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**The Corporate War Against Higher Education**

The innate feature of the university is that not only does it examine, it also produces power-laden and value-ridden discourse. ...In any case, it becomes incumbent upon us as citizens/scholars in the university to accept the consequences of our own value-redolent roles. Like it or not, we are paradigms of our own values, advertisements of our own ethics—especially noticeable when we presume to foster ethics-free, value-lite education....What are we personally willing to sacrifice, give up for the 'public good'? What gestures of reparations are we personally willing to make? What risky, unfashionable research are we willing to undertake?

—Toni Morrison

What I defend above all is the possibility and the necessity of the critical intellectual....There is no genuine democracy without genuine opposing critical powers.

—Pierre Bourdieu

Neoliberalism has become the most dangerous ideology of the current historical moment. Not only does it assault all things public, sabotage the basic contradiction between democratic values and market fundamentalism, it also weakens any viable notion of political agency by offering no language capable of connecting private considerations to public issues. Market forces have altered radically the language we use in both representing and evaluating human behavior and action. One consequence is that civic discourse has given way to the language of commercialism, privatization, and deregulation. In addition, individual and social agency are defined largely through market-driven notions of individualism, competition, and consumption. As such, the individual choices we make as consumers become increasingly difficult to differentiate from the "collective choices we make as citizens." Under such circumstances, citizens lose their public voice as market liberties replace civic freedoms and society increasingly depends on "consumers to do the work of citizens." Similarly, as corporate culture extends even deeper into the basic institutions of civil and political society, there is a simultaneous diminishing of non-commodified public spheres—those institutions engaged in dialogue, education, and learning—that address the relationship of the self to public life, social responsibility to the broader demands of citizenship, and provide a robust vehicle for public participation and democratic citizenship. Without these critical public spheres corporate power goes unchecked and politics becomes dull, cynical, and oppressive.

But more importantly, in the absence of such public spheres it becomes more difficult for citizens to challenge the neoliberal myth that citizens are merely consumers and that "wholly unregulated markets are the sole means by which we can produce and distribute everything we care about, from durable goods to spiritual values, from capital development to social justice, from profitability to sustainable environments, from private wealth to essential commonweal." As democratic values give way to commercial values, intellectual ambitions are often reduced to an instrument of the entrepreneurial self,
and social visions are dismissed as hopelessly out of date. Public space is portrayed exclusively as an investment opportunity, and the public good increasingly becomes a metaphor for public disorder. Within this discourse, anyone who does not believe that rapacious capitalism is the only road to freedom and the good life is dismissed as either a crank or worse.

Within this market-driven discourse, corporate culture becomes both the model for the good life and the paradigmatic sphere for defining individual success and fulfillment. I use the term corporate culture to refer to an ensemble of ideological and institutional forces that functions politically and pedagogically to both govern organizational life through senior managerial control and to produce compliant workers, depoliticized consumers, and passive citizens. Within the language and images of corporate culture, citizenship is portrayed as an utterly privatized affair whose aim is to produce competitive self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain. Reformulating social issues as strictly individual or economic issues, corporate culture functions largely to cancel out the democratic impulses and practices of civil society by either devaluing them or absorbing such impulses within a market logic. No longer a space for political struggle, culture in the corporate model becomes an all-encompassing horizon for producing market identities, values, and practices. The good life, in this discourse, "is construed in terms of our identities as consumers—we are what we buy." Public spheres are replaced by commercial spheres as the substance of critical democracy is emptied out and replaced by a democracy of goods, consumer life styles, shopping malls, and the increasing expansion of the cultural and political power of corporations throughout the world.

Accountable only to the bottom-line of profitability, corporate culture and its growing influence in American life has signaled a radical shift in both the notion of public culture and what constitutes the meaning of citizenship and the defense of the public good. For example, the rapid resurgence of corporate power in the last twenty years and the attendant reorientation of culture to the demands of commerce and regulation have substituted the language of personal responsibility and private initiative for the discourses of social responsibility and public service. This can be seen in government policies designed to dismantle state protections for the poor, the environment, working people, and people of color. For example, the 1996 welfare law signed by President Clinton reduces food stamp assistance for millions of children in working families and a study enacted shortly afterwards by the Urban Institute showed that the bill would "move 6 million people, including 1 million children into poverty." Other examples include President Bush's passing of a punitive welfare reform bill that requires poor, young mothers to work a forty-hour week, without the benefit of funds for child care as well as the passing of a 2002 budget in which forty times more money went for tax cuts to the wealthy than for education.

As a result of the corporate take-over of public life, the maintenance of democratic public spheres from which to organize the energies of a moral vision loses all relevance. As the power of the state and civil society are reduced in their ability to impose or make corporate power accountable, politics as an expression of democratic struggle is deflated, and it becomes more difficult within the logic of self-help and the bottom-line to address pressing social and moral issues in systemic and political terms. This suggests a dangerous turn in American society, one that both threatens our understanding of democracy as fundamental to our freedom and the ways in which we address the meaning and purpose of public and higher education.

History has been clear about the dangers of unbridled corporate power. The brutal practices of slavery, the exploitation of child labor, the sanctioning of the cruelest working conditions in the mines and sweat shops of America and abroad, and the destruction of the environment have all been fueled by the law of maximizing profits and minimizing costs, especially when there has been no countervailing power from civil society to hold such powers in check. This is not to suggest that capitalism is the enemy of democracy, but that in the absence of vibrant public spheres and the imperatives of a strong democracy, the power of corporate culture when left on its own appears to respect few boundaries based on self-
restraint and those non-commodified, broader human values that are central to a democratic civic culture. John Dewey was right in arguing that democracy requires work, but that work is not synonymous with democracy.\textsuperscript{13}

Struggling for democracy is both a political and educational task. Fundamental to the rise of a vibrant democratic culture is the recognition that education must be treated as a public good—as a crucial site where students gain a public voice and come to grips with their own power as individual and social agents. Public and higher education cannot be viewed merely as sites for commercial investment or for affirming a notion of the private good based exclusively on the fulfillment of individual needs. Reducing higher education to the handmaiden of corporate culture works against the critical social imperative of educating citizens who can sustain and develop inclusive democratic public spheres. There is a long tradition extending from Thomas Jefferson to C. Wright Mills that extols the importance of education as essential for a democratic public life. This legacy of public discourse appears to have faded as the American university reinvents itself by giving way to the demands of the marketplace. In the age of money and profit, academic disciplines gain stature almost exclusively through their exchange value on the market, and students now rush to take courses and receive professional credentials that provide them with the cache they need to sell themselves to the highest bidder. As the line between for-profit and not-for-profit institutions of higher education collapse, John Palattela observes that many "schools now serve as personal offices for corporations."\textsuperscript{14} Educational consultants all over America now call upon educational institutions to "advise their clients in the name of efficiency to act like corporations selling products and seek 'market niches' to save themselves," and meet the challenges of the new world order.\textsuperscript{15} Within this corporatized discourse, management models of decision-making align human initiative and learning with business interests, making issues of social responsibility and public accountability irrelevant as the goals of higher education are increasingly fashioned in the language of debits and credits, cost analyses, and the bottom line.\textsuperscript{16} Not surprisingly, students are now referred to as "customers" and "consumers," while faculty are now defined less through their scholarship than through their ability to secure funds and grants from foundations, corporations, and other external sources. Instead of concentrating on critical teaching and research aimed at the public good, faculty are now urged to focus in on corporate largesse. Rather than being esteemed as engaged teachers and rigorous researchers, faculty are now valued as multinational operatives and increasingly reduced to contract employees.\textsuperscript{17}

In what follows, I want to address the fundamental shift in society regarding how we think about the relationship between corporate culture and democracy.\textsuperscript{18} Specifically, I want to argue that one of the most important indications of such a change can be seen in the ways in which we are currently being asked to rethink the role of higher education. Underlying this analysis is the assumption that the struggle to reclaim higher education must be seen as part of a broader battle over the defense of public goods, and that at the heart of such a struggle is the need to challenge the ever growing discourse and influence of neoliberalism, corporate power, and corporate politics. I will conclude by offering some suggestions as to what educators can do to reassert the primacy of higher education as an essential sphere for expanding and deepening the processes of democracy and civil society.

**Incorporating Higher Education**

The current debate over the reform of higher education appears indifferent both to the historic function of American universities and to the broader ideological, economic, and political issues that have shaped it. Against the encroaching demands of a market driven logic, a number of educators have argued forcefully that higher education should be defended as both a public good and as an autonomous sphere for the development of a critical and productive democratic citizenry.\textsuperscript{19} Higher education, for many educators, represents a central site for keeping alive the tension between market values and those values representative of civil society that cannot be measured in narrow commercial terms but are crucial to a substantive democracy. Central to this discourse is the recognition that education must not be confused
with training, suggesting all the more that educators resist allowing commercial values to shape the purpose and mission of higher education. Richard Hofstadter understood the threat that corporate values posed to education and once argued that the best reason for supporting higher education "lies not in the services they perform...but in the values they represent."\textsuperscript{20} For Hofstadter it was the values of justice, freedom, equality, and the rights of citizens as equal and free human beings that were at the heart of what it meant for higher education to fulfill its role in educating students for the demands of leadership, social citizenship, and democratic public life.

The ascendancy of corporate culture in all facets of American life has tended to uproot the legacy of democratic concerns and rights that has historically defined the stated mission of higher education.\textsuperscript{21} Moreover, the growing influence of corporate culture on university life in the United States has served to largely undermine the distinction between higher education and business that educators such as Hofstadter wanted to preserve. As universities become increasingly strapped for money, corporations are more than willing to provide the needed resources, but the costs are troubling and come with strings attached. Corporations increasingly dictate the very research they sponsor and in some universities such as the University of California at Berkeley, business representatives are actually appointed to sit on faculty committees that determine how research funds are to be spent and allocated. Equally disturbing is the emergence of a number of academics who either hold stocks or other financial incentives in the very companies sponsoring their research. As the boundaries between public values and commercial interests become blurred, many academics appear less as disinterested truth seekers than as operatives for corporate interests. But there is more at stake than academics selling out to the highest corporate bidder. In some cases, academic research is compromised and corporations routinely censor research results that are at odds with their commercial interests. For instance, Eyal Press and Jennifer Washburn reported in a recent issue of the \textit{Atlantic Monthly} that "In a 1996 study published in the \textit{Annals of Internal Medicine}, found that 98 percent of papers based on industry-sponsored research reflected favorably on the drugs being examined, as compared with 79 percent of papers based on research not funded by the industry.\textsuperscript{22} Press and Washburn also provide examples of companies that have censored corporate sponsored research papers by removing passages that highlighted unfavorable results or negative outcomes. It gets worse. As large amounts of corporate capital flow into the universities, those areas of study in the university that don't translate into substantial profits get either marginalized, underfunded or eliminated. Hence, we are witnessing both a downsizing in the humanities as well as the increasing refusal on the part of universities to fund research in areas of public health or science which place a high priority on public service, areas largely inhabited by people who can't pay for such services. The new corporate university appears to be indifferent to ideas, forms of learning, and modes of research that do not have any commercial value.

In the name of efficiency, educational consultants all over America advise their clients to act like corporations selling products and seek 'market niches' to save themselves. Within this corporatized regime management models of decision-making replace faculty governance. Once constrained by the concept of "shared" governance in the past decade administrations have taken more power and reduced faculty-controlled governance institutions to advisory status. Given the narrow nature of corporate concerns, it is not surprising that when matters of accountability become part of the language of school reform, they are divorced from broader considerations of social responsibility. As corporate culture and values shape university life, corporate planning replaces social planning, management becomes a substitute for leadership, and the private domain of individual achievement replaces the discourse of public politics and social responsibility. As the power of higher education is reduced in its ability to make corporate power accountable, it becomes more difficult within the logic of the bottom-line for faculty, students, and administrators to address pressing social and ethical issues.\textsuperscript{23} This suggests a dangerous turn in American society, one that threatens both our understanding of democracy as fundamental to our basic rights and freedoms, and the ways in which we can rethink and re-appropriate the meaning and purpose of higher education.
Education and the Rise of the Corporate Manager

Katherine S. Mangan reported not too long ago in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that there are a growing number of presidential searches "looking for leaders who can bridge business and academe." According to Mangan, this has resulted in a large number of business-school deans being offered jobs as college or university presidents. The rationale for such actions appears to be that "Business deans are often in a strong position to cultivate corporate contacts,...[and are] better at translating the academic environment to the outside world." Mangan's article makes clear that what was once part of the hidden curriculum of higher education—the creeping vocationalization and subordination of learning to the dictates of the market—has become an open and defining principle of education at all levels of learning.

According to Stanley Aronowitz, many colleges and universities are experiencing financial hard times brought on by the end of the cold war and the dwindling of government financed defense projects coupled with a sharp reduction of state aid to higher education. As a result, they are all too happy to allow corporate leaders to run their institutions, form business partnerships, establish cushy relationships with business oriented legislators, and develop curricula programs tailored to the needs of corporate interests. Stories predominate in the national press about the changing face of leadership in higher education as more and more schools turn away from hiring scholars to fill administrative positions and rely instead on business leaders who can assume the role of innovative budget cutters. One example includes the hiring of John A. Fry, a former business consultant who never worked for a university, as an executive vice president at the University of Pennsylvania. According to one report, Fry "embodies the new, corporatized Penn: tactical, innovative, not tied to tradition, and with an ever-sharp pencil." Fry has instituted reviews of all services at Penn in order to determine which ones can be outsourced to the private sector. Thus far, he has saved the university over $50 million dollars while eliminating over 500 jobs, many of them among employees who have been with the University of Pennsylvania for decades. Fry's response to the plight of such workers is instructive. He claims that under his corporatized model, with its threat to traditional forms of job security, employees are now more efficient. He claims "They are taking less for granted in terms of their employment status....I feel we do the institution a disservice if we all allow inefficiency to perpetuate because we don't want to rock the boat, or we don't want to deprive these poor people who have been working here for five decades from their jobs. I don't consider it cold-hearted, I consider it an absolute responsibility." Fry frames the issue of responsibility exclusively with the logic of the market and, as one University of Penn faculty member put it, he seems entirely indifferent to the traditional role of higher education as a "humanizing force in society, where the value of people is always a priority." The effect of the new leadership at Penn is disheartening. Elsa R. Ramsden, the chairman of the Penn chapter of the American Association of University Professors, reports that many faculty are disheartened by the new leadership, and they have retreated to their classrooms, unwilling to get involved in the political process because they fear losing their jobs, not getting tenure, or having their salaries frozen. Fry's single-minded devotion to management driven efficiency appears to legitimate such fears. According to Fry, "I tend to be very impatient. Sometimes that serves us well, sometimes not. I have a foot-on-the-gas mentality. I don't always want to listen to reasons. I just want to get results." Fry's vocabulary reveals the exhaustion of critical thought as a defining feature of corporate culture, especially as it is applied to public spheres that serve a broader conception of public service and citizenship. The notion that higher education should be defended as centers of critical scholarship, social responsibility, and enlightened teaching in order to expand the scope of freedom and democracy appears irrelevant if not dangerous in this discourse.

The vocationalizing of the university has many consequences. In some cases, it has meant that universities such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of California at Irvine have cut deals with corporations by offering to do product research and cede to their corporate backers the patents for such inventions and discoveries in return for ample research money. Further evidence of the vocationalization of higher education can be found in the increasing willingness on the part of legislators,
government representatives, and school officials to rely on corporate leaders to establish the terms of the debate in the media regarding the meaning and purpose of higher education. Bill Gates, Jack Welch, Warren Buffet, and other members of the Fortune 500 "club" are now viewed as educational prophets.

And, yet, the only qualifications they seem to have is that they have been successful in accumulating huge amounts of profits for themselves and their shareholders, while at the same time laying off thousands of workers in order to cut costs and raise profits. While Gates, Milken, and others couch their concerns about education in the rhetoric of public service, corporate organizations such as the Committee for Economic Development, an organization of about 250 corporations, have been more blunt about their interest in education. Not only has the group argued that social goals and services get in the way of learning basic skills, but that many employers in the business community feel dissatisfied because "a large majority of their new hires lack adequate writing and problem-solving skills."

Given the narrow nature of corporate concerns, it is not surprising that when matters of accountability become part of the language of school reform, they are divorced from broader considerations of ethics, equity, and justice. This type of corporate discourse not only lacks a vision beyond its own pragmatic interests, it also lacks a self-critical inventory about its own ideology and its effects on society. But, of course, one would not expect such concerns to emerge within corporations where questions of consequence begin and end with the bottom line. Questions about the effects of downsizing, deindustrialization, and the "trend toward more low-paid, temporary, benefit-free, blue- and white-collar jobs and fewer decent permanent factory and office jobs" caused by the reforms implemented by companies such as IBM must come from those democratic arenas that business seeks to 'restructure'.

Mega-corporations will say nothing about their profound role in promoting the flight of capital abroad, the widening gap between intellectual, technical, and manual labor and the growing class of permanently underemployed in a mass of 'deskilled' jobs, the growing inequality between the rich and the poor, or the scandalous use of child labor in third world countries. The onus of responsibility is placed on educated citizens to recognize that corporate principles of efficiency, accountability, and profit maximization have not created new jobs but in most cases have eliminated them. My point, of course, is that such absences in public discourse constitute a defining principal of corporate ideology, which refuses to address—and must be made to address—the scarcity of moral vision that inspires such calls for school reform modeled after corporate reforms implemented in the last decade.

But the modeling of higher education after corporate principles and the partnerships they create with the business community do more than reorient the purpose and meaning of higher education, such reforms also instrumentalize the curricula and narrow what it means to extend knowledge to broader social concerns. Business-university partnerships provide just one concrete example of the willingness of both educators and corporate executives to acknowledge the effects such mergers have on the production and dissemination of knowledge in the interest of the public good. Lost in the willingness of schools such as MIT to sell part of their curricula to the corporations is the ethical consequence of ignoring basic science research that benefits humanity as a whole because such research offers little as a profit maximizing venture. Ralph Nader indicated a few years ago in a nationally broadcast speech on C-Span that one result of such transactions is that the universities are doing far too little to develop anti-malaria and tuberculosis vaccines at a time when these diseases are once again killing large numbers of people in third world countries; such interventions are viewed as non-profitable investments. Research guided only by the controlling yardstick of profit undermines the role of the university as a public sphere dedicated to addressing the most serious social problems a society faces. Moreover, the corporate model of research instrumentalizes knowledge and undermines forms of theorizing, pedagogy, and meaning that define higher education as a public good rather than as a private good.

Missing from much of the corporate discourse on schooling is any analysis of how power works in shaping knowledge, how the teaching of broader social values provide safeguards against turning citizen skills into simply training skills for the work place, or how schooling can help students reconcile the
seemingly opposing needs of freedom and solidarity in order to forge a new conception of civic courage and democratic public life. Knowledge as capital in the corporate model is privileged as a form of investment in the economy, but appears to have little value when linked to the power of self-definition, social responsibility, or the capacities of individuals to expand the scope of freedom, justice, and the operations of democracy. Knowledge stripped of ethical and political considerations offers limited, if any, insights into how schools should educate students to push against the oppressive boundaries of gender, class, race, and age domination. Nor does such a language provide the pedagogical conditions for students to critically engage knowledge as an ideology deeply implicated in issues and struggles concerning the production of identities, culture, power, and history. Education is a moral and political practice and always presupposes an introduction to and preparation for particular forms of social life, a particular rendering of what community is, and what the future might hold.

If pedagogy is, in part, about the production of identities then curricula modeled after corporate culture have been enormously successful in preparing students for low skilled, service work in a society that has little to offer in the way of meaningful employment for the vast majority of its graduates. If CEO's are going to provide some insight into how education should be reformed, they will have to reverse their tendency to collapse the boundaries between corporate culture and civic culture, between a society that defines itself through the interests of corporate power and one that defines itself through more democratic considerations regarding what constitutes substantive citizenship and social responsibility. Moreover, they will have to recognize that the problems with American schools cannot be reduced to matters of accountability or cost-effectiveness. Nor can the solution to such problems be reduced to the spheres of management and economics. The problems of higher education must be addressed in the realms of values and politics, while engaging critically the most fundamental beliefs Americans have as a nation regarding the meaning and purpose of education and its relationship to democracy.

**Corporate Culture's Threat to Faculty and Students**

As universities increasingly model themselves after corporations, it becomes crucial to understand how the principles of corporate culture intersect with the meaning and purpose of the university, the role of knowledge production for the twenty-first century, and the social practices inscribed within teacher-student relationships. The signs are not encouraging.

In many ways, the cost accounting principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control of the corporate order have restructured the meaning and purpose of education. As I have mentioned previously, many university presidents are now given the title of CEO, academic programs are streamlined to cut costs, and in many colleges new presidents are actively pursuing ways to establish closer ties between their respective colleges and the business community. For example, *The New York Times* reports, in what has become a typical story, that at George Mason University, a business oriented president has emphasized technology training in order to "boost the university's financing (by the state legislature) by as much as $25 million a year, provided that George Mason cultivates stronger ties with northern Virginia's booming technology industry."

In other quarters of higher education, the results of the emergence of the corporate university appear even more ominous. James Carlin, a multimillionaire and successful insurance executive who until recently served as the Chairman of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, gave a speech to the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. In a statement that belies his ignorance of the recent history and critical mission of higher education, Carlin argued that colleges need to be downsized just as businesses have in the past decade, tenure should be abolished, and faculty have too much power in shaping decisions in the university. Carlin's conclusion: "At least 50 percent of all non-hard sciences research on American campuses is a lot of foolishness" and should be banned. Pointing to the rising costs of higher education, he further predicted that "there's going to be a revolution in higher education. Whether you like it or not, it's going to be broken apart and put back together differently. It won't be the same. Why should it be? Why should everything change except for higher education?" Carlin's
"revolution" has been spelled out in his call for increasing the work load of professors to four three-credit courses a semester, effectively reducing the time such educators might have in doing research or shaping institutional power.

There is more at stake in university reform than the realities and harsh principles of cost cutting. Corporate culture in its reincarnation in the 1980s and 1990s appears to have little patience with non-commodified knowledge or with the more lofty ideals that have defined higher education as a public service. Carlin's anti-intellectualism and animosity toward educators and students alike signal that as higher education comes under the influence of corporate ideologies, universities will be largely refashioned in the image of the new multi-conglomerate landscape. One consequence will be an attempt to curtail academic freedom and tenure. As one business oriented administrator admitted in a conversation about tenure to Bill Tierney, "We have to focus on the priorities of the...school and not the individual. We must industrialize the school, and tenure—academic freedom—isn't part of that model."40 Missing from this model of leadership is the recognition that academic freedom implies that knowledge has a critical function, that intellectual inquiry that is unpopular and critical should be safeguarded and treated as an important social asset, and that public intellectuals are more than merely functionaries of the corporate order. Such ideals are at odds with the vocational function that corporate culture wants to assign to higher education.

While the appeal to downsizing higher education appears to have caught the public's imagination at the moment, it belies the fact that such "reorganization" has been going on for some time. In fact, more professors are working part-time and at two-year community colleges than at any other time in the country's recent history. A report recently put out by the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty recently pointed out that "in 1998-1999, less than one-third of all faculty members were tenured....[and that] in 1992-1993, 40 percent of the faculty was classified as part-time and in 1998-99, the share had risen to 45 percent."41 Creating a permanent underclass of part-time professional workers in higher education is not only demoralizing and exploitative for many faculty who inhabit such jobs, but such policies increasingly deskill both partial and full-time faculty by increasing the amount of work they have to do, while simultaneously shifting power away from the faculty to the managerial sectors of the university.

The turn to downsizing and deskilling faculty is also exacerbated by the attempts on the part of many universities to expand into the profitable market of distance education. Such a market is all the more lucrative since it is being underwritten by the combined armed services, which in August of 2000 pledged almost $1 billion to "provide taxpayer-subsidized university- based distance education for active-duty personnel and their families."42 David Noble has written extensively on the restructuring of higher education under the imperatives of the new digital technologies and the move into distance education and the news is not good. According to Noble, on-line learning largely functions through pedagogical models and methods of delivery that not only rely on standardized, pre-packaged curriculum and methodological efficiency, they also reinforce the commercial penchant towards training and depersonalization. The marriage of corporate culture, higher education, and the new high-speed technologies also offers universities big opportunities to cut back on maintenance costs, eliminate entire buildings such as libraries and classrooms, and gain further control over what educators teach by appropriating property rights to courses for a small fee, while removing faculty members from any control over how their courses might be used. With the deskilling of the professoriate there will be a rise in the use of part-time faculty, who will be "perfectly suited to the investor-imagined university of the future."43 Reporting on the coming restructuring of the university around online and distance education, The Chronicle of Higher Education claims that this new type of education will produce a new breed of faculty, "who hails not from academia but from the corporate world." Hired more for their "business savvy than their degree, a focus on the bottom line is normal; tenure isn't." This alleged celebration of faculty as social entrepreneurs appears to offer no apologies for turning education into a commercial enterprise and teaching into a sales pitch for profits. As one enthusiastic distance educator put it for the Chronicle, "I love not only the teaching but the selling of it."44
Held up to the profit standard, universities and colleges will increasingly calibrate supply to demand, and the results look ominous with regard to what forms of knowledge, pedagogy, and research will be rewarded and legitimated. In addition, it appears that populations marked by class and racial subordination will have less access to higher education. As globalization and corporate mergers increase, technologies develop, and cost effective practices expand, there will be fewer jobs for certain professionals resulting in the inevitable elevation of admission standards, restriction of student loans, and the reduction of student access to higher education. Stanley Aronowitz argues that the changing nature of intellectual labor, knowledge production, and the emerging glut of professionals on a global scale undermine mass education as the answer to the growing underemployment of the professional classes. He writes:

Although the media hypes that millions of new jobs require specialized, advanced knowledge and credentials, the bare truth is that technological change, globalization, and relatively slow growth have reduced the demand for certain professionals....And despite the boom of the middle 1990s, chronic shortages of physicians, accountants and attorneys have all but disappeared. In fact, the globalization of intellectual labor is beginning to affect knowledge industries, with Indian and Chinese engineers and computer designers performing work that was once almost exclusively done in North America and western Europe. And do nonscientists really need credentials signifying they have completed a prescribed program to perform most intellectual labor? If jobs are the intended outcome of a credential, there are few arguments for mass higher education.  

Fewer jobs in higher education means fewer students will be enrolled or have access, but it also means that the processes of vocationalization—fueled by corporate values that mimic "flexibility," "competition," or "lean production" and rationalized through the application of accounting principles—poses the threat of gutting many academic departments and programs that cannot translate their subject matter into commercial gains. Programs and courses that focus on areas such as critical theory, literature, feminism, ethics, environmentalism, post-colonialism, philosophy, and sociology suggest an intellectual cosmopolitanism or a concern with social issues that will be either eliminated or technicized because their role in the market will be judged as ornamental. Similarly, those working conditions that allow professors and graduate assistants to comment extensively on student work, provide small seminars for classes, spend time with student advising, conduct independent studies, and do collaborative research with both faculty colleagues and students do not appear consistent with the imperatives of downsizing, efficiency, and cost-accounting. Students will also bear the burden of privatization as higher education joins hands with the corporate banking world. Lacking adequate financial aid, students, especially poor students, will increasingly finance the high costs of their education through private corporations such as Citibank, Chase Manhattan, Marine Midland, and other sanctioned lenders. Given the huge debt such students accumulate, it is reasonable to assume, as Jeff Williams points out, such loans will "effectively indenture students for ten to twenty years after graduation and intractably reduce their career choices, funneling them into the corporate workforce in order to pay their loans." Of course, for many young people marginalized by class and color, the potential costs of higher education will dissuade them from it regardless of its status or availability.

**Higher Education as a Democratic Public Sphere**

I want to return to an issue I had raised in the beginning of this article in which I argued that corporations have been given too much power in this society, and hence the need for educators and others to address the threat this poses to all facets of public life organized around the non-commodified principles of justice, freedom, and equality. Against the current onslaught to vocationalize higher education, educators need to defend higher education as a resource vital to the democratic and civic life of the nation. Central to such a task is the challenge to resist what Bill Readings has called a consumer-oriented corporation more concerned about accounting than accountability. The crisis of higher education needs to be analyzed in terms of wider configurations of economic, political, and social forces that exacerbate tensions between
those who value such institutions as public goods and those advocates of neoliberalism who see market culture as a master design for all human affairs. Educators must challenge all attempts on the part of conservatives and liberals to either define democracy exclusively as a liability or to enervate its substantive ideals by reducing it to the imperatives of hyper-capitalism and the glorification of financial markets. Moreover, as Jeff Williams points out, educators must distinguish the university as a not-for-profit institution, which serves a public interest, from for-profit organizations, which by definition serve private interests and often conflict with public interests.... [while at the same time proposing] new images or fictions of the university, to reclaim the ground of the public interest, and to promote a higher education operating in that public interest.\textsuperscript{49}

Challenging the encroachment of corporate power is essential if democracy is to remain a defining principle of education and everyday life. Part of such a challenge necessitates that educators and others create organizations capable of mobilizing civic dialogue, provide an alternative conception of the meaning and purpose of higher education, and develop political organizations that can influence legislation to challenge corporate power's ascendancy over the institutions and mechanisms of civil society. Such a project suggests that educators, students, and others will have to provide the rationale and mobilize the possibility for creating enclaves of resistance, new public cultures for collective development, and institutional spaces that highlight, nourish, and evaluate the tension between civil society and corporate power while simultaneously struggling to prioritize citizen rights over consumer rights.

In strategic terms, revitalizing public dialogue suggests that educators need to take seriously the importance of defending higher education as an institution of civic culture whose purpose is to educate students for active and critical citizenship.\textsuperscript{50} Situated within a broader context of issues concerned with social responsibility, politics, and the dignity of human life, higher education should be defended as a site that offers students the opportunity to involve themselves in the deepest problems of society, to acquire the knowledge, skills, and ethical vocabulary necessary for what Vaclav Havel calls "the richest possible participation in public life."\textsuperscript{51} This points to defending higher education as a democratic public sphere whose purpose is to help students to come to terms with their own sense of power and public voice as individual and social agents by enabling them to examine and frame critically what they learn in the classroom "within a more political or social or intellectual understanding of what's going on" in the interface between their lives and the world at large.\textsuperscript{52}

But such protests cannot be limited to either the sphere of higher educators or to faculty and students. Educators, parents, legislators, students, and social activists from a variety of sites need to come together to defend institutions of higher education as indispensable to the life of the nation because they are one of the few public spaces left where students can learn the power of and engage in the experience of democracy. In the face of corporate takeovers, the ongoing commodification of the curriculum, and the transformation of students into consumers, such a project requires that educators mount a collective struggle to reassert the crucial importance of higher education in offering students the skills they need for learning how to govern and take risks, while developing the knowledge necessary for deliberation, reasoned arguments, and social action. At issue here is providing students with an education that allows them to recognize the dream and promise of a substantive democracy, particularly the idea that as citizens they are "entitled to public services, decent housing, safety, security, support during hard times, and most importantly, some power over decision making."\textsuperscript{53}

But more is needed than defending higher education as a vital sphere in which to develop and nourish the proper balance between democratic values and market fundamentalism, between identities founded on democratic principles and identities steeped in forms of competitive, self-interested individualism that celebrate their own material and ideological advantages. Given the current assault on critical educators in
light of the tragic events of September 11th, it is politically crucial that educators at all levels of involvement in the academy be defended as public intellectuals who provide an indispensable service to the nation. Such an appeal cannot be made in the name of professionalism but in terms of the civic duty such intellectuals provide. Too many academics have retreated into narrow specialisms that serve largely to consolidate authority rather than critique its abuses. Refusing to take positions on controversial issues or to examine the role of intellectuals in lessening human suffering, such academics become models of moral indifference and unfortunate examples of what it means to disconnect learning from public life. On the other hand, many left and liberal academics have retreated into arcane discourses that offer them mostly the safe ground of the professional recluse. Making almost no connections to audiences outside of the academy or to the issues that bear on their lives, such academics have become largely irrelevant. This is not to suggest that they do not publish or speak at symposiums but that they often do so to very limited audiences and in a language that is often overly abstract, highly aestheticized, rarely takes an overt political position, and seems largely indifferent to broader public issues. Engaged intellectuals such as Noam Chomsky, Edward Said and Pierre Bourdieu suggest a different and more committed role for academics. They suggest that academics should engage in ongoing forms of permanent critique of all abuses of power or authority, "to enter into sustained and vigorous exchange with the outside world," as part of a larger project of helping "to create the social conditions for the collective production of realist utopias."54 Following Bourdieu and others, I believe that intellectuals who inhabit our nation's universities should represent the conscience of a society not only because they shape the conditions under which future generations learn about themselves and their relations to others and the outside world, but also because they engage pedagogical practices that are by their very nature moral and political, rather than simply technical. And at its best, such pedagogy bears witness to the ethical and political dilemmas that animate the broader social landscape. Such pedagogical approaches are important because they provide spaces that are both comforting and unsettling, spaces that both disturb and enlighten. Pedagogy in this instance not only works to shift how students think about the issues affecting their lives and the world at large, but potentially energizes them to seize such moments as possibilities for acting on the world, engaging it as a matter of politics, power, and social justice. The appeal here is not merely ethical, it is also an appeal that addresses the materiality of resources, access, and politics, while viewing power as generative and crucial to any viable notion of individual and social agency.

Organizing against the corporate takeover of higher education also suggests fighting to protect the jobs of full-time faculty, turning adjunct jobs into full-time positions, expanding benefits to part-time workers, and putting power into the hands of faculty and students. Moreover, such a struggle must address the exploitative conditions many graduate students work under, constituting a de facto army of service workers who are underpaid, overworked, and shorn of any real power or benefits.55 Similarly, programs in many universities that offer remedial programs, affirmative action, and other crucial pedagogical resources are under massive assault, often by conservative trustees who want to eliminate from the university any attempt to address the deep inequities in the society, while simultaneously denying a decent education to minorities of color and class. Hence, both teachers and students increasingly bear the burden of overcrowded classes, limited resources, and hostile legislators. Such educators and students need to join with community people, and social movements around a common platform that resists the corporatizing of schools, the roll back in basic services, and the exploitation of teaching assistants and adjunct faculty.

In the face of the growing corporatization of schools, educators should organize to establish a bill of rights identifying and outlining the range of non-commercial relations that can be used to mediate between the higher education and the business world. If the forces of corporate culture are to be challenged, progressive educators must also enlist the help of diverse communities, local and federal government, and other political forces to ensure that public institutions of higher learning are adequately funded so that they will not have to rely on corporate sponsorship and advertising revenues. How our colleges and universities educate youth for the future will determine the meaning and substance of democracy itself. Such a responsibility necessitates prioritizing democratic community, citizen rights, and the public good over market relations, narrow consumer demands, and corporate interests.
The corporatizing of United States education reflects a crisis of vision regarding the meaning and purpose of democracy at a time when "market cultures, market moralities, market mentalities [are] shattering community, eroding civic society, [and] undermining the nurturing system for children." Yet such a crisis also represents a unique opportunity for educators to expand and deepen the meaning of democracy—radically defined as a struggle to combine the distribution of wealth, income, and knowledge with a recognition and positive valorizing of cultural diversity—by reasserting the primacy of politics, power, and struggle as a pedagogical task. Jacques Derrida has suggested in another context that the social function of intellectuals as well as any viable notion of education should be grounded in a vibrant politics, which makes the promise of democracy a matter of concrete urgency. For Derrida, making visible a "democracy" which is to come as opposed to that which presents itself in its name provides a referent for both criticizing everywhere what parades as democracy—"the current state of all so-called democracy"—and critically assessing the conditions and possibilities for democratic transformation. Derrida sees the promise of democracy as the proper articulation of a political ethics and by implication suggests that when higher education is engaged and articulated through the project of democratic social transformation it can function as a vital public sphere for critical learning, ethical deliberation, and civic engagement. Under such circumstances, the meaning and purpose of higher education redefines the relationship between knowledge and power, on the one hand, and learning and social change on the other. In doing so, higher education represents the possibility of retaining one important democratic public sphere that offers the conditions for resisting the increasing depoliticization of the citizenry, provides a language to challenge the politics of accommodation that connects education to the logic of privatization, refuses to define students as simply consuming subjects, and actively opposes the view of teaching as market-driven practice and learning as a form of training. At stake is not simply the future of higher education, but the nature of critical democracy itself. Toni Morrison understands something about the fragile nature of the relationship between higher education and democratic public life and she rightly suggests given the urgency of the times the necessity for all members of academia to rethink the meaning and purpose of higher education. She writes:

If the university does not take seriously and rigorously its role as a guardian of wider civic freedoms, as interrogator of more and more complex ethical problems, as servant and preserver of deeper democratic practices, then some other regime or menage of regimes will do it for us, in spite of us, and without us.

Both Derrida and Morrison recognize that the present crisis represents a historical opportunity to refuse the commonsense assumption that democracy is synonymous with capitalism and critical citizenship is limited to being a literate consumer. It is in the spirit of such a critique and act of resistance that educators need to break with the "new faith in the historical inevitability professed by the theorists of [neo]liberalism [in order] to invent new forms of collective political work capable of confronting the march of corporate power." This will not be an easy task, but it is a necessary one if democracy is to be won back from the reign of financial markets and the Darwinian values of an unbridled capitalism. Academics can contribute to such a struggle by, among other things, defending higher education for the contribution it makes to the quality of public life, fighting for the crucial role it plays pedagogically in asserting the primacy of democratic values over commercial interests, and struggling collectively to preserve its political responsibility in providing students with the capacities they need for civic courage and engaged critical citizenship.

Notes

4. These ideas are taken from Benjamin R. Barber, "Blood Brothers, Consumers, or Citizens? Three


7. The classic dominant texts on corporate culture are Terrance Deal and Alan Kennedy, *Corporate Culture: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1982) and Thomas Peterson and Robert Waterman, *In Search of Excellence* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982). I also want to point out that corporate culture is a dynamic, ever changing force. But in spite of its innovations and changes, it rarely if ever challenges the centrality of the profit motive, or fails to prioritize commercial considerations over a set of values that would call the class based system of capitalism into question. For a brilliant discussion of the changing nature of corporate culture in light of the cultural revolution of the 1960s, see Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

8. Gary Becker captures this sentiment in his book, *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*. He argues "we not only ought to think and act as self-interested agents, but we are already acting (if not yet thinking) in precisely those ways. We are each of us self-interested calculators of our own advantage, however much we might wish to hide that fact from others and even (or perhaps especially) from ourselves." Cited in Terrance Ball, *Ibid.*, p. 78.


17. The percentage of part-time faculty in higher education continues to grow from 33% in 1987 to 43% in 1998. Moreover, 53% of such institutions offered no benefits to part-time faculty. See Mary Beth Marklein, "Part-time instructors march for better pay," *USA Today* (October 30, 2001), p. 11D.


Routledge, 2000).
22. Ibid. p. 42.
31. The many books extolling corporate CEOs as a model for leadership in any field is too extensive to cite, but one typical example can be found in Robert Heller, Roads to Success: Put Into Practice the Best Business Ideas of Eight Leading Gurus (New York: Dorling Kindersley, 2001).
32. Catherine S. Manegold, "Study Says Schools Must Stress Academics," The New York Times (Friday, September 23, 1998), p. A22. It is difficult to understand how any school system could have subjected students to such a crude lesson in commercial pedagogy.
44. Cited in Noble, op. cit., p. 31.
46. This issue is taken up in Michael Berube, "Why Inefficiency is Good for Universities," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 27, 1998), p. B4-B5.
57. On this issue, see Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

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