues

In broad terms, the amount of advertising content aimed at the young on
television has remained roughly stable, but that advertising has steadily become more
commercial as the time devoted to informational, public service, and program
announcements has declined (Jennings and Wartella 2007, 155-156; Calvert 2008, 212-213). The content of that advertising has long been dominated by four categories of
products: cereals, candies, toys, and fast food—with restaurants, hygiene products,
clothing, and leisure (music, movies, or amusement parks) accounting for significant
amounts/percentages at various times (Jennings and Wartella 2007, 156-157). The
categorical prevalence of food is linked to an overwhelming contemporary concern over
childhood obesity. “Over 30% of American children are overweight or obese,” with
billions spent specifically to advertise “high-calorie, nutritionally deficient foods” in a
largely unregulated media market (Linn and Novosat 2008, 133-134; Molnar 2009).\(^{22}\) Another study put the figure at 35%, resulting in a probable 36.5% occurrence of Type 2 diabetes in the American population, “caused almost exclusively by diet, inactivity, and obesity” (Harris et al. 2009, 212). The rise in obesity largely mirrors exposure to advertising of these foods, which has increased with the progressive deregulation of the media (Young 2008, 418-419; Linn and Novosat 2008, 133-136).\(^{23}\) The relationship between advertising and consumption of these foods is not merely correlative: the “ads are typically effective in persuading children to like and request the product” (Kunkel 2001, 384). For instance, in a well-known study conducted under well-controlled conditions, exposure to juice or fruit commercials led children in a summer camp to choose juice and fruit as their snack; those who saw candy and Kool Aid commercials chose those (Young 2008, 419). This broad result is backed up by numerous other studies (Young 2008, 418-420; Grier and Kumanyika 2010, 357-358; Kunkel 2001, 384). And while this effect tends to lessen with adolescents (Grier and Kumanyika 2010, 358), the point is that “eating habits formed during childhood often persist throughout life” (Kunkel 2001, 384). Again, there is evidence, correlative and otherwise: adolescent obesity has tripled since 1980 (Linn and Novosat 2008, 133), and significant health problems among African Americans and Latino youth and adults have been linked to

\(^{22}\) Beyond familiar “old media” advertising, these practices are so commonplace and interwoven with food and meals in our culture, it is worth enumerating a few of them if for no other reason than to note their historical novelty. Poor-nutrition foods are coupled with famous cartoon characters and shows, movies, characters in movies, placed in popular prime-time shows (though technically prohibited in children’s shows, these are certainly watched by the young), and placed in games, contests, movie promotions, websites, and schools (Linn and Novosat 2008, 136-144; Calvert 2008, 212).

\(^{23}\) There is also a parallel to the developmental issue of time displacement noted earlier.
targeted marketing of high-calorie, low-nutrition foods to them in numerous studies (Grier and Kumanyika 2010, 355).

Though it has been deregulated considerably, this discussion has largely centered around the most regulated and self-regulated environment of children’s television, which is at least subject to public pressures and the research and opinions of health professionals and organizations (Harris et al. 2009, 216-218; Linn and Novosat 2008, 147-149; Kunkel 2001, 385-388). However, advertising to “adults” in adult venues is almost-completely unregulated and does target children and adolescents with age-inappropriate materials (Calvert 2008, 212-213; Young 2008, 410-411; Scantlin 2007). Two areas of real concern with this content (beyond fast food and junk food) crop up: tobacco and alcohol. Despite a television ban on tobacco ads since 1971, and growing and widespread public opprobrium over the practice,\(^{24}\) tobacco is advertised to adolescents. It is has been done so in the form of the cartoon character of Joe Camel in magazine ads, in behaviors depicted on web sites,\(^ {25}\) with free samples, billboards, signage or display in convenience stores, sponsorship and logos on race cars, music videos, in movies adolescents are likely

\(^{24}\) The health effects of smoking have been so well-rehearsed and the controversies over the tobacco companies long-running tactics in denying this are so well known that they will only be noted here (American Academy of Pediatrics 2006, 2564; Ong and Glantz 2000; Malone and Balbach 2000; Pierce et al.. 1998). There is little doubt that tobacco ads were targeted at the very young, populated as they were by children’s cartoon characters from the Flintstones and even Santa Claus (Elliot 2008).

\(^{25}\) Though the official websites of the large brands do now have elaborated sign-ins with an attempt at age verification, other sites are far less regulated, like the one noted in the footnote below, and http://www.camelcigarette.net (Accessed May 7, 2011) which has a picture of a beautiful young couple in a glamorous, evening setting with the following text: “In the hustle and bustle of the 21st century, few simple pleasures remain. A perfectly brewed cup of coffee. A frosty mug of beer. And, most importantly, the pleasure of a quality cigarette. Due to taxes and other regulatory issues, the price of cigarettes has become unbelievably expensive…over $8 a pack in some states. However, there is a perfectly easy and legal way to avoid overpaying for your smokes…buying your cigs online.”
to see, the traditional thirty or sixty second television ad on YouTube, older television ads for cigarettes uploaded to YouTube, and with user-generated content (Calvert 2008, 213; Borzekowski and Strasburger 2008, 436-438; Perse 2007; Ciolli 2007; Strasburger 2001, 421-430; Pierce et al. 1998). And, these do have a positive effect for the companies:

Exposure to tobacco advertising may be a bigger risk than having family members and peers who smoke and can even undermine the effect of strong parenting practices. … Approximately one third of all adolescent smoking can be attributed to tobacco advertising and promotions. In addition, more than 20 studies have found that children exposed to cigarette ads or promotions are more likely to become smokers themselves. Recent evidence has emerged that tobacco companies have specifically targeted teenagers as young as 13 years of age. (American Academy of Pediatrics 2006, 2564)

The extensive literature review and examples provided by Strasburger also bears out these findings as well: brand awareness is high (even among young children), the images are clearly aimed at adolescents, and girls are targeted as well as boys (2001, 422-429).

Only somewhat less controversial and definitely less regulated, alcohol

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26 Though set on an aircraft carrier in “1944,” the YouTube commercial for Lucky Strikes embedded in a discount cigarette website shows a crash landing, a concerned grizzled captain and a young, beautiful WAVE reacting to the crash. The handsome young pilot emerges, standing and waving on the wing of the plane, which then pitches into the sea to the dismay of the captain, but only the distraught WAVE runs to the end of the runway to help. The handsome young pilot is then shown lounging hammock-like in a safety net, Lucky Strike lit up, with an insouciant devil-may-care look on his face. The WAVE is startled, and then smiles and licks her lips in a way that can only be described as sexual, cutting to the tag line superimposed over the pilot of “Get Lucky.” Upon finish, the YouTube site then offers a menu of other (older and contemporary) cigarette ads—almost all clearly and equally aimed at adolescents’ developing sexuality (http://www.discountcigarettesmall.com/lucky-strike-cigarettes Accessed May 7, 2011).
advertising is allowed on television. “Young people typically view 2000 beer and wine commercials annually” (up to 2.4 ads per hour at key times, much of it focused on sports programs), and a million acts of alcohol consumption on television by age eighteen (American Academy of Pediatrics 2006, 2565; Perse 2007). The most popular shows for teens all had alcohol advertisements (Martin et al. 2002). “The pervasiveness and the glamour of … images of alcohol” consumption promote “positive attitudes toward alcohol and drinking” (Perse 2007; Borzekowski and Strasburger 2008, 438-439; Strasburger 2001, 423, 430-435). Advertising alcohol directly to the young, while not as regulated as tobacco, is still publicly controversial. For this reason, alcohol advertising follows much the same pattern as tobacco (beyond television), replete with cartoon characters in the ads (recall the Budweiser Frogs), cool animal characters (recall Spuds McKenzie), point-of-service signage and display, and sexualized print ads, along with alcohol consumption itself appearing in cartoons, films, and music videos (Perse 2007; Borzekowski and Strasburger 2008, 438-439; Terry-McElrath et al., 2003; Strasburger 2001, 423, 430-435). And again, the tactics work: adolescents “admired the lifestyles the ads depicted … because they promote an attractive, adult lifestyle that adolescents find desirable and relevant to their needs to feel more adult,” with virtually no depiction

27 Again, the health aspects are so obvious that they will only be noted in brief here: “more than 17,000 adolescents died in alcohol-related automobile accidents” in a two year period, and “alcohol increases the risk of adolescent suicide and homicide” (Perse 2007). The effects are not proportionate: alcohol use and abuse has “roughly quadrupled” among girls, and “drink per drink, alcohol is more dangerous to young women than it is to young men, even after adjusting for differences in height and weight. … [It] appears to damage girls’ brains differently and more severely than the same degree of alcohol abuse affects same-age boys” (Sax in Flanagan 2011, 90).

28 Stunningly, nine out of ten of the most popular children’s movies from the late 1990s (mostly animated cartoons) contained scenes with drinking (Strasburger 2001, 431).
of the deleterious effects of alcohol consumption, let alone the longer term health effects (Perse 2007; Borzekowski and Strasburger 2008, 438-439; Martin et al. 2002; Strasburger 2001, 423, 430-435). A series of studies found that heavy exposure to alcohol advertising led to likely beliefs among adolescents “that drinkers possess the qualities being displayed in the advertising (e.g. being attractive or successful), have more positive beliefs about drinking, think that getting drunk is acceptable, and are more likely to drink, drink heavily, and drink and drive” (Strasburger 2001, 431).

**Socialization**

The ideas within this section have been touched upon previously, and in some ways that context forms a harsh push-pull for some of the deleterious effects of advertising on the socialization of children and adolescents. To begin, empirical research has documented the gender roles prescribed by advertising. For instance, beer commercials are aimed at men and define gender roles in specific ways as noted (Postman et al. 1987). They are run predominately during male college basketball and football broadcasts, and are affiliated with sports generally (Perse 2007). Men have been portrayed as active, thoughtful users/interpreters of technologies in print technology advertisements; “women are often portrayed interacting with a technological product only to the extent of pushing a single button with a painted fingernail” (Dilevko and Harris 1997, 726). While these kinds of products and events are aimed at boys and men, girls have clothing and makeup actively advertised to them (Molnar et al. 2010a; Calvert 2008, 219). Video games (whether tied to a console or web-based) have traditionally been
associated with boys and adolescents (and violent content), but games aimed at girls (centered around fashion or nurturing) have been developed and marketed to them with some success (Molnar et al. 2010a; Calvert 2008, 209-210; Scantlin 2008, 67-68; Hust and Brown 2008, 103; Subrahmanyam et al. 2001, 87-88). It is clear that advertising tracks and encourages broader gendered themes predominant in the media: “(1) It’s a man’s world; (2) Men are strong and muscular; women are thin and sexy; (3) Men are serious and powerful; women are emotional and passive; (4) Heterosexuality prevails; (5) Boys will be boys and girls better be prepared; and (6) A woman’s place is still in the home” (Hust and Brown 2008, 104).

Even a casual review of advertising images of women shows the almost-total hegemony of the thin-and-beautiful model, and it encourages the belief that physical attraction is desirable and important—especially to be attractive to men (Hust and Brown 2008, 110; Lorch 2007, 209). This in turn has fed dissatisfaction among young women (but a version of it is beginning to show up among young men) with their bodies and body-image—wanting to be thinner (Harrison and Hefner 2008, 388-392; Perse 2007). In a vicious feedback loop with the problem of childhood obesity, literature reviews link the “anorectic appearance” of models in advertisements with “the development of a distorted body self-image and abnormal eating behaviors in young girls” (American Academy of Pediatrics 2006, 2565; Harrison and Hefner 2008, 388-392). In other words, the socialization of advertising and media is pushing poor nutrition habits resulting in obesity, and then unattainable ideals of physical attractiveness that leads to eating disorders.
Closely related is the vulnerability and insecurity of older children and adolescents. There are three relevant and interrelated factors in the literature reviews. First, advertisements “target [adolescents’] identity-formation processes” at a time when they are particularly vulnerable and open to suasion (Molnar et al. 2010a; Grier and Kumanyika 2010, 354). For instance, while adolescents recognize persuasive intent, studies show that “teenagers have a reduced ability to control impulsive behaviors and to resist immediate gratification,” and advertisers play on this (Molnar et al. 2010a).

Second, peers are very important to older children and teenagers, they are important to consumption decisions, and advertising which plays on their vulnerabilities increases the influence of peers (Molnar et al. 2010a; Young 2008, 422-423; Mazzarella 2007).

Finally, the media (including its advertisements) itself can act as a sort-of “super peer” since it is such a dominant source of information, role models, and forms perceptions and an environment making particular behaviors and relationships seem perfectly acceptable (Borzekowski and Strasburger 2008, 434; Hust and Brown 2008, 111).

Materialism

After this extensive review of the empirical evidence thus far, this would seem to be an obvious category, but one worth noting if only in brief. Put at its most basic,

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29 This is, unfortunately, not limited to this age group. An analysis of the infamous “horizontal academics” PowerPoint incident at Duke showed a familiar pattern of reifying the qualities of the physical specimen (the young mens’ as well as young woman’s) and then vulnerability reflected in the detailed discussion of those qualities in the aftermath of the young woman’s encounters (Flanagan 2011). At Georgetown, an advising committee dealt with female students who came to the group to report out on an environment that isolated them socially if they asserted themselves as leaders. Their social lives dwindled, and it made them less attractive to their male peers.

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materialism promotes the idea that money, possessions, and acquiring more of both equals happiness and self-fulfillment, leading to wants and desires that can never really be fulfilled (Fournier and Richins 1991, 403-407; Buijzen and Valkenburg 2007). More specifically, literature reviews note the change and increase in requests for toys and presents during Christmas season’s uptick in advertising, and with watching advertising generally (Buijzen and Valkenburg 2007; Kunkel 2001, 377). Advertising (and then consumption) broadly encourages materialism and displaces both time spent on other activities and their values (Molnar et al. 2010a; Young 2008, 417-418; Buijzen and Valkenburg 2003, 451; Kunkel 2001, 383). These behaviors then cause parent-child conflict—traditionally in the form of nagging/whining/wheedling for the items they have seen advertised with resulting child’s unhappiness in terms of disappointment in the purchase, or its being denied (Buijzen and Valkenburg 2003, 451-452; Kunkel 2001, 384; Fox 1996, 19). Advertising and the media’s feedback increasing the influence of peers often means increased pressure to purchase to have “street cred” and to be “cool” (Young 2008, 422-423). Further, “materialistic values also correlate with increased smoking, drinking, drug use, weapon carrying, vandalism and truancy” (Molnar et al. 2010a). Finally, theoretical and empirical critiques are coming together in pointing out that the consequences of materialism in the form of the churn of consumption and waste and turnover are environmentally unsustainable and lead to some unsavory practices within American democracy to sustain that culture (Kahn 2010; Darts and Tavin 2010; Gilbert 2008).
In sum, the empirical critiques of advertising redacted here have been substantial and sustained: from documented developmental concerns in establishing behaviors early on prior to understanding advertising’s content/intent to the effects of what is marketed—and how—on socialization and physical and psychological development through adolescence; from studies documenting materialism and its encouragement from early childhood through the peer pressures of adolescents. There are clear cross-links to the theoretical critiques, such as the study led by Postman on images in beer commercials. Commodification, manipulation, and irrationalism are all relevant and can be layered over these empirical critiques to inform a more rounded critique of the practice. That is more or less what the literature on Channel One (our paradigmatic example of advertising in the classroom) attempts to do. That literature will be surveyed in brief in the final section of this chapter, ending with the particular note of concern over the future of democracy that has been sounded in that literature.

**Channel One: The Critiques**

The sheer amount of social science data behind marketing research and advertising can make it seem as if corporations and advertising agencies have a thorough command of how to use it to get us to buy. However, the waves of technological innovation and the rapid fluctuations in taste and habits engendered in a culture saturated with advertising means that the internal logic remains the same: “the sheer mass of advertising … is at least partly a result of advertisers casting a wide net, trying everything and hoping something works” (Molnar et al. 2010b, 85). As one advertising executive
put it, “like roaches—you spray them and spray them and they get immune after a while” (Stasko and Norris 2008, 144). This very intense competition—often just for access to attention and not necessarily for attention itself—is why the practices of advertising and marketing in the schools continue to change, shift, and insinuate themselves into previously-untapped areas, and why students assembled in schools remain a desirable and lucrative market (Molnar et al. 2010b, 87-92; Molnar 2005, 31-34). Quite aside from Chris Whittle’s publicity and splashy practices, and despite its troubled financial record, Channel One remains paradigmatic for the simple reason that its *modus operandi* of capturing actual, required school time and locations to deliver content and advertising remains a business model that continues to be imitated (Molnar et al. 2009; Attick 2008). In Channel One, “the advertiser gets a group of kids who cannot go to the bathroom, who cannot change the station, who cannot listen to their mother yell in the background, who cannot be playing Nintendo, [and] who cannot have their headsets on” (Babbit in Stasko and Norris 2008, 144). And in fact, its audience has been estimated as “20 times larger than MTV” (Austin et al. 2006, 424), or elsewhere as 40% of the adolescent population (American Academy of Pediatrics 2006, 2565). For these reasons (and the novelty and audacity with which it was promoted), there is a substantial literature on Channel One over time which broadly tracks the empirical and theoretical

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30 It is worth noting again from Chapter 2 that Channel One still exists and operates in its latest corporate incarnation (saved by political intervention), and it stands as perhaps *the* paradigmatic example of the political thrust and extension of neoliberal reform of public institutions in its backers, tactics, and rhetoric.
critiques of advertising. The groundwork for these critiques of Channel One has been laid in the prior sections, and they are often embedded in broader critiques of the commercialization of childhood, adolescents, and the schoolhouse. The focus will center on Channel One’s advertising, reviewing first the empirical critiques, then the theoretical.

Fox conducted an in-depth ethnographic study of Channel One’s advertising, interviewing and discussing the commercials with two hundred middle and senior high school students across the country. His findings speak directly to the developmental concerns over advertising and understanding of intent, content, and context: “Kids didn’t look for ulterior motive in commercials; they assumed that the commercials were altruistic”; in fact many “embraced” the commercials with “warm regard” (Fox 1996, 148). A Pepsi ad elicited consternation and pushback when queried about its “story,” truth, and construction: “it’s not a story” one student said; and in fact, to the students “the ad’s rapid-fire editing and its swinging, seemingly random camera angles convey an image of kids spending a knock-about day at the beach cavorting with pals. Most students told me they could easily be friends with the kids in this commercial” (Fox 1996, 3). They knew the content of the ads very well, able to recall minute details of color and packaging; they would often act them out or associate them with another event or person; and 40-50% reported buying a product because of a specific commercial (Fox 1996, 149-155). These findings were broadly mirrored in prior studies (Greenberg and Brand 1993; Bachen 1998, 143). A study with similar findings ten years later found additionally that

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31 Enough of the Channel One literature has been reviewed here that earlier studies and critiques of both advertising and Channel One itself have been found to be referenced in this later literature. For instance, the work of Strasburger, DeVaney, and the critical concept of commodification (all of which have informed important parts of this chapter and Chapter 2) are referenced with frequency in these sources.
only 15% of the students correctly knew that the school did not approve the commercials before they were shown, and 25% believed that they were in fact approved by the teachers (Austin et al. 2006, 431). Time displacement—in the form of the limited teaching-learning time of the school day—was also noted in an early study, costing the school nine times more in time than they received in equipment (Larson 2002).

Content was one of the most documented aspects of Channel One’s commercials. Recall that the early raison d’être for Channel One that made the commercials acceptable was that it was meant to increase awareness of current events—Channel One named and respond to a crisis in the form of students’ complete lack of current events knowledge. Studies disagreed whether or not Channel One increased knowledge of current events and consumption of the news, or even what such an increase might mean (Brand and Greenberg 1994; Knupfer and Hayes 1994; Knupfer 1994). However, much analysis focused on the blurring of news, entertainment, and commercials. Put simply, Channel One’s news programming imitated entertainment and MTV formats, the commercials were actively peppered with pop quizzes, and the editing of the transitions between the two encouraged this conflation (Fox 1996, 54-59; Boyles 1998, 75-76; Belland 1994, 97-98). As a result, much of the vaunted current events coverage was watered down, or, as it was put, it was highly debatable “whether information on the world’s largest high school, Johnny Depp, U2, and fear of peanut butter … is worth remembering at all” (Barry 1994, 109; Brighouse 2005, 531-532; Apple 1993, 103-107). Food commercials

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32 In an interesting side note, Worsham found that news coverage of the 2004 and 2008 elections and the war in the Middle East changed with the political orientation of Channel One’s ownership, sometimes obviously so (2009; 2007).
dominated in early studies, and students were found to be better-disposed toward those brands (Brand and Greenberg 1994; Greenberg and Brand 1993). Though Channel One has since bent to public concerns about health and obesity among children and adolescents, the list of products and foods that have been advertised is familiar: Pepsi, Mountain Dew, Snickers, Pop Tarts, Tootsie Rolls, Fritos, Skittles, M&Ms, Gatorade, pizza, and cereals all show up (Molnar et al. 2009; Linn and Novosat 2008, 142; Molnar 2003, 372).

Content was particularly scrutinized in terms of socialization messages about adolescence and popularity and gender roles. To begin, male students (and better-performing students) generally benefitted more from Channel One’s programming where there were educational benefits (Austin et al. 2006, 424). Second, DeVaney has closely analyzed this content and found plentiful erotic metaphors, none-too-subtlety conveyed (ears of corn in hand), and a frank approach to selling in Channel One’s ads she characterized as Bacchanalian and Rabelaisian:

Whole bodies are displayed and fractured body parts are often juxtaposed with the item being sold. … Blond and dark-haired young women are pictured, but most close-ups are of blond hair cascading over a girl’s shoulders and partially obscuring her eyes. … Although boys bodies are sometimes objectified—such as in beach scenes—girls’ bodies are clothed in tight revealing clothes and usually objectified. This fact is easily ascertained, because more female body parts are fractured and pictured without faces. … Adolescents pictured in these ads are almost exclusively celebrating and consuming. (1994b, 146)

Third, the products advertised on Channel One and their themes were studied, and the prevalence of jeans, shampoo, makeup, gum, razor blades, breath mints, acne cream, deodorant, and sneakers was paired with prominent activities in the advertising such as
DeVaney’s findings and the gendered and sexual themes found in the broader empirical critique of advertising (Wulfemeyer and Mueller 1992, 737). The overwhelming messages within those commercials confirmed this: “be popular/have friends,” “be attractive,” and “have fun/have pleasure” were by far the most prominent themes of the ads, with outright “appearance/sexuality” showing up as a personal value with frequency (Wulfemeyer and Mueller 1992, 738-739). In other words, and in sum, the empirical critiques of Channel One challenge its educative value, the messages it promotes, and in redacted form, they closely track the problems and issues found in the broader empirical critiques of advertising to adolescents, the difference being this advertising is being done on required school time, in a required venue.

Themes of commodification, manipulation, and irrationalism inform most of the theoretical critiques of Channel One’s advertising as well. In broadest terms, commodification is the theoretical critique that underwrites many of the empirical studies or the critiques that assemble evidence of the growth of schoolhouse commercialism. At its most basic, the argument goes that advertising is a corporate strategy to induce consumption, and particularly in the case of children and adolescents, to produce consumers. Channel One is a prime venue to advertise to this group in situ, especially lucrative as they control/spend significant resources. Ergo, Channel One’s advertising is one element of commodification in the form of monetizing the educational relationship

33 A quick check of Channel One’s commercials and news programs on May 15, 2011 indicates very little has changed from these descriptions in the intervening time.
(Linn and Novosat 2008; Jennings and Wartella 2007; Brighouse 2005; Molnar 2005; Story and French 2004; Molnar 2003). 34 This monetization goes up to and includes the students themselves sold as commodities (age grouped together with required attendance) to advertisers (Paraskeva 2007; Apple 1993, 93-117). Other critiques note the corporate origin and structure of Channel One, and the corporate sources of its advertising content, and make a connection between those capital interests and the content and thrust of Channel One, including its advertising (Worsham 2009; Worsham 2007; Paraskeva 2007; Molnar and Reaves 2002; Hoffman 1991). 35 In particular, Channel One is but one source in a complex array of political and economic forces, arguments, and incentives that broadly promotes “corporate discourses in … understandings of how the school should function,” and for what purpose (Bettis 2000, 27; Paraskeva 2007; Ball 2004; Giroux 1999b; Apple 1993, 93-117). 36 This critique ranges from broad concerns over Channel One’s educational role undermining public purposes and the need for those to be defended in the face of private interests (Blokhuis 2008; Giroux 1999a; 1999b; Molnar 1995), to directly linking Channel One to an ongoing neoliberal agenda of the

34 This perspective particularly underwrites the empirical critiques related to food marketing and obesity. The sources noted here and after will not be an exhaustive list of those studies previously cited which utilized a theoretical perspective, but rather will be a representative group.

35 Strongly implied is the history previously noted that corporation know no level below which they will not stoop in search of a profit in their advertising to children and adolescents. Recall the Flintstones and Santa Claus-endorsed cigarette advertisements, the undermining of the ban on cigarette advertisements via YouTube and the web, the current struggles over food advertising to this group and the epidemic of obesity combine with the media images of young women that in turn encourage eating disorders.

36 This goes up to and includes the older Marxist critique in Bowles and Gintis (1976) that education was/is being reduced to mere preparation for a vocational role at all levels (Bettis 2000; Giroux 2002).
“methodical destruction of collectives,” and a broader critique—rooted in commodification—of corporate capitalism’s cultural, political, ideological, and economic dominance (Bourdieu 1998; Apple 1993; 1994; Giroux 1999b). Broadly speaking, the commodification critique of Channel One is lodged in a larger analysis of the overweening influence of corporate capitalism and its penetration into previously-untouched areas of personal and social life.

The manipulation critique underwrites the empirical analyses of the content of Channel One’s advertisements, their images and messages and effectiveness (the stimulation of wants and insecurities), the dumbing-down of content, and the blurring of news and ads (Brighouse 2005, 531-532; Boyles 1998, 75-76; Fox 1996, 54-59; DeVaney 1994b; Belland 1994, 97-98; Barry 1994, 109; Wulfemeyer and Mueller 1992). In this particular sense as well, there is a linkage to the commodification critique: Channel One’s techniques are manipulative in the service of a corporate agenda, and tend to “other” those outside of neoliberal discourses (Paraskeva 2007; Apple 2004; 1993, passim; Giroux 1999b; 1995). For Brighouse, this constellation of forces crosses a moral/ethical line and undermines the public schools’ obligation—indeed, it’s very raison d’etat—to foster autonomy: the commercial environment crowds out alternate messages, presents them in saturated, manipulative ways, and thereby obviates the grounding of autonomous choice and its development; schools should not reinforce this.

37 In the case of both Apple and Giroux, this analysis has been linked to an earlier and ongoing critique of privatization and the neoliberal thrust within education. Though they do not always mention Channel One in these (or the publication predates it), it is clear that Channel One represents one node in a broader array of neoliberal challenges to the core structure and purpose of public education in their analyses (Apple 2004; 2001; 1987; Giroux 2005; 2002; 1998; 1995; 1984).
and Channel One is a ready “proxy for all deals of this kind, in which some noneducational resource is marketed on the school premises or through the schools in return for some payment either in money or in kind” (2005, 530, passim; Boyles 2005, 220-221). Elsewhere, advertising in the schools (and again, Channel One is Exhibit A) is linked to the tradition of propaganda, and like Brighouse, cast as non-educational content (Paraskeva 2007; Molnar and Reaves 2002). The irrationalism critique is very closely related and draws from the broader critiques of media and education reviewed earlier. The small subset that focuses on Channel One more or less directly imports and applies this perspective: that the ads shown in schools “target emotions, bypassing reason (and skepticism), to produce certain behaviors,” fundamentally at odds with educational purposes (Brighouse 2005, 536); that it furthers the disconnect of meaning and free-floating signification that has become inherent in advertising (Paraskeva 2007); that it fundamentally encourages an epistemological change that runs counter to reason, rationality (as we have understood them), and the educational purposes and methods we have used to foster them (Boyles 2005, 228-237; St. Maurice 1994, 223-224).

Again and in sum, the theoretical critiques of Channel One closely track the problems and issues found in those critiques of advertising. If one looks as the sources cited here, the same authors or individual pieces of scholarship tend to show up utilizing various iterations of the theoretical (and empirical) critiques. That is because this literature attempts to more thoroughly and systematically challenge schoolhouse commercialism generally, and Channel One specifically as a paradigmatic case-in-point by synthesizing a wide variety of critiques. They do so for a reason that is just below the
surface, and at other times it is explicit: concern over schools and democratic functioning. For many, the issue comes down to schools and their functions to teach the reasoning, literate, critical citizens that democracy needs to flourish: “If the methods of modern mass marketing to adults threaten the happiness of individuals and undermine the well-being of society, deploying them against children colonizes our future” (Molnar and Reaves 2002, 46; Brighouse 2005; Molnar 2005, 87-89). Boyles’ critique of the irrational epistemology of Channel One (2005, 228-237) explicitly uses Postman’s framework of analysis, and implicitly shares his concern for the fate of democracy in media-influenced ways of knowing, reasoning, and conducting democratic politics (1985, 30-63). Democracies rely on a sense of the public interest (vs. the private) in order to recognize unjust inequalities and act on them—precisely the principles that Channel One (and schoolhouse commercialism in general) erode (Blokhuis 2008). And, Channel One’s blurring of news and advertisement, the influences of its coverage and what gets covered, and the quality of its content is cause for democratic concern, if for no other reason than it is an important and identifiable source of news information for adolescents and thus for the future of American democracy (Worsham 2009; 2007; Paraskeva 2007; Apple 1993, 103-107).

Apple (2004; 2001; 1993; 1987) and Giroux (2005; 2002; 1999a; 1999b; 1998; 1995; 1984) represent some of the most sophisticated analyses of the broad phenomena of advertising in the public school classroom, weaving these themes and critiques together. They link Channel One and schoolhouse commercialism closely to privatization, neoliberalism, and the coalition with conservative values and politics.
Their is an analysis rooted in early responses to *A Nation at Risk* which saw undemocratic and inegalitarian principles in the blue-ribbon education reform recommendations of the early 1980s (Apple 1987; Giroux 1984; Finkelstein 1984, Stedman and Smith 1983). Giroux invokes the public sphere generally and the classroom specifically as an essential democratic public sphere (2002; 1984), and ends in a harsh critique of neoliberalism: “the conflation of private interests, empire building, and evangelical fundamentalism brings into question the very nature, if not the existence, of the democratic process. Under the reign of neoliberalism, capital and wealth have been largely distributed upwards, while civic virtue has been undermined by a slavish celebration of the free market” (2005, 4). Apple excoriates the neoliberal descriptions of and prescriptions for educational problems, and the conservative ideology that gives it political clout: “We are told by neo-liberals that only by turning our schools, teachers, and children over to the competitive market will we find a solution. We are told by neo-conservatives that the only way out is to return to ‘real knowledge’” (2001, 409). Both note that these policies and power-moves tend to freeze existing inequalities, and exacerbate them, and both point to an undermining of spaces not dominated by market logic, and critical knowledge not tied to making a living. But even in the culminating critiques of Apple and Giroux and their concerns for democracy and public education, we seem not to have gone much further than the articulations of Jefferson, and later Madison, on the need for independent information and independent thought, implying an education to enable both as essential to democracy. In other words, the critiques of Channel One—
including the culminating critiques—seemingly have not engaged more sophisticated (and more contemporary) democratic ideas and theories.\textsuperscript{38}

After a long diversion into advertising, consumption, media, and school practices, we are back to the question we began with: should this state of affairs bother us and if so why? The critiques of advertising and their variants concerning Channel One most certainly do give cause for concern, but have not adequately engaged more sophisticated concepts of democracy, and have come close to devolving into an “impotent moralism” as counterargument to neoliberal consumer and market culture and its advertising (Miller 2008a, 37). It’s not that advertising—all the way down to and including the paradigmatic case of Channel One—has been under-theorized. That is clearly not the case. But, advertising in the public schools has been under-theorized politically. The context just reviewed reveals that this educational practice clearly has empirical and cultural implications. If democracy needs democrats and those democrats must have certain virtues or attributes for democracy to flourish, there is a core democratic interest in education and Americans have historically turned to the institution and process in the

\textsuperscript{38} The passages are famous, and bear repeating in full here. Jefferson wrote that:

The people are the only censors of their governors; and even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principles of their institution. . . . The way to prevent these [errors] is to give them full information of their affairs through the channel of the public papers, and to contrive that those papers should penetrate the whole mass of the people. The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers, and be capable of reading them. (16 January, 1787)

In 1822 Madison (Jefferson’s protégé and ally) further fleshed out the issue when he wrote that “A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives” (1973, 437).
interests of shaping of its citizens and young. Advertising is now a potent, even overweening, cultural influence among the young, and how they are shaped “implies a vision of the future. They are the living messages we send to a time we will not see” (Postman 1981, 386). The practice of advertising in the classroom, and the broader educational practices and contexts it represents, is a matter of democratic concern about the future democrats we are producing (and their capabilities), and it should be interrogated theoretically. It is not enough to point to the deleterious empirical and theoretical results of advertising, and leap to the conclusion (as much scholarship has) that its presence in the schools is therefore bad for democracy. It is this situation the remainder of this thesis will seek, if not to correct, to incrementally address. The next chapter, the heart of this thesis, will interrogate the three sources of democratic theory noted for insights into the type of democracy such practices may produce.
Chapter 4

Three Resources of Analysis and Critique from Democratic Theory:
Tocqueville, Communitarianism, and Deliberative Democracy

Introduction

Up to this point, the dialogic process of clarification in which this thesis is engaged has established that there is a close relationship between political (particularly democratic) theory and education, that advertising in the American public school classroom is prevalent within a neoliberal environment, and that advertising has been thoroughly theorized and empirically critiqued (up to and including the paradigmatic example of Channel One). Yet advertising in the public school classroom has been oddly and ineffectively under-theorized politically. Again, should this concern us and why? Restated at its most basic, if an educational policy presumes a political theory, then the question is: what is the theory behind advertising in the public school classroom and what is its relationship to democracy? The iterative and dialogic process here will plumb the relationship—posited in the Introduction and often gestured towards in the first three chapters—between democratic policy and the discourse of economic reasoning and motivations, contemporarily the policies and practices produced by the dominance of neoliberalism. That discourse turns moral and political questions into economic choices, and that phenomenon plays itself out up and down our political ladder—from American prominence at the conferences at Davos to decisions about our local, democratically-controlled institutions. In other words, what does the practice of advertising in the public
school classroom both indicate and produce in terms of public choice at a local level in
democracy under the strong influence of neoliberal ideology? Given the core interest
democracies have in education, the paradigmatic example at hand calls out for
interrogation from the vantage of democratic theory if we value democratic influence and
action. As noted, there are many potential resources within democratic theory to
interrogate this practice, but three of them have been chosen because they help to more
deeply and pragmatically analyze the conditions which produced it, and the conditions
which it produces. Tocqueville observed American democracy during a crucial,
formative time and limned early centrifugal and centripetal forces within American
culture. He placed the project of education in a democracy at the core of his analysis and
his response to its challenges. The communitarian analysis cuts to the heart of
contemporary market-based culture and its practices which dissolve basic forms of social
solidarity in their theorizations, and a kind-of practical communitarianism brings the
analysis to bear at the institutional level. Deliberative democrats engage in a fundamental
critique of capitalism, analyzing obstacles to deliberative informing of government and a
critical and democratic education. The next step in this dialogic clarification is to engage
each of these resources at some length, in the order presented in order to appreciate what
they say about economic motivations, reasoning, and public politics and choices in a
democracy.
4.1: Tocqueville and the Centrifugal/Centripetal Forces Within America

Introduction

Tocqueville produced a layered and complex practical analysis with notable predictions and prescriptions from observation and experience, drawing on familiar vocabularies, categories, and descriptions while at the same time seeking to invent new concepts and inflect different meanings to extant ones (Mansfield 2010, 1-4; Mansfield and Winthrop 2000, xliii-xlvi; Wolin 1989, 89-90; Hereth 1986, 22, 46-47; Boesche 1983b; Eberts and Witton 1970). He famously declared that “A new science of politics is needed for a new world” (Tocqueville\textsuperscript{1} 1990a, 7, I.Intro.), but he also remarked on and marveled at the quotidian: the American mingling of peoples, “languages, beliefs, opinions: in a word, a society without roots, without memories, without prejudices, without routines, without common ideas” in an observation with clear aristocratic roots (Tocqueville 9 June, 1831, 38). “I confess that in America I saw more than America; I sought there the image of democracy itself, with its inclinations, its character, its prejudices, and its passions, in order to learn what we have to fear or to hope from its progress” (Tocqueville 1990a, 14, I.Intro.). Democracy and America are not interchangeable, but they are deeply interrelated and entangled in Tocqueville, particularly as we move through his thinking toward capitalism and consumption. Tocqueville looked at democracy through different eyes, not entirely aristocratic, but

\textsuperscript{1} Again, see notes 3 and 7 in Chapter 1 on citation portability and precision.
certainly not un-aristocratic either. Like any reading of Tocqueville, this one will take a path through his thinking and writing. “The truth is that there are many Tocquevilles who speak different languages and address different constituencies” (Craiutu 2005, 602). In theorizing from empirical bases (observation, conversations, and questions), Tocqueville sought to analyze and understand in order to guide democratic cultures and practices away from bad cultural practices and toward good ones, very much within pragmatic, contentious, political, and policy contexts important to the project here (Mara 2008, 20-21).

Those contexts are of particular note. Tocqueville was brilliantly incisive, but he also arrived in America to observe and theorize at a key period, and during a very propitious time in the midst of it. Wilentz notes that “there are ample grounds for describing the half-decade from 1828 to 1833—and even more specifically the period immediately surrounding Tocqueville’s brief stay in 1831—as a turning point in American history. The sheer pace and drama of events, crowding in on each other, reinforce that impression” (1988, 213-214).2 As examples, he goes on to cite events such as Jackson’s election, Virginia’s slavery debates, religious revivals, abolitionism, Nat Turner’s slave rebellion, the Nullification crisis, the rise of radical labor movements and the party system, and the fall of the gentry and their dominance of politics (Wilentz 1988, 213-214). Westward expansion was picking up, industrialization was beginning to

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2 Tocqueville’s visit specifically coincided with Andrew Jackson’s fight over the Second Bank of the United States, with all the attendant political rhetoric of the Bank as a “corrupting influence … upon the morals of the people” representing “a few Monied Capitalists” who encouraged aristocratic-like social distinctions (Jackson in Wilentz 2005, 361, 360-374).
emerge, and urban centers were taking shape with the resulting economic, demographic, and social effects coinciding with the strong push to expand the franchise, rights, and freedoms generally (Wilentz 2005; Wood 1991; Montgomery 1992; Shklar 1990). Tocqueville witnessed the early stages of a deep intertwining of democracy and capitalism and the identification of one with the other, an “American entrepreneurial culture into which, insensibly, democracy has begun to emerge” (Wolin 2001, 347; Wood 1991; Wilentz 1988, 226-227). The thesis here is that Tocqueville produced—particularly in Democracy in America—a critique of capitalism without necessarily being a critic of capitalism. This follows Mill’s observation in a review of Tocqueville: he attributed to democracy effects that capitalism produced, or also produced. Tocqueville “has bound up in one abstract idea the whole of the tendencies of modern commercial society, and given them one name—Democracy; thereby letting it be supposed that he ascribes to equality of conditions, several of the effects naturally arising from the mere progress of national prosperity … in modern times” (Mill 1840, 38). The tensions Tocqueville explored are those of the nascent modern economy as a centrifugal force in American society and democracy over and against the centripetal forces needed for

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3 Though Mill will be an occasional touchstone, his analyses stopped well short of “an account of the institutions and social entities willing to actively support [political liberty]. This is why Tocqueville is a more powerful critic of mass society” (Ryan 2002, 38). This is because Mill assumed the best form of democracy was representative government by an educated elite (1987, 177-226), and Tocqueville saw the influence in the “reverse, from the people to the intellects” (Mansfield and Winthrop 2000, xxviii-xxix). Mill only belatedly acknowledged Tocqueville’s influence in identifying problematic tendencies in capitalism in the course of his own late turn toward “a qualified socialism” (Mill in Pappé 1964, 224). While Boesche does not underestimate Mill’s complexity, he notes that in spite of this late turn toward socialism he “always offer[ed] at least a qualified defense of the … emerging capitalist society” and remained in favor of laissez-faire: “every departure from it, unless required by some great good, is a certain evil” (Mill in Boesche 1981, 496N6). As much as anything, the spread of prosperity was the spread of civilization for Mill (Mara and Dovi 1995, 15).
democracy to work—meaning for him preserving liberty. In making this case and bringing it to bear upon schools and education, an excursus and some stipulations and clarifications must be made in the interests of not distorting or misrepresenting Tocqueville in this reading.

_Tocqueville and Economic Matters_

The first of these is a clarification on Tocqueville as an economic thinker. The broad criticism is that he had no “economic culture” (Aron in Benoit 2007, 54) and/or that “lacking a conception of capitalism as such, Tocqueville does not in any rigorous way theorize” it (Janara 2001, 324). More specifically Aron noted that he conflated commercial and industrial activity (1965, 190-193), and a significant subset of scholarship on Tocqueville contends that he was “uninterested in the material bases of American life. …He rides about on steamboats without noticing how crucially important they were to changing American life” (Wills 2004, 52; Jennings 2006, 399-400; Janara 2001, 317-320). It is certainly true that a far less famous (and somewhat neglected) account by Chevalier—a Frenchman who travelled at nearly the same time but for a longer period—did focus on economic activity and technology and provided a much richer picture (in details) of the American economy (Chevalier 1961; Jennings 2006). Two observations are helpful here. First, the era in which Tocqueville thought and wrote was still premodern in the sense that both social solidarity and social problems were thought to be the product of government and the values and virtues of the persons who governed; thus political issues would be naturally theorized in personal—not economic—
terms (Wood 1991, 5, 77-124). Second, the social transformations that Americans initiated and underwent (the early-to-middle results of which Tocqueville observed and theorized) “took place without industrialization, without urbanization, without railroads, without the aid of any of the great forces we usually invoke to explain ‘modernization’” in an economy far less developed than England’s at the time (Wood 1991, 7, 58-59, 66-68). In such a culture, economic instruments and government institutions were not yet impersonal or autonomous entities to be specifically theorized. If Tocqueville missed the economic forces driving these changes, he was not alone.4 The economic themes and concerns within Tocqueville’s writing and thinking have been curiously overlooked.5 There is, for instance, much that is original about the American economy in Democracy in America, and he wrote as well as on poverty, the right to work, and the tax structures of the ancien régime (Swedberg 2009; 2006; 2004; 2003). Others note that Tocqueville was highly influenced by a group of political economists who included Jean-Baptiste Say (a popularizer of Adam Smith), Malthus, Mill, and Senior—the last two with whom he had a relationship (Swedberg 2006; Drolet 2003).6 Tocqueville became for a year the

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4 This is why Marx still won’t go away.

5 A more rounded perspective on Tocqueville’s thinking was reflected in his private correspondence—as will be seen. Boesche argues that his correspondence is essential to understanding Tocqueville, and that scholarship on him had been limited since his letters were so long unpublished and untranslated for decades thereafter (1981, 495-497). Craiutu treats publications and correspondence similarly (2005, 603-604N17).

6 While Say was the source of Tocqueville’s ideas on classical political economy based around Enlightenment assumptions of human perfectibility, Malthus modified his approach by tapping into his early Jansenist training with his critique of limitless human improvement and the consequent necessity of self-discipline to stave off the insurmountable realities of economic scarcity and population growth (Drolet 2003). Boesche (1981; 1987; 1988) and Janara (2001) also marshal impressive amounts of evidence that he thought economically.
“dominant force” behind the “somewhat leftist” newspaper *Le Commerce*, a time during which the paper weighed in on many economic issues (Boesche 1983a, 277). The corpus of his writing certainly confirms that Tocqueville’s focus was the “social, political, and psychological manifestation of a democratic condition of life” (Welch in Jennings 2006, 401N15). The argument here is not that Tocqueville is an economic thinker *per se*, but that he read and was influenced by political economy, reflected and commented on economic topics in his project, and in the end produced an analysis of an aspect of that—consumption in America—even if only as a by-product.

*Tocqueville and Property as the Source of Liberty*

The second point is a stipulation that Tocqueville was not a critic of capitalism *per se*. Rather, he was a staunch defender of private property and many of his political ideas were rooted in or flowed from his ideas of its origin and meaning. Tocqueville consistently held that in seeking understanding, he needed to study history, to “disregard” what exists today and “look back” (1955, vii) because “One generation may anathematize the preceding generations, but it is far easier to combat than to avoid resembling them” (1862, 204; Boesche 1987, 17-18). Property in the modern sense began with the aristocracy’s martial culture and control of land. They were “the owners of the soil and the rulers of the inhabitants; the right of governing descended with the family inheritance from generation to generation; force was the only means by which man could act on man; and landed property was the sole source of power” (Tocqueville 1990a, 3-4, I.Intro.; 1997, 40-43). Property created a class of persons “indebted to no one but himself; his
virtues, his vices, and his prejudices were his own work,” his liberty was the freedom to do “evil as well as to [do] good” (Tocqueville 1990a, 22, 42, I.1, I.2). In the interests of maintaining its power, the aristocracy “formed a distinct body amid the people, which commanded from the inaccessible heights where it was ensconced. To maintain this peculiar position, which constituted its strength, not only did it require political privileges, but it required a standard of right and wrong for its own special purposes”: initially the feudal (and violent) code of honor which bound both the aristocracy and their subjects to their estates, localities, and customs and welded together the powers and privileges that flowed from this interlocking hierarchy (Tocqueville 1990b, 231-234, II.3. XVIII; 1990a 49, 240-241, I.3, I.14). That peculiar position and those special purposes required uniting the aristocracy “for the purpose of checking the Government”—that is, the beginnings of political liberty began in opposing central power (Tocqueville 1862, 209; 1990a, 240, I.14; 1990b, 322-324, II.4.VII).7 If power and authority are fixed in property—in a place—and embedded in fixed social relations, the aristocrat is not likely to flee conflict, but rather to resist infringements on his local and personal liberties with the long range in mind (Tocqueville 1990a, 236, I.13; 1990b, 44, 177-180, II.1.X, II.3.V). It is in this sense that the “primordial” and “constituting principles” of liberty and individual responsibility (Tocqueville 24 July, 1850, 250-251) are deeply intertwined with the “ancient and necessary privilege of property” (Tocqueville 28 April 1850, 401),

7 That common political liberty arose from the dominance of an historic elite is a typical and classic paradox—a French tradition of analysis in which Tocqueville shared (Boesche 1987).
producing “an exalted idea” of the individual (Tocqueville 1862, 246) and a consequent “passionate love of independence” in them (Tocqueville 1959, 10).

In order to maintain this privilege and authority (and the values they produce), the aristocracy faced a political question, they “must either remain the people’s masters, or must become their leaders” (Tocqueville 1862, 209). Their political leadership was based on classically-modeled virtues of a “disinterested” (lack of pecuniary interest in making a profit) stance, educated judgment, and the ability to command obedience through hierarchical, economic, and kinship ties within and among the aristocracy and gentry, and embedded in and instantiated by property (Wood 1991, 95-109, 269). In this the English aristocracy serves as Tocqueville’s supreme historical example of a class nurturing both its haughty privileges and a supple form of local political authority and provincial rights, sharing them just enough with commoners and the emerging middle class when necessary, remaining just open enough to entry to remain vital (and wealthy),

8 In Tocqueville’s nascent analysis of consumerism toward which this account is building, the aristocratic values imbued in things, ideas, and actions—in short, an account of virtues—are an important counterpoint to what democracy produces and consumes. It is to aristocratic power and wealth that education and culture flows, setting the artistic, and intellectual models of distinction and excellence for the society as a whole (1990b 9-10, II.1.II.; 1990a, 240-241, I.14; 1862, 223).

In countries in which … [the] aristocratic class remains fixed at the pinnacle of greatness on which it stands, without diminution or increase … the men of whom it is composed naturally derive from their superior and hereditary position a taste for what is extremely well made and lasting. This affects the general way of thinking of the nation…. [E]ven the peasant will rather go without the objects he covets than procure them in a state of imperfection. … [T]he handicraftsmen work for only a limited number of fastidious customers: the profit they hope to make depends principally on the perfection of their workmanship (Tocqueville 1990b, 49, II.1.XI).

Tocqueville never claims that aristocratic virtues are timeless, and some can appear “capricious” and even “fantastic” in another age, like the extremes of violence that attended what seems to us as trivial points of feudal honor (1990b, 230-233; I.18).
and sacrificing for the general good in order to maintain their authority and leadership 
(1990a, 4, 8, I. Intro.; 1990b, 98-99, II.2.II; 1955, 97-98; Himmelfarb 1997). It was this 
leadership and political culture that made England rich and free, and it percolated down 
through the culture to the common objection among the English people “to allowing the 
government to do his business” and a “passion for being master at home” (Tocqueville 27 
February 1858, 359; 1997, 37-38). 9 This bias and culture were transplanted to British 
America in the form of an “untaught instinct for political freedom” (Mansfield and 
Winthrop 2000, lxxi). This instinct was adapted in a wholly-new environment that 
enabled things that Europe could not, particularly wide ownership of land. With land 
“ideas are altered and their habits changed,” and men “begin to think of the future” and to 
plan and endure “temporary deprivation” to achieve their goals, or security, or future 
(Tocqueville in Swedberg 2009, 140-141). Further, “the small landed proprietor … 
receives no impulse but from himself. His sphere is confined, but he moves within it in 
perfect liberty” (Tocqueville 1862, 231). As one American farmer put it, “We are Lords 
of our own little but sufficient Estates” (Osgood in Wood 1991, 123). Flowing from this, 
local and free institutions, trial by jury, participation in public affairs, voting on taxation, 
holding public agents accountable, and personal liberty were all established with due 

9 Tocqueville was well aware of—and often irritated at—the smugness that came with England’s 
wealth and power though he recognized and admired their political culture (1959, 285-286). While these 
attributes also existed within the French aristocracy, it was their gradual undermining by the monarchy and 
the aristocracy’s gradual enervation and separation from the people and the middle classes over which they 
lorded—but did not lead or serve—that was the classic example of how to lose power for Tocqueville: “It 
was on the day when the French people … permitted the King to impose a tax without their consent and the 
nobles showed so little public spirit as to connive at this, provided their own immunity was guaranteed … 
that the seeds were sown … which led to the violent downfall of the old régime (1955, 98-99; 1862).
haste in America, often well ahead of Europe promoting the virtues of independence and
the exercise of civil and political liberty, “a noble exercise to the faculties of man”
(Tocqueville 1990a, 44, 39-44, I.2; 1990b, 297-298, II.4.IV). For Tocqueville, these
liberties and freedoms don’t exist in a state of nature prior to society (Mansfield and
Winthrop 2000, xliii-xliv), but rather are made through exercising them: “In a
community of free citizens every man is daily reminded of the need of meeting his fellow
men, of hearing what they have to say, of exchanging ideas, and coming to an agreement
as to the conduct of their common interests,” revealing (and encouraging) virtues (1955,
xiv; 1862, 247).

His are (almost) ancient ideas of the intertwinment of the virtues and liberty. He
longed for greatness and great actions (Boesche 1987, 62-70). “And what is politics
without action? To live in a public assembly and not to work effectively for public
concerns, not to act and not to join with those who alone have the power to act, is that not
manifestly absurd?” (Tocqueville 27 September, 1841, 159) But Tocqueville could—and
did—bring these ideas down from lofty heights to more common requirements for
democracy to work: “To love freedom for itself, to sincerely respect the independence
and the rights of your neighbor even when the exercise of those rights does not please, to
keep the power of the government in check and to limit its actions, even when that power

\[10\] The classic example for Tocqueville being the New England township (1990a, 59-97, I.5).

\[11\] Tocqueville’s formulation is almost-Arendtian, and Boesche elsewhere makes the connection
with Arendt (1988, 28; 1993). Mill makes a similar implied observation: “In a country like America, of
high wages and high profits, every citizen can afford to attend to public affairs, as if it they were his own”
(1835, 101). Of course, it is the “as if they were his own” that grates on modern sensibilities, and why Mill
is less incisive about some contemporary matters than Tocqueville.
acts in agreement with our desires; to gradually and reasonably decentralize the administration” (Tocqueville 16 September 1842, 219; Mansfield and Winthrop 2000, xlix). Tocqueville consistently and vehemently opposed socialism because of its hostility to private property. Political systems based on socialism “destroy property, others transform it, others limit it, and others administer it. … They have in common a profound mistrust of reason and man’s individual freedom. … All limit his intelligence, his rights, his future” (Tocqueville 1848, 250; 12 September 1848; Mahoney 1993).

Socialism will turn into a struggle between “those who have and those who have not; property will form the great field of battle and the principal political questions will turn upon the more or less important modifications to be introduced into the right of property” and thus, the fundamental bases of political rights as a whole (Tocqueville 1959, 11). Ever mindful of France, Tocqueville saw in America a remarkable inversion of the French Revolution: a democracy based on equality where rights, the rule of law, industry, and property were well established, protected, and respected (19 March 1848, 373-374; 10 November, 1841, 59-60).

**Tocqueville and the Bourgeoisie**

It is this rather conservative stance on the origins of political liberty and rights in property that serves as a basis of his severe critique of the values and culture of the bourgeoisie—the third clarification in this approach to Tocqueville which moves us far closer to the critical stance toward capitalism and consumption he ended up taking. This can be stated succinctly since the bases of his thinking have been spelled out at some
length here: the bourgeoisie—or the middle classes—came to dominate France politically, and their domination coincided with a period of almost constant political instability since the French Revolution (Tocqueville 1959, 2-3; 23 May, 1853, 219). The influence of the bourgeoisie extended up to and included the various French sovereigns installed during his time who were “enervated in the more material and more bourgeois enjoyments ..., reduced to the basic principle of ... powerlessness and modesty outside, industrial politics inside; ... no striking virtues serve ... as well as the mediocrity of such vices” (Tocqueville 23 March, 1853, 285-286; 1959, 3-7). Tocqueville felt they utterly abandoned the role, responsibilities, and values of political leadership, constituting instead “nothing but a small bourgeoisie oligarchy, devoted to its special interests” (27 July, 1853, 226). As noted, Tocqueville placed a high value on principled political action and intercourse stemming from the virtues and independence of property. The bourgeoisie hold, value, and instantiate mobile and fluctuating forms of property and wealth (money, stocks, industrial capital, the assets of commerce, the futures of trade) and “floating capital ... is more readily available to gratify the passions of the moment” (Tocqueville 1990a, 49, I.3). Thus the bourgeoisie lack both an interest in and a culture of long-term political liberty and do not contest its encroachment (1990a, 49-50, I.3). Their motivations are in the opposite direction since their wealth is subject to whims (of opinion or of the valuation of goods on the market), and they embody the crass cultural

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12 Along with Mill and Aron as previously noted, historians have long complained of his terminological conflations (Wilentz 1988, 208-213; Boesche 1988, 26). Boesche contends that Tocqueville’s language—placing many concepts and critiques together—suited his needs as an author writing to/for the middle classes and as one seeking elected office (1983a, 282N22; Boesche 1993, 167).
values that reflect that circumstance: “exposed to every vicissitude in the commercial or industrial condition of his country; his existence is incessantly troubled by alternations of prosperity and distress; and it is rare that the fluctuation which rules his destiny does not introduce disorder into his ideas and instability into his tastes” (Tocqueville 1862, 231). The middle classes “fear even to think about the causes that produce or maintain” prosperity and political liberty, and care only for the circumstances of that liquid wealth, tolerating and/or exercising domination to maintain stability (Tocqueville in Richter 2006, 258; 9 January, 1852, 283-284). “I cannot describe … the disgust that I feel, in watching the public men of our day traffic, according to the smallest interests of the moment, in things as serious and sacred to my eyes as [political] principles” (Tocqueville 22 April, 1838, 129). Tocqueville declared many times his devotion to/love for liberty, but his point was broader, that “no moral and political greatness is possible for long without it,” hence the dangerousness of bourgeois culture and their cavalier attitudes toward politics and the political virtues behind liberty (24 July 1836, 153). It was the flattening of life and culture into self-interest and the resulting utter lack of “political life itself” that alarmed him (Tocqueville 1959, 7; 10 October, 1836, 311) And it was not the destruction of the ancien régime that Tocqueville mourns per se, but the “mode of destruction” that left long-festering vices in place and swept away prior political virtues (11 September, 1857, 405). This expression of, analysis of, and disgust at “our little democratic and bourgeois pot of soup” appears in Tocqueville’s published writing, but is stated most bluntly and acidly in his private correspondence and conversations—particularly to his best friend Beaumont (9 August, 1840, 143; 12 November, 1837, 121;
Tocqueville’s Resulting Emphasis on Self-Interest Rightly Understood

The fourth and final clarification can also be stated succinctly. The political and cultural failures of the French bourgeoisie were laid at the feet of their crass self-interest, and so Tocqueville put an enormous emphasis on “self-interest rightly understood” (1990b, 121, II.2.VIII). This concept arises in a contrast for him. Aristocracies can, by their nature and structure, claim or compel social cooperation through duty; “all generations become … contemporaneous” and “sacrific[ing] personal gratifications to those who went before and to those who will come after” is a natural—and keenly felt—duty that democratic equality tends to erode or break (1990b, 98, II.2.II). Americans combat this with a happy accident: they never faced radical inequality among one another; they were “born equal instead of becoming so” through a violent revolution (Tocqueville 1990b, 101, II.2.III). Thus the ethos in America “that man serves himself in serving his fellow creatures and that his private interest is to do good” (self-interest rightly understood) is pervasive, and produces “habits of regularity, temperance, moderation, foresight, self command”—perhaps more common virtues than aristocracies

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13 This is especially the case in France (Tocqueville 1990b, 123, II.2.VIII).
produce, but constituting nonetheless a “chief … security” against evils Tocqueville identified (1990b, 121-123, II.2.VIII). Americans exercise this virtue through and in associations—particularly political associations where “they meet together in large numbers, they converse, they listen to one another, and they are mutually stimulated to all sorts of undertakings. They afterwards transfer to civil society the notions they have acquired, and make them subservient to a thousand purposes” (Tocqueville 1990b, 119, II.2.VII).

For Tocqueville, Americans’ conflation of private and public goods (self interest rightly understood) was a good thing and to be encouraged, and education was his principle means and metaphor of doing so: “Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science” (Tocqueville 1990a, 61, I.5). He often combined education with the theme of guidance, instruction, and/or moderation of youthful American exuberance (Tocqueville 22 March 1837; 11 December, 1852, 139; 29 August, 1856, 181-183; 1990a, 246, I.14; Craiutu 2005). While “political associations may therefore be considered as large free schools” in self-interest rightly understood, he specifically emphasized that schools and public education proper were core to these values not only in their prevalence and what they taught, but in how they were locally formed and governed; newspapers and juries were also integral to education generally and this specific kind of political education as well (Tocqueville 1990b, 116, II.2.VII; 1990a, 41, I.2; 181-190, I.11; 1990a 281-287, I.16; 1990a 314-316, I.17). So too, religious

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14 The well-known tyranny of the majority along with base self interest being chief among them.

15 This ground of Tocqueville’s has been plowed so often, it will not be reviewed at length here.
toleration “instructs the Americans more fully in the art of being free” in its separation from political life and its utility in inculcating virtue (Tocqueville 1990a, 303, I.17). Over and over again, Tocqueville sought the means and insight to guide, instruct, and educate democratic societies away from the disastrous effects of self-interest.\textsuperscript{16} He is a “partisan of democracy” (Tocqueville in Craiutu 2005, 605) without illusions as to its dangers,\textsuperscript{17} and believes “it is possible to diminish the evils it brings and to produce the good it promises only by working with it and guiding it as much as possible” (Tocqueville in Morgado 2010, 274). “Education, then, at any rate, for the age of implicit self-sacrifice and instinctive virtues is already flitting far away from us, and the time is fast approaching when freedom, public peace, and social order itself will not be able to exist without education” (Tocqueville 1990b, 124, II. 2.VII; 21 February, 1835, 98-99; 12 April, 1835, 1; 26 December, 1836, 315; 1990a, 7, I.Intro.). In sum, it was these educative associations and cultures, educational structures, schooling itself, and the content of their lessons that formed an important and core centripetal force in American

\textsuperscript{16} Mill also identified education as the “safety-valve of democracy” (1835, 100) and the key to the maintenance of social relationships is education in certain kinds of virtues (1987, 177-226). But there were limits for Mill in his equation of “the spread of civilization as … the extension of both material well-being and education. … Mill’s preferred education should promote the enjoyment of higher pleasures even if such a promotion would not please or gratify some people materially” (Mara and Dovi 1995, 15). Interestingly, Tocqueville’s famous “new science of politics” is precisely the task of “those who direct our affairs … to educate democracy” in a variety of ways (1990a, 7, I.Intro.). That linkage between a new science of politics and the project of education is not often noted by scholars.

\textsuperscript{17} Tocqueville’s is a cautiously optimistic answer to the bourgeois political attitudes Laski portrayed in his scathing sketch of Voltaire: “He sees no case against republicanism or democracy, though he thinks men rarely worthy to govern themselves. He knows that the French system degrades the stature of man; … but if Voltaire cares passionately for civil liberty under a constitutional system, he is also the great proprietor with a scrupulous regard to his rights as such. … ‘I want my lawyer, my tailor, and even my wife to believe in God; for I imagine that I shall then not be robbed or cuckolded so much’” (Voltaire in Laski 1966, 82).
democracy in encouraging self interest rightly understood, and specifically acted as a
counter to the centrifugal forces encouraging virtues to flit away.

*Tocqueville’s Early Limning of American Consumer Capitalism*

These clarifications form the framework of Tocqueville’s limning of American
capitalism. In short, Tocqueville saw in America nascent bourgeois (that is, French)
attitudes toward economic life, business, possession, and their dangerous and damaging
effects on healthy democratic practices. More than anything, Tocqueville responded to
extremes and damaging tendencies, habits, and ways of thinking and sought a kind of
moderation. So it was with his critique of self-interest and commercial values (Craiutu
2005; Boesche 1983b; Boesche 1988). His “strange liberalism” outlined so far combined
conservative, radical, romantic, and mainstream liberal ideas (Boesche 1981; 1987). On
the conservative side, he was firmly skeptical of human perfectibility as noted, but he
went further. In “what came to be called civilization” in the spread of science and liberty,
Tocqueville found real dangers in the many “small, seemingly insignificant ways life was
being made easier, more comfortable, more enjoyable” that the Enlightenment valorized:
“decrease the pain and increase the pleasure of the people” (Wood 1991, 192). The
scholarship noted earlier that establishes Tocqueville’s economic thinking seems to stop a

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18 Likewise, when he reflected on America, Tocqueville “did not write one page of it without
thinking about [France] and without having her … before my eyes” (18 October, 1847, 191). It will likely
not be lost on the reader that Tocqueville’s most potent rhetoric on and most fundamental worries about
consumption appeared in his second volume, written after five years further reflection and specifically in
light of what Tocqueville observed of the French bourgeoisie, and democratic and economic developments
in Europe noted earlier (1990b, 316, II.4.VI; 18 October, 1847, 191).
step short on just this point. They duly note the observations and worries that flow from it, but they seem to take Tocqueville too much at his word: as a group they tend to reflect only on the ethos of the bourgeoisie, or cast him as an early economic sociologist or psychologist of the fallout of the dominance of an entrepreneurial culture. Specifically, Tocqueville came up with some very striking observations on Americans’ consumer wants and their consequences, but “bound [them] up in one abstract idea” as Mill put it (1840, 38).\textsuperscript{19} Swedberg does conclude that the turn away from aristocratic quality in goods toward mass produced goods is the new consumer culture arising in a “democratic economy,” but his primary goal is to capture Tocqueville’s general economic views of the United States, which consisted of economic and social fluidity and restlessness\textsuperscript{20} and its relationship to enlightened despotism by those who are willing to take advantage of the disinterest in public life (2006, 144; 2009, 16-21; 2004; Wood 1991, 124-134). This scholarship for instance, does not credit the transformation of land into fluid capital (along with a variety of other economic tools such as paper money and an impersonal market) as a core symptom and driver of the consumption behaviors Tocqueville observed.\textsuperscript{21} Many others do not penetrate even this far, simply noting that Tocqueville

\textsuperscript{19} Janara makes the same point about Tocqueville’s conflation of the consequences of capitalism with democracy’s (2001, 322N15). However, she ultimately turns to a social-psychological analysis of Tocquevillian citizenship.

\textsuperscript{20} This is Mill’s analysis as well (1840, 32).

\textsuperscript{21} Wood does note the collapsed “distinction between real and personal property,” and that land had become a form of “commercial, dynamic, and unpredictable” capital that “could have little to do with [disinterested political] independence” (1991, 270). Curiously, Wood also discusses Tocqueville at points, and comes close at times to connecting him to Americans’ deep motivations to consume, but never quite does (1991, 285-286, 304, 325, 336, 348, 365).
early on sketched something like the broad outlines of consumer capitalism and leave it at
that.\(^{22}\) Tocqueville went deeper, and his mix of nineteenth and eighteenth century ideas
and vocabularies have tended to mask how much deeper into the early contours of
consumer capitalism he went without necessarily being a critic of capitalism.\(^{23}\)

Boesche sternly warns against reading Tocqueville’s “work through the prism of
our own contemporary categories,” and notes that he meant different things than we do
when he used words like socialism;\(^{24}\) but that example itself reveals a productive reading
of Tocqueville who both damned socialism and praised common ownership of property
(1987, 17-18). Similarly, Tocqueville thought industry both a source of good
(association) and of ill (self-interest and centralization) (Boesche 1987, 18, 130-131, 137-
138). If, as was written much later, “the ideas of economists and political philosophers
… are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little
else” (Keynes in Worswick 1972, 75), then at a minimum we can profitably read a
significant subset of Tocqueville’s economic worries about democracy and the

\(^{22}\) For instance, Mansfield and Winthrop tend to elide this point, noting only that for Tocqueville
an “‘honest materialism’ becomes the content of equality and the end of democratic life” (2000, lxvii).
Some important works on Tocqueville barely mention consumption or if they do, don’t particularly link the
phenomena to him (Welch 2006; Wolin 2001; Bellah et al. 1985). Like many, Sennett (1979) chalks up
his consumerist-like analysis to the problems and anxieties of mass society and politics (McLendon 2006;

\(^{23}\) This isn’t a project to turn Tocqueville into Marx. Tocqueville took the influence of ideas and
their social-historical contexts far too seriously to be cast as such. “I am quite convinced that political
societies are not what their laws make them, but what sentiments, belief, ideas, habits of the heart, and the
spirit of the men who form them, prepare them in advance to be, as well as what nature and education have
made them” (Tocqueville 17 September, 1853, 294). Interestingly, Marx did read Tocqueville (with little
effect); there is no evidence at all that Tocqueville ever read Marx (Swedberg 2009, 315N3).

\(^{24}\) His point is complimentary to Wood’s observation noted earlier that these vast modernizing
changes took place in a preindustrial America.
acquisitive cultures he observed as a commentary on the flowering of a liberal valorization of unfettered self-interest and *laissez faire* that began with Hobbes (Wolin 2004, 251; Sandel 2003, 152; MacPherson 1992). Boesche himself thought Tocqueville saw a “conflict between economic man and political man” (1988, 28). In focusing on nascent consumerism, Tocqueville typically begins with an anachronistic distinction between luxury and comfort. Luxury was (formerly) safely aristocratic, deeply entangled with property and thus the necessary virtues and discipline of political liberty: “wealth, strength, and leisure, accompanied by the pursuit of luxury, the refinements of taste, the pleasures of wit, and the cultivation of the arts; on the other side were labor, clownishness, and ignorance” (Tocqueville 1990a, 9, I.Intro.). With the ascent of democratic and economic equality, the task was to harness and direct the “energetic passions, generous sentiments, profound religious convictions, and wild virtues” of the “coarse and ignorant multitude” (Tocqueville 1990a, 9, I.Intro.). Put simply, Tocqueville “rejuvenated [an] expression of the ancient conviction that luxury induces moral decline, enervating popular government” (Boesche 1988, 25).26 In rather fastidious and

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25 This culture of luxury was typified by the drive toward quality and workmanship previously set out in footnote 9. Wood notes that “traditionally consumption was regarded as both the privilege of the gentry and as an obligation of their rank. Gentlemen responded to unemployment among the laboring ranks by ordering another pair of boots or a new hat,” thus both reinforcing the elite political culture of hierarchy and interlocking social dependencies and loyalties (1991, 34).

26 “[T]he spending habits of ordinary people were what most concerned and alarmed their betters. The aristocracy needed to display its status by spending, but the responsibility of common people was to produce, not consume” (Wood 1991, 35). This attitude was rooted not only in aristocratic elitism, but also in liberalism: Smith’s theory of unproductive labor and deployment of capital. Whether in tithing, spending on a puppet show, or consuming foreign goods, all are “immediate consumption” and retard the accumulation of capital for productivity in the interests of society. “Idleness” is the enemy and industriousness and “parsimony” are needed to accumulate capital and counter wasteful consumption (Smith 1937, 314-323).
aristocratic vocabulary, he held to the old distinction between true quality (luxury), and less-expensive and more available comforts, never extolling or valuing the wide dispersion and enjoyment of comforts within reach of the multitudes (Salkever 1990, 196N12). It is this distinction that sits behind the many names he gives consumption.

Tocqueville sketched a coherent and rounded analysis of consumption and identified American elements essential to its rise. For him, “every aspect of society … dynamically interrelates with every other, so that the part always reflects the whole” (Boesche 1983, 80; 1988, 34-39). Contexts are crucial to Tocqueville, and those important to consumerism appear often, material wealth, prosperity, and becoming wealthy and rising in life being prominent examples: “The desire for prosperity has become an ardent and restless passion” (1990a, 295, I.17); “Nature and circumstances have made the inhabitants of the United States bold, as is sufficiently attested by the enterprising spirit with which they seek for fortune” (1990a, 305, I.17); “[T]hose whose thoughts are not engaged in the matters of the commonwealth are wholly engrossed by the acquisition of a private fortune” (1990b, 222, II.3.XV); “An eager crowd hastens toward the resort of commerce and industry; everything around you bespeaks motion, bustle, hurry. … [Y]ou might almost suppose that [Americans] had but one day to acquire wealth and to enjoy it” (1990b 341, II.App. I). Such observations are repeated dozens of times in the two volumes of Democracy in America. It is not the mere desire for wealth or gain that imbues Americans; it is the particular form it takes. The “spirit”

27 Jefferson also worried that abundance would corrupt the yeoman virtues of the American republican experiment, but Jeffersonians came to celebrate widespread comforts (Boesche 1988, 25; Salkever 1990, 196N12).
“tastes” or “habits” of enterprise, ownership, or commerce are widespread: “Nothing checks the spirit of enterprise. The government invites the aid of all who have talents or knowledge to serve it” (Tocqueville 1990a, 165, I.8). Tocqueville notes that business is never “wholly out of [Americans’] minds” (1990b, 221, II.3.XV) and that they “are constantly driven to engage in commerce and industry. … Their present condition, then, is that of an almost exclusively manufacturing and commercial association” (1990b 235, II.3.XVIII). In America, Tocqueville saw a commercial culture.

It is not the contention here that these impulses to wealth and prosperity (and similar ones to follow) are the same as consumption, but in Tocqueville’s theorizing and his background picture of the French bourgeoisie, these impulses are strongly interconnected with other economic behaviors and the values they express. For instance, “No one is fully contented with his present fortune; all are perpetually striving” (Tocqueville 1990b, 254, III.3.XXI). Very closely related is the overwhelming theme of restlessness, change, tumult, and ceaseless agitation that also recurs often in different contexts in his particular picture of American capitalism. Tocqueville paradoxically explains the stability of American democracy by this trait—revolutions and serious political conflict would disturb the overwhelming restless pursuit of commerce, and he continually returned to this idea in theorizing American democracy in both volumes.

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28 Tocqueville expresses it as well when he writes on the environment of politics: “No sooner do you set foot on American ground than you are stunned by a kind of tumult; a confused clamor is heard on every side, and a thousand simultaneous voices demand the satisfaction of their social wants. Everything is in motion around you” (1990a, 249, I.13). He also expresses it when he writes on western expansion: “The Americans who quit the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean to plunge into the Western wilderness are adventurers, impatient of restraint, greedy of wealth” (Tocqueville 1990a, 396, I.18).
(1990a, 250-252, I.14; 1990b, 221-229, III.3.XV-XVII; 251-263, II.3.XXI).Coupled to this are themes of excitement, rapid changes in fortune, competition, speculation, and chance (Tocqueville 1990a, 51, I.3; 1990b, 71, II.1.XVII; 150, II.2.XVIII; 277-278, II.3.XXIV). Again, it is worth keeping in mind Tocqueville’s observations of Americans were filtered through his critique of the cupidity of the French middle classes and/or the bourgeoisie, manifested in the interconnections (for him) between its obsession with business, shaping politics in the form of its petty intrigues in those interests, its contemptible lust to compile unstable (and thus unworthy) forms of wealth, and the petty passion for low quality and mass goods and culture—its consumerism. This was most strikingly stated in the second volume of *Democracy in America*: “The passion for physical comforts is essentially a passion of the middle classes; with those classes it grows and spreads, with them it is preponderant. From them it mounts into the higher orders of society and descends into the mass of the people” (Tocqueville 1990b 128, I.2.X).\(^{29}\) In a statement that shifts us toward the specifics of consumerism, Tocqueville sums up and knits together many of these themes and the resulting psychology and social psychology of a culture of gain and possession:

> When everyone is constantly striving to change his position, when an immense field for competition is thrown open to all, when wealth is amassed or dissipated in the shortest possible space of time amid the turmoil of democracy, visions of sudden and easy fortunes, of great possessions easily won and lost, of chance under all its forms haunt the mind. The instability of society itself fosters the natural instability of man’s desires. (1990b, 150, II.2.XVII)

\(^{29}\) Again, note the interconnections in Tocqueville’s argument.
He identifies that the instability of democratic culture in combination with the unlimited freedom to pursue gain introduces particular and unstable forms of desire—including a strong desire for consuming goods. He then goes on to mention in the very next paragraph one of a number of such similar phrases (“a thousand petty selfish passions of the hour”) which characterizes his language for the desire to consume and/or the objects of consumption, to which we now turn.

“Physical gratification” is the most famous of Tocqueville’s phrases, but he used other words and phrases as well: “materialism” (used alternately to describe both consumption and a materialist philosophy), “material gratification,” “enjoyments,” “petty,” “small” or “vulgar pleasures,” “well-being,” and “physical comforts” all occur with frequency, but most particularly in the second volume, well beyond the extended excursus he engages in on the topic (1990b, 128-153, II.2.X-XVIII). There is seemingly little Tocqueville observes or no topic on which he theorizes that is not in some significant way connected to the strong desire for consumer goods described in his varied vocabulary: rapid transport of commodities in the interior of the nation is linked with “busy-mindedness and love of self” (1990a, 405, I.18); war is just another venue in which to rise economically and socially, and “In either case the restlessness of the heart is the same, the taste for enjoyment is insatiable, the ambition of success as great” (1990b, 206, II.3.XI). This drive for comforts defines democracy (or at least the American democracy he observed) for Tocqueville: “The taste for well-being is the prominent and indelible feature of democratic times” (1990b, 26, II.1.V). “The comforts of life” for aristocrats “are not to them the end of life” as they are with Americans (Tocqueville 1990b, 128,
I.2.X), and thus “Violent political passions have but little hold on those who have
devoted all their faculties to the pursuit of their well-being. The ardor that they display in
small matters calms their zeal for momentous undertakings” (Tocqueville 1990b, 255,
II.3.XXI).

There are striking and very modern social and social-psychological themes in
Democracy in America closely linked to consumerism which forms an important context
of the excessive and insatiable desire for these gratifications and their relationship to
democracy. One is the result of having striven and worked so hard to acquire things that
they are never enjoyed or possessed “without apprehension,” up to and including the
specter of death cutting such acquisitions and enjoyments short (Tocqueville 1990b, 129,
136-139, II.2.X, XIII). The rich man, having worked so hard to become rich with fresh
memories of being poor, does not know how to enjoy his leisure and the goods he has
acquired (Tocqueville 1990b 155, II.2.XIX). Tocqueville very frequently remarked on
the roots of and utter absorption, passion, universality, and vehemence with which
Americans seek such enjoyments, often in very strong terms: such is the pursuit of
profits and the comforts they bring that a man will engage in the grinding work to clear
land and make it tillable not to settle on and farm, but as speculation to sell for profit, and
move on (1990a, 43, 51, I.2-3; 1990b, 26, 45, 49, 145-147, 157, 293, II.1.V, X, XI,
II.2.XV, XIX, II.4.III). Tocqueville identified in this pattern conformity crucial to
consumerism. Time and again Tocqueville mentions that democratic equality tends to
make people the same and/or feel pressure to be the same: “I know of no country in
which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in
Tocqueville closely links this phenomenon to public opinion and its homogenizing power with frequency. Equality makes people more like one another and “gradually infuses itself into their opinions”; it is not that intellectual or social innovators are suppressed *per se*, but rather that they are isolated and alone (1990b, 255-259, II.3.XXI; 1990a, 51-52, I.3). There are a “multitude of men almost alike” in being neither rich nor poor, “eager and apprehensive men of small property” and among them they “attach an enormous value to their possessions” (Tocqueville 1990b, 252-253, II.3.XXI).30

Tocqueville reconnects these phenomena back up with consumption. With that combination of drive and conformity, the search for distinction leads Americans to seek the markers of small social advantages in buying and possessing and displaying those goods. Americans “are forever brooding over advantages they do not possess” (Tocqueville 1990b, 136, II.2.XIII). “I never met in America any citizen so poor as not to cast a glance of hope and envy on the enjoyments of the rich or whose imagination did not possess itself by anticipation of those good things that fate still obstinately withheld from him” (Tocqueville 1990b, 129, II.2.X). Again, Tocqueville explores this with frequency, specifically mentioning the consumption of cultural production such as novels and the theater and the state as a consumer (and producer) of goods (1990b, 55-61, II.1.XIII-XIV, 311, II.4.V). Tocqueville explores the interaction of this quest to consume

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30 Arendt is helpful here in fleshing out this idea: in her corollary target of the "substitution of the social for the political," the social is a stand-in for universalizing mass society which undermines spaces of freedom and action (Arendt 1998, 23).
with more general economic activity and concludes that the desire to consume “leads
men to engage in commerce and manufactures, as a means by which they hope to satisfy
themselves more promptly and more completely” (1990b, 154-155N1, II.2.XIX). In
other words, supply was only attempting to keep up with American consumer demand.
Elsewhere, he repeatedly notes the drive for cheapness as “the common law of
commerce” (Tocqueville 1990a, 428, I.18), “the representation of motion” (1990b, 52,
II.1.XI) in American’s “entertainments” (1990b, 106, II.2.5), the ubiquity in the
production of goods, the preponderance of advertisements in newspapers, and even
planned (or foreseen) obsolescence (Tocqueville 1990a, 185, I.11; 1990b, 34, 45, 50,
II.1.VIII-XI). Added to this is the repeated theme of wants outstripping means:
Americans’ “desires grow much faster than their fortunes, and [they] gloat upon the gifts
of wealth,” and their restlessness results in a quest for “novelty” or newness in things
(Tocqueville 1990b, 49, II.1.XI; 1990a, 185, I.11). It is not much of a leap to see (as he
does) that the drive is to acquire: cheaply-produced houses with false painted marble
columns, cheap watches, and cheapened entertainment (plays and novels)—all passed off
as luxuries or exciting novelties (Tocqueville 1990b, 51-52, 61, 79-80, II.1.XI, XIV,
XIX). Producers “strive to give to all their commodities attractive qualities that they do
not in reality possess. … [E]veryone hopes to appear what he is not … [and] the
hypocrisy of luxury belongs more particularly to the ages of democracy,” up to and
including the cheap trick of manufacturing imitation diamonds (Tocqueville 1990b, 51,
II.1.XI).  Getting the attention of such busy, focused, distracted, energetic, and acquisitive people becomes perhaps the most important issue, and politics and the means of carrying on elections themselves seem to become a similar form of spectacle, pandering, and entertainment (Tocqueville 1990a, 136-137, 250-251, I.8, 14; 1990b, 103, 260, II.2.IV, II. 3.XXI).  In other words, the nascent patterns of advertising and consumption are starting to appear in American politics and political engagement as well.

It is not hard to conclude that Tocqueville identified the historical rootstock and early manifestations of modern American consumerism at a crucial point of transition. He knitted these early insights together with a frequency and clarity which does not speak to happenstance and isolated discoveries. Within four paragraphs in less than a full page of text, Tocqueville links the isolation and anonymity of the American to the ruthless economic and social competition he faces in a democratic and capitalist society, the role of chance in that competition which leads an instrumental intellectualism (in order to get

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31 Mill's description is a helpful expansion of this idea. The tradesman in a small town would lose all business if he did poor work or sold shoddy goods or was dishonest, but the emerging and impersonal conception of commerce generated dishonesty as the “inevitable fruits of immense competition”:

If he trusts solely to the quality of his goods, to the honest and faithfulness with which he performs what he undertakes, he may remain ten years without a customer... he is driven to cry out on the housetops that his wares are the best of wares past, present and to come; while if he proclaim this, however false, with sufficient loudness to excite the curiosity of passers by, and can give his commodities “a gloss, saleable look,” ... he may drive a thriving trade though no customer ever enter his shop door twice. (Mill 1977, 133)

32 Again, Arendt’s framing is helpful here. Work built a world of possessions and stability, but became subject to instrumentality and the productivity of tools, transforming it into a non-political public realm: “the commercial society, characteristic of the earlier stages of the modern age or the beginnings of manufacturing capitalism, sprang from this ... with its concomitant hunger for universal possibilities of truck and barter, and its end came with the rise of ... the labor society which ... [enshrined] ‘conspicuous consumption’” (Arendt 1998, 162).
on with the pressing and serious business of his occupation)—all of which enables and encourages the free reign of the “urge” for “wants” all around, “none ... wholly beyond his reach” (Tocqueville 1990b, 223-224, II.3.XV). Tocqueville’s broad point was that democracies tend toward a pattern or model of equality: in an ideal world “freedom and equality would meet and blend”: if all “take a part in the government” with an equal right to do so, then “no one is different from his fellows, none can exercise a tyrannical power; men will be perfectly free, because they are all entirely equal; and they will all be perfectly equal, because they are entirely free” (Tocqueville 1990b, 94, II.2.1). But he saw that the way people actually behave produces new despotisms in new environments (Zunz 2006, 363). The case here has been that the democratic virtue-sapping drive to acquire goods in the search for individual escape from equality and conformity in consumption are two important manifestations of that. Tocqueville’s letters provide a useful précis and summary here. The Americans, Tocqueville wrote very early in his trip, have “an immoderate desire to grow rich, … perpetual instability of purpose, and a continual longing for change; a total absence of established customs and traditions; a trading and manufacturing spirit which is carried into everything, even where it is least appropriate” (28 July, 1831, 370). Writing to his English translator of Democracy in America nine years later about the second volume, he explained that the “great danger is … that the component parts of society may be destroyed or greatly enfeebled for the sake of the whole” (3 January, 1840, 52-53). Seven years later he combines and hones these ideas: “One must take care not to confuse political liberty with certain effects it sometimes produces. Once it is well established, and exercised in a peaceable milieu, it
impels men to the practice and taste of well-being, to the care and passion for making
fortunes; ... its cares ... harm political passion itself” (18 October, 1847, 193). It may be
that these observations were an accident of Tocqueville’s uncanny timing of his visit, but
they do not represent the sum of his insights on capitalism generally. Tocqueville at
times sounded very much like Marx on the alienation of labor: “[W]hat can be expected
of a man who has spent twenty years of his life in making heads for pins?” (1990b, 158,
II.2.XX) And he sounded like Marx on the religious disenchantment of a world
dominated by business: “[T]he community would run less risk of being brutalized by
believing that the soul of man will pass into the carcass of a hog, than by believing that
the soul of man is nothing at all” (Tocqueville 1990b, 146, II..XV). Such observations
were not isolated: Tocqueville also commented incisively on the interests of bourgeois
owners versus workers, the threat of a capitalist oligarchy, the relentless competition to
reduce costs, the cash nexus as opposed to the bonds of feudal society, business cycles
and their relationship to political instability, strikes, and even class struggle (1990b, 4, 50,

Americans should educate against these forces in their society, “set less value on
the work, and more upon the workman ... [because] no form or combination of social

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33 Again, a contrast to Mill is helpful. Though he questions the “absolute right in an individual to
an unrestricted control ... over an unlimited quantity of the mere raw material of the globe,” Mill’s focus is
on concentrations of land as a form of power—in which the state has an inherent interest (1987, 219-220).
Civilization for Mill is “combination” and “compromise,” and he valorized both in the form of joint-stock
companies and their “irresistible” spread and gigantic scale, as well as newspapers as the “voice of the
many” (1977, 122, 125, 129).
polity has yet been devised, to make an energetic people out of a community of pusillanimous and enfeebled citizens”—enfeebled that is, by an endless quest for cheapened consumer goods as much as the dangerous effects of political equality (1990b, 329, II.4.VII). Tocqueville feared the invasiveness of this culture, and he summed it up as a principle danger in a democracy:

When the taste for physical gratifications among them has grown more rapidly than their education and their experience of free institutions, the time will come when men are carried away and lose all self-restraint at the sight of the new possessions they are about to obtain. ... It is not necessary to do violence to such a people in order to strip them of the rights they enjoy; they themselves willingly loosen their hold. ... [T]hey neglect their chief business, which is to remain their own masters. (1990b, 140, II.2.XIV)

Thus the contemporary invasive data-driven tracking and marketing to Americans arguably also reflects the desire to “guide and to instruct ... in the various incidents of life and to secure ... happiness quite independently of ... consent” (Tocqueville 1990b, 306, II.4.V). The “immense and tutelary power which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate” is as much rooted in Americans’ “incessant... endeavoring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives” which serves to “keep them in perpetual childhood” as it is in a centralizing government (1990b, 318, II.4.VI). Mill’s observation rings true: Tocqueville gathered many things under the concept of democracy, including patterns of consumption and a culture of gain that act as isolating centrifugal forces in the developing capitalism he observed.

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34 In Boesche’s formulation, Tocqueville feared abundance (1988).
4.1 Conclusion: Tocqueville and the Paradigmatic Example in American Education

Given the gap between the nineteenth-century capitalism he observed and the neoliberal environment of the twenty-first, what does Tocqueville have to contribute to a reflection on a paradigmatic case of advertising in the public school classroom? As a relevant historical exercise, Tocqueville confronted a newly-unbound society in which a more radical equality among people was conceptualized and combined with an unprecedented variety of economic opportunities which simply obliterated notions of both elite and common republican virtues as a basis of government and replaced it with “a scrambling business society dominated by the pecuniary interests of ordinary working people” (Wood 1991, 250, 229-255). Beyond mere enjoyment, Americans at that time positively identified self interest as society’s “binding cement,” the “golden chains [of] the best social system that ever was formed,” and the core meaning of democracy: “private interests in government” were taken for granted and “commerce had found its full identity with society” (Wood 1991, 252, 338). But beyond deepening our historical understanding of the contemporary environment, Tocqueville is a contemporary presence, often “stenciled” over the contemporary situation “to create a desired pattern of

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35 In reality the equality was among white male Protestants, but the principle could be and was eventually extended well beyond them. Wood explains much of this as the outcome of overcoming the old European mercantilist prejudice that “commerce was generally equated with international trade, not with mere trafficking and exchanging within the community” (1991, 337). However, even the mercantile environment drove colonial Americans to produce surpluses for profit in foreign exchange, and in turn drove an expansion of internal markets and manufactures, and “once it was finally realized that the desire of ordinary people to buy such consumer goods, and not their poverty or frugality as used to be thought, was the principal source of their industriousness and their productivity, the fear of ‘luxury’ … died away” (Wood 1991, 315, 314-317). These opportunities “made market farmers out of husbandmen” and made “Luxuries,” “pleasures and diversions” widespread and expected: Americans “had enjoyed buying, selling, and consuming and desired to do more of it” (Wood 1991, 248-249).
ideas” arising from his theoretical insights (Keilty 2011). Neoliberal political theory has appropriated Tocqueville, but his early observations on nascent American consumerism certainly make problematic any sanguine conclusions from those who utilize (stencil) his insights. For them, his work on pauperism reveals that “public relief is an invitation both to individual irresponsibility and to an overweening state” (Himmelfarb 1997, 31). Thus Tocqueville’s mistake was not to see his way clear to rely on the “potentialities of industrialism to improve the condition of the poor” rather than continue to reflect on private charity or state help (Himmelfarb 1997, 28). Prescribing a simple Tocquevillian step in a radically changed neoliberal context seems oversimplified and wishful: mere participation in associations allows “individuals [to] pool their efforts … to meet more of their common needs without the assistance of a strong central government” rather than enhancing the social safety net (Mansfield and Winthrop 2001, 205). Mansfield and Winthrop’s previous comment (already noted) about Tocqueville characterizing an honest materialism in an earlier American culture appears equally sanguine in light of his thinking on consumption revealed here. Likewise, those who would seek to use Tocqueville to moralize about the pernicious effects of television without attending to its business interests and consumerist content would appear naïve at best, cynical at worst (Berger 2011; Putnam 2000, 216-246; 1995). Putnam drew on Tocqueville’s observations on association to theorize social capital as the metric of “social trust, norms of reciprocity, networks of civic engagement, and successful cooperation” that made

36 Needless to say, those who use Tocqueville to argue for the place (or even a resurgence) of the role of religion in American public life (Bellah et al. 1985; Bellah 2002) are easily swept into the neoliberal-neoconservative political tent, irrespective of their scholarly aims.
government work well (1993, 180). Where social capital doesn't exist, inefficiency seems to be the point, leading to economic backwardness; thus in the Tocquevillian theoretical terrain outlined here, Putnam problematically emphasizes the traditional meaning of “capital” in social capital in the form of economic utility, obviating its social, civic, and public aspects (1993, 180-185; Day 2002). Tocqueville was not about making democracy “function,” but rather analyzing the behaviors and cultures it encouraged and how resulting damaging outcomes could be avoided. Part of the project here is to rebalance and answer neoliberal (or neoliberal-ish) appropriations of him.

In addressing Tocqueville’s contemporary policy relevance, the matter of education itself goes to the heart of why he is the focus here and not the prior example of Jefferson. Very much like Tocqueville’s contemporary Mill, Jefferson’s reasoning about and plans for educational systems and curricula were centered on training the “natural aristocracy among men” (28 October, 1813, 632). It was this natural aristocracy that would rise to join the gentry (where appropriate) and contribute to virtuous rule. As we saw in Chapter 1, for Jefferson’s yeoman it was necessary but sufficient to be educated to read, look after his business, and know his rights—inherent common sense and virtue could and would take care of political concerns from there. Tocqueville understood immediately—almost upon arrival—that the role of education was necessarily different in the American democracy he observed. The Americans understood “republican principles in the most democratic sense”; “no one seems to doubt” that a republic is good and “natural for human societies,” and while majorities do err, “in the long run the majority … is not only the sole legal judge of its interests but also the surest and most infallible
judge” (Tocqueville 29 June, 1831, 46-47). He follows this up immediately with a core observation and contrast with France:

The result of this idea is that enlightenment must be diffused widely among the people, that one cannot enlighten the people too much. You know how many times in France we have been anxious ... to know if it is to be desirable or fearful for education to penetrate through all the ranks of society. This question, which is so difficult for France to resolve, does not even seem to present itself here. ... It has never given them pause, and to them even stating the question had something shocking and absurd about it. Enlightenment, they say, is the sole guarantee we have against the mistakes of the multitude. ... They believe, in good faith, in the excellence of the government that rules them, they believe in the wisdom of the masses, provided they are enlightened, and they do not seem to suspect that there is some education that can never be shared by the masses. (Tocqueville 29 June, 1831, 47)

Tocqueville immediately grasped that the political goal of education in America was not a natural aristocracy, but as high a level enlightenment and as wide a diffusion as possible. His questions were odd and archaic to the Americans he queried, but his observations were very modern and remain germane to political democracy.

Tocqueville did not rest everything on education or schooling per se. Education was both an actual process in schools and the content of what was taught and modeled in families, communities, religion, and in the laws, and had real consequences. Recall that the “part always reflects the whole” (Boesche 1983, 80), so it was the teaching of

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37 Again, the contrast with the aristocratic (but “enlightened”) attitudes of Voltaire is helpful here. “For the common people ... he has profound contempt; they are the source of all fanaticism and superstition. ... The ‘canaille’—the ‘swinish multitude’ of Burke—is not ‘worthy’ of enlightenment. ... [T]he perpetuation of the uninstructed masses was essential and ... anyone who owned property and needed servants would think the same; ... he was, indeed, afraid of the social consequences of popular enlightenment” (Laski 1966, 83). Contrast this with Tocqueville’s searching inquiries and his attempt to conduct them without undue influence of base interests – his own or others’. This also deepens Wood’s (1991) argument as to the radical social nature of the American Revolution and the resulting novel society about which Tocqueville theorized.
democratic self-discipline to the citizen “from infancy” which was the telling detail: it could “even be traced in the schools, where the children in their games are wont to submit to rules which they have themselves established, and to punish misdemeanors which they have themselves defined. The same spirit pervades every act of social life” (1990a, 191, I.12). In pragmatic terms, education and the details of what people are taught and how they are taught them—in schools and society—are crucially important. Thus Tocqueville leads us to strongly question the idea that justifies the policy of advertising in the classroom as a meaningless and harmless drop in the bucket in a culture saturated with it. What we choose to include as part of the classroom has extensive connections and ramifications throughout American culture and sends a not-insignificant message about what we value and the content of democracy and our expectation of the citizen. We educate merely by what we present and how we structure and fund it in the schools.

What Tocqueville can lead us to conclude about the content of that education in our paradigmatic example can be cast too simply and moralistically: if “freedom requires self-mastery” for Tocqueville (Boesche 1988, 31), then the heedless rush to gratify unchecked desires in consumption that he identified is, simply, corrupting license; ergo, such people in a democracy will “lose political power [because] they have become unworthy to retain it … through [their] indifference, … selfishness and vices (Tocqueville 1959, 12-13). The usual nostrum in neoliberal cultural terms is that such

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38 In a contemporary parallel, Lasch notes that “If we believe the revisionists, a culture of consumption has been with us for a long time and … is now experienced … as the ‘very element in which we all breathe,’” it ends up reinforcing the more radical accounts of the hegemony of advertising and consumption (1993, 1389).
morally-lax people will allow the nanny state to fill in, take over, and liberty will be extinguished. Tocqueville is more nuanced, however. If freedom requires self-mastery, it is because we too often “confound independence with liberty” (Tocqueville 1955, 275). That is, mere freedom (or independence) to do as we wish is not the same thing as political liberty. Americans’ longstanding and hopeful conflation of self interest in commerce and consumption with the public good is manifested in this case in the implied endorsement of consumption in the heart of the school’s time and purpose. Recall that political liberty for Tocqueville was, in his historical examples, a considered and deliberate matter developed over time, consciously and jealously protected and extended with the long view in mind.\textsuperscript{39} If the Revolution began maturely, a product of reflection on freedom, and is the source of common beliefs and behaviors and the democracy that grew from it (Wood 1991, 336), then does it stand for unbound self interest and profit, or does it admit of at least a modicum of Tocquevillian call to the commonweal? This is why there is such continuing and rancorous debate over how defining events (particularly those where issues of freedoms and rights have been at stake) in American history are interpreted.\textsuperscript{40} If Tocqueville is “less inclined to applaud [democracy] for what it does than what it causes to be done,” (1990a, 251, I.14), then our policies and practices of

\textsuperscript{39} America was simply a new version of this very principle:

The Revolution of the United States was the result of a mature and reflecting preference for freedom, and not of a vague or ill-defined craving for independence. … [I]ts course was marked … by a love of order and law. It was never assumed in the United States that the citizen of a free country has a right to do whatever he pleases…. No idea was ever entertained of attacking the principles or of contesting the rights of society; … the community should be at once regulated and free (Tocqueville 1990a, 70-71, I.5).

\textsuperscript{40} In addition to the Revolution see, for example, the April 18, 2011 issue of Time with Lincoln on the cover with the caption: “Why We’re Still Fighting the Civil War.”
advertising in the schools reflect at least a partial answer to that question, and
Tocqueville does not allow us to blithely say that this has no consequences for our
political culture. We cause advertising in the classroom to be done for a variety of
reasons that reflect on and affect our political culture, the most obvious being an
unwillingness to discuss and agree on the purpose and scope of school activities, and then
enact realistic budgets to pay for them. The practice represents in its way a widespread
failure of a key, local political process, but it also reflects the success of neoliberal
solutions to allow the free play of markets in these spaces in order to pay for them
through those mechanisms. Americans have long tried to have both an education for
economic participation (in which the practice of advertising in the classroom would
matter little), and one that promotes the reflective virtues of citizens (in which the
practice could matter a great deal) (Menand 2011). Advertising in the public school
classroom perhaps decisively alters any semblance of Tocquevillian balance and
moderation between the two. Tocqueville clearly identified the tensions between the
motivations of consumption and political engagement. An education that teaches that
self interest (rightly understood) also includes necessary attention to the commonweal
over the long term is, in Tocqueville’s analysis of democracy’s dynamics, consistently
countered by neoliberal mechanisms and message of encouraging consumption in the
midst of the public school classroom.

What of the messages of advertising itself? We run the risk of too easily
dismissing Tocqueville because he casts consumption and the means of promoting it in
disdainful, aristocratic, and anachronistic language. However, behind that language is the
political context of a strong aversion to deception. It is *fake* diamonds, *false*-painted columns to look like marble, cheap watches sold as luxuries, and cheap *deceptions* of plays and entertainments that raise Tocqueville’s particular ire. In politics, these practices take the form of “electioneering intrigues” (Tocqueville 1990b, 103, II.2.IV) or “electioneering schemes” (Tocqueville 1990a, 137, I.8): the American “is canvassed by a multitude of applicants [who] seek… to deceive him in a thousand ways” (Tocqueville 1990a, 251, I.14). Mill is again helpful, and he articulates more directly what Tocqueville is after: “It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question” (1991, 140). The damage for Tocqueville (and Mill) is in substituting independent judgment on what is being sold (merchandise, perceptions of merchandise, or political ideas) for the images, words, and ideas of the seller. By inculcating or substituting the seller’s invention—unthinkingly buying the good or idea in just doing as one wishes—the process of advertising and consumption obviates freedom and liberty. The consumer who has accepted the seller’s invention about the product or political idea may be formally free in the sense of negative liberty, but his liberty is false, consisting of doing the bidding of the advertiser (Smith 1984, 184-185). He is a fool satisfied. This again is why the bourgeois-like unstable forms of property and the debased desire for consumer goods, the new and pervasive habits that encouraged unbridled consumption were dangerous to democracy (recall Tocqueville put much stock on mores, norms, and habits of the heart). Not being fooled by false ideas and information is again why Tocqueville
so insisted on the paradox of American self interest (rightly understood), and why, in the political deceptions of electioneering, he hoped that it would educate (“really enlighten”) Americans in sorting through the cant (1990a, 251, I.14). In a fundamental way, the core methods of consumption and advertising undercut the cultural resources of Americans to understand themselves and their role in democracy for Tocqueville. Americans have placed this practice in the heart of their schools—education being a significant countervailing centripetal force in his analysis. Advertising in the classroom substitutes a set of motivations in the young that does not enable identification of people’s long-term political interests in liberty and the health of the surrounding society. Placing its mechanisms in the heart of the public school classroom can only confuse the necessary education for democracy and democratic practices and further undermine the cultural resources of democratic efficacy. Truly, by such practices, democratic society’s nature and potential are shaped for Tocqueville. The paradigmatic example here is not a detail meaningless to effective democratic participation and political liberty for him.

There is one more pragmatic policy insight to be gleaned from Tocqueville. So much scholarship on him falls into the easy dichotomy between the decline of aristocracy and the rise of democracy. This analysis indicates those categories should be rethought. His new science of politics was after all, an educational project and not so easily pegged. Tocqueville produced insights strikingly modern in character—such as on the

41 This is an adaptation of a point Bellah makes about individualism undercutting political efficacy (1992, 21).

42 Neoliberal appropriations of Tocqueville tend to assume this framing in focusing on his analysis of the overweening democratic state.
motivations of and damages to democracy wrought by nascent consumerism outlined here. But we must remember that, at the end of two volumes of reflection, the second of which was completed a full eight years after his return amid his growing concerns about and disgust with bourgeois culture and politics, Tocqueville was still in wonder at what he had seen, still respectful of the American experiment, ever focused on the liberty of the individual person—all of them, and his project remained that of insightfully analyzing and guiding those developments and was still hopeful. “There is less perfection, but more abundance” in American democracy; “life is not adorned with brilliant trophies, but it is extremely easy and tranquil” for most all (Tocqueville 1990b, 332, II.4.VIII). “The political world is metamorphosed; new remedies must henceforth be sought for new disorders,” including “settled limits on the action of the government”; but Tocqueville’s rhetorical weight here is on the “rights [of] private persons, and … the undisputed enjoyment of those rights; to enable individual man to maintain whatever independence, strength, and original power he still possesses; to raise him by the side of society at large, and uphold him in that position” (1990b, 329, II.4.VII). Tocqueville was very dark at times about the challenges, including those in the analysis presented here. But in the end, the nascent American consumerism Tocqueville identified was a dangerous infection, not a cancer in democracy: had he thought so “I should not have written this book,” and in pointing out its dangers, he seeks to help solve them—”I do not think that they are insurmountable” (1990b, 329, II.4.VII). Whatever the contemporary hegemony of neoliberal ideas, Tocqueville argues that our practical decisions on these small
democratic matters like advertising in the public school classroom are changes that make a difference.

4.2: A Practical Communitarianism

Introduction

Tocqueville’s extensive focus on associational life (and the role of self interest rightly understood within it) is very often taken as a theoretical pillar of contemporary communitarianism, which centers on a relatively simple-but-profound insight of long standing: community is central to social and political identity, perhaps especially in democracy. As Tocqueville (and Dewey, as we saw in Chapter 1) knew well, “shared understandings and experience, intersubjective practices, sense of affinity, solidarity, and those tacit affective ties that bind individuals together into a community must already exist,” and they depend on and are produced by resources and commitments that are neither automatic nor unassailable (Bernstein 1983, 226; Grange 2010). Communities are “both an objective structure and subjective dimensions” at the same time; that is, they are instantiated in physical spaces, structures, and institutions as well as in social bonds (Wallacavage and Gruters 2007, 222; Grange 2010). In terms of the long path of human history, the intersubjective processes at the heart of forging communal connections begin in cooperation and shared understandings of symbols and symbolic practices, rituals/practices, and then the building of stable spaces for them43 until ultimately; the

43 This aspect will come into play in an important way later.
process is instantiated in an actual community and its practices. (Grange 2010, 387, 389-391). Maximally, community “denotes solidarity between persons united in their sense of belonging through a shared past and/or common goals” (Wallacavage and Gruters 2007, 221). In more minimalist and contemporary terms, community consists of social interaction, shared ties and/or belonging, some amount of mutual influence (person to person, person to group, group to person), and some form of shared space—whether territorial or not (Almgren 2000, 363; Bell 2010). Contemporary mainstream communitarianism takes up some of the factors and forces that undercut or challenge the resources and commitments of community. Generally, communitarians posit the locus of politics in the relationship between individual interests and “shared ends that can serve as the basis for a politics of the common good” (Kymlicka 2002, 259). It is summed up in Sandel’s statement that “when politics goes well, we can know a good in common that we cannot know alone” (2003, 159). The extent of the claims of community, how far they should be publicly acknowledged or tolerated, how far they extend into politics, and how far the ties of community extend (neighborhood, ethnicity, nation) are the key conflicts with liberalism (Callan and White 2003, 107). Politically, while communitarians generally favor “strong democracy,” that is, vigorous and meaningful participation in shaping and realizing a common good, the key and common point here is

44 The term “mainstream” here is not meant to pejoratively contrast what follows, but rather to denote—and in some ways bracket—this line of thinking and scholarship. Generally, communitarians endorse a definition of community that falls somewhere between these two definitions, such as Etzioni’s “web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals” that is not merely one-on-one, combined with a “measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings and a shared history and identity to a particular culture” (2000, 360-361).
the analytic insistence on the attention to community as fundamental to democracy (Gabardi 2001, 550).

Michael Sandel’s argument is widely taken to be the *locus classicus* of the contemporary case for communitarianism in his debate with Rawls over rights, justice, and the good (Dryzek, Honig, and Phillips 2006, 18-10; Callan and White 2003).

Liberalism, he argues,

… invites us to imagine the principles we would choose to govern our society if we were to choose them in advance, before we knew the particular persons we would be—whether rich or poor, strong or weak, lucky or unlucky—before we knew even our interests or aims or conceptions of the good.45 These principles—the ones we would choose in that imaginary situation—are the principles of justice. What is more, if it works, they are principles that do not presuppose any particular ends. (Sandel 1984b, 86)

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45 Sandel is characterizing Rawls’ (1996, 22-28) formulation of the Original Position here. Sandel is the basis here rather than MacIntyre, Taylor, or Walzer. All three will be important touchstones for clarifying key concepts within mainstream communitarianism. However, MacIntyre’s opposition to pluralism (Mara 1989, 31) and his valorizing and harkening back to “local modes of communal activity … in farming, in craftsmanship of various kinds” makes his frame of analysis too far removed from the paradigmatic case of advertising in the public schools (MacIntyre 1990, 360), resulting in an unrealistic “scrupulously insular education” (Callan and White 2003, 106). Taylor strikes a not-dissimilar theme when he calls for “a civilization which recovered contemplation” and an economy focused not on “serviceable materials and objects but on those which could be lived with for a long time” (1989, 155-156). Sandel rightly calls this “recalling a community to itself,” and notes that such reasons for community are insufficient: “The mere fact that certain practices are sanctified by the traditions of a particular community is not enough” (1998, xi). Walzer’s focus is on distributive criteria of justice: the nature of goods, how they come to individuals, and how those arrangements are worked out in just or unjust forms (Sally 2001; Mara 1989, 31). The terms and terrains of this debate with liberalism have been reported and covered extensively and over a long time, with significant overlap in the identification of the prime movers and the terms of the debate (Bell 2010; Dagger 2009; Gutmann 2003; Callan and White 2003; Kymlicka 2002, 208-283; Gabardi 2001; Walzer 1990; Buchanan 1989; Yack 1988; Thigpen and Downing 1987). It is here acknowledged that some of the major figures have distanced themselves from the term communitarianism and represent near alternatives such as civic republicanism or a strain of deep skepticism about the entire enterprise of liberalism (Bell 2010; Dagger 2009, 318N3). But like the authors cited here who have produced these overviews, the communitarian umbrella is not used pejoratively and is a useful handle for a recognizable and common core set of ideas and critiques.
In this way, liberalism constructs a “moral universe inhabited by subjects capable of constituting meaning on their own – as agents of construction in the case of the right, as agents of choice in the case of the good. … [T]he deontological subject is installed as sovereign, as the author of the only moral meanings there are” (Sandel 2003, 153). There is a radical distancing in this process—what Sandel calls a mythical “me” somehow standing well apart from one’s values, aims, ambitions, and so on, and “it rules out the possibility of … constitutive ends. No role or commitment could define me so completely that I could not understand myself without it … [or] that turning away from it would call into question the person I am” (Sandel 1984b, 86). The reality of the way people actually live and exist in the world is quite different: “we are … members of this family or community or nation or people, as bearers of this history, as sons and daughters of that revolution, as citizens of this republic. … To imagine a person incapable of constitutive attachments such as these is not to conceive an ideally free and rational agent, but to imagine a person wholly without character, without moral depth”—formulated by Sandel as the “unencumbered self” (1984a, 172; 1984b). Walzer simply calls this “bad sociology,” an unattainable, unrealistic, and undesirable goal—with the important proviso for our purposes here that identity also forms and is enacted within “the framework of on-going institutions” (1984, 324). The fallout for Sandel and communitarians generally is that, absent these commitments, the unencumbered self is “less liberated than disempowered[;] … what goes on … is less a choosing of ends than

46 Rorty puts it this way: our sense of community “is heightened when we see [it] as ours rather than nature’s, shaped rather than found” (Rorty in Bernstein 1983, 225).
a matching of preexisting desires, undifferentiated as to worth, with the best available means of satisfying them” (2003, 154). Politically, liberalism “lacks the civic resources to sustain self-government. The public philosophy by which we live cannot … inspire the sense of community and civic engagement that liberty requires” (Sandel 1996, 58). It is the source of our problems, not the solution (Hollenbach 1987, 22).

It follows that communitarians focus their analyses on the groupings, units, structures, and agencies that instantiate or produce these webs of relationships that in turn produce commonalities of purpose, values, responsibility, and solidarity: families, religious institutions, local businesses and governments, senior centers, labor unions, volunteer fire companies, choirs, bowling leagues, and so on—and they most certainly include schools and the issue of education generally (Galston 2004; 2001; Etzioni 2000; Putnam 2000; 1995; Barber 1998; 1992; Bellah 1998; 1992; 1985; Bellah et al. 1985). For communitarians schools are part of the “moral infrastructure” that both builds community (and individual character), and is constitutive of it (Etzioni 1993, 89-115). Furthermore, communitarians worry about and critique the market’s deleterious effects on these very social structures and institutions and the values they produce (Barber 2007; 2004; 1992; Sandel 2005, 77-96; 2000; Bellah et al. 1985, 290-296). Barber in particular has thundered about the “infantilization” of adulthood through consumption: “inducing puerility in adults and preserving what is childish in children trying to grow up, even as children are ‘empowered’ to consume” (2007, 82). And he critiques the homogenization of culture and the “soft forms of tyranny” that globalized consumerism produces, resulting in an undermining of community in the isolation of individuals so constructed.
who are unable (or unwilling) to cooperate or connect (Barber 1995, 13; 2004, 10-12, 183-185; 1992). Bellah et al. see the incursions of the market and consumerism as an “ideology that turns human beings into relentless market maximizers” (1991, 846). With individuals—and their multiplicity—so valorized economically and culturally, “our capacity to imagine a social fabric that would hold individuals together is vanishing,” and the commitments that undergird community are undermined (Bellah 1998, 622). These concerns have themselves been extended into specific analyses of advertising in the public school classroom, up to and including some mentions of the paradigmatic case in point of Channel One (Sandel 2005, 73-76; Etzioni 1993, 109-112; Barber 1998, 214-224, 277; Bellah 1985).

A Truncated Critique

We would seem to be at an end here, with communitarianism having already made a strong case against advertising in the classroom. However, mainstream communitarian analysis and argument is strangely truncated—stopping short of the next steps or a deeper analysis. Schools and education are a good example of this. In looking at education generally, and schools and classrooms particularly, communitarians do point the finger at the market as an incursion too far, but the weight of their rhetoric is on other

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47 This group has clearly tracked Dewey’s concern for the role of community in democracy and democracy-as-community as noted in Chapter 1. They have gone somewhat beyond him in the push for a kind of political agency that he neglected and in addressing the larger forces shaping the social (versus his focus on the individual). We will return later to a deeper set of reasons why a vein of communitarianism was chosen for this analysis here rather than Dewey, but the deeper common and motivating focus among communitarians again is not the equation of healthy democracy and community, but the analytic insistence on community for democracy.
issues. For Bellah, the target is individualism: “If the ideology of American
individualism creates problems in sustaining intimate relationships, it causes even greater
difficulty for involvement in the public sphere” (1992, 18), and in education this has
meant a bias toward individualism and thus a dire tradeoff between education for “private
advancement” versus for citizenship (1985). For Putnam it is the time displacement of
television that is killing off American civic community in the form of social capital and
civic involvement—but not necessarily television’s marketing methods and purpose or
commercial content (2000, 216-246; 1995). For Etzioni the point is the diminution of
sustaining disciplines and civic virtues necessary for community. For instance, the
traditional good of working after school has been turned into something anti-educational
and the “instant reward of money, and the youth status symbols it buys, [are] much more
alluring than credits earned in algebra, American history, or French” (Etzioni 1993, 112).
For Galston the target is the lack of teaching (and thus social valuing) of civic knowledge
and a consequent civic/communal detachment in the young (2004; 2001). For Sandel, the
schools are a “frontier” for “rampant commercialization”; the principle of his criticism is
the “corrupting” influence of advertising in the familiar form of corporate-sponsored
materials and “because it undermines the purposes for which schools exist,” which is “to
reflect on their desires, to restrain or elevate them” (2005, 73-76). Elsewhere Sandel
states his more extensive case against corruption: “Even in a society without unjust
differences of power and wealth, there would still be things that money should not buy,”
and those domains are those necessary to cultivate and develop republican citizenship
(2000, 94, passim). Even the thunderous Barber ends up simple citing a deeply mixed
message on broad social values when it comes to advertising in the schools: “We honor ambition, we reward greed, we celebrate materialism, we worship acquisitiveness, we cherish success, and commercialize the classroom—and then we bark at the young about the gentle arts of the spirit” in a too-late, last-ditch effort to imbue them with some sense of binding communal and social obligations (1998, 218). We have managed in the end “to globalize many of our vices and almost none of our virtues”—especially those resources of virtues which enable democratic activism and civic involvement in communities (Barber 2004, 116). These critiques are not invalid, and they are helpful as far as they go, but they tend to boil down to a simple moralism with little depth of analysis: advertising encourages consumption; consumption encourages selfish anti-social behaviors; selfish anti-social behaviors are inimical to community; ergo advertising in the classroom is bad for community. One can easily envision such an argument made before a cash-strapped school board being lauded as a fine sentiment, and then ignored as another part of the school is made ready by policy for more advertising or further privatization.

Why the truncation? Why the lack of a depth of analysis when communitarianism has staked out a fundamental insight about how we actually live? Part of the answer is in communitarianism’s approach. In grounding much of their thinking in response to Rawls (as noted previously), contemporary communitarianism chose large intellectual themes: rights and the deontological self, equality and difference, and locality versus universality to name but a few (Bell 2010; Lukes 1998). In their intellectual commitments to these bigger issues of political philosophy and sociology, the communitarians seek to solve
problems of a type (such as the free-rider problem in national social-good ventures), but they leave behind the pragmatic connections to actual behaviors and persons in actual communities in the process (Gutmann 2003, 186-187; Walzer 1990, 16-22). Sandel has argued vigorously that “as rights and entitlements expand, politics is … displaced from smaller forms of association” and therefore should be curtailed in the interests of community and democracy (1984b, 94). Etzioni makes the same point (2009), and both he (1993, 130-132) and Barber (1998, 187-202) urge national programs of mandatory service in the interests of promoting community and civic knowledge/responsibility. For Bellah, only the telos of God/faith can “restore our organic relationship to each other and the biosphere, … [and] reconcile the conflicts between freedom and equality that are inherent in our kind of society”—political rationality will never be enough (2002, 275). Walzer points out that any attempt to politically enact such solutions would represent a “massive and harsh application of state power” that communitarians themselves oppose, and further represents a substantial curtailment of Americans’ freedoms; thus communitarian policies are deeply contradictory, impractical, and politically unviable (1990, 12). Further, liberals have adapted to and accommodated many of the communitarians’ theoretical points, and the result as Mara puts it, is that the liberal-

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48 Kymlicka points out that communitarians generally, and Sandel in particular, offers very few practical examples of communitarian politics, policy and shared ends, and the grounds for defending them are often contradictory and exclusionary (2002, 258-260). Walzer in turn argues that this stems from an unresolved contradiction within communitarianism: that “liberalism [both] tells the truth about the asocial society that liberals create,” and at the same time “liberal theory radically misrepresents real life” (Walzer 1990, 7, 9; Buchanan 1989, 857).
communitarian “wars are, after all, gentle ones,” an intramural affair with substantial common commitments (1997, 257; Dagger 2009; Kymlicka 2002, 208-283).

A second part of the answer is oft-stated. Communitarians have focused a great deal of attention on proliferating diversity and the resulting fragmentation of ends in society (Mara 2008, 93-94; Kymlicka 2002, 271). In response, communitarians assert that “when members of a society have settled roots and established traditions, they will tolerate the speech, religion, sexual, and associational preferences of minorities, [but] history simply does not support [that] optimism” (Gutmann 2003, 189). Instead, history “illustrates the practical tendency … to enhance the normalizing power of majority social judgments and cultural norms” (Honig 1993, 154; Mara 2008, 238-241).49

“Communitarians often write as if the historical exclusion of certain groups … was just arbitrary, so that we can now include them and proceed forward” (Kymlicka 2002, 258). Minimally, communitarians rhetorically imply all communities are “worthy of valorization and gratitude,” and they don’t consistently make the distinction between good and bad ones, or between positive and harmful forms of association (Honig 1993, 163-164; Salkever 1990, 188). Maximally for agonistic democrats, this commitment defines oppression. It is “individuality [that] secures space to be through resistance and opposition” to the normalizing pressures communitarians valorize—with interdependence comes conflict between the two as a matter of course (Connelly 1990, 76-77). The end

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49 This tendency is argued to be firmly embedded in liberal neutralism, let alone in communitarianism—up to and including Rawls’ famous and unfortunate example of liberal communal toleration of the idiosyncratic grass-counter (Honig 1993, 152-154; Connelly 1990). If communitarians value a form of political energy that is centripetal, agonistic or postmodern political theorists valorize “inevitable contestation among social forces” and oppose “cultural stability” as stifling to identity formation—the generative source of all that is original in politics (Mara 2008, 197, 197-199, 240).
result of these foci is an analysis which pictures a “bizarre amalgam of emotional repression, narcissism, and calculating reason,” and communitarians naively seemed to have believed that the philosophical concern to critique and name this faulty foundation would be adequate to undermine it and reassert community (Callan and White 2003, 107; Bell 2010; Kymlicka 2002, 258).

The third reason for the truncated nature of the communitarian analysis is their oft-stated commitment to political neutrality between left and right (Lukes 1998, 87). Perhaps it is due to this political commitment, or the commitment to a common political language of moral concern, or perhaps it is the already-noted substantial commonalities and shared convictions with liberalism proper, but “the role of economic forces … is something fundamental[ly] missing in … communitarian discussions” (Coughlin 2004, 117; Lukes 1998). There are broad brush strokes about the “moral and cultural consequences of market processes,” but few specific and thoroughgoing critiques of the now-familiar hallmarks of economic neoliberalism: “corporate networks and contingent labor markets … [or] the degradation of employment and the stagnation of wages—particularly among the bottom third of the workforce—which brutally sabotages communities, parenting, and family values” (Lukes 1998, 89). This unwillingness to name and put moral and political energy behind enacting actual, practical limits on market incursions is precisely the division between left and right that a focus on a moral consensus denies (Coughlin 2004, 125-127; Lukes 1998, 89). As a result, it has been rather easy for the political alliance of neoliberals and neoconservatives to graft on to the
communitarian agenda for their own purposes (Fox 2007; Apple 2001).

For example, in disputing whether capitalism is inimical to community, Conway simply equates capitalism with representative democracy and concludes that political community is better off within this synergy—easy divorce, single-parent families, welfare, national schooling agendas, multiculturalism, crime, and government are the real culprits and enemies of community (1996). Michael Novak makes a similar series of points in a different context, emphasizing capitalism’s virtues (Sniegocki 2009, 159-166; Hollenbach 1987, 23-25). When it comes to local policy issues such as whether to allow advertising in the public school classrooms, the combination of communitarians’ level of abstraction and simplified moralism is politically off-putting and would not be effective with a school board seeking to close a budget gap—and they tend to avoid the overtly economic issues associated with the left.

The Failure to Face Up to Neoliberalism

Mainstream communitarian analysis seems especially inadequate and unsophisticated as an analysis of the neoliberal environment. Their arguments about and critique of social and political arrangements would fail to give reasons that neoliberalism’s supporters would take seriously—the pragmatic standard used in this thesis (Mara 2008, 4). Neoliberalism represents a “family” of theories that cohere around

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50 Sandel tries very hard to demonstrate that communitarian policies need not be conservative in nature and are in fact neutral (1987, 146-149). However, communitarians seemingly never point to those historical instantiations of community which emanated from the left, such as Socialist Sunday schools to counter the dominance of business interests in the curriculum in the early part of the 20th century (Teitelbaum 1998).
basic and common ideas of political economy and human nature (Lauder 1997, 383). Its
social and cultural arrangements have not been as thoroughly articulated as their
economic ones, and neoliberals vary, with significant overlaps with classic liberalism and
the ethos of libertarianism (Gamble 2007). Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to claim
they have no moral or cultural ethos (Braedley and Luxton 2010; Gamble 2007). First
and foremost, neoliberals’ concept of human nature posits that “we are each of us self-
interested calculators of our own advantage” (Becker in Giroux 2002, 458N22), and
further that “all human behavior can be viewed as involving participants who maximize
their utility from a stable set of preferences and accumulate an optimal amount of
information and other inputs in a variety of markets” (Becker in Grofman 1993, 240N5).
This not only is, but represents the way we ought to be. This in turn leads to a very high
priority on individual liberty and property rights and the “provision of many goods and
services on a pluralistic basis” (Shearmur 1992, 79). 51 From there, “the presumption
must be that people are different,” and thus the best arrangements for human flourishing
“is to aggregate diverse individual preferences into social choices” (Moe 2000, 129).
“Choice is … a desirable condition in its own right” (Clarke 2005, 449). Thus the
“preferred setting for the good life is the marketplace where individual men and women
… choose among a maximum number of options. The autonomous individual … is much
the best thing to be … [and] it is the activity of choosing that makes for autonomy”
(Walzer 1991, 296). Where markets don’t exist, the state should encourage them in the

51 Those who critique liberalism from the left continue to stress the continuities of neoliberalism
with liberalism per se. The early Rawls sounded very neoliberal in his strong description of the
“inviolability” of the autonomous “free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests”
(Rawls in Wolin 1996b, 104).
interests of efficiency, choice, and human happiness because market participation fosters rationality and liberty; it decentralizes and encourages the investigation of alternatives and (self-interested) social cooperation (Harvey 2007b, 22-23; Clarke 2004, 35-36; Satz 2007, 122). Somewhat paradoxically, in order to maximize this capacity (and markets), the state must be weak and limited, particularly in its ability to coerce persons (that is, tax them) to aid others or protect them for their own good because in the end there is no social or communal entity, “only individual people … with their own individual lives” (Nozick 1996, 698-699).

What then are the social and cultural arrangements favorable to these behaviors and/or the arrangements that neoliberal assumptions engender? There is a deep hostility to collectivism within neoliberalism with a consequent emphasis (corollary to individual freedom and choice) on personal responsibility and a valorization of competition in some variation of the market (Braedley and Luxton 2010, 7-10; Cradock 2007; Sennett 1997; Bourdieu 1998). Such “responsibilized” persons are “moralized, choice-making, self-directing subjects … [who] produce the condition of [their] own independence,” making an enterprise of their lives by maximizing their employability, behaving in conformity with the labor market, and consuming public services rationally (Clarke 2005, 451; Treanor 2005). Neoliberalism valorizes the family unit over against the state’s interest in children—particularly as an economic unit and the locus of the most efficient and effective sources of moral and social development and within which children themselves
may exercise a utility-maximizing interest (Cradock 2007; Brown 1997). Margaret Thatcher famously declared “There is no such thing as society. There is only the economy and families” (Thatcher in Luxton 2010, 175). At the same time (and in some tension), the social ethos increasing participation in the workforce in neoliberal economies (especially among women) is strongly linked to earning and consumption (Manne 2010). Care of all sorts (childcare, eldercare, food service, cleaning) becomes a market, and as a result “non-market care” is economically and socially devalued; parents who are in a work/time squeeze must “choose between being a parent and buying a commodified version of parenthood from someone else” (Hochschild in Manne 2010, 160-161). Children themselves are often responsibilized for their own care under this ethos (Manne 2010, 162-163). This is a vision of the social and the public as a set of relationships coordinated by the market and a corresponding primacy given to the private, conflating the valorization of the (private) family with individual (private) behaviors appropriate to the market (Clarke 2004, 31). Indeed, any constraints on markets or their development appear “conceptually of a piece with the constraints of bare nature” (Levine in Lauder 1997, 388).

52 Cradock’s article is referring to foster homes where children have an interest in “regain[ing] control over their lives” and the “expert knowledge” to make choices within the foster care system and to negotiate living arrangements with their host families (National Youth in Care Network in Cradock 2007,165-166). This is not a pejorative characterization. Becker explains human behavior in economic terms in an extraordinarily wide range of activities: whom people marry, how they invest in their children, the quotient of wit or charm or sexiness they contribute to their intimate relationship, divorce, discrimination against minorities, crime and crime prevention, and the gap in earnings between men and women and between races, and so on (Becker 1993; Kelman 1988 206-214).

53 Clarke notes that this entanglement goes as far as the “anthropomorphised corporation” complete with heroic leadership and suffering the same burdens as persons such as regulation and hindering the entrepreneurial spirit; hence the success of (paradoxically elitist) corporate populism (2004, 31).
It is a short step from there to conflate personal/private independence and freedom with participation in the market, and thus consumption—and the metaphor of consumption—become deeply implicated with shaping family life, expressing self identity, and in definitions and expectations of politics and democracy (Apple 2005, 273; Brown 2006). Neoliberals observe that, when restrictions are lifted, left to their own devices people will consume—and have demonstrated this principle in numerous historical circumstances (Fukuyama 1989; Wood 1991; Taylor 1989). Under neoliberal conditions, educational performance becomes strongly linked to economic success in personal, national, and global competitive terms, and education becomes a commodity; students are future human resources who must be given the skills to compete, and if the school’s practices strongly encourage or mimic behaviors appropriate to the market (as in the case of advertising in the classroom), this is unproblematic (Goldberg 2000; Goldberg and Traiman 2001; Apple 1998, 6). Indeed, we needn’t invest heavily in targeting underperformers or in improving schools. A form of market choice among the young will identify the good ones: “The students themselves are perfectly capable of deciding just how inspiring those schools are as compared to other alternatives available to them” (Sowell 1986, 166). These are conditions of a “thin morality”: social justice is largely a matter left for market mechanisms to bring out and recognize unmet needs and community is defined as social capital—with the clear emphasis on “capital” (Apple 2004, 34; Fitzsimons 2000). And though there is a working assumption that markets work best under (neoliberal versions of) democracy, democracy itself is not necessarily valued for its own sake unlike well-being, freedom, and autonomy because popular
sovereignty has too often expanded the state and interfered with market operations (Fukuyama 1989; Fukuyama 1992; Shearmur 1992, 79; Gamble 2007).

However harsh the neoliberal ethos seems, they make the pragmatic and common sense case that these social arrangements work, and thus are best: “the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and … state interventions … [are] inevitably distort[ed] and bias[ed]” (Harvey 2007b, 23; Apple 2004, 34; Giroux 2002, 428). Neoliberal outcomes—encouraging individual control of lives, a plethora of choices conducted under conditions of personal responsibility, neutral (market) fairness—are good ones they argue. Margaret Thatcher again epigrammatically captured the essence of neoliberalism’s hard-nosed realism with her acronym TINA: There Is No Alternative (George 1999). Communitarians’ valorization of soft forms of social bonding, their seemingly woolly-headed emphasis on going after liberalism’s various ethics, their emphasis on the damaging effects of consumption and consumerism on social bonds, and their easily co-opted political neutrality represents an inadequate pragmatic response to hegemonic neoliberal reasoning and culture, and is analytically inadequate to the social psychology of consumption. Communitarians’ normative statements come across as naïve and oversimplified to neoliberals who would easily brush aside as irrelevant the “patina of ‘emotional warmth’” that communitarian thinking exudes (Sullivan 1990, 151). However, there is a path through the resources of communitarianism that is helpful on both these accounts.

*Toward a Practical Communitarianism: Institutions, Trust, and Efficacy*
If we must give reasons against neoliberal practices like advertising in the public schools that neoliberals themselves would need to take seriously, then those reasons should be pragmatic and practical in keeping with their arguments. The first and most obvious of these is that the schools deal with the young who are in various stages of development and learning, and their reasoning capabilities are in the process of being formed within their aptitudes and by their environments (which includes the school). This is an empirical reality well-covered in the review of the literature on advertising and the young in Chapter 3, so it need not be repeated at length here. The point is not a moral one about neoliberal shaping (or deforming) of the capabilities of the young so much as the empirical observation that the neoliberal assumption of the cool, rational utility-maximizer does not apply to them. In other words, there is a socialization of the young that takes place in the process of development. Those arrangements that socialize (and their ends) are a matter of social agreement, not market functions. Thus some form of sociology must exist to shape individuals to function in neoliberal society, and for it in turn to properly function. Neoliberalism would obviate the human freedom it valorizes because the market represents a compulsion that is at odds with the free rational individual at the center of their theory (MacPherson 1992, 262). Adapting Lippmann, neoliberal conditions and functions depend not on pure self-interest, but rather on social and “moral commitments which could never possibly be expressly stated” by

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54 MacPherson’s point here is about the logic of Hobbes, but it is applicable to neoliberalism as well.
neoliberalism itself: a social value on truthfulness, “reasonableness in argument, of trust, confidence, and good faith in transactions[, a] mood of disinterestedness and justice” which goes beyond mere letter-of-the-law rule-following (1963, 172). In other words, to function reasonably well, market interactions themselves depend on at least minimally nascent bonds and values within community. There is a picture of human nature and social functioning within neoliberalism, and, adapting Mara again, “fostering the goods possible and necessary within [neo]liberal society may require more than supporting the goods inherent in [its] practices” (1998, 324N38).

A communitarian argument would challenge the “view that choice is intrinsically valuable” (Bell 2010). But more specifically a practical communitarian response would emphasize that the neoliberal model of market choice implies a transaction that is characterized by alienation rather than rational calculation: once the transfer of goods or services is made (literally, alienated from the seller), the relationship is over, obviating any coherent basis for the kinds of solidarity and social cooperation that neoliberal society relies upon to function (Slater 2002, 237; Gilbert 2008, 557-558; Waldman 1999, 361, 364-365). It is for this reason that neoliberal capitalism, despite itself, “is highly dependent on state action—not only to prevent theft and enforce contracts but also to regulate the economy…. [People paradoxically] need the state but have no moral relation to it” under neoliberal social and economic conditions (Walzer 1991, 296-297). This inevitably means that social and political choice and their bases are deeply implicated in making neoliberal society happen, and thus the continuing “political relevance of conceptions of human flourishing” in the arrangements organized to bring that about
“[H]uman flourishing is always public or social” (Hollenbach 1993, 883), and indeed, in neoliberal terms, it is a market externality that should hold little weight as guide to action (Couldry 2010, 37). Further, there is nothing inevitable about neoliberal practices or outcomes. It is an empirical fact as well that people are powerfully motivated by non-maximized ends to make gifts, receive recognition and prestige, there is the practical fact that people have actively chosen democracy (sometimes at considerable risk to their wealth), and they often democratically demand “more ambitious conceptions of social justice and the common good than are realizable by the minimal state” under neoliberalism (Christiano 2008; Covey 2009; Wood 1991). Finally, if neoliberals are making their argument on fair terms, neoliberalism itself was not a natural outcome of a hard-nosed recognition of human reality, but rather a series of conscious policies, pursued politically through the exercise of channels of power (political, rhetorical, and economic), with highly unequal results in imbalances of class power and wealth that do not match its populist rhetoric (Harvey 2007b; Harvey 2007a; Brosio 2000; George 1999). In other words, neoliberal society can be contested as a social and practical outcome on its own terms.

Walzer and Gutmann help us to move communitarianism in a more pragmatic direction. In stating the practical fact that “the unencumbered self is … the encumbrance of our modern social conditions” that we cannot wish or theorize away, Gutmann notes the social facts (versus a normalizing communal ethos) with which communitarianism

\[55\quad\text{As Galbraith put it in his “less than elegant metaphor,” neoliberal economic policies presume “that if one feeds the horse enough oats, some will pass through onto the road for the sparrows” (Galbraith in Manne 2010, 149).}\]
simply must deal (2003, 187). The result for Walzer is that “the central issue … is not the constitution of the self”—the abstract generative controversy of contemporary communitarianism—but rather “the connection of constituted selves, the pattern of social relations” (1990, 21). Neoliberalism’s valorization of “free exchange won’t maintain itself; it needs to be maintained by institutions” (Walzer 1984, 322). We will turn to the role of institutions in more depth, but Mara is helpful here in making another practical distinction concerning the pluralities that so concern communitarians: rather than focus on an “ethics of ideals” that evaluates a life selection holistically (and posits something of a unitary community), he pulls from Aristotle an “ethics of practice” which obviates neither plurality nor an evaluation of the “intrinsic attractiveness or choiceworthiness of … manners of conduct” (1989, 28). For Mara, virtue and pluralism are “incommensurable only when both … are radically conceived” (1989, 30). Thus if “virtues are developed in the context of practices” (Mara 1989, 30; MacIntyre 1984, 141; MacIntyre 1990), and the cultivation and practice of worthy choice among alternatives very often takes place collectively in institutions and democracy has an inherent interest in shaping and supporting them (Taylor 1992, 43-45), then such institutions should be guided by something more concrete than the pursuit of a language of moral consensus.

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56 Mara is careful to point out that, while circumstances and the appropriate responses to them will vary infinitely (in a military analogy, the same behavior—retreat—can be wisely tactical, valorous, or cowardly), “the range of preferred human qualities is not”; thus it is not necessarily damaging to plurality to support such a practical approach to virtue: “there is no reason why the ends which can support those praiseworthy qualities need be restrictively circumscribed” (1989, 41-43).
that characterizes much communitarian thinking (Sullivan 1990). Such commitments minimally call forth practical actions like subsidies for (and within) those institutions to encourage those attractive and choiceworthy manners of conduct, or disincentives to discourage the opposite (Coughlin 2004, 125-126) and would represent a challenge to the neoliberal dominance of economic reasoning in public life.

The goal here is more modest and practical than mainstream communitarianism, and yet within its broad agenda: a more localized, associational efficacy and trust built through such institutions as a democratic and social good. Mara contrasts the more comprehensive communitarian view that trust signals “shar[ed] conceptions of the good” with the view that “trust is built by institutions that provide predictable and effective means for influencing and monitoring public policy” (2008, 93). Warren finds broad democratic effects in a plurality of associational (and institutional) venues such as unions, schools, and libraries as well as those that are voluntary, ethnic, non-voluntary, commercial, as well as in some workplaces (2001, 94-95). “These spaces … may be more likely to meet the conditions of trust because they provide opportunities for arguing, demonstrating, deliberating, and empathizing—that is, democratic experiences that are remote and scarce in the formally-organized, state-centered domains of politics” (Warren 2008, 93).

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57 While this thesis focuses on a specific practice and institutional location, Taylor’s broad endorsement of many such institutions is the right one: “museums, symphony orchestras, universities, laboratories, political parties, law courts, representative assemblies, newspapers, publishing houses, television stations, and so on,” thus broadening the loci and sources of community beyond the usual range within communitarianism and providing more practical settings to socially enact and politically support the benefits of community (1992, 45).
In contrast, institutional associations as practical locations of control and policy fosters efficacy, trust, good will, shared interests, and enables collective action as building blocks of community (Warren 1999b, 14). Such practices “impl[y] processes of communication through which individuals come to know as individuals what they want or think is right” in a collective, and this in turn helps to form public opinion (Warren 2001, 60). For Warren, those very social and political circumstances that “thrive on communicative powers should be protected and cultivated,” in specific contrast to those “embedded within economic and political power relations [which] should be regulated and counterbalanced” (Warren 2001, 223). The immediate goal is practical (local efficacy), and the broader end still speaks to communitarianism’s dreams, but in a more pragmatic and modest way: “people must … be so constituted that its members are capable of listening to one another” (Taylor 2004, 31).

This then is half of the practical communitarian base to question advertising in the public school classroom, and it moves us toward a more direct engagement with the neoliberal environment as it operates in local, democratic policy decision making as they shape our institutions. The school is a local public institution (whether funded by taxes or a parochial school in Warren’s formulation). Such institutions are not the location of shared identity, but social arrangements where life choices are shaped in part and a

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58 Warren notes the affinities between associational and communal ties, but also that they are not equivalent; association (as he theorizes it) can be harnessed for ends not always congenial to mainstream communitarianism (2001, 21-24). However, given the more limited, pragmatic goals here, and that Warren explicitly questions “an apolitical image of community, a vision within which democracy loses its political functions” (2001, 24), his formulations are helpful in sketching the practical version of communitarianism put forward here and significantly overlap it. Like Gutmann who will be discussed in more detail, Warren is something of a bridge between communitarianism and deliberative democracy as seen by the quote to follow on the cultivation of communicative powers.
measure of common, collective purposes can be experienced. Schools are, after all, an influence on the young even in a culture overwhelmed by other forces. How we shape those local institutions—how we participate, and the decisions we make about their role and content—has social and political implications, the most important of which is promoting an efficacy in the ability to communicate, debate, and trust. If virtues are shaped by practices, and cooperation, trust, efficacy, and autonomy are the democratic and communal virtues we seek, then there is a high democratic interest in the practices of our classrooms. It is in this sense that Taylor’s formulation of “no community, no democracy” is used (2004). There another aspect of this practical communitarianism which deepens our understanding of the neoliberal context and brings it to bear on an institutional location in an analysis of the impact of advertising and consumption in the classroom.

**Neoliberal Effects in the Practical Communitarian Critique of Advertising and Consumption in the School and the Classroom**

There is an intellectual tradition closely allied to communitarianism:

The dignity of the human person, realized in community with others, is the criterion against which all aspects of economic life must be measured. All human beings, therefore, are ends to be served by the institutions that make up the economy … [and] all economic institutions must support the bonds of community and solidarity that are essential to the dignity of
persons. (U.S. Catholic Bishops in Hollenbach 1987, 25-26)\textsuperscript{59}

The second half of the construction of a practical communitarianism will be an analysis within this tradition which brings us to the intersection of advertising and consumption in the framework of a local institutional form of association under democratic control (the school and classroom). A democracy would want to that institution to foster efficacy and the social bonds of trust as a democratic and social good. Miller provides a specific analysis of consumption conducted within a specific institutional context, analyzing the effects of the presence (both within the institution and in the broader cultural context) of advertising and consumption, drawing the analysis down to neoliberalism’s practical

\textsuperscript{59} Modern Catholic Social Thought (CST) has morally contested the claims of capitalism and neoliberal assumptions in defense of essential social and ethical bonds of community and represents a scholarly perspective applied to social problems and issues shaped by a worldview and ethical perspective analogous to the application of other outlooks such as feminist sociology, Marxist history, Freudian psychology, and so on. (Coulter et al. 2007; Frohnen 2007). There are within this tradition arguments for the dignity of labor and of all persons (McGuire 2007), equations of economic wealth with concentrated, unchecked power (Sniegocki 2009, 105-141; Hollenbach 1979, 51-77), a linking of the capitalist economy to issues of social-economic justice as matters of concern and action for democratic institutions (Sniegocki 2009, 110), and the unacceptability of “capitalism as the only model for economic organization,” leaving persons exploited as consumers or exposed to state manipulation (John Paul II in Hollenbach 1992, 81, 93; 1989; O’Boyle 2007; Abela 2007a; 2007b; 2007c; Clapp 1998, 12-14; Tropman 1998, 77-79). Important secular resources have been put in dialog with this tradition (Mara 1986, 160; Sniegocki 2009, 177-178, 177N58, 178N60; Miller 2003; 2008c), and Harrington (1983) explicitly draws upon it in his analysis of capitalism and the collapse of community. CST’s defense of community has contested both capitalism and the historic opposition to capitalism: historically, the CST critique was conducted to temper the most severe outcomes of capitalism in order to fend off socialism and communism and their basis in a materialist philosophy that “obscures and ultimately undermines the dignity of the human person” and “mediating social structures,” that is, community (Toth 2007a, 219; 2007b; McGuire 2007; Storck 2007, Sniegocki 2009, 109-113). Hollenbach does note the “considerable irony” in harnessing the CST tradition in support of the goods of democratic society in light of a long history of hostility in the form of opposition to the Enlightenment’s freedom of conscience and the church’s political affiliations with the ancien régime (1994, 127; 1987, 23-25; Langan 1990, 105-112). Nevertheless, CST has clearly shifted, “serving as an active critic … against injustice and oppression” (Langan 1990, 112; Cole 2007). For purposes here, there a frank and open acknowledgement within CST of the connection between the pressures against community and the operations of modern capitalism, eschewing communitarianism’s political neutrality and thus the reticence to highlight problems, issues, and analyses clearly identified with the left. Though there are of course core distinctions between Marxist commitments and CST, “personal freedom and social solidarity” and the necessity of economic and material guarantees in order to “participate fully in the public life of society” are common to both (Hollenbach 1979, 20-21; Toth 2007b).
effects on community. In so doing, Miller synthesizes an extensive set of grounding scholarship on consumption beginning with Marx’s concept of commodification and continuing through to neoliberal globalism (Miller 2003; 2008c). His analysis will be placed in dialog with other scholars with similar concerns about capitalism, advertising, consumption, and community and allows us to discuss community in light of the social psychology engendered by neoliberalism as it is embedded in school culture. It is this focus that constitutes the core reason why a practical communitarianism focused on institutional and social efficacy and its intersection with the effects of advertising and consumption is being deployed rather than Dewey—who, unlike Tocqueville, either did not perceive or chose not to focus on the progress, development, and interactive effects of media, advertising, and consumption. That Tocqueville limned its effects from so much less data, and that Dewey lived through its full flowering into a system of mass communication and consumption, throws the contrast into high relief.

The very first thing that should be noted is that Miller’s analysis of consumption focuses on a place, a space, and local institutions with specific practices, which all

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60 Miller’s work is practical in the sense that it is “directed principally toward society” and concerned in its analysis with “implications … for our life together” (Haught 1988, 25). Though his project “is not to critique consumer culture but to explore how religious belief and practice are transformed by its structures and practices” (Miller 2003, 107), deploying his work in this theoretical exercise will nonetheless exhibit a critical cast. It is duly noted here that porting over the institutional analogy is not perfect and it will not be pushed excessively. For instance, significant differences remain between building local associational efficacy and trust through the schools to enable democratic communal goods and the engagement of a comprehensive doctrine which is comprised of a concept “of what is of value in human life, and ideals of personal character, as well as ideals of friendship and of familial and associational relationships… cover[ing] all recognized values and virtues within one rather precisely articulation system” (Rawls 1996, 13).

61 Marx himself noted that “the community from which the worker is isolated by his own labour is life itself, physical and mental life, human morality, human activity, human enjoyment, human nature. Human nature is the true community of men” (1978c, 131).
together are meant to forge, enact, and communicate a form of social solidarity and
cultivate or impart choiceworthy or praiseworthy behaviors and/or the ability to make
attractive life choices (2010; 2008c; 2008a; 2007; 2006b; 2003, 201-203, 213-214, 217-
224). Put at its most basic, advertising and consumption in the specific location of the
school seriously undermines and redirects the purposes and nature of the place, space,
institution, practices, and their messages and thus obviates social solidarity and
community as a basis of democracy. Those concepts will be reviewed in light of an
ethics of practice institutionally located via Miller’s work. Traditionally, institutional
spaces and places were designed and furnished for purpose: to send a message about the
overall social goal and expectations that a particular space was encouraging. Conversely, advertising and consumption produce profound effects on such places and
spaces in the form of the behaviors of persons who have been shaped by those
phenomena. With no sense of a longer commitment in the acts of choice and
consumption, advertising instantiates the “temporary contract” in everything (Lyotard
1984, 66) and invites us “to treat other persons as well as culture, politics, and religious
beliefs as if these were also consumables” (Miller 2006a, 174), providing no social
context for commitment (Miller 2003, 142). At a minimum, the saturated environment of
advertising and consumption has produced effects in persons who enter these locations

62 The concepts of space and place used here are closely related, but not identical: “space refers to
location somewhere and place to the occupation of that location. Space is about having an address and
place is about living at that address” (Agnew in Leckie and Buschman 2007, 5). Broadly, theorization
about the two concepts has been integrated in terms of thinking about and analyzing the purposes
communicated and the behaviors elicited by interactions with the built environment (Leckie and Buschman
2007; Arenson 2007; Given 2007; Van Slyck 2007). As Harvey put it, “material spatial practices … occur
... in such a way as to assure production and social reproduction” and are inventions that shape meanings
and possibilities (1990, 218-221).
with a strong set of expectations about their individual preferences and the role of institutions in meeting them (Miller 2006b). The school in this case becomes a kind of service station for a variety of individual wants in the form of choices of sports to play, activities to engage, types of food to choose in the food court, personalized counseling, and the realization of college admissions goals or job goals post-graduation. The much-vaunted contemporary processes of customer-driven, user-driven, and student-driven shaping of services, spaces, and curricula turns the shaping of public institutions on its head in a neoliberal mimicking of market forces and calls into question why people are gathered there, in the place of the school and the space of the classroom and for what social purpose (Miller 2007; Nixon, Freeman, and Ward 2010; Carlson 2007; MacDonald et al. 2001). Is any vital part of community or social solidarity being realized? More fundamentally, it abandons the field of the broader social interests in shaping institutions (such as schools in the interests of democracy) to the vagaries and fashions of a consumer and advertising culture and the desires they elicit (Miller 2003, 107-110). Minimally, advertising in the classroom can only goad on the continual neoliberal shearing off of “practices and communal institutions that connect [students] to a manner of living” we would want to systematically encourage as a democracy (Miller 2007, 16).

More radically, the processes of cultural neoliberal globalization and the penetration of mobile devices go hand in hand to transform the place of the school and the space of the classroom: “advertising abhors distance”—including the distance of the

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63 Miller and many other scholars treat “neoliberalism [as] synonymous … with globalization” (Foshee 2007, 754).
classroom (Sandel 2005, 76). These devices enter as both consumable commodities (with that entire complex of fluid significations) and more simply as carriers of commercial messages further into the heart of the space, changing it and connecting it globally in a way that obviates the school and classroom as a space apart (Miller 2008c; 2006a; Greene 1982). The school and classroom are thus deterritorialized, that is, broken “loose from the moorings” of their specific location (Miller 2008c, 417). This effect invites further fragmentation both in the form of isolation from social solidarity (withdrawing into the devices and personalized messages) and in dislocating the institution and the classroom as “an analytical focus” for identifying social problems, problem-solving, and negotiating the more demanding parts of social engagement that democracies need: schools are “being rendered virtual from within” (Miller 2008c, 430-431) and “social space becomes detached from physical location” (Miller 2006a, 181). “Virtual solidarity” (Miller 2000, 287) is difficult at best, a chimera at worst. In this respect, the process represents a social and cultural distancing: contemporary consumption relies upon a series of commodity chains that systematically abstract and obscure the origins, “conditions and consequences of the production of the things we consume. … I’d be unlikely to eat a fast food burger if behind the parking lot there were 100,000 cattle crammed into a feed lot, standing knee deep in their own feces. But since that lot is actually in Kansas or Brazil, I

64 This recalls Miller’s account of Lefebvre’s analysis of the fundamental shaping of twentieth century life via street advertising (in the urban setting) and the penetration of glossy magazine ads into rural locales as ”capturing” space and ”invad[ing] experience” (2003, 57, 55-58).

65 The question of whether or not community can be achieved virtually is a hotly debated issue (Brown and Duguid 2010; Wilson and Peterson 2002; Lievrouw and Livingstone 2002; Trend 2001; Winner 1997).
smell only the cooking meat”; cultural distancing is the lack of any knowledge of the conditions of, and thus social solidarity with, the persons and their predicaments in the process of production and distribution (Miller 2008a, 41). The transaction costs of overcoming these gaps (both technological displacement and fragmentation and the abstractions of commodities) are severe disincentives to the kind of connecting knowledge or human interaction that schools would want to encourage in a democracy (Harvey 1990, 219, 222).

This speaks to advertising in the classroom in a series of cross-cutting effects at play. First and foremost, policies to disallow the use of these devices in classrooms (as distractions that take away from learning) become far more tenuous when time is set aside during required school time specifically to watch advertisements that themselves have nothing to do with educational purposes. Put plainly, the argument against the bad educational effects of mobile devices during class time is severely compromised by the policy of advertising in the classroom. The connected ideas of the role of the school and classroom in forging ideas of the common good, social goods, public space, and the needs of democratic community are obviated as well by the practice. Advertising in the classroom simply furthers the process already enhanced by mobile devices—both in time displacement and their de facto placement in the curriculum66—of crowding out these ideas, or more complexly, rendering them inert and unspoken (Greene 1982). Adapting Winner, the contention is that the context in which both the technological affordances and

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66 Recall the study cited in Chapter 3 that students assumed that the presence of Channel One’s commercials meant that the school endorsed the products and messages.
school practices are developed means that they are inherently “biased in a particular direction” whether intended or unintended, and the consequences are “political in a very specific way” in shaping “conditions for human relationships that have a distinctive … cast” (1986, 25-29). Advertising’s sanctioned place in the classroom can only goad on the spiraling process of the “collapse of the chain of signification [which] brings the collapse of … temporal unity” from within the curriculum (Miller 2003, 65). Minimally, further saturating the environment with advertising in the midst of a location engaged in the process of teaching sense-making and sharing cultural understandings makes those tasks that much more difficult (Brown and Duguid 2010; Grange 2010). In high theoretical terms, the result is that the school and classroom contributes to “no true public realm, but only private activities displayed in the open … driven by a process in whose ever-recurring cycles things appear and disappear … never to last long enough to surround the life process in their midst” (Arendt 1998, 134). Rooted in the culture of mass culture consumption, this process is now radically extended by the logic of neoliberalism. In more quotidian terms, the school as a source and semblance of a democratic community is further undermined by the practice of advertising in the classroom (Giroux 2002; 1990; 1984).

Institutional messages are also profoundly altered. Essentially, the commodification processes of consumption and the destabilized signification processes of advertising mean that school content and messages may “remain unchanged, but are enacted in a context that radically alters” them (Miller 2000, 287). By rendering “content” and any associated social goods to be conveyed less important at best, and
utterly disconnected from ways of living at worst, shared meanings (and thus shared social and democratic purposes) are extraordinarily difficult to come by (Miller 2003, 1, 61-66; 2006b; 2000). These signifying and commodifying processes rip everything out of their contexts, embrace everything in undifferentiated form, and obviate fundamental social values and terms a democratic society might wish the school and the classroom to reinforce, like community, justice, democracy, and autonomy (Miller 2003, 4-6; 2000).

The message of the school and the classroom subtly changes as well: it must “compete in a cultural sphere of endless innovation … [and] vie to capture the attention of a fickle and sated public” (Miller 2006b, 161), and thus content is tailored, made more contemporary by mimicking or appropriating the techniques and productions of consumer culture in an “appealing performance…, eloquent and engaging without offering challenges” to capture students’ (and parents’) attention and affection (Miller 2007, 15, 17). Advertising in the classroom simply legitimizes and furthers these processes—both in its messages and methods, and by its sheer presence as de facto part of the curriculum. In the process, the actual underlying message of the school and the classroom changes. If advertising in the classroom presumes that the school delivers a captive audience for a return, the school “competing” for attention in a consumer culture presumes even more: the goal is (or certainly can become) institutional thriving (or survival) through capturing its audience; this is the logic of neoliberal exchange, and everyone wants/gets a return on their investment (Neal 2011; Grange 2010, 393-394; Miller 2007; Brighouse 2005; Budd 1997). Advertising in the classroom represents what Grange calls the “disastrous effects of failed institutions”: the school simply abandons “depth” and “scope” in promoting
“numerous and varied … interests which are commonly shared and … full and free … interplay with other forms of association,” and implicitly communicates the substituted motivation of capitalist competition, “the only standard of achievement [of which] is ‘more’” (2010, 393-394). It is difficult to see this practice in any way contributing to intersubjective trust, nor trust and commonality of purpose between the school and the families which constitute it, let alone contributing to any broader solidarity among members of the community or community efficacy.

What of communitarians’ generative concern for the self? Miller takes us part of the way in his account of the single family home as the “infrastructure for the emergence of the modern nuclear family” and as a consumption-intensive space in the shift from domestic production to consumption noted earlier (2003, 47, 46-54). In the proliferation of separate spaces (a backyard playground for each house, a bedroom for each child each furnished with its set of toys and/or media, the separate adult space of the den or basement bar), Miller notes the social isolation of the single family home that “brings with it the atrophy of certain psychological skills,” primarily social and intergenerational in nature (2003, 48-50). In conjunction with social conformity/competition (keeping up with the Joneses) and its primed location for mass media and its marketing, the single family home both encouraged a significant uptick in consumption and a “blindness concerning the common good” (Miller 2003, 50; Cohen 2003). Miller’s précis of Jameson and Lasch’s “therapeutic self” notes the obviating effects of consumption and proliferating signification on the development of the self (2003, 65, 85-88). Turning
directly to Lasch helps to flesh out some of the details of this picture. He too sees that the “the assertion of social control over activities once left to individuals or their families” initially took the form of moving production out of the household (Lasch in Mattson 2003, 385). Lasch also closely linked consumption with the newly-structured family. Those fundamental changes in the space and organization of the family had (and have) profound developmental outcomes on the individuated self and the type of community which is possible as a result. The historical processes of American Progressive reform that produced the classic bourgeois family had ambiguous and ironic results: In briefest terms:

… [T]he assault on cultural particularism and patriarchal authority, which encouraged self-reliance and critical thought..., has gone together with the creation of a universal market in commodities, which has had the opposite effect. The growth of a mass market … destroys privacy, discourages self-reliance, and makes people dependent on consumption for the satisfaction of their needs, [and] vitiates the liberating possibilities opened up by the destruction of older constraints on the imagination and the intellect (Lasch 1981, 11).

The resulting collapsed privacy and distorted development of autonomy meant “the family [couldn’t] provide for its own needs without outside assistance” (since production had been moved out), and advertising played on the therapeutic culture of experts to fill in these gaps and sell (Lasch 1977a, 10; 1981; Miller 2003, 87).

This fundamentally changed family and developmental dynamics, and the single family home became an insulated space of selecting and deploying commodities. The

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67 Lasch’s thesis was and remains controversial. Rubin for instance characterizes him as nostalgic for the patriarchal family (1986). This redacted account is focused on his analysis of the psycho-social role of consumption.
“minimal” (or therapeutic) self was the result: stunted, unindividuated individuals who lack an inner life, over rely on outside expertise, and define themselves through others along with the messages of advertising and the processes of consumption (Lasch 1984, 27-34; 1977a; 1977b; 1976). For Miller this had significant effects: “it increased social insecurities, further eroded the meaning of cultural symbols, and promoted a relation between consumption and fulfillment” (2003, 87). It would be a mistake to characterize this “as a culture dominated by things. The consumer lives surrounded not so much by things as by fantasies. He lives in a world that has no objective or independent existence and seems to exist only to gratify or thwart his desires” (Lasch 1984, 30). The early policy choices to prefer or invest (economically and culturally) in the American single family home only extended and accelerated these trends, and in turn, their effects have been further accelerated by neoliberal public policies (Lasch 1986; Cohen 2003). These are the minimal or therapeutic selves who enter the schools and other public institutions of American democracy who find forming social solidarities and community extremely difficult. As a result, politics is obviated by the destruction of “collective memory, by replacing accountable authority with a … star system, and by treating all ideas, all political programs, all controversies and disagreements as … equally deserving of fitful attention, and therefore equally inconsequential and forgettable” (Lasch 1981, 19). In practical terms, Lasch’s critique extends Miller’s analysis and leads us to question any policy which further extends the reach of advertising into a public institution important to the project of shaping persons and solidarities for democracy. Maximally, Lasch raises the question whether the selves shaped under such influences have the resources in the
form of the capacities for trust, reciprocity, efficacy, and communication to forge
community. Again, in practical terms, the paradigmatic case at hand points to the role of
the school in shaping and sustaining selves capable of community which should be
strengthened, not sapped by short term financial considerations liable to be given
precedence under the sway of neoliberalism. That is why we should care about
advertising in the public school classroom and why it makes a difference.

4.2 Conclusion

Miller’s analysis and the others noted here are not merely critical postures, but
responses to empirical realities and changes. For instance (and to review), there is
considerable evidence that advertising and consumption have psychological and social-
psychological effects, and there are ample amounts of such messages aimed at the young
(Zukin and Maguire 2004; Storper 2000, 391-393; Calvert 2008). Consumption-oriented
media use does, in fact, erode civic forms of community and encourage consumption
(Keum et al. 2004). School (and broad educational) practices beyond advertising in the
classroom have been substantively shaped by neoliberal ideas, politics, and contextual
economic pressures (Wilkinson 2006; Boyd 2004; Apple 1991). For instance, we frame
and speak of citizenship in the schools differently now than we did seventy five years
ago—our rhetoric is much more closely aligned to neoliberal economic values (Giroux
1987). Media and its technologies do organize us socially in manners that have changed,
and are in many ways deeply controlling and technocratic—including their effects on and
within the schools (Segal 1993; Beniger 1989; Buschman and Carbone 1996; Buschman
When communitarianism is made practical in the workings of institutions and the democratic virtues we would want students to develop, the choiceworthy lives we would want students to live, and a social solidarity and trust we would want to foster for political efficacy, then the policy and practice of advertising in the public school classroom is clearly at odds with those democratic goals. It would be very difficult to construct an argument—even in the neoliberal view—where this policy and practice could be construed as helpful in practical communitarian terms to developing efficacy, autonomy, and trust: “the coming into being of a type of public life that can strengthen solidarity, public freedom, a willingness to talk and listen, mutual debate, and a commitment to rational persuasion [which] presupposes the incipient forms of communal life” (Bernstein 1983, 226). Simply put, advertising in the classroom undermines yet another resource which helps us to make connections, and it fails the test of an ethics of practice. It would fail in a fully neoliberal society which depends on such connections.

We are close to a kind of pessimistic cul de sac here. Gay for instance posits that the market and consumption simply is the core ethos of modernity (1998). Lest we think that reclaiming and rejuvenating the resources of community is hopeless, Wolin points out that “there still exists a highly flourishing archaic political culture that is democratic, participatory, localist, and … more egalitarian and elitist in ideology,” and though we might not find their choices, targets, and reasoning attractive, it represents real political
A profile of the Brooklyn Free School is an instructive case in point and moves us toward Section 4.3. The school is organized around one rule (meeting the legal requirement of attendance) and modeled after democratic participation and governance with the ability of anyone at any time to call a meeting to discuss an issue or problem. The students run everything: all decisions are by majority vote of all those present (including teachers who are outnumbered). There is a broader point here. As one teacher put it, many of the meetings are chaotic and drift with little follow up or conclusions, but the process—and that others are brought in on discussions—is the point. A student summed up what it is the school elicits: “I’ve gotten so used to deciding everything”; but (poignantly) she knew that this was “different from a real school” and adult life: “I feel bad that a lot of people don’t have the power in their environment we do” (This American Life, “Kid Politics, Act Three: Minor Authorities,” NPR, January 14, 2011). This is not to advocate an unrealistic purism about either advertising (thus falling into the role of mainstream communitarianism) or mass-replicating the Brooklyn Free School. Rather, there is real, practical truth in asserting that there is “more truth in the questions than in the answers because the questions are freeing” (Ambrosio 1987, 32). That advertising will have a presence in school is not the point—the Ford dealership’s

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68 Wolin originally wrote this essay in 1985 and was commenting on the politicization of services formerly left to experts (abortion clinics, waste disposal) and the rise of the right and its tactics with which we are now familiar.

69 Interestingly (and germane to the discussion here), the students at the time of the profile voted down the longstanding policy of “no screens week”: no internet-connected devices with screens were allowed in the school every other week. The debate was very rational (and heated, with some later-admitted self-interest at play in a follow up interview), but the point was that, in allowing screens, their use and incursions had to be consciously modulated by the students themselves.
sign on the scoreboard and the Nike logo on the players’ uniforms will probably remain. But in raising the practical policy question of the limit of advertising’s formal reach, and in doing so publicly, we begin a way down the path of democratic solidarity and efficacy in our institutions, and a more conscious purpose for our classrooms and what goes on there. The Brooklyn Free School shows us clearly that this energy does not exist on only one end of the political spectrum, and the resources of community are still not far under the surface. But the point of the school is more fundamental and points to why we should go farther in this analysis: the process of the school is democratic, deliberative, and encourages autonomy. Mainstream communitarianism is ill-equipped to deal with a robust concept of autonomy precisely because of its deep mistrust of the linked concepts of individuality, diversity, and plurality in its defense of community. The attempt here has been to avoid the pitfall of communitarianism’s tendency to eclipse individuality (and thus autonomy) in a practical communitarianism that encourages a form of solidarity and efficacy that enables community. That effort can go only so far within (even a broadened) communitarian framework. There are further resources within deliberative democratic theory that speak to the meaning and development of an efficacious autonomy, and how neoliberal practices—up to and including advertising in the public school classroom—affect its development. It is to this analysis that we now turn.
4.3: Deliberative Democratic Theory’s Deeper Critique of Neoliberalism and Advertising in the Public School Classroom

Introduction

The basic ideas behind deliberative (or discursive) democracy are deceptively simple and widely agreed upon. It is a “conception of democracy that affirms that policies and decisions must be justified to those who are bound by them” (Gutmann and Thompson 2010, 325). Deliberation is both an end and a means, and it is the “moral quality of the arguing—not of the arguments—which occurs within democratic politics” that deliberative democrats valorize (Pamental 1998, 224; Gutmann 1998). There are several key commitments and concepts behind this. First is the commitment to conceptualize democratic practices “in a way that does not convert all forms of public choice into market behavior” (Mara 2008, 89; Chambers 2003, 308). That is, deliberative democrats view mere aggregation of choices and interest-laden bargaining as inadequate moral means of arriving at political decisions and inadequate justifications for them. Second is the embedded concept of reciprocity: “citizens owe one another [reciprocal] justifications for the institutions, laws, and public policies that collectively bind them” (Gutmann and Thompson 2000, 167). Reciprocity implies the third concept, public reason. Arguments for a political decision must be open (public), accessible, and

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70 In order to avoid repetition, Section 4.3 will rely on the characterization of neoliberalism as previously given in the Introduction, portions of Chapters 2, 3, and Section 4.2 of this Chapter.
reasonable\textsuperscript{71} (or at least understandable) to justify the reasons for fellow citizens to accept or submit to them even if they disagree (Gutmann and Thompson 2010, 327; 2000, 169; Freeman 2000, 382). Moral justifications, reciprocity, and public reasons are means and motivations to facilitate deliberation about the idea of the common good\textsuperscript{72} within democratic politics: in the face of inevitable pluralities of goods and goals that citizens will pursue, the common good is primarily focused on equality, freedom, and independence in order to facilitate expression and make various reasons/reasoning public in the interests of deliberative exchange (Freeman 2000, 382, 412). Finally coming somewhat full circle, accountability and legitimacy move democratic practices away from simple aggregative consent (mere vote-counting as an expression of known interests): “a legitimate political order is one that could be justified to all those living

\textsuperscript{71} Like the précis on proceduralism to follow, this note acknowledges the debate around the concept of reasonableness. There is, first, the distinction between reasonable and rational. The rational “entails the … pursuit of your own interests, whereas reasonableness involves a willingness to see the world from the perspective of another persona and act accordingly” (Graham 2010, 1163). There are problems in this distinction, however. The rational being not only pursues self interest, but is one “who thinks and acts for reasons” (Scruton 2007, 578-579). The giving of those reasons (justification, itself a part of rationality) is itself predicated on the concept of the reasonable person: a creature of common parlance recognized “as the standard against which human conduct is to be judged, and who remains undefined except through … social judgments,” effectively the description of the “normal” person (Scruton 2007, 582). Honig strongly questions those very social judgments: are such normal “citizens people with whom one could be happy living if one was not quite like them, if one was not … quite so reasonable?” (1993, 149) For instance, there are examples of activists who could only enter deliberative processes by ceding an essentially hegemonic principle: addressing poverty within the framework of the labor market, or environmental problems within the framework of extracting and consuming fossil fuels (Young 2001). In such a case, deliberation represents either a crucial concession in order to enter the discussion in the first place, or an unreasonable condition of deliberation on the other hand. As Christiano put it, “what constitutes … a reasonable acceptance of a different position is likely to be a subject of controversy itself,” up to and including the standards, criteria, and even epistemology of the reasons given (1997, 269).

\textsuperscript{72} This idea of the common good stands in contrast to what will come later with Habermas who is concerned with “the general conditions of communication for a discursive formation of will” and sufficient conditions of “communication [to] regulate the flow of the formation of political opinion … so as to endow … fallible results with the presumption of practical rationality” (1992, 450, 452). As will be seen, Habermas recasts both the basis of rationality and deliberative politics.
under its laws,” including by representatives governing in our name (Chambers 2003, 308; Gutmann and Thompson 2000, 169). Democratic politics is not reduced to the simple rule of majorities with protective rights built in.

Aside from theoretically describing common sense understandings of democracy—open, freewheeling public and legislative debate, critical publicity about those debates and decisions in the media in the broad interests of the common good—a virtue of this conception of democracy is that it “has benefitted from the ‘what about …’ line of argument”; that is, its scope and methods are endlessly revisable and tend toward inclusion of those who have been marginalized (Chambers 2003, 322; Gutmann and Thompson 2000; Freeman 2000). Additionally, “within a deliberative context, the political goods of trust and judgment are … mutually reinforcing” (Mara 2008, 93). That is, the more and better the exchange, the more the basis of trust is laid and the claim is that democratic decisions are qualitatively better: “The policies that result from our democratic deliberations will not always be the right ones, but they will be more enlightened—by the values and concerns of the many communities that constitute a democracy” (Gutmann 1987, 11). The goals of deliberative democracy are to “augment legitimacy through accountability and participation; to encourage a public-spirited perspective on policy issues.; to promote mutual respect … through inclusion and civility; and to enhance the quality of decisions (and opinions) through informed and substantive debate” (Chambers 2003, 316). In the end, deliberative democratic theory

73 Like Warren, Gutmann is something of a bridge figure between deliberative democrats and communitarians. She certainly valorizes deliberation, but does so in advocating a democratic education that includes families, communities, and a shared culture, carefully noting that “the need for cultural coherence” does not trump either in the interests of the state or the community (Gutmann 1987, 43). 216
describes both an actual method and a standard for democracy that allows moral critique of existing political policies and practices (Gutmann and Thompson 2010; Chambers 2003; Freeman 2000). Thus deliberative democratic theory itself can form an immanent critique of social and political arrangements (Mara 2008, 4; Gutmann and Thompson 2000, 172). We are already some distance from the social arrangements neoliberalism encourages.

Words like “justification,” “judgment,” “reasonable,” and “arguing” imply a kind of person inhabiting this role as a citizen. Deliberative democratic practices and goals require and rely on personal and political forms of autonomy: “the political demand to be permitted to govern ourselves is grounded in … agency: any agent who faces the task of ‘making up her mind’ has the authority to determine how she will act” (Buss 2008; Cohen 1997, 77; Rawls 1997, 132-133). Deliberative democrats distance themselves from the political implications inherent in neoliberal constructions of the self: aggregations of interest and an emphasis on rights and protections to frame public deliberation are in themselves an inadequate basis in deciding what we should do (Gutmann 1987, 7; Christman 2009). It is also clear that pursuing the concept of autonomy can draw us back onto the theoretical shoals of the self and identity upon which mainstream communitarianism ran aground, but it need not. Whatever the differences, conceptions of autonomy tend to significantly overlap, and it is not necessary to specify an exact definition of the autonomous person for purposes here in order to

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74 Christman (2009) notes that neoliberals (and communitarians for that matter) do not abjure rights, but rather assume them as functional part of the democratic framework.
describe them as a political entity in deliberative democracy: “only if citizen participants in the public discourse … are assumed to have (and [are] provided the basic resources for having) capacities for competent self-reflection, can the public defense and discussion of competing conceptions of [the common good] take place. … [And it presumes] autonomy … as reflective self-appraisal., non-alienation from central aspects of one’s person,” and to be directed by cares, wishes, reasons, and personal characteristics not imposed by an external force or influence (Christman 2009; Buss 2008). It follows that those social and psychological factors that can undermine autonomy are analytically important to deliberative democracy (Cohen 1997, 77-78). In other words an independent, rational autonomy is deeply entwined with deliberative theories of democracy (and central to neoliberal selves).

Deliberative Democracy and Education

“The single most important institution outside government is the educational system” for deliberative democrats (Gutmann and Thompson 2010, 329), and deliberative democracy reinforces itself through education: deliberation is institutionalized in a healthy democracy, and “healthy democratic institutions are privileged because they respect and are guided by the goods of deliberation” (Mara 2008, 87). The refinements and critiques of the broad areas of deliberative democratic theoretical agreement are
extensive, but they are not our overarching concern here because the core questions—should the paradigmatic case of advertising in the public school classroom bother us, and if so, why?—focuses the analysis on the young, the institution of the school, and the provision of some of those basic resources for having and developing personal and democratic autonomy. Autonomy and rationality are not all-or-nothing states: while the young lack the full capacities for autonomous and rational deliberation (as deliberative democrats define them), the point of the school is to develop, teach, and model those capacities (Young 1990, 111-112, 119; Blake and Masschelein 2003, 49). Adults hold a “present deliberative freedom” and are thus in a position of responsibility to promote the “future deliberative freedom of children”—and they should be restrained from undermining that future freedom as well (Gutmann 1987, 45). Thus the questions

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75 Deliberative theory represents not only these principles and commitments, but “a specification of a process to realize the principles” in the form of a strong theoretical focus on proceduralism in order to avoid prescriptive, substantive, or constitutive ends (Gutmann and Thompson 2010, 325; 2000, 165; 1990). That leaves open a significant set of variations on the reasons for, purposes of, and end results of those procedures (Bohman and Rehg 1997, xvii-xxiii). Such is the focus on the controversies of procedure there is a danger that, with properly formulated procedures settled in stable institutional contexts, deliberative democratic theory represents a “privileging of certain political outcomes [and] it threatens to replace rather than to respect the pragmatic activities of democratic citizens” (Mara 2008, 91). Furthermore, basic and essential concepts such as equality, autonomy, reason-giving, reasonableness, and the tensions and interplay between rights and the requirements of deliberation represent thorny theoretical issues (Bohman and Rehg 1997, xiii-xvii, xxiii-xxvii; Freeman 2000, 383-384; Chambers 2003, 322). In practical terms, deliberation is taxing, people can be lazy or inattentive in their deliberations producing unjust and unreasonable results, the overall concept is highly abstract and can be elusive, there are important situations that require expertise, it can represent a real danger to election/reelection prospects, it is difficult to institutionalize, the empirical results of deliberation are decidedly mixed, and there are many ways to solve political problems such as coercion, tradition, etc. (Bell 1997; Mara 2008, 132; Ryfe 2005; Warren 1999b, 18; Chambers 2003, 310).
become about institutional (school, curricular) arrangements\textsuperscript{76} to develop deliberative skills and judgment—in short, autonomy—among the pre-political in age in answering an age-old question of democratic theory: from whence will capable citizens come? (Gutmann 1995, 573; Mara 1998, 132; Gutmann and Thompson 2010, 329; Saward 2006; Carleheden 2006; Enslin and White 2003; Blake and Masschelein 2003; Pamental 1998; Bohman and Rehg 1997, xxiii-xxiv). It is not that the school does this alone, but it is an important cultural site of producing the capacities of sound judgment in a democracy which interacts with other types of democratic institutions and arrangements.\textsuperscript{77}

Democracy justifies itself in part by giving children “an education that is adequate to their becoming free and equal citizens” which is necessarily critical in outlook and content (Gutmann, 2000, 18; Gutmann 1987, 42-47; Roth 2006; Pamental 1998).

“Necessary” in this case means both that democracies require engaged, intelligent, and informed deliberative citizens and that the “self-evident truths in democratic politics only become so if they are defended publicly against the strongest challenges” (Gutmann 2000, 17, passim). “Critical” in this case means that educational problems and the decisions on how to structure and run our educational institutions are themselves open to criticism and debate, teaching deliberative, critical evaluation to students in the process:

\textsuperscript{76} Mara worries that “insofar as broad questions of purpose are tacitly settled, the more significant political debates become matters of institutional design or organization, questions answered more appropriately by experts” (2008, 91). Given the weight of neoliberalism as a driver of policy decisions and the invasive reach of advertising all the way into school practices, that is a risk consciously taken in this analysis.

\textsuperscript{77} Mara describes them as three: educative, enabling (voting, political participation), and elicitive (juries, school boards, etc. that democracies utilize and which depend on judgment) institutions (2008, 132).
“That democratic standards do not yield simple answers is a necessity, given the complexity of our collective life; that they do not yield single answers is a virtue, which underscores the democratic critique of ‘the one best system’” (Gutmann 1990, 17, 12; Katz 1982).

An important subset of the literature has focused and commented on deliberative democracy, education, and the schools. Gutmann is the most prominent of these authors, and her project makes a democratic virtue out of deliberating disagreements over educational aims, structures and policies: such principled discussions both shape schools and produce “educational institutions that are conducive to democratic deliberations” (1990, 12). In other words, education in a democracy will inevitably (and legitimately) be enmeshed in politics, and so the ways in which we decide policy should model the kind of politics we wish to produce, promoting “sources of authorization for more democratic action” (Gutmann 1998, 38; 1999, xi; 1995, 573-574; 1987, 283-291). There is, in her view, “little difference between educating for citizenship and educating for individuality and autonomy,” and similar to the commitments and principles that follow from the broader theoretical terrain of deliberative democracy, Gutmann premises her democratic education on principles of nondiscrimination and nonrepression (1995, 573; 1987, 44-46). Autonomy is deeply tied to socialization in effective democratic functioning for Gutmann. Her version is appropriately cast to the young, and encompasses the simplest broad precepts within deliberative democracy: “education should produce in children the desire and capacity to make moral choices based on principles that are generalizable among all persons” (Gutmann 1987, 59).
Though Gutmann tends to reserve the teaching of this broad concept of autonomy largely to parents (she notes that there is little reason to believe schools could do this well), she distinguishes this from the role the school can take in teaching *democratic* autonomy in deliberative democratic terms: diversity, mutuality, the political virtues developed within history, and disciplined judgment (1987, 52-63). To this Gutmann adds an important codicil. For the school to develop autonomy (so conceived) in the young, the institutions and their professionals must themselves have a form of autonomy: “insulation from external control necessary to fulfill [their] democratic functions” (1987, 77). This represents an immanent challenge to neoliberal practices which closely link school policies to market drivers, endangering the democratic- and autonomy-producing functions of the schools. Much of the rest of the deliberative democratic educational literature has taken its cues from the broad base of theoretical discussions of deliberative democrats and focused on justifying democratic-like deliberation in the schools and a critical analysis of and the contexts working against these developments (Englund 2006; 2000; Roth 2006; Boman 2006; Carlehed 2006; Enslin and White 2003; Blake and Masschelein 2003; Welton 2001; Holt and Margonis 1992; Young 1990). Indeed, the question of why we don’t teach and enact such democratic practices in the schools more is the driver of much of critical-educational literature previously reviewed here (Apple 1993; 1994; 2005; Bridges and Jonathan 2003; Gutmann 2000; Giroux 1984; 1999a; Galston 2001).\footnote{These references are a few representative examples from the larger body of critical-educational literature previously cited.}
Deliberative democratic theory tends to “put forward principles that constitute its own theory” in somewhat circular fashion (Gutmann and Thompson 2000, 172). Perhaps this explains in part why the literature on the intersection of deliberative democracy, autonomy, and education seems to remain at a stage of abstraction, focused on the “content of education, its distribution, and the distribution of educational authority” rather than more specific pragmatic proposals (Gutmann 1999, xi). It is a little dispiriting to see reviews of that literature reaching back to 1972 which continue to talk primarily about the necessary conditions of a critical education, the gap between the ideal of deliberation and actual classroom practices, hesitation over the empirics of classroom deliberation, and even the necessity of establishing the legitimacy of deliberative democratic forms of education “before establishing types of training and pedagogy that come with concrete implementation of a deliberative vision of citizenship” (Lefrançois and Ethier 2010; Reich 2007; Ewert 1991; Young 1990, 123). If “our political reality is no more like a controlled experiment than it is like the ideal speech situation” (Chambers 2003), deliberative theorists tend to respond to such empirical difficulties and complexities by “retreating into the abstractions of proceduralism and constitutionalism” (Ryfe 2005, 62).\footnote{Gutmann and Thompson in fact chide Galston for making an argument about a school policy more appropriate to a school board than the abstractions of the law (2000, 173-174).} Deliberative democratic education is stuck at a similarly abstract level of ideal-type critique that recognizes both that schools are over-centralized and overly-bureaucratic (and thus difficult to change), and at the same time that the “good life must be one that people live from the inside..., [yet] individual freedom is [not] the only
legitimate end of education,” seemingly displaying little direct practical capability to address neoliberal school policies (Gutmann 1998, 41, 39). Gutmann only broadly notes that “consumer choice is … an irresponsible and incomplete principle for designing a … school. Educators must limit students’ freedom of choice on some ground; otherwise education simply ceases” (Gutmann 1990, 11). In other words, deliberative democracy as applied to educational contexts at this stage should have become more practical and specific enabling us to more meaningfully address the paradigmatic case of advertising in the classroom and the fostering of democratic autonomy in/for students.

Education and the institutional location of the schools certainly provide a ready means of answering some of the empirical challenges to deliberative democracy that Ryfe (2005) identifies: addressing the strong linkage between social class and civic participation through organizing and practicing forms of deliberation based on diversity (and addressing the collapse in civic participation in the bargain); giving public meaning to diversity and community as by-products of an inclusive deliberative learning; motivating intentional reflection in early experiences; and setting up the structured mechanisms of democratic apprenticeship via teacher leadership involving clear and fair rules and making outcomes meaningful (grades). The values of accountability, discussion, social bonds, mutual and self-respect, rational decision-making, fairness, and equality that broadly constitute autonomy and its conditions would tend to come along in the bargain, again at an early and crucial stage (Chambers 2003; Freeman 2000; Reich 2007). We need not wait to act in the name of deliberative democratic education until the conditions of fully-formed curricula, student democratic councils, the empirics of student
deliberation, and specific structured classroom lessons tailored for specific subjects come along to counter neoliberalism’s influence on the schools (Lefrançois and Ethier 2010; Reich 2007; Pamental 1998; Young 1990, 123). Within deliberative democratic theory there is a more fundamental analysis of the democratic dysfunction of the communicative elements of the neoliberal practice of advertising in the classroom which can be applied to our case.

Toward a Deeper Critique

Habermas provides a bridge between the broad commitments of deliberative democracy and a specific, practical critique. He has long stood at the generative center of modern deliberative democratic theory (Scheuerman 2006; Carleheden 2006; Englund 2006), and, he has also long stood at the center of the connections between critical theory and education (Brookfield 2005; Blake and Masschelien 2003; Ewert 1991; Holt and Margonis 1992; Young 1990). His influence in both is generative: “All deliberative democratic theory contains, either implicitly or explicitly, and idea of a well-ordered public sphere”—a Habermasian idea that itself relies on and is generated by deliberation (Chambers 2003, 322). And in turn, schools have been theorized as “weak publics” whose discourses form opinion (but not policy) and favor pluralism (Frasier 1992, 134; Englund 2006, 504). Further, classrooms have been theorized as “stable, already institutionalized spaces for the exercise of freedom,” and also a place to teach the “skill[s] in creating those spaces themselves” (Reinhardt in Boesche 1998, 857). Which is to say that schools and classrooms have been cast as small public spheres: “a place
where teaching is not confused with training, militarism, or propaganda; a safe space where reason, understanding, dialogue, and critical engagement are available to all … [and] a site … to preserve and extend the conditions in which autonomy of judgment and freedom of action is informed by the democratic imperatives of equality, liberty, and justice” (Giroux 2010, 190; Greene 1982). 80 Habermas—along with many deliberative democrats—insists that this is no mere construct: decisions “must survive the test of actual deliberation” which should take place to legitimize political, and in this instance, educational outcomes (Gutmann and Thompson 2000, 176; Habermas 1996, 458; Freeman 2000, 415; Brookfield 2005, 1161-1164). 81 Thus for Habermas “democracy is an extension of his general … theory of communicative action and ideal discourse” (Freeman 2000, 407). It is through tracing back his theoretical commitments and his basis of democracy that we will arrive at a more specific critical deliberative approach to advertising in the classroom. 82

“[I]t is always a significant question to ask of any philosopher: what is he afraid of?” (Murdoch in Bernstein 2006, 79). The answer for Bernstein is unequivocal: for

Habermas posited “counter-institutions” and “counterprojects” that were later theorized as counter-public spheres in this vein (1981b, 36-37; Downey and Fenton 2003). This also represents a variant “spatialization” of Habermas’ thesis by “conceiving of the public sphere as a space or domain that one enters, occupies, or leaves” (Mah 2000, 160N18).

This is not to say that Habermas idealizes the bourgeois public sphere and its social arrangements and nostalgically wishes to return to them. Rather, his search is to realize their “promise of a self-organizing community of free and equal citizens … under conditions of complex societies” (Habermas 1996, 7; 1992, 442).

Again, the caveat here is that this is a highly redacted and selective reading of Habermas’ thinking. Many intelligent interrogators have read, digested, and glossed his thinking across a wide range of fields, and it would not be a productive use of the space here to repeat those (better) efforts at any length. Some of the better ones will be cited here. As we move into Habermas’ specific critiques, some of these concepts will be further fleshed out.
Habermas it is irrationalism—especially when translated into politics (2006, 79). It is Habermas’ project to “hold on to the intentions of the Enlightenment” and its humane project of reason (1981a, 9; Calhoun 1992, 40). In building his basis of reason up from the bottom (particularly in the teeth of the postmodern critique of teleology), the first of these commitments is to communication and language in a specific sense: not “as a disinterested description of the real world” (as in structural linguistics), but rather as a “practical, intersubjective activity” understood hermeneutically (Jay 1982, 93). Habermas goes beyond formal analysis to look at language in action. Words are not de-worlded and taken into the “philosopher’s laboratory” and dissected; rather, the philosopher accepts the world into her laboratory (Young 1990, 100). “[T]he pragmatic dimension of language … is accessible to formal analysis,” and thus it is a source of both understanding and critique (Habermas 1979, 6; McCarthy 1978 187-193). A great deal of Habermas’ project can be traced to this commitment and his subsequent disagreements with Gadamer\(^84\) in his task of overcoming “domination, repression, and distortion” in the interests of emancipation and a “dialogue that is not yet but ought to be,” motivated by “a

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\(^{83}\) This represents a modern project not completely unlike that of the Enlightenment advance of civility and knowledge that Tocqueville was so suspicious of earlier in this chapter.

\(^{84}\) McCarthy (1978, 187-193), Bernstein (1983, 182-185), and Jay (1982) all note the extensive overlap with Gadamer’s thinking, and that responding to his challenge shaped and honed Habermas’ project. His break with Gadamer and hermeneutics generally came about in a fundamental disagreement over “hidden forms of positivism”:

This … becomes evident in hermeneutical and interpretive approaches to social phenomena when it is mistakenly claimed that we can understand and interpret forms of life and *bracket* critical rational evaluation of [them]. One of Habermas’s most basic … theses is that we cannot even make sense of the concepts of meaning, understanding, and interpretation unless we rationally evaluate the validity claims that are made by participants in these forms of life. (Bernstein 1992a, 721)
future state of freedom” (McCarthy 1978, 192). His second commitment is a further
refinement of language in action in the form of the closely related idea of dialog or
deliberation. If language is a “fact of reason,” then the giving and receiving of reasons in
dialog and exchange—the actual use of language—constitutes rationality\(^85\) (Habermas
1982, 233-234; McCarthy 1976, 482-483). In simplest terms, “the everyday appeal to
validity-claims implicitly” instantiates this process, and such communication produces
social cooperation and rational understanding naturally as a matter of course (Habermas

These then, in over-simplified terms, are the building blocks of his theory of
communicative action, the intersubjective “‘space of appearance’ in which actors enter,
encounter one another, are seen and heard” (Habermas 1994, 215).\(^86\) If everyday
communication is oriented toward social cooperation in the form of rationally motivated
agreement through the giving and receiving of reasons (“validity claims”), then two
things follow from Habermas’ construction of communicative action. First, he is making
a strong distinction between communication/action oriented toward reaching
understanding and that which characterizes neoliberal motivations: those that are
strategic, instrumental, or technical oriented toward control, domination, and/or

\(^85\) “Well-grounded assertions and efficient actions are certainly a sign of rationality” according to Habermas. But we also “call someone rational ... if he is able to put forward an assertion and ... provide grounds for it by pointing to appropriate evidence, [or] if he is following an established norm and is able ... to justify his action ... in light of legitimate expectations. We even call someone rational if he makes known a desire ..., expresses a feeling or a mood ... and is then able to ... draw... practical consequences from it and behav[e] consistently thereafter” (Habermas 1984, 15).

manipulation; second, we do not exist in this abstract communicative context, but rather inhabit a lifeworld—a “mode of assumptions that are taken for granted with which the persons acting communicatively are intuitively so familiar that … [they] can no more take up an extramundane position towards [it] than they can towards ordinary language” (1985b, 165-166, 157, 169-173; McCarthy 1984, x). Mara gives a clear précis of the lifeworld for purposes here:

[D]eliberative democratic theory relies on … the lifeworld to provide the “reservoir” of societal meanings that surround and enable communicative action. … It is the site at which systemic problems first become tangibly present for citizens. And it constitutes the informal but structured communicative networks that allow discursive interactions among the differentiated spheres of complex societies. For those who see democratic political culture as playing a constitutive role for democratic theory, the lifeworld becomes the surrounding condition for political practice, the source of its coherence and the grounding of its norms …enable[ing] both the explanation of political forms and the evaluation of political alternatives. (2008, 143)

We constitute that lifeworld through long experience of social (which is to say communicative) cooperation: just getting along as a species and forming society is proof of a “rational potential intrinsic in everyday communicative practices,” and it generates moral content (Habermas 1992, 442; Holt and Margonis 1992, 237).

There are for Habermas political concepts that flow from this. Legitimate society is “one that rational participants in free dialogue would identify as capable of satisfying

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87 Bernstein parses the differing forms of interest (and therefore the actions appropriate to them) Habermas theorized and the corresponding “dimension of human social existence” with which they are concerned (1992a, 720). However, he has since backed away from their “quasi-transcendental” characterization (Bernstein 1992a, 720), and they are here broadly characterized since Habermas ultimately opposed them to communicative reason/action: “strategic action … correspond[s] to the utilitarian model of purposive-rational action” oriented to administering crises of legitimation and/or increasing productive capacity under capitalism (Habermas 1979, 40-41; 1994, 224).
their true common interests” (Mara 1985, 1038). Therefore a political arrangement is a good and moral one if and when it provides an arena for “discourse about shared societal concerns that is both rational-critical and influential” (Calhoun 1993, 276; Habermas 1996, 107-111). This is instantiated in is his concept of the public sphere—his explanation of the emergence of democracy from the closed system of feudalism (Habermas 1989b). A central question for democratic theory is “when and under what conditions the arguments of mixed companies could become authoritative bases for political action” constituting “an inquiry … into normative ideals and actual history” in identifying “an institutional location for practical reason in public affairs” (Calhoun 1992, 1). Essentially, the public sphere was that intermediate space created by “discoursing private persons who critically negate political norms of the state and its monopoly on interpretation…. Public opinion institutionalizes itself with the goal of replacing ... secret politics with a form ... that is legitimated by means of rational consensus” (Hohendahl 1979, 92-93; Habermas 1989b, 24). It is separate from the lifeworld and is not constituted by the mere existence of the institutions of civil society, representing instead their critical functioning (Habermas 1996, 373; Calhoun 1993). The public sphere was rooted in the rise of the merchant class and their interests in government actions, and took its impetus from the growth of the commercial sector (Habermas 1989b). A central question for democratic theory is “when and under what conditions the arguments of mixed companies could become authoritative bases for political action” constituting “an inquiry … into normative ideals and actual history” in identifying “an institutional location for practical reason in public affairs” (Calhoun 1992, 1). Essentially, the public sphere was that intermediate space created by “discoursing private persons who critically negate political norms of the state and its monopoly on interpretation…. Public opinion institutionalizes itself with the goal of replacing ... secret politics with a form ... that is legitimated by means of rational consensus” (Hohendahl 1979, 92-93; Habermas 1989b, 24). It is separate from the lifeworld and is not constituted by the mere existence of the institutions of civil society, representing instead their critical functioning (Habermas 1996, 373; Calhoun 1993). The public sphere was rooted in the rise of the merchant class and their interests in government actions, and took

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88 Again, others have glossed this idea thoroughly, and Habermas himself gives a very short, very informative précis (1989b, 11-12), and his encyclopedia article fleshes this out further (1974).

89 Taylor notes that we often conflate the concepts, but the public sphere cuts across categories: “not quite like a social structure, constituted by the rules governing action within it. There are no such definite rules. [I]t is … constituted by our understanding of it, and thus seems to fall also into the realm of ‘ideas’ … [which are actually] made of … background and the imaginary. Moreover, the action which takes place in this sphere is common action, and not simply that of individuals” (1993, 228). Yet it is not governing or ruling in nature, but rather constituted by a discourse coming to a “general understanding of what things count as is constitutive of the reality which we call the public sphere” (Taylor 1993, 225).
place through the exchange of the written word and critical conversation, constituting a discourse (Habermas 1989b, 1-26; 1974). It is in this historical sense that democracy in its modern form began in discourse and deliberation, its genesis was rational, and it included the informal track of free public communication strongly influencing the formal processes of political decision-making (Habermas 1989b; 1974; Cohen 1999, 389).

We move toward a specific analysis of the functions of neoliberal consumer capitalism in the form of Habermas’ strong link between the demise (structural transformation) of the public sphere (and thus the legitimate functioning of democracy) and the rationalization of the lifeworld (1992, 452-453). Taylor puts it this way: “The public sphere is a central feature of modern society. So much so that even where it is in fact suppressed or manipulated it has to be faked” (1993, 221). Keeping in mind that Habermas wishes to save or defend reason, he is speaking here not of the reason embedded in free social coordination, but rather the domination of a specific type of controlling instrumental reason (Habermas 1970, 81-122; 1971, 650-652). Positive rationalization “means extirpating those relations of force that are inconspicuously set in the very structures of communication and that prevent conscious settlement of conflicts … [that] can be sustained in appearance only, that is counterfactually” (Habermas in Bernstein 2006, 76). Since reason is a natural outgrowth of communication, something must be structured to block its functioning and development (Brookfield 2005, 1151). Briefly, those blocks are both the domination of science as the definition of knowledge.

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90 Clearly as will be seen, Habermas’ critique is closely tied to this idea.
and reason to the extent that technical direction and control obviate “democratic planning as a steering mechanism” (Habermas 1971, 651-652), and the distortions of economic arrangements under capitalism which make “permanent the extension of subsystems of purposive-rational action” (Habermas 1970, 96). The two forms of domination are linked in the form of interest-laden political bargaining and the obligation of “the political system to maintain stabilizing conditions for an economy that guards against risks to growth” versus democratic will-formation (Habermas 1970, 102). Capitalism’s basic ideology of economic exchange loses its relationship to social and political legitimation because it can no longer be reciprocal (Habermas 1979, 193-196; 1974; 1975, 45-94).

Recall that democratic discourse began for Habermas in merchant discourse over government policy, trade, and exchange: “bourgeois society understood itself as … secur[ing] economic growth and general welfare through competition” under the conditions of cultural and political stability and fairness that they demanded, “with monetary rewards conforming to the system” (Habermas 1975, 82-83; 1989b). The radical intertwining of political processes and capitalism has made politics “a field for the competition of interests … [and] the compromise of conflicting private interests,” where power, not deliberative reason, holds sway and “large organizations strive for political compromises with the state and with each other excluding the public sphere” (Habermas 1974, 54). Neoliberalism cannot justify its political legitimacy based on the resulting hollowed-out public life.

Civil privatism means strong interests in the administrative system’s output and minor participation in the process of will-formation … [and] corresponds to the structures of a depoliticized public. Family and
vocational privatism complements [it and] consist of a family orientation with consumer and leisure interests, and of a career orientation consistent with status competition … thus correspond[ing] to the structures of educational and occupational systems regulated by competitive performance. (Habermas 1989a, 278)

This stands in direct contrast to the still-available potential for “citizens’ making use of their communicative and participatory rights also with an orientation toward the common good” which cannot be simply compelled or called forth administratively (Habermas 1996, 461).

For Habermas, this change had a decidedly communicative bent. Historically, the “press was relieved of the pressure of its convictions [and] able to … take advantage of the earning possibilities of a commercial undertaking,” becoming transformed by economic concentration, then technological development, then shifting to a forum for advertising, and finally becoming a form of advertising and public relations (Habermas 1974, 53; 1989b, 181-195). The public sphere thus became managed in the now-familiar spin of publicity and public relations and is driven by the “grammar of systematically distorted communication … of dissociated symbols and suppressed motives” (Habermas 1970, 96; 1989b, 197). Again, Taylor is helpful in bringing these two strands together: the question concerns manipulation in less obvious but more insidious ways91 “by money, or government, or some collusive combination of the two. Another is whether the nature of certain modern media permits the truly open, multilateral exchange which is supposed to issue in a truly common opinion on public matters,” which is clearly related to the

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91 Taylor is here speaking of those manipulations beyond the ham-handed methods of despotic regimes.
global corporate nature of modern media and its relationship to politics (1993, 221). This characterizes the structural transformation of the public sphere away from deliberative democratic reason and will-formation and the resulting crises of legitimation. We have contemporary (neoliberal) social, political, and economic arrangements that are irrational (or faked in Taylor’s term): they persist and “maintain their legitimacy despite the fact that they could not be validated if subjected to rational discourse” (Schroyer in Held 1980, 256). “There can be no *administrative creation of meaning*, only ideological retailing of cultural values” (Habermas 1976, 377)—the modern definition of systematically distorted communication and the “suppression of generalizable interests” (Habermas 1975, 113).

It is a short jump from here to Habermas' broad critiques of the role of the media, and the colonization/rationalization of the lifeworld. For him, integration (reason in the form of the positive kind of rationalization in communicative action) between society, the lifeworld, and democratic politics is best addressed through “removing restrictions on communication”; what we have now is a “public sphere administered through the mass media” (Habermas 1970, 118, 120; 1992, 452-453). His critique has come to focus on the crippling of an integrated lifeworld and public sphere via communicative corruption: mass manipulation in the service of consumerist values, the colonization and rationalization of everyday life and consciousness (social and personal relationships steered through the medium of money) toward consumerist ends, a state on the horns of a democratic dilemma, and the evacuation of meaning in politics and public communication via advertising and public relations in politics as well as in the service of
commerce. Put succinctly, “advanced capitalist society [is not] a social totality. … [I]t is split into separate realms integrated on different bases …: personal relationships and (at its best) communicative action … is counterposed [with] nonlinguistic steering media (money and power) integrating society impersonally through functional or cybernetic feedback” (Calhoun 1992, 30).

The rationalization of the lifeworld had to reach a certain maturity before the media of money and power could be legally institutionalized in it. The two functional systems of the market economy and the administrative state ... intermeshed … to the extent that processes of monetarization and bureaucratization penetrate[d] the core domains of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization. (Habermas 1987a, 355)

In other words, social relationships now become easily translated into monetary values and are steered through that mechanism and its underlying instrumental rationality. This endangers “reliable structures of intersubjectivity” and perhaps even the production of healthy selves (McCarthy 1978, 359; Habermas 1981b, 36; Warren 1993; 1989). Thus:

To the degree that the economic system subjects the life-forms of private households and the life conduct of consumers and employees to its imperatives, consumerism and possessive individualism, motives of performance and competition gain the force to shape behavior. The communicative practice of everyday life is one-sidedly rationalized into a utilitarian lifestyle; this media-induced shift ... calls forth the reaction of hedonism freed from the pressures of rationality. As the private sphere is undermined and eroded by the economic system, so is the public sphere by the administrative system. (Habermas 1987b, 325)

Productive and consumptive capacity, in order to remain effective motivations and sources of legitimacy, must be glorified and its power must be tangibly expressed; the result is a society and a politics not particularly “enriched with basic normative concepts”
(Habermas 1985b, 157; Taylor 1989, 154). This, in Taylor’s formulation, is how the public sphere is faked; in Habermas’ formulation, it is how it is hollowed out.

Habermas insists on communicative rationality’s “stubbornly transcending power, because it is renewed with each act of unconstrained understanding,” and at times, he is willing to extend at least the possibility that the mass media can assist in spreading that renewal (1982, 221; 1992, 455; Welton 2001). But its performance thus far has been in the form of the “constant interpretation and re-interpretation of needs” which, in the absence of democratic will-formation, takes the form of “massive manipulation[:] … the appearance that the customer has the ability to choose freely … must be maintained … as the façade of possessive individualism” (Habermas 1976, 383). The intertwinements of advertising, media, and consumption fit the description of that function for Habermas:

We are witnessing an increasing substitution of images for words, and also that inter-mingling of categories such as advertising, politics, entertainment [and] information … promot[ing] the neon-lit re-enchantment of a de-realized reality. The banal coalesces with the unreal [and] de-differentiated customs blend with high-tech style, and the ruins of popular cultures with the highly personalized, consumeristically polished bizarre. (1985a, 97)

The public sphere has thus been “re-feudalized” under neoliberal capitalism’s long reach and the emotional/experiential spectacles of media advertising and

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92 Again, this includes contemporary media forms which have evolved into personal-yet-social devices. Much that is politically beneficial has been claimed (or hyped) on their behalf (Chou 2011; Coll 2011).
consumption are core to this process (Peters 1993; Kellner 2000). Spectacles and events like Super Bowl halftime shows and the pomp of the media fulfill a similar public function now as courtly splendor did seven hundred years ago. Politically, it is the illusion of democracy—consumer choice, public opinion, and the rituals of voting and elections—which marketing and advertising now serve:

The world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only. … [C]ritical discussion … tends to give way to “exchanges about tastes and preferences” between consumers … [and] the mass media today strip away the … husks from … self-interpretation and utilize them as marketable forms for the public services provided in a culture of consumers [and] the original meaning is reversed. (Habermas 1989b, 171)

Corporations conflate the idea of consumption decisions with citizenship, refeudalizing the public sphere in another sense: the “integration of mass entertainment with advertising … assumes a ‘political’ character [and] subjects even the state itself to its code. … [Thus] the state has to 'address' its citizens like consumers” and political communication and decision making becomes an exchange of symbols, “a stylized show,” and a spectacle of “managed integration” (Habermas 1989b, 195, 206-207). This produces the previously noted civil (and other forms of) privatism and a “mood of antipolitics,” paralyzing civil society (Habermas 2006, 422). It is a process and a culture

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93 As Taylor put it, “the king has two bodies, only one being the … perishable one, which is now being fed and clothed and will later be buried” (1993, 235), the other body is the feudal instantiation of the state and the public realm, thus presented in splendor and literally “representing” power and authority (Habermas 1974, 50-51). Habermas notes that even today “politicians in Western democracies retain something of the radiance proper to the sovereign nature in the form of personal prestige produced by public relations, even though the image is derived only from disposition over media-enhanced organizational power and not from charismatic qualities” (1987a, 226). Habermas’ analysis is clearly similar to those of Postman, Harvey, and Jameson noted in Chapter 3.
that is deeply irrational and unsustainable on its own terms. Habermas’ analysis represents a substantive challenge to neoliberalism’s logic and ethos.

4.3 Conclusion: A Practical Habermasian Return to Education

Analyses of the school and classroom have been conducted on the basis of Habermasian perspectives, but like those of the broader deliberative theorists noted earlier, those analyses elide practical realities, jumping instead to the “progressive radicalization of [Habermas’] argument; there must be the freedom to move from a given level of discourse to increasingly reflected levels” (McCarthy 1976, 482). Habermasian educational critiques stress broad themes of reflexivity and critique tied to discourse, and as a result, while this work notes that “contemporary education needs a normative foundation of a specific kind” (Carlehedenu 2006, 523), and that there is a “need for the education of citizens in deliberative capacities and attitudes” (Englund 2006, 503), we are still at the stage of using Habermas to “suggest hypotheses, supply major categories, and suggest sources of information” for schools and classrooms (Holt and Margonis 1992, 236; Brookfield 2005; Blake and Masschelein 2003; Ewert 1991; Young 1990; Shapiro 1984). This tends to end in weak prescriptions to “pay far more attention to the empirical forms, potentials, and limitations of this type of communicative interaction … to turn it into an adequate educational instrument” (Reich 2007, 197). Still, in the communicative concept of an education free from organized powers and “specialized interests, routines, and vocabularies,” Habermas has struck a strong chord (Cohen 1999, 409).
If healthy, autonomous public- and life-choice are to be rational and deliberative, then the schools have a substantive role in fostering those baseline capacities (Mara 2008, 132, 141). Adapting Mara and Warren, broad goals for both politics and education can be extracted from Habermas in the form of the development of “autonomy and responsibility in the evaluation of individual and social choices,” the capacities for agency and critical reflection, reciprocity, and of course reason developed through deliberation (Mara 1985, 1038; Warren 1993, 214-216). Much of this can be summarized in his concept of autonomy, which for Habermas is a normative ideal, but it also a real, practical possibility (Warren 1993, 214). An autonomous self for Habermas maintains coherence and continuity in her biography and unique life history, and has the capacity for agency (to set goals, initiate ventures, changes, and to create), the giving of reasons and responses, as well as the ability to “distance self-identity from circumstances at the same time that one locates the self in terms of these circumstances” (Warren 1995, 172-174). Habermasian autonomy thus implies critical judgment, reciprocal recognition, and responsibility to others (Warren 1995, 174-175). In other words, the concept is psychological and social and deeply connected to discursive exchange—itself deeply connected to democracy. Furthermore, the school should be the public, political institution that serves as a location/space for developing autonomy, and providing for its
initial practice by the young (Warren 2002, 692; Gutmann 1987). Despite his moves toward non-ontological and non-teleological bases, Habermas has retained a consistent focus within this work on an emancipatory potential and interest in this fully-rounded concept of autonomy: “only in an emancipated society, which had realized the autonomy of its members, would communication have developed into that free dialogue of all with all which we always hold up as the very paradigm of a mutually formed self-identity, as well as the ideal of true consensus. To this extent the truth of statements is based on the anticipation of a life without repression” (Habermas 1966, 297; 1990, 114N81, 162-163; 1987a, 82; White 1995, 5-6; Bernstein 1992a; Mara 2008, 90; 1985).

The key Habermasian issues at hand are that the development of such autonomy can be severely limited when public spaces (such as schools and classrooms) are organized around a manipulative mass media, and the legitimacy of an institution so operating (Warren 1989, 521, 528; Ewert 1991, 367-373).

The argument here is that advertising in the public school classroom demonstrates Habermas’ analysis that such matters of “school policy can be understood as … the

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94 Similar to Taylor as noted earlier, the school is only one among several institutions and social forms of organization such as the press (of all stripes), social movements, and libraries along with those forms of semi-, quasi-, and fully formed associations Warren identifies as fulfilling this role (2001). Habermas is adapted and interpreted here since he largely overlooked or underplayed schooling in his thinking about the development of democratic habits and mobilizations (1992, 438). Therefore he did not develop a fully-formed analysis of the processes of education nor their relationships to consumption beyond noting that expanding education is a potential opportunity to challenge “a materialistic achievement orientation” and that consumerism isn’t an inevitable outcome (Mara 1985, 1058). His primary focus on education consisted in the analysis that “market success is being replaced by professional success resulting from formal education … [in the] ideology of achievement” (Habermas 1976, 381). I agree with Mara (1998) and Brann (1979) that such an education would largely be a liberal education.

95 I agree with Mara when he concludes that “Habermas … unavoidably relies on a particular conception of human excellence; the best way of life is the autonomous life” (1985, 1053).
colonization of the lifeworld” (1987b, 371). That is, the means and motivations of neoliberal capitalism—advertising and consumption here—continually penetrate deeper into lifeworld and its institutions due to its “irresistible inner dynamics that bring about [its] colonization,” and represents “a reification of the communicative practice of everyday life” within the school (Habermas 1987b, 331, 386, 367). This represents a “mediatized” school and lifeworld in two senses. First, the school, in the form of the (probably democratic) decision made under the sway of neoliberal ideology to allow advertising in the classroom, is quite literally mediated/steered via the media-generated revenue to finance the school (Habermas 1987b, 196, 305). Second, the sanctioned penetration of advertising media proper into the classroom subjects students to messages of commercialism and the motivations of possessive individualism, obviating “processes of opinion- and will-formation … and mak[ing] it easier to uncouple” those from the lifeworld and everyday efficacy (Habermas 1987b, 325). Lefebvre is helpful here; the colonization of the lifeworld is often linked to his description of capitalism’s utter domination of the quotidian (Bolton 2005; Gregory 1997, 205-206; Brosio 1991). With the ascension of capitalist production, the “prodigious diversity” of social practices and life was destroyed:

Modernity and everydayness constitute a deep structure … covered by a surface…. News stories and the turbulent affectations of art, fashion and event veil without ever eradicating the everyday blahs. Images, the cinema and television divert the everyday by offering up to it its own spectacle, or sometimes the spectacle of the distinctly noneveryday; violence, death, catastrophe, the lives of kings and stars…. (Lefebvre 1987, 1011; 1996, 65-85)
Without pushing the analogy too far, the neoliberal practice of advertising in the classroom represents a refeudalization of this small public sphere: “The spectacle of a stupefied … [student] audience worries us because it seems a travesty of … the implicit principles” we want to inhere in an education in a democracy (reasoning, critical examination, and the development of autonomy), and it is for this reason that discussions of these phenomena “have such sharp political inflections because we are debating democracy by other means” (Peters 1993, 559). Habermas explicitly contrasts the extension of mediatized forms of representation and communication with those that support the practice and growth of reason and autonomy (Peters 1993, 562).

More to the point, as an ancillary process of the incursion of the steering mechanisms of money and power, marketing and advertising are doubly delinguistified. They are a non-linguistic (and thus non-rational) form of structuring and steering social relationships and the lifeworld based on the purposive rational goal of production, consumption, and gain, and they are conducted through appeal to dissociated and emotive (that is, non-linguistic) means: “a staged display … [of] symbols to which … one can not respond by arguing but only by identifying with them” (Habermas 1989b, 206, 189; 1987a, 412N3). This represents essentially a throwback to pre-reason and corresponds closely to the crisis in signification noted earlier.96 In other words, at best advertising in the classroom represents systematically distorted communication, a “conscious manipulation, as in the case where a salesperson attempts to get a customer to make a

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96 Such double-delinguistification is not limited to marketing and advertising, as can be seen from Postman’s analyses in Chapter 3.
certain commitment” (Young 1990, 112). At worst it represents a block, a single source of skewed information utterly closed off to deliberation and interrogation (Habermas 1994, 224-225; Nappo 2009; Hoffman 1991, 17). In either case, it represents a deep undermining of the resources of communicative reason, and thus the autonomous capacities of the young that deliberative democracy relies upon. Recall Postman’s definition of a curriculum: an “information system whose purpose, in its totality, is to influence, teach, train, or cultivate the mind” (1979, 49). Advertising as curriculum is “immune to truth,” and destabilizes thought and symbols, and is profoundly irrational (Postman 1988, 42; Strate 1994). Again, these are not mere critical postures concerning consumption and reason. Empirically we know that shoppers do not turn left upon entering stores; goods placed near the entrance of a store sell 30 percent less; the number of items purchased correlates with how far the shopper walks into the store—knowledge that calls into question assertions about the rational nature of consumer choice (Schor 1999). In terms of media, “the more you watch … the less you know” (Pilger in Webster 2000, 80), and consumption “to a great extent is [now] based on values, commitments and forms of community sustained by customers… [thus] our everyday life-world is filled with attempts to manage and steer how we actually produce truth, beauty and utility around goods” (Arvidsson 2005, 236). Under such circumstances, the consumer choice neoliberalism valorizes cannot help but be significantly alienating, irrational, uninformed, and undermining of the self (Waldman 1999). Thus it is a deep Habermasian worry that advertising in the heart of the school promotes an “everyday consciousness [that] is robbed of its power to synthesize; it becomes fragmented” and unable to create or take
part in constructing a coherent, rational lifeworld (1987b, 355). The self and autonomy are undermined by the further radical incursions of advertising in public school classroom with such policies adopted under the sway of neoliberal ideology.

The practical problem for Habermas rests in precisely these areas of the culture where the stakes for money and power are not high, but the issues lie in the definition of such terms as learning, autonomy, integrity, and education; in short, the “grammar of … forms of life” which is important to forming political concepts (1989a, 297). What is at stake is our “severely curtailed … ability to [counter] subtle demagoguery within the public sphere” by the shaping of our schools through such neoliberal policies (Brookfield 2005, 1160). The school is allowing media and advertising to put a radically irrational reality together within the curriculum, and gathering students as a commodity-constructed audience for them (Paraskeva 2007, 216). In this case, we can say quite literally that the state is addressing its future citizens as consumers. More radically, given the incessant neoliberal extensions of the market into the lifeworld, it is not too far-fetched to suggest that the schools would be offered (and some would accept) the opportunity to harness (that is, gain a return from) the students’ social media feedback to advertisements in the classroom, so both the advertisers and the school would be in a position exploit their immaterial labor as an audience (Dyer-Witheford 2005; 2001).

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97 Such efforts to influence this grammar now includes the widespread practice of looking to corporations to motivate public school teachers: “More than 300 school systems … have undergone Disney training in the past two years, underscoring the rising influence of business practices in public education at a time when schools are under intense pressure to improve performance.” Disney specializes in “emotional attachment to the … mission” of the organization as their key deliverable, and the target is “growing global competition for jobs and why every student needs a good education for any chance at a middle-class life” (Chandler 2011). There could not be a better example of the hegemony of neoliberalism.
Such current and potential practices represent “the covert displacement of one category of
communication by another: issues of political discourse become assimilated into and
absorbed by the modes and contents of entertainment” and the schools are eviscerated of
democratic educational content (Habermas 2006, 422). Such “contradictory steering
imperatives assert themselves through the purposive-rational actions not of market-
participants, but of members of administration,” including school administrators who face
decreasing legitimacy since curricula are no longer self-evident (Habermas 1975, 68, 71).
It is difficult to see how a policy allowing advertising in the classroom would discourage
an attitude of strategic calculation about the process of education or the school itself;
conversely, it is difficult to see how this institutional arrangement would encourage
nascent deliberation about public purposes or the reflective practices to construct life-
goals that we would want schools and classrooms to inculcate in the young (Mara 2008,
89). Advertising in the public school classroom represents a deep crisis of the
legitimacy of public schools’ neoliberal functioning in a democracy, and Habermas gives
significant depth to our understanding of the resultant undermining of deliberative
democracy’s educational and political resources to produce autonomy.

Chapter 4 Conclusion

This chapter has been an extended meditation on a selected set of resources within
democratic theory that help us to reflect on the often (but not always) serious tensions
between advertising and consumption and democracy through the institutional venue of
the school. We find in Tocqueville a deep ambivalence toward the role of the economy
and the rise of consumer wants as they affect persons and their relationship to their political liberties. His historical limning of both the developing American democracy and the developing American economy provides a valuable resource to reflect on the deep entanglement of the two, to the extent that he would warn that Americans were in danger of letting hard-won liberties (a subject always of sober and mature long term consideration for Tocqueville) slip away on cat feet while they were focused on the fleeting pleasures the economy was bringing to them. Tocqueville’s penetration into the culture that supported such liberties and broad self government never quite allowed him to quit looking for and identifying those areas of hope (and the new dangers to those hopes) that democratic practices could both spread and endure in a far-flung nation seemingly dedicated to prosperity. In this, he convinces us that the details of our educational practices matter in fostering a culture that is a resource that can help or hinder democratic practices, and in fostering a self-mastery and a conscious social cultivation of the judgment to cut through the cant of what is being sold to us. Tocqueville remains a resource to plumb even in a neoliberal age.

Communitarian concerns about the culture of consumption, when focused institutionally in a practical manner, provide valuable insights into neoliberal effects within the school. The meaning of consumption in its actual workings inside an institution—on its means, methods, and purposes—is cast in high relief with the centrality of community for a democracy via Miller’s analysis. Far from an abstract debate over whether selves are deformed by the historical trajectory of liberalism, the practical communitarianism constructed here found that the fundamental social
solidarities that communitarians rightly claim are the basis of practical democratic
efficacy in our local institutions and associations were deeply compromised by the ethos,
social arrangements, and behaviors valorized under neoliberalism. The paradigmatic case
of advertising in the classroom only accelerates a process whereby the space and place of
the school and the classroom are de-located, curricula are repackaged to compete, the
school is recast as a service entity and its goals are repurposed in the interests of
institutional thriving. The isolated, rational, utility-maximizing person neoliberalism
valorizes is unsustainable under such practices, and a society built on exchange must
itself have resources of social solidarity to function.

Deliberative democrats give procedural and methodological specificity to the
practice of democracy and its purposeful reproduction in the schools. When its principles
are plumbed more deeply as they are by Habermas, the specifics of communication,
discourse, and intersubjectivity are profoundly affected by the nexus of media,
advertising, and consumption—the logic and reach of which has been radically extended
in neoliberal consumer democracies. An essentially unleashed logic of producing
markets and consumers in almost all social and cultural venues affects schools and their
ability to foster and develop in students over the years of the curriculum a critical,
deliberative rationality, key—as Habermas and deliberative democrats generally argue—
to personal and democratic autonomy and a healthy, integrated lifeworld and public
sphere. The delinguistified grammar of advertising and consumption in the classroom
fundamentally works against the role of the school and the classroom in fostering that
critical autonomy that lies at the basis of democracy and even the rational self that neoliberalism posits.

Tocqueville, communitarianism, and deliberative democratic theory answer the question should we care about this, and if so, why? They each reveal a different facet of the same complex reason: that neoliberal practices viewed historically and in contemporary terms cannot sustain themselves culturally or politically. The social arrangements and motivations that neoliberalism produces are inadequate to sustain a healthy democracy or a healthy social psychology for that matter, and the school and the classroom is a place we should care about in light of that insight. Advertising to students in the legally required setting of the public school during required class time is, viewed in light of these democratic resources, a startling and deeply contradictory practice that stands at cross purposes to the attributes we would want the school to help foster and produce. If Tocqueville found, after years of engaging America, a reason to continue to hope and look out for dangers to the flourishing of democracy, and if nascent democratic community and deliberation can simply spring up and take hold in educational settings as the Brooklyn Free School shows us, then we have continuing reason to care about such practices. Habermas after all finds rationality and the seeds of democracy in every instance of unbidden understanding between persons. So it is not to rectify and reclaim that we conduct this analysis, but rather to look ahead at policies and practices for our schools and classrooms that might affect our ability to make a different democratic decision about advertising in the classroom and change other institutional arrangements.
in the interests of liberty, social solidarity, and democratic deliberation. This will be the purpose of the concluding chapter.
Chapter 5

Conclusion: Reasons to Look Ahead

Introduction

The Isaiah Berlin quote that began the Introduction to this thesis has been adapted here throughout to argue that we avoid an evaluation of the institutional arrangements and policy decisions which contribute substantively to the constitution of the polity in American democracy at our peril. Berlin further challenges us to justify the adequacy of that evaluation in its historical setting. In the terms of this thesis, the question was stated, should we care about the significant incursion of marketing and advertising in the schools, and if so, why? Dialogical clarifications to a resulting series of questions have established the relationship between democratic theory and education, the presence of advertising in American education (up to and including advertising in the classroom during required attendance time) and its contemporary neoliberal context, and the substantive theoretical and empirical concerns about advertising—particularly to the young. With that framework in place, three resources were deployed in a pragmatic use of democratic theory to interrogate the practice more deeply than prior analyses which invoked democratic interests had done. This discussion of democratic theory is important because the use of advertising in the classroom has theoretical support provided by neoliberalism, particularly the neoliberal capture of “common sense”—the claim that this is, simply, how the world really works. The different (but intersecting) democratic
theories chosen for this purpose provide resources for challenging the support given to advertising in the classroom by neoliberalism at the theoretical level.

The goal of this theoretical exercise was the practical question framed by Mara: can we give reasons against this educational practice and policy that its supporters must take seriously because its advantages can be undermined by its own effects? In this case, democratic theories significantly deepened the problematic of this educational practice and policy as summarized at the end of Chapter 4 and gave substantive reasons why its supporters should take arguments against the practice seriously. For purposes of this concluding Chapter, one final question remains if this is not to be an exercise in review of the regrettable consequences of past decisions: does the issue have continuing relevance? Gutmann is helpful in broadening our frame of reference again: “Except by abolishing mandatory schooling, there is no way of avoiding a political decision about the content of schooling”; even abolishing mandatory schooling would itself be a political decision (1999, xi). In other words, there are continuing political implications to this ongoing practice if for no other reason than we continue to educate the young to take their putative place as citizens in a democracy. But there are other reasons rooted in Berlin’s “given historical circumstances” of the ascendancy of neoliberal market incursions that give cause for continued examination of the practice.
The Extension of Neoliberal Logic:  
The Supreme Court and the Solidified Status of Commercial Speech

There is a further context to considerations of the paradigmatic case of advertising in the public school classroom: the legal environment. The crux of the legal issues surrounding the practice revolve around freedom of speech in the schools and the status of commercial speech and its First Amendment protections within that context and location. ¹ The initial question is: can we legitimately limit such speech in the classroom and school? The initial answer is promising. Schools are a type of forum for First Amendment purposes, specifically what has been delineated as limited public forum. Forum law is rooted in property law, hence there has been a “concern with the function of the property when the property involved … has some other specialized function,” like that of a public school (Gathegi 2005, 6; Blocher 2007). A full public forum, defined as “government property that has traditionally been available for public expressions” such as parks and sidewalks, have the highest level of First Amendment protections—meaning speech regulations and restrictions must be based on a compelling state interest (Gathegi 2005, 8). A nonpublic forum is simply all other government property, and First Amendment rights can be regulated for a nonpublic forum as long as the restrictions are reasonable and not based on the speaker’s views (Gathegi 2005, 8). Because schools are set up both to encourage inquiry and “expressive activity … to a class of speakers,” the

¹ It is not claimed that this exercise constitutes a formal jurisprudential analysis (that is, a review of the structural relationships among laws and Supreme Court decisions based on them). Rather, it is an analysis of a selection of a series of related decisions and their general thrust from the vantage of democratic theory as utilized in this thesis. As such, it is not dissimilar to those undertaken in the legal literature itself by authors such as Blocher (2007), Cohen (2003), or Castagnera (2002).
intention behind school regulations on speech are important, and “once a limited forum
has been opened, its lawful boundaries must be respected” (Blocher 2007, 45). Indeed,
the Court has carefully parsed school speech over the years seeing fit to regulate school
prayer (Lee v. Weisman 1992; Santa Fe Independent School Dist. v. Doe 2000) and
The Court has also regulated a variety of student speech such as sexual innuendo (Bethel
School Dist. No. 403 v. Fraser 1986), sensitive information in a school newspaper
(Hazelwood School Dist. v. Kuhlmeier 1988), and drug-related speech at a school event
(Morse v. Frederick 2007). Conversely, the Court has taken pains to establish that
“[n]either students [n]or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or
expression at the schoolhouse gate” in upholding student expressive rights to wear black
armbands in a war protest (Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School Dist.
1969), or when ruling against the removal of books from a high school library for reasons
of content (Board of Education v. Pico 1982). The broad thrust of limited public forum
theory in Supreme Court decisions has been to balance the protection of student speech
while acknowledging the school and classroom as a place of “structured dialogue
bounded by teacher authority and rules of decorum, and the curriculum itself” (Sullivan
and Gunther 2007, 1036; McEllistrem, Roth, and Walsh 2002, 119-120). Similarly, the
Court has parsed speech directed at the school in traditional public forums carefully:
sidewalk labor protests outside the school proper were protected (Police Dept. of Chicago
v. Mosley 1972), and while antiracism protests in the same (sidewalk) location were
allowed, a related antinoise ordinance was upheld as a legitimate protection against
disruption of class work (*Grayned v. City of Rockford* 1972). The school’s status as a limited public forum has the effect of allowing school boards to decide on and regulate forms of commercial speech (Blocher 2007, 43-44), and in fact the Court has ruled that university property does not constitute a public forum for commercial activities (*Board of Trustees of the State University of New York v. Fox* 1989).

This is not the end of the legal context, however. The trouble begins in an intersecting line of reasoning behind a series of historical decisions concerning, first, the status of corporate speakers and the status of rights of school children. To begin, corporations have been deemed to be “persons” for the purposes of 14th Amendment Equal Protections for 125 years, albeit with the privilege and protection of limited liability (*Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad Co.* 1886). Anomalously, in *San Antonio Independent School Dist. v. Rodriguez* (1973), the Court ruled that children subject to compulsory schooling laws are *not* covered by the Equal Protection Clause. Thus receiving an education was not deemed a right, nor was being educated a sufficiently important condition to meaningfully exercise other rights (*San Antonio Independent School Dist. v. Rodriguez* 1973).² Contradictorily, the interest in education was found to be insufficiently distinguishable from “significant personal interests in the basics of decent food and shelter”—which the Court then subjected to thoroughgoing

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² Liu (2006) makes an extensive historical argument that, if we take the Framers of the 14th Amendment seriously, the Court must give substantive consideration to ideas of national citizenship, the right to an education, and inculcating the capabilities thereof: the 14th Amendment went hand-in-hand with the Freedmen’s Bureau and its educating mission for ex-slaves (to make them capable citizens of all states, not just their resident state), a nascent Department of Education, and a proposal to create a national system of education. All were discussed in light of the Amendment at the time of its recent adoption by its Framers; members of the Court, Liu (2006) seems to argue, ideologically select their Framers to cite.
neoliberal logic: where economic disparities in educational funding (and thus outcomes) are at stake, “the marketplace of ideas” may well be an empty phrase without the “basic communicative tools” provided by an education; however, “we have never presumed to possess either the ability or the authority to guarantee to the citizenry the effective speech or the most informed electoral choice”; specifically, “where wealth is involved, [it] does not require absolute equality or precisely equal advantages” (San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez 1973). This means that education can be compulsory, but cannot be a rule-like entitlement, and the Court explicitly ruled out democratic considerations (preparation of citizens) or conditions of basic equality (disparities in wealth to provide the education) as reasons for such a right (Katz 1982).³

Thus we are at a situation (characteristically neoliberal) in which corporations have a constitutional protection that children compelled to attend school (for at least partially democratic reasons) do not. That legal status (as persons) of corporations comes in to play when we arrive at the issue of commercial and corporate speech itself—which essentially boils down to advertising (Sullivan and Gunther 2007, 903). Without tracing the tangled history of the Supreme Court’s commercial speech decisions in detail, suffice it to say that after 1976 the Court deemed it a matter of First Amendment protections (Sullivan and Gunther 2007, 904). Since then, there is wide consensus among supporters and opponents that Supreme Court decisions on commercial speech have been confused,

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³ This is a jarring counterpoint to the Court’s Brown v. Board of Education (1954) decision which waxed eloquent about education as the “most important function” of government, “the very foundation of good citizenship,” a “principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values,” and providing a reasonable chance at success in life; thus the “opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.” Much of this language was quoted in the Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972) decision eighteen years later.

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contradictory, and made unsustainable and unworkable distinctions for businesses that seek to “speak,” or for venues and businesses (such as newspapers) through which they would “speak” (Blocher 2007; Ross 2004; 2001; Sullivan and Gunther 2007, 903-935; Fischette 2008; Piety 2010; Mayer 2007; Boedecker, Morgan, and Wright 1995).

Essentially, during this process the Court has “created and expanded First Amendment protection for commercial speech in two ways: First, by narrowing its definition—thus leaving more seemingly commercial speech in the fully protected realm of pure speech—and second, by imposing more significant restrictions on government attempts to regulate commercial speech” (Blocher 2007, 32). The effect is that the Court’s treatment of commercial speech is now almost indistinguishable from its reasoning concerning full, pure First Amendment protections (Ross 2004). The trajectory of this series of decisions is best revealed by the nature of the dissent it has elicited. No less than Rehnquist questioned the “decision which elevates commercial intercourse between a seller hawking his wares and a buyer seeking to strike a bargain to the same plane as has been previously reserved for the free marketplace of ideas…. [T]here is certainly nothing in the [Constitution] which requires [us] to hew to the teachings of Adam Smith” (Virginia State Pharmacy Board v. Virginia Citizens Consumer Council 1976). This conflation has gone so far as to render equivalent the speech of a paid statement placed in the New York Times defending the justice of civil rights actions in 1964 with a global corporation’s (in this case, Nike’s) “speech” defending its overseas manufacturing operations against sweatshop allegations in prepared statements and letters to the editor in the early 2000s (Ross 2004). There seems to be little credence in this reasoning given to the power of
corporations to “speak” “louder” given the combination of their financial resources and their privileged status as “persons” for the purposes of Equal Protection along with the power inherent in the contemporary extreme fluidity of capital and where to base jobs. Corporations, in this formulation, are merely “associations of individuals who, like the civil rights movement, should not lose their right to speak simply because they have joined together to increase the power of their collective voice. Corporate speech also is produced by an individual, who retains her right to freedom of expression” (Ross 2004).

This neoliberal logic has reached an apogee in two recent decisions that bear directly on the context of the school, commercial speech, and the ability to limit it even in the limited public forum of the school. In 2001 the Court struck down regulations prohibiting the advertising of tobacco products within 1,000 feet of a school or playground and further regulations concerning the physical location of those ads at point-of-sale indoors in the store (Lorillard Tobacco Co. v. Reilly 2001). While it was conceded that the state’s “interest in preventing underage tobacco use is substantial and even compelling, … we must consider that tobacco retailers and manufacturers have an interest in conveying truthful information about their products to adults, and adults have a corresponding interest in receiving truthful information about tobacco products” (Lorillard Tobacco Co. v. Reilly 2001). This appears to be a decision based upon a quaint notion of advertising and advertising as plain speech.⁴ As we know, advertising

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⁴ The effect of this decision also seems to set specific limits on the regulation of commercial speech directed at or near the school, and is in some tension with the Grayned v. City of Rockford (1972) decision noted earlier where restrictions could be made if they represented legitimate protections of the conditions needed for the classroom.
has long since shifted to a basis of swaying and appealing to emotions (such as guilt and
shame) and the amorphous production of desire and the selling of experiences, spectacle,
image, and proliferating signification is the new basis of the economy (as reviewed in
Chapter 3). Further, the Court seemingly ignores the documented cases of tobacco
companies (Lorillard among them) distorting or suppressing research in order to justify
the marketing of their products (e.g. Ong and Glantz 2000; Pierce et al. 1998; Malone and
Balbach 2000) and/or the targeting of adolescents in that advertising (also covered
extensively in Chapter 3). This logic reached its apex in *Citizens United v. Federal
Election Commission* (2010). In their decision on corporate-sponsored campaign
commercials, the Court equated corporate expenditures with speech, and thus the full
protection of that “speech” with the rights of citizens. The Court even denied that the
unequal effects of the immense resources of corporations to “speak” are necessarily bad:
the majority opinion cites and quotes an earlier opinion on the benign influence of
political support, and brackets that with statements that the “fact that speakers may have
influence over or access to elected officials does not mean that those officials are corrupt”
and the “appearance of influence or access ... will not cause the electorate to lose faith in
our democracy” (*Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* 2010). Therefore,
regulations on corporate speech in the form of political advertising “interferes with the

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5 All of these examples were published well before the *Lorillard Tobacco Co. v. Reilly* (2001) decision.

6 This has been a long trajectory as noted, with the Court stating as early as 1978 that “The
inherent worth of the speech in terms of its capacity for informing the public does not depend on the
identity of its source, whether corporation, association, union, or individual” (*First National Bank of
'open marketplace' of ideas,” and concurring opinions further amplified this concept as a welcome un-“muzzl[ing of] the principle agents of the modern free economy” in public debate (Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission 2010). Again, the dissenting opinion (of Stevens) is revealing in questioning the Court’s logic: “under the majority's view, I suppose it may be a First Amendment problem that corporations are not permitted to vote, given that voting is, among other things, a form of speech” (Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission 2010).

In classic neoliberal fashion, the Court has equated participation in the market with speaking ideas, and so speaking ideas is equally equated with participation in the market. Given that logic, there is seemingly no way to reach a “reasonable relation to any end within the competency of the state” (Pierce v. Society of Sisters 1925) to effectively regulate commercial speech in the public schools. If corporate political speech in the form of unlimited donations and advertising in elections cannot be regulated, regulating commercial speech in schools for the purposes of democracy seems a lost cause. The schoolhouse walls seem headed toward being fully permeable to commercial speech, and in fact current regulations on tobacco, credit marketing practices, and food marketing to children appear to be very much in danger with the almost-complete Supreme Court conflation of commercial, corporate, and individual speech (Piety 2010, 16-17). Equally predictably, tobacco corporations have used Citizens United as a precedent to argue for the protection of speech which conceals information about the science around the health consequences of the use of their products and to “manufacture
controversy” about it: “The defendant’s strategy … was to sow doubt and confusion, rather than to educate and inform…. In short, the tobacco companies asserted a constitutional right to obfuscate public opinion” based on the rights of listeners to hear deliberate misinformation (Piety 2010, 20-21). Combine this trajectory with developments in the surrounding logic of schools as limited public forums, and the recipe seems set: the Court “has repeatedly recognized that the way in which a forum is used in turn shapes the amount of free speech regulation allowed,” thus allowing commercial speech in the school in the first place at all might well be deemed to have created a (literal) marketplace of (commercial) ideas that could garner First Amendment protections (Blocher 2007, 44). Furthermore, “the degree to which … a named sponsor is motivated by advertising and profit may correspondingly limit a school’s power to regulate that sponsor’s message in a limited forum” (Blocher 2007, 49). In the case of commercial speech and its relationship to advertising in the public school classroom we have seemingly constitutionalized one of our most important democratic issues. That is, instead of acting and deliberating on the practice as a polity, we have seemingly turned over political questions about it to the logic of litigation and the neoliberal logic of an increasingly “political” Court (in the Habermasian sense of the structural transformation of the public sphere). The result is that the trajectory of “our constitutional jurisprudence, in a very tangible way, limits our moral ambitions for a just polity” and democratic action

7 The lower court found the facts well established and ruled substantially in favor of the government. The Supreme Court upheld the lower court’s findings in this case. That does not obviate the continuing logical consequences of the Citizens United (2010) decision. Note that the claim now is that suppression and misdirection of research results as noted in the discussion of the Court’s Lorillard (2001) decision here are now claimed to have full First Amendment protections.
to shape our constitutive institutions as we would wish (West 2006, 160). Considered in
the “thin, pure air of abstraction, [market] choice can be presented as a universal goal,” as
indeed it has (Henig 1994, 21). One law review article stated the neoliberal case
perfectly: “Adam Smith got it right, once and for all…. Capitalism—the free market—
works so well because it reflects our very nature” (Castagnera 2002, 297). The Supreme
Court is instantiating that logic in law, and is doing so in the absence of democratic
action and debate by citizens. Advertising in the public school classroom is a continuing,
vital, and democratic concern in this given historical setting. Again, neoliberalism
provides the theoretical basis to justify such actions, policies, and decisions. Democratic
theory is useful to interrogate and counter these practices, particularly in articulating the
interests of democracy itself in light of them.

The Analytical Frame of Voice

Restricting and regulating speech and expressive activities in schools and
classrooms inevitably implicates the question of who has a voice, the status of those
voices, and voice priorities in that venue under conditions of dominant neoliberal

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8 This author takes the position, rhetorically framed as somehow controversial, that Rawlsian
justice can and should (modestly) inform public policy, such as against international sweatshops which
exploit “the bottom of the human barrel … replacing handouts with disposable income”: “while liberals
and conservatives may clash on issues such as unionism and affirmative action, a position favoring slavery
and sweated labor is hardly viable in the arena of public opinion” (Castagnera 2002, 307-308). That seems
to be the limit of our democratic public policy options under neoliberal logic: opposing exploitation
elsewhere and limiting social care and remedies to injustice at home by endlessly extending the market in
American society.

9 Currently, the crop of Presidential contenders in one of the two major political parties
collectively represent an even more radical neoliberal ethos that reaches back beyond New Deal reforms
and regulations and valorizes the market even further (Ip 2011; Troy 2011).
ideology. Mara notes the “centrality of political voice to modern democracies” and
democratic institutions—arguably the crux of the political and legal issue we face in the
case of advertising in the public school classroom now (1993, 157-158; Warren 2002,
692). We should not confuse voice with mere sounding-off, what Barber calls the
“divisive rant” of what passes for contemporary political discourse that seems to have
only grown worse in recent years (1996, 275; Farenthold 2011). Adapting his
framework, Mara notes three types democratic voice: “cries” which are “individual or
collective interest articulations” and is adapted here to be indicative of the now-dominant
role of media, advertising, and consumption in public and political life; “participatory
public decisions”; ¹⁰ and “voice understood as [reflective] judgment” (1993, 157, 173).
There are conditions to voice: it is inherently social, mutual, and inclusive and at the
same time firmly situated in individuals; it is provisional and open to revision; and
sustaining voice (individually, collectively, or in its distribution) is a material process—
that is, voice needs to be instantiated in a form, a place, or in a record¹¹ (Couldry 2010, 7-
10; Barber 1996, 276-279). For voice to be reflexive and to “exercise its choicemaking

¹⁰ To be clear, Mara casts this as “eloquence”—that which “stirs the heart more than engages the
mind” and can falsely persuade and sway in a democracy (1993, 159). It is therefore clearly related to
commercial “cries” in his construction. However, given the extended argument here that, under
neoliberalism, political and consumer suasion and choice has been radically conflated, his phrase quoted
above is used literally since the distinction can be argued to be largely obviated, as indicated in his citing
Reagan’s 1980 political campaign question, “Are you better off now than you were four years ago?” (Mara
1993, 171).

¹¹ Proof of these ideas for Couldry is the experience of extreme repression of voice: what whites
did to blacks under American segregation or the structures and restrictions of Nazi concentration camps to
ensure the hegemony of the captors’ voice (2010, 9-11).
and critical functions … personal rationality [needs to] be directive, rather than instrumental or subordinate” (Mara 1993, 173; Couldry 2010, 8-11; Barber 1996).

The contention here is that the neoliberal practice of advertising in the public school (and the reasoning behind taking such decisions and their political and legal justifications) represents a radical privileging of a particular type of public and political voice (“cries”) and a deep undermining of the public institutional role of the school and public values needed for democratic voice (participation and reflective judgment) to flourish and maintain itself. We are abrogating a very basic political resource at a time when it is perhaps more important than ever for democracy (Mara 1988, 407-409), and the logic of the Supreme Court is seemingly embedding that abrogation in the Constitution. Furthermore, the political voice we would want the schools to express and instantiate is undermined by our paradigmatic practice of advertising in the public school classroom because it takes no account of an answering, dialogic process. “[S]ocial life and social space are organized in part by narratives that set reference-points, relevances and values,” and our paradigmatic practice excludes and “undermine[s] in subtle ways through the organization of social relations” and devalues, blocks, and discredits in a “voice-denying rationality” (Couldry 2010, 10). The continuing practice of advertising in the classroom—and thus the continuing radical extension of the logic of neoliberalism, the diminution of possibilities for social bonds and efficacy, and the continuing rationalization of the lifeworld—matters. It is difficult to see how schools and classrooms framed in this way, with the paradigmatic practice thus sanctioned, would be able to even realize the modest humane goal of preparing persons to perform “productive
work, including [those in] the service trades, [to] be carried on in a liberal spirit, intelligently, and with relish,” even in a largely neoliberal economy (Brann 1979, 60). What we are left with under the prevalence and dominance of neoliberal policies, politics, and social ethos is an almost-absent public and a politics that is being straitjacketed into the pursuit of pure interest, redefining the public interest in the process as yet another special pleading—a “sociology without society” as it has been put (Touraine 1998; Barber 1996). The “values of res publica” under neoliberalism are simply the “remains after subtracting private concerns and attractions” (Wolin 1996b, 101).

Wolin and Habermas are again helpful in framing the issues around voice: “relationships of power in society can be, and are, reproduced through the medium of communicative interaction” (Dryzek 1995, 106); and indeed, substantial “professional [media] techniques to transform social power into political muscle” have been deployed to maintain conditions of deepening inequality in both economic and political terms (Habermas 2006, 419; 1994; Wolin 1996b). The neoliberal voice of “cries” in the classroom essentially means that the voice of the advertiser has been given a privileged

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12 It is a measure of how much and how rapidly things have changed under a radically-extended (and many would argue, ruthless) neoliberalism that Brann would cite studies of job satisfaction from the time she wrote her book which noted that “people invent ways to do freely and with gratification many jobs that would appear to have little scope or intrinsic interest” (1979, 60-61). A helpful example of Brann’s idea of such work performed liberally is the case of the Wal-Mart “greeter.” Wal-Mart is, of course, a commonly-known classic case of neoliberalism with its global supply chain, relentless drive to lower its costs, its hollowing-out effects on downtowns, its anti-union stance, its pay scales and benefits structures, and its gendered promotion environment. The “greeter” is (in classic neoliberal employment fashion) essentially structured as a low-paid security job masquerading as a kind-of “concierge” to the store. Yet, this employment niche seems to bring a certain kind of person into the workforce: they tend to be older, know many of the people coming and going, make sure that the busy entrances/exits stay clear, carts (often in short supply) are kept available, and they very gently intercept and guide those who set off the store alarm to customer service and/or check their receipts—and do so with apparent pleasure and/or good humor. It is not the argument here that Wal-Mart is beneficent in its neoliberal practices. Rather, a person in such a position even then needs social and intellectual resources and bonds to be able to perform such work in a manner humane for them and for Wal-Mart’s customers.
platform to generate power with those techniques along with the ability to choose information and its format, as well as “agenda setting [and] the priming and framing of issues” which effectively block other kinds of voice (Habermas 2006, 419; 1994, 222, 224). As Wolin\textsuperscript{13} puts it, we have a society in which addressing issues of the continuing effects of past grievances and deep contemporary inequalities in the political pursuit of justice is frozen: “power is never freely shared in a free society of individualists and free-wheeling entrepreneurs” that neoliberalism valorizes, and to presume otherwise is to hope that the “rich … have somehow acquired greater political virtue [and] … would agree to … material readjustments” (1996b, 108, 101). The conditions of neoliberal rational choice are conditions of exclusion for a vast number of people, and concentrations of wealth and power (in reality, they have become more equivalent under neoliberalism) make the issue one of “develop[ing] a fairer system of contestation over time” (Wolin 1996b, 115, 112).

If under the sway of neoliberal reasoning “democracy is out of synch with or opposed by virtually every dominant tendency in the American economy, cultural life, and politics” as Wolin contends (1996b, 117-118), then the matter of voice in the school and classroom becomes not incidental, but a central concern of democracy and for democratic theory. Advertising in the classroom is at issue not as a symbolic contest, but at the heart of the question of our ability to generate the resources on which democratic action and autonomy, social solidarity, and institutional efficacy depend. Tocqueville

\textsuperscript{13} This is an explicit adaptation of Wolin’s (1996b) argument here: he is writing about Rawls’ *Political Liberalism*, but his argument tends to cast Rawls in strongly neoliberal terms as noted previously.
told us long ago that such matters are often the difference that makes a difference. Practical communitarianism tells us that the incursions of the practice damage our institutions’ abilities to foster social bonds and efficacy. Deliberative democracy tells us that neoliberalism will continue to rationalize the lifeworld in ever deeper ways and distort the communicative basis of developing autonomy and meaningful social integration. As Wolin argues, if under neoliberalism the “supreme political value is … individual liberty,” then the “pivotal” political action does not occur in democratic participation by the polity, but rather in the Supreme Court: “the true expression of political identity is not in the vitality of local institutions but in the constitution” and how it is shaped (Wolin 1996b, 98). Our Supreme Court’s logic tells us that our resources to limit the voice of “cries” in our classrooms under a neoliberal legal regime are constrained. This is a continuing matter of political (vs. legal) concern, and not a matter of mere past grievances.

**Conclusion**

The claims here are not comprehensive. That is, we will not solve the problems of education and public schools by eliminating advertising in schools and classroom. Rather (and to repeat), the goal is more modest—to theoretically critique and give reasons to oppose a prominent practice and its neoliberal justifications in the interests of the resources needed for democracy to flourish. To deploy an old insight of Marxists, no hegemony is complete: “What people believe and value and how they choose to behave is not entirely or exclusively determined” by the incursions of contemporary
neoliberalism,\textsuperscript{14} no matter how thorough or sophisticated its media manipulations (Raber 2010, 146). In a parallel to a point by Habermas cited earlier, Wolin notes that irreducible and inevitable plurality always contains the possibility of the political, and it cannot be managed or honored by “bureaucratic modes of decision-making. Diversity is the nightmare of bureaucracy. The bureaucrat’s response to it is either to invent another classification or, in the corporate world, to manufacture fifty-seven varieties. The mode of action that is consonant with equality and diversity is deliberation” (Wolin 1994, 304). In return, Habermas notes (in parallel to Wolin’s notion of the political) that those moments of unbidden and un-manipulated communication that generate mutual understanding continue, and they generate and contain political potential (1982, 221). If our task is to search for “the conditions … needed for the political to come into being” in nascent form in our schools and classrooms (Wolin 1994, 302), then what must accompany that task is a recognition that the dominance of neoliberalism and the reasoning of the market is an idea/ideal that must be continually maintained and renewed. It is for this reason that thinkers from across the political spectrum have always continued their project of exploring and critiquing. The classic case in point is Milton Friedman’s often-quoted statement on the occurrence of a crisis—or a perceived crisis—as the

\textsuperscript{14} George (1999) reminds us that, in their inception after World War II, classic neoliberal entities like the World Bank and the IMF “were seen as progressive institutions … [whose] mandate was to help prevent future conflicts by lending for reconstruction and development and by smoothing out temporary balance of payment problems.” Such was the dominance of Keynesian ideas that the notion that “the market should be allowed to make major social and political decisions…, the State should voluntarily reduce its role in the economy, or that corporations should be given total freedom, that trade unions should be curbed and citizens given much less rather than more social protection” would have had no audience (George 1999). The implication of course is that such things can change again as evidenced by the historical ascendency of neoliberalism.
opportunity for change: “the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable” (Friedman in Couldry 15 2010, iv). In this case, “the great question [is] how to limit drastically the control over public discourse exercised by corporate and governmental bodies” (Wolin 1996b, 106). Again, it is the in the “trenches” of the culture and society where these questions are worked out; in terms of the school and the classroom, that is where diversity and issues of equality and inequality meet an institution that still claims to promote rational discursive exchange in the name of democracy (Raber 2010, 149). As Habermas put the practical matter, the stakes for money and power are not necessarily high in the schools, but they are the site of working out the “grammar” of such terms as learning, autonomy, integrity, and education which are important to forming political concepts (1989a, 297). The school still “represent[s] a deliberate state intervention … in order to provide a public good” (Raber 2010, 153), and while we cannot rely on a Marxist-like structural contradiction to produce change or generate political challenge, we also ignore at our peril that insight in marshaling the resources to argue for an education more purposefully directed toward social solidarities and efficacious democratic citizenship, and against further incursions of the neoliberal market.

15 It is notable that this wildly successful formula of the right is now picked up by those opponents of hegemonic neoliberalism—the apotheosis of Friedman’s ideas.
Wolin notes that “policy is flexible,” and it will bend to accommodate political force (1996b, 109). We cannot generate such political force out of nothing—even on a local basis concerning a democratic issue such as a decision about limiting the reach of advertising in our schools and classrooms. But inequalities and the continuing effects of historical injustices that “still define many of its members,” the “frustration on the part of those social classes and groups for whom the rhetoric and processes” of neoliberalism have produced few (or negative) results are continuing sources of political energy (Wolin 1996b, 116, 107; 1989, 81). Warren notes that, counter intuitively, “democratic expectations are growing” in the face of the substantial “list of the promises of democracy that have been broken”: the incoherence of popular sovereignty, the failure to adequately represent collectivities of individuals, the lack of a diminution of oligarchic power and the growth of bureaucratic power, the constriction of deliberative spaces, the non-elimination of “invisible powers,” the lack of education of citizens for democracy, the gap in expertise needed to make collective decisions, and the growing demands for services in light of “ungovernable” circumstances to meet those demands (2002, 679-680). Warren’s formulation is helpful in our paradigmatic case in point; he puts a premium on democratizing society, not the state, and providing voice—and providing the capacities for voice—in those civic and associational venues (2002, 692). In fact, neoliberal policies and actions do provoke response and do produce nascent political

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16 Most of these are drawn from Warren’s gloss on Norberto Bobbio. Coming full circle, Warren’s point further elaborates Mara’s reasoning concerning a continuing searching examination of our democratic ideas and practices, despite the near-hegemony of democratic theory as noted in the Introduction.
voice. Even after long publicity to sell and fashion public health services as a neoliberalized marketed service, only 6.2% of people thought of themselves as a customer or a consumer when surveyed about using health services (Clarke et al. 2007, 128). The comments of respondents showed a not-unsophisticated understanding of what agenda was being pursued: “Patient is the traditional term and I think it is still appropriate. …I know ‘consumer’ and ‘customer’ imply choice and that is what we are supposed to want. … ‘Choice’ may be a political ploy to take our eye off the ball and confuse us as to what really matters. Choice sounds good—but is it?” (Clarke et al. 2007, 130) Users of other public services were surveyed, and only 3.2% defined themselves in these terms when using police services, zero thought of themselves as a consumer when using social work services; these figures are dwarfed by the numbers of those who thought of themselves in the related cluster of citizen or as a member of the public or local community—a disparity in average across categories of users of public services of 6.6% (consumer/customer) compared to 54.5% (citizen, member of the public/local community) (Clarke et al. 2007, 128).

Even a confirmed skeptic of the critiques of advertising and anti-political nature of consumption like Schudson worries over the conflation of citizen and consumer. He notes two key and interrelated ideas. “It is not that in consuming one looks out for oneself—so much of consuming [is] done so often by wives and mothers … for others, not for oneself” (Schudson 2006, 203). The key difference lies in the fact that “in the ordinary act of consuming, the circle of people … tends to be small; in ordinary acts of politics, the circle … extends to the boundary of whatever polity one is acting in—if not
further” (Schudson 2006, 203). Like the goal of any worthy classroom and curriculum, politics extends the individual and implies an arena of some potential discomfort—tension, contest, conflict, issues of consequence—and gives causes for reflection and self reflection (Schudson 2006, 2003). There are forces pulling in the opposite direction away from the comforts (to use a Tocquevillian idea) we seek in consuming: environmental concerns and the related regulation of the health and safety issues surrounding consumer products (now globally produced in neoliberal fashion) are deeply conflating the boundaries between the comforts of consumption and politics (Schudson 2006, 203). There are similar tensions within democratic politics. Wolin insists that democracy is not about “deference to a formal principle of popular sovereignty,” but rather the “experiences of justice and injustice … as moments for the demos to think, to reflect, [and] to construct themselves as actors” (1996b, 98). The task here, as ever, has been the more modest one: not to theorize democracy or the relationship between political concepts such as power and authority, but rather to pragmatically use democratic theories to make a substantive argument against a neoliberal practice in the heart of one of our most important cultural and educative institutions. There is a long and vigorous critical tradition of analysis to draw upon in this task of responding to real concerns about real neoliberal practices. And it is worth reminding ourselves again that these institutions are under local, democratic control. The paradigmatic practice remains at issue, and threatens to be extended and even instantiated in constitutional law. This thesis has

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17 Beck’s theorization of risk society (2004; 2001) and Appadurai’s theorization of global flows of capital, people, and culture (2002; 1998) both arrive at conclusions similar to Schudson, but in a more comprehensive global context.
shown that marking the limits of advertising (and neoliberalism generally) in our classrooms is a worthwhile political goal in terms of the resources a democratic society and polity depend upon, and that it is a project that is defensible in theoretical terms.
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