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America Inc.: The Rise and Fall of a Civil Democracy

Keith W. Edmonds

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America Inc. – The Rise and Fall of a Civil Democracy

by

Keith W. Edmonds

(Under the Direction of John Weaver)

ABSTRACT

The field of Curriculum Studies has thoroughly outlined the detrimental effects of corporate ideology on education in terms of curricular mandates, the corporatization of higher education, rampant privatization, and globalization. Educational mandates have created an atmosphere of control in which students are methodically deprived of exploration and creativity through strict adherence to a prescribed curriculum. This results in the de-skilling of teachers and the loss of Self as students are forced to memorize facts based on educational mandates, with teachers having to constantly redirect outlets for creativity in order to “teach to the test.” As a result of this study, it is evident that educational mandates are the first step in preparing children to become the unknowing participants in a consumer culture. In addition to curriculum mandates, children are also controlled by a system that advocates the use of psychiatric diagnoses and subsequent medication as a means to suppress disruptive forms of behavior that are deemed to be abnormal, such as a child’s propensity to play and normal forms of adolescent rebellion. I propose that a culture of defiance is rising out of the attempts to suppress normal behavior as children and adolescents rebel against the system. I also propose that the Self is methodically detached from its creative core and that Object-Relations Theory plays an integral role in understanding the behavior of postmodern consumers.

INDEX WORDS: Education, Curriculum, Ideology, Object-relations

America Inc. – The Rise and Fall of a Civil Democracy

by

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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Dedication

To my two boys: Dylan and Hunter

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I would first like to acknowledge my father for continuously reinforcing the value of education and his words of encouragement during each step of the process. He has been an inspiration in terms of his educational and career achievements as well as his utter tenacity in battling cancer. I would also like to acknowledge my mother and step-father for their support and feedback during this process. The interesting - sometimes boisterous – conversations on political and social issues have certainly challenged my critical thinking skills as well as my temperance (on certain occasions), but most importantly, I have learned the value of proactively engaging the problems we face on both a national and global level. I also wish to acknowledge my committee members for their help during each stage of this process. John Weaver, Marla Morris, Dan Chapman, and Julie Webber have been invaluable in their knowledge of Curriculum Studies and the variety of disciplines that play an integral role in the educational process. Dr. Morris’ seminars on the psychoanalytic facets of curriculum not only challenged my clinical and analytic skills, but also formed the basis for my approach to this dissertation. Finally, this would not be complete without the acknowledgement of my two children, Dylan and Hunter. Their unconditional love and uninhibited playfulness constantly reminds me of the ultimate goal that we face as curriculum theorists, which is to establish a mode of education that allows children to actively engage in education through creative outlets and the natural curiosity that is vital to the development of critical thinking skills.

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PREFACE

According to Freud (2005), “we shall never completely master nature... Our bodily organism, itself a part of that nature, will always remain a transient structure with a limited capacity for adaptation and achievement” (p. 37). As far back as the 1920’s, Freud could clearly see the difficulty of attempts to delineate nature as a product of human intervention, since we are inextricably linked within an intricate chain of interdependent, chaotic, and ubiquitous forces that resist attempts to overcome the natural processes of adaptation. Freud maintains that man’s search for happiness is a hopeless endeavor due to an unhealthy reliance upon artificial constructs - the “regulations” that form the basis for interpersonal relationships by imposing notions of truth, goodness, and posterity (Freud, 2005). These regulations are meant to prevent suffering and elevate society to a level of superiority over the primitive forces of nature, but the irony of progress is the futility of change.

The alleviation of suffering is based upon the false notion that the ability to conquer nature can only result in the perpetuation of happiness, but “when we consider how unsuccessful we have been in precisely this field of prevention of suffering, a suspicion dawns upon us here, too, a piece of unconquerable nature may lie behind - this time a piece of our own psychical constitution” (Freud, 2005, p. 38). Wherever we go, we are always there. Suffering is part of nature, and mankind’s attempts to conquer an entity of which they are a part of only heightens the futility of finding happiness outside oneself. As Freud (1961) notes, “what we call our civilization is largely responsible for our misery, and... we should be much happier if we gave it up and returned to primitive conditions” (p. 8).

Freud's notion of "Civilization and Its Discontents" speaks loudly in the postmodern era, where human beings continue to seek solace beyond the confines of an ideologically defined self, searching for happiness in the techno-gadgets of consumer existence. The defense mechanisms of rationalization and denial protect the ego against the destructive forces of a reality that defines a *brand* of happiness that can only be attained by apt participation in the market. The advances in technology seem to coincide with the intensity of frustration - a feeling of deadness that whales from within. This brings up Freud's (2005) fundamental question: "How is it that so many people have come to take up this strange attitude of hostility to civilization" (p. 38)? Is this a byproduct of ideological blandishment, a collective disengagement from self, or a combination of both? In the current regime of truth (Foucault, 1980), the ability to experience aliveness is intimately connected to the facility of consumer participation, with happiness evolving from the external products of existence that provide momentary relief from an inescapable reality. The formation of relationships is a process that begins early in life as the infant begins to learn the subtle nuances of communication, testing the bounds of environmental stability by projecting emotional impulses onto surrounding objects, with the mother being the main recipient of this intriguing experiment. The infant is testing the bounds of reality by learning the process of "integration," an adaptive growth process that allows the individual to experience all of the feelings associated with aliveness, regardless of the destructivity or actualizing potentialities of competing emotional states (Winnicott, 1986).

According to Klee (2000), "early in life we have little sense of ourselves, or our identity... it is through our relationships with significant people around us that we take in part others (objects) and slowly build a self-structure, which we eventually call a personality" (p. 2). The significance of early experiences is evident as the child begins to grow and mature, interacting with the

environment in ways that repeat early patterns of behavior. As Klee (2000) notes, “the term ‘object-relations’ refers to the self-structure we internalize early in childhood, which functions as a blueprint for establishing and maintaining future relationships” (p. 2). In this respect, object-relations theory has important implications for understanding the ways in which individuals adapt to societal demands, found in an ideology that invokes a methodology for survival that beseeches a certain level of deadness in empathic awareness while initiating an acute perception of gratification in the attainment of outside, material objects. In essence, the ability to engage in satisfactory human relationships, a key to healthy psychological adjustment, is secondary to the individual’s capacity for participation in the postmodern panacea that equates self-actualization to pathological independence. Even when the mother is able to provide “good enough” care in a healthy, facilitating environment (Winnicott, 1986), the formation of object-relations continues throughout the developmental process in accordance with cultural values and ideological tenets which, in our society, elevates the consumption of external commodities as an avenue for reaching the true self - the indelible source of creativity.

The ability to become independent - to become less dependent on the environment by moving away from the absolute sanctity of the mother’s care - is an important designation of a healthy ego, but also constitutes the ability to actively participate in social relationships through a reciprocal process of giving and receiving, without succumbing to the “mental mechanisms” of projection and introjection (Winnicott, 1986). Projection is the process of attributing aspects of self to others, while introjection involves the incorporation of object characteristics as an aspect of one’s personality. According to Winnicott (1986), projection and introjection are processes more important than either object-relating or instinct gratification, and the ability to maintain psychological health begins when the infant begins to function as a unit, as a “complex interchange

between what is inside and what is outside now begins, and continues throughout the individual's life, and constitutes the main relationship of the individual to the world" (p. 72).

Throughout this dissertation, a post-structural interpretation offers an explanation for the production of desire, discursive truths, and the maintenance of hegemony, but the addition of a psychodynamic approach such as object-relations theory delves into the mental mechanisms that allow ideology to penetrate the true self, disabling creative impulses and defending against the Freudian prognosis that reliance upon civilization cannot substitute for knowledge of the psyche. As individuals learn to mediate the complexity of postmodern existence, there is an eventual awareness that reality is an intensely normalizing process in which citizens are defined as consumers, perpetually ensconced in a world that offers happiness through the acquisition of external objects and the unimpeded use of natural resources. Even when the infant is able to receive "good-enough" care, the basis for object-relations in late capitalism is predicated upon a false self that succumbs to a normalizing deadness, a discursive regime that functions within a reality that abhors individual contact with the essence of existence - the true self. Bollas (1987) describes this as "normotic illness," a person who is "abnormally normal... he is inclined to reflect on the thingness of objects, on their material reality, or on 'data' that relates to material phenomena" (p. 136). The normotic is completely void of subjectivity, a character trait that bodes well for the neoliberal moratorium on criticality, as the perpetuation of the "desiring machine" depends on a nation of hopelessly enamored consumers whose preoccupation with the id denies the opportunity for meaningful relationships. Bollas (1987) discusses the faulty introjection process that characterizes normotic illness as "any mental activity that constitutes a transfer of a subjective state of mind into a material external object that results in the de-symbolization of the mental content... if this element is overused, if it is a means toward the evacuation of subjective states of

mind, then the person may be subtly moving towards normotic illness” (p. 136). The normotic is immune to the subjective states of consciousness necessary for empathic awareness, a trait that perpetuates the neoliberal ideology by disconnecting self from the destructiveness of unbridled consumption. A nation of normotics bodes well for an ideology that thrives on the absence of critical thought.

Increasingly, society is defined by a disjointed collection of impersonal beings, searching for meaning in the spaces beyond the confines of self. As Bollas (1987) notes, the normotic is “possessed of an urge to define connectedness through the acquisition of objects, and he measures human worth by means of collections of acquired objects” (p. 138). The images of self projected onto other objects is a normal part of the developmental process, but the fascination with consumer culture has yielded a tenacious hold on the minds of individuals, as the desire to find meaning outside of self leads to the permanent projection of fantasy into material objects, a process that ultimately displaces reality by circumventing the path to the inner core - the center of creativity. The inner image of self becomes vested in a material object that, once obtained, becomes an innocuous introjection incapable of satisfying one’s internal desires. This contrasts with Winnicott’s (1986) version of a healthy individual, in which a “great deal of life has to do with various kinds of object relating, a ‘to and fro’ process between relating to external objects and relating to eternal ones” (p. 31). According to Winnicott (1986):

Health here includes the idea of tingling life and the magic of intimacy. All these things go together and add up to a sense of feeling real and of being, and of the experiences feeding back into the personal psychological reality, enriching it, and giving it scope. The consequence is that the healthy person’s inner world is related to the outer or actual world and yet is personal and capable of aliveness on its own. Introjective

and projective identifications are constantly taking place. (pp. 31)

In American society, adherence to the market discourse disables the capacity for aliveness, causing the projective and introjective identifications to progress from healthy defense mechanisms to inflexible modes of reality. A sense of being is replaced by a normotic excursion into benign materiality, protecting the pathologically-defended self from the touch of human emotion. The normotic is too healthy, immune to the necessary tinges of madness that explode productive lines of flight. Consequently, the citizen-consumer has lost the necessary line of congruence between the true and false self, an integral component in the ability to test the bounds of sanity by exploring new relations with objects. In terms of ideological control, corporate hegemony necessitates the organization of a false self to cope with the alienation of a fragmented society, and to perpetuate cultural adherence to a meaningless existence. According to Winnicott (1986), “society is easily taken in by the false-self organization, and has to pay heavily for this... it merges into the Kleinian concept of a manic defense - where there is depression but this depression is denied, by unconscious processes of course, so that the symptoms of depression appear as their opposites” (p. 33). In order to survive, society becomes a product of the hyper-real images streamed through a multitude of media outlets, a depersonalizing process that depicts human interaction as a volatile proposition, fraught with corruption, violence and greed. It is much safer to place meaning in material objects, and to become intensely sane - normal beyond normalcy. This is the conundrum of postmodern existence, where the liveliness of insanity is replaced by the dullness of truth.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

- *If we admit that human life can be ruled by reason, the possibility of life is destroyed. - Leo Tolstoy*

Reason is the killer of creativity – an endgame to the possibilities of imagination.

In writing this dissertation, the objective is not to simply outline another treatise on corporate abuse, but to show how individuals are methodically trained to be good consumers, void of the necessary insight to think critically about the forms of power that wield control over every facet of existence. In the Freudian tradition, insight is a necessary component for recovery, but in terms of corporate ideology, the ability to critically examine misanthropic policies based on a particularly vicious form of capitalism is to be avoided at all costs. The reduction of social cohesion based upon notions of community development and public good are brought about by policies that conceal the plight of marginalized citizens, who are ultimately deemed unfortunate casualties in a world where the market is the arbiter of freedom. The market mentality creates an atmosphere of indifference, as consumers associate the development of self with the acquisition of the next cell phone, diet plan, or car that will facilitate actualization. The “me generation” is a direct result of savvy marketing plans that promise the fulfillment of desire when in reality, self can only be fulfilled from within. Instead of viewing the universe as one, the egotistical self is consumed with craving for external objects, blissfully unaware that each individual action instills a fallible ripple into the waves of planetary being. Corporate America is riding this wave into oblivion. The danger is that corporations are attempting to manage the planet in the same manner as a computer compiles

statistics or an industry controls its machines (Orr, 1994). As Orr (1994) points out, “what might be managed, however, is us: human desires, economies, policies, and communities... it makes far better sense to reshape ourselves to fit a finite planet than to attempt to reshape the planet to fit our infinite wants” (p. 9). This brings up the important questions that will be the subject of this paper. How does education manage students to become good consumers? What happens to students who resist? What are the psychological manifestations of consumerism? And finally, how can the mechanisms of desire be reduced to the simplicity of being? It is difficult for individuals to see the true nature of destructive forces when they are consumed by insatiable needs – created needs. The nature of corporate ideology creates an endless cycle of needs, always looking to the future for the gratification of a need that doesn’t really exist. Even when the consumer has an unlimited supply of resources, there is always a feeling of dissatisfaction, a yearning for something to fill the void of materialistic existence. When this yearning is replaced by the realization that all forms of life are interconnected and that materialism is a progenitor to a depthless, destructive existence, the power of relationships can begin to replace buying-power as the fundamental distinction of a civil democracy.

This dissertation will further explore the decline of civility by identifying the relationship between corporate ideology and the mass extinction of public space through rampant privatization and an arguably pathological fascination with shopping. We have become a nation of consumers driven by a mechanistic will to achieve material wealth through a decidedly *unconscious* drive that attributes self-actualization to an elusive search for meaning in the attainment of external objects. The purpose of this dissertation is to not only identify the consequences of corporate ideology (critical theorists have done this), but to explore the individual in relation to the mechanisms of control that begin early in life, that insidiously replace the necessity of viable human relationships

with the digitalized necessities of postmodern life. In particular, how does the *self* metamorphose from an uninhibited and curious explorer into a computerized “buying-machine?” What are the mechanisms that defend the *true* self from having any meaningful contact with the outside world? The primary purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the pathological dissonance that occurs between self and its relationship to the faulty objects of desire that characterize America’s relentless drive to acquire material wealth.

Critical theorists such as Giroux, McLaren, and Apple have thoroughly outlined the deleterious effects of neoliberal and neoconservative ideology on society as a whole, post-structural theorists such as Deleuze, Martusewicz, and Serres have showed the importance of deconstructing the “truths” that demarcate constrictive boundaries, while Greene’s existential approach to education empowers students and teachers to address the stultifying routinization of schooling through a constant striving for creativity in the arts and the freedom to choose, regardless of the circumstances. In addition to these theorists, the multidisciplinary field of education is rich with contributions from theorists in the areas of cultural, aesthetic, post-structural, phenomenological, postmodern, and existential studies. While all of these contributions have important implications in our understanding of the problems and possibilities in education, there is a distinct need to analyze the ways in which the concept of *self* is methodically detached from the meaningful contact of human relationships and replaced with the unhealthy attachments of brand-name existence.

To facilitate our understanding of this process, object-relations theory offers a lens through which the self evolves from meaningful contact with early parental attachments toward attachments to objects of desire, significantly impeding our ability to know the *true self – the inner core of being*. According to Klee (2000), “within modern object relations theory, objects can be people (mother, fathers, others) or things, such as transitional objects with which we form attachments...

these objects and the developing child's relationship with them are incorporated into a self, and become the building blocks of the self system" (p. 1). Klee (2000) further notes that during childhood, "we form relationships with our stuffed animals, toys and pets (transitional objects)... [while] later in life, some people form intense and even self-destructive relationships with food and alcohol, as well as with other people" (p. 1). Each successive foray into the escape mechanisms of self-introspection negates opportunities to realize the value of unmediated contact. In the current era known as late capitalism, corporate ideology has a profound effect on the "self-structure that we internalize in early childhood," which functions as "a blueprint for establishing and maintaining future relationships" (Klee, 2000, p. 2). It is this "blueprint" that is the source of pathological attachments to material goods and an ideology that elevates private corporations above public good, and replaces meaningful relationships with a relentless search for unattainable objects. Object relations theory will provide the framework for this study, which seeks to magnify individual awareness of self in relation to a hopelessly materialistic existence.

Always Already Defined

The passive reception of discourse engenders the ideological framework from which definition is derived, reinforcing the societal epistemology that demarcates categories of identity. In the current era known as late capitalism, we know what we know through inculcation to a realm of being that insidiously controls our perception of events, ideas of freedom, and notions of truth. We know what we know through a discourse that defines us, not only through the grand narratives of western literature, but in the effervescent displays of material emptiness found in the consumer-capitalist versions of self, perniciously assigned by savvy marketers remarkably adept at the art of needs creation. Late capitalism marks the transition from a production to a consumer economy where the manufacture of needs has replaced the manufacture of goods, a distinct change from the

productivist capitalism in which the economy prospered by meeting the real needs of real people (Barber, 2007, p. 9). According to Barber (2007), the inequality created by globalization “leaves capitalism with a dilemma: the overproducing capitalist market must either grow or expire.... if the poor cannot be enriched enough to become consumers, then grown-ups in the First World who are currently responsible for 60 percent of the world’s consumption, and with vast disposable income but few needs, will have to be enticed into shopping” (p. 11). This strategy has worked well for corporate America as the creation of needs has become one of the primary determinants of profitability, while at the same time a significant portion of our nation’s citizens are left without a voice in a system that equates civic freedom to market freedom. Public space is a dying entity as corporations turn the platforms for collective critical action into the ecclesiastical “stomping grounds” of free-market fundamentalists. In order to “take back” public space, a discourse of possibility needs to replace the anti-intellectual, pro-consumerist, reductionist ideology that insidiously grasps individual consciousness by derailing the avenues for critical awareness. In late capitalism - as with any other ideological movement – “notions of correctness” are created through discourse in an attempt to frame interpretations consistent with the administration of power, therefore, a reduction in interpretative capabilities will prevent dissent (Petrosky, 1994). According to Petrosky (1994), in terms of performance assessments, there is “a constant tension between the requirement to make assessment decisions and the fact that the performances and their assessment are considered to be acts of interpretation which do not easily accommodate the notion of correctness” (p. 1). In short, the creative force of humanity cannot survive under the dictates of a single truth. We are desperately in need of constant tension.

In order to create a critical voice, there is a need to establish a form of education conducive to critical scholarship, devoid of the incessant noise (mandates, standards, moronic rules) that forces a

brand of knowledge upon impressionistic young minds. To combat the discourse that defines knowledge through stultifying dualities, curriculum theorists have thoroughly exposed the restrictiveness of a standards-based education, built upon an ideological framework that seeks control through the utilization of market forces. Consequently, the basis for individual freedom is posited to exist only through the perpetuation of an unrestricted free-market, where corporate America promotes the execution of constitutional rights as a preponderance of buying power, insidiously removing the venues for political action through widespread privatization of public institutions. Issues of power and control have been written about extensively in curriculum studies, but in addition to discussing the egregious effects of corporate ideology, there is a distinct necessity to analyze the impact of consumerism in relation to the psychological aspect of self. How does individual consciousness succumb to a mode of being that reduces empathic awareness to a pathological dependency on objects of desire? What is contributing to the epidemic in oppositional behavior among our nation's youth? This dissertation will present an analysis of the impact of corporate ideology on every aspect of existence, specifically relating the process through which individuals succumb to the mandates of compliance in terms of physical, social, and psychological assimilation. Throughout this study, I will show how corporate ideology not only impacts the environment, education, and social justice, but define the etiology of the *consumerized* self as it becomes pathologically detached from meaningful contact, quite content to indolently traverse the manufactured world of Madison Avenue.

The initial chapters will discuss the subtle but rapidly progressive ways in which individuals are removed from psychologically vital human relationships through an ideological acculturation to free-market fundamentalism. The progression into the world of consumerism is accomplished by indoctrination to an authoritarian system that includes abject compliance to educational mandates,

the eradication of critical thinking skills, privatization of public space, anti-intellectualism in the University, corporate control of the university, rampant globalization, biased media, and a neoliberal ideology that equates consumer satisfaction to self-actualization. In essence, individuals are “schooled” to be consumers, as knowledge of the inner-self succumbs to the externalities of disconnected images, a cultural fascination with shopping, and pharmaceutical/marketing companies that bombard the airways with sexually active extroverts, remarkably agile seniors, the rapid alleviation of depression, happy outings on the lake, and well-rested insomniacs with curtains blowing in the breeze, all made possible with the simple ingestion of a pill.

In health relationships, a benevolent disposition creates an atmosphere of trust and beneficence, as the propensity toward insurrection is disbanded by the principal of reciprocity. Goodwill begets goodwill, while deception yields contempt. In late capitalism, the drive toward globalization has yielded a reckless disregard for human rights that resulted in a contemptuous attitude toward the Bush administration and America in general. When looking back at the proposed nature of governance, the initial principles of the United States are based on the democratic rights of free speech, equal protection, and the inalienable pursuit of happiness, created for the prosperity of a fledgling republic and designed to ensure a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people” (Lincoln, 1863). Democracy, in its purest form, would be a direct manifestation of the will of the people, devoid of representational politics and the caveats of wisdom that lurk from within the multitude of special interest groups and capitalistically deluded corporations, intently focused on the designation of the public arena as private, profit-producing property. A pure democracy would transparently produce the needs and desires of its inhabitants without the inevitable convolution of ideas as they proceed through the ideological maze of entrapment, ultimately conforming to an agenda that places the power of special interests over the will of the people.

Unfortunately, a pure democracy would also evolve into a Darwinian manifesto dictating the survival of the strongest, where the government eventually succumbs to the popular desires of its citizenry. In this form of government, goodwill means nothing – only the strongest survive.

Ironically, the United States practices a form of government more aptly referred to as a republic, but is ultimately based upon the dysfunctional ideals that characterize the manifestations of a pure democracy. A system of “checks and balances” is an integral part of our governmental framework, designed to provide a self-regulating mechanism that prevents the domination of a particular branch of the federal government, but the allocation of funding is still largely determined by the influx of dollars from special interest groups and the ideological truths that encompasses societal discourse. This particular “regime of truth” (Foucault, 1980) encompasses an ideal that supposedly provides equal opportunity for the citizens of the United States, when in reality the form of capitalism inherent to our pseudo-democratic way of life consistently prioritizes the rights of those who are able to “buy into” the American dream. The balance of justice tips toward the financially secure in terms of access to healthcare, legal defense, quality of education, and adequate living conditions, as the unrestrained forces of capitalism bestow the wrath of inequity to the millions of citizens permanently entrapped in the lower socioeconomic class. The immobility of class structure bodes well for a corporate hierarchy that has become increasingly dependent upon a low-paid service sector, resulting in a consumption economy where the majority of manufacturing jobs have been allocated to third world countries as a means to cut production costs. Consequently, corporations have a vested interest in the creation of dependency among its citizen-consumers, as a large percentage of products are unnecessary for survival but ingeniously marketed as life-enhancing choices that have the potential to satiate the tastes of the American “desiring machines” (Deleuze, 1987). Democratic citizenry has been replaced by free-market fundamentalism, reducing notions of

liberty and community responsibility to an individualized determination motivated by dreams of material success and unbridled hedonism. The id is fully in control. According to Schwartz (2007), “we're increasingly governed by impulse... feeling dominates thinking, me dominates us, now dominates later, egoism dominates altruism, entitlement dominates responsibility, individualism dominates community, and private dominates public” (p. 2). Lost in the maelstrom of relentless advertising campaigns and media-induced hypersensitivity, the average consumer (formerly known as citizen) navigates the capitalistic landscape through an emotionally-laden responsiveness that negates the ability to think rationally about the decisions that ultimately reinforce corporate hegemony. Freedom is a disingenuous illusion granted to those with buying power, as the American brand of democracy equates the satiation of material desire with the glow of patriotic fervor. To question the constitutional freedoms that form a representative democracy is labeled as unpatriotic dissent, a purposefully contrived tactic that quickly silences the voices of reason. Critical thought is the enemy of corporate ideology.

The pervasiveness of corporate power in American society is fueled by the belief that capitalism is the guardian angel of prosperity and freedom, while the remainder of the world remains unduly oppressed to the benefits of unfettered global trade. This doesn't completely discount the advantages of a global economy, but the guiding light of American capitalism is profit, stealthily concealed under the prodigious display of an ideology that preaches the spread of democracy while viewing human beings as pawns in a complex game of financial strategizing. The days of producing goods to meet human needs are long gone, as “producers and marketers of goods and services [now] have to convince those with money to buy them... Viagra and Botox become readily available here while drugs to combat life-threatening malaria and diarrhea are not in developing countries” (Schwartz, 2007, p. 2). The value of human life is measured in dollars, with those

fortunate few who are able to participate in the buying-game safely protected from the painful byproducts of postmodern capitalism, including third-world sweatshops, polluted communities, and rampant poverty.

This study will explore the brand name existence that characterizes late capitalism by identifying corporate ideology and its supporting mechanisms, which include the control of education, global expansion, rampant privatization, a return to traditional values, and an uncanny ability to excel in the production of “desiring machines.” It is not enough to merely identify the forces that create such gross disparities in social and economic conditions, but it is a necessary step in understanding the problems that plague American society. Operating under the guise of democracy and the hidden agenda of conservative ideologues, corporations have been able to justify egregious behavior by pointing to the “invisible hand” of the market as the hallmark of a democratic society. In reality, “most major corporations are anything but democratic... profits are much more important than the lives, hopes, and well-being who have given their working lives to these organizations” (Apple, 2001, p. 18). The impetus for corporate hegemony lies in the ability to convince Americans that privately-run corporations are superior to state government in terms of fiscal responsibility, efficiency, and educational opportunities. In essence, the public forum is depoliticized, resulting in a stronger corporate machine by reducing the avenues by which marginalized citizens can impact governmental decision-making. According to Apple (2001), “efficiency and cost-benefit analysis will be the engines of social and educational analysis, [but] the ultimate effects of such ‘economizing’ and ‘depoliticizing’ strategies is to make it ever harder to interrupt the growing inequalities in resources and power” (p. 44). This study will argue that corporate power so thoroughly dominates the American landscape that social change cannot be understood in the context of a cultural revolution, meaning that the market has replaced the community as the venue

for transmitting problems inherent to consumer existence, effectively denying voice to a large segment of the population. Corporate America silences dissent by immersing individuals in a discourse of consumerism that begins in the early years of school, as children are slowly alienated from self by strict adherence to standardized forms of education, relentless advertising, and unavoidable exposure to a world of material excess.

The Loss of Creativity

Investment in education should be regarded as an investment in people, not in terms of a collective induction into an ideological framework, but as an experientially-based curriculum that facilitates critical awareness through interaction with each other, the environment, and a multi-faceted approach to teaching and learning. As Greene (2001) points out, “trying to arouse the young to attend, we may make it possible for them in their plurality to incorporate what they see and hear into their own distinctive repertoires” (p. 89). Imagination plays a significant role in this process, as the ability to generate the enhancement of meaning occurs when individuals are able to “multiply the perspectives” through which the present is perceived (Greene, 2001). Ultimately, this study will attempt to change the perception of the present by identifying the ubiquitous forces that construct self in relation to a decidedly unimaginative realm of existence. This is in response to Serres’ assertion that “thought is usually only found constrained and forced, in a context rigid with impossibilities... [Consequently], one must resolutely open a new epistemological spectrum and read the colors that our prejudices had previously erased” (quoted in Martusewicz, 2001, p.10). Martusewicz (2001) refers to post-structural theory in the delineation of a generative form of pedagogy that is best exemplified in Derrida’s concept of *differance*, a term that “denotes the process of differentiation at play in the production of meaning (and thus of knowledge) as well as the movement of deferred meaning, or other possible interpretations” (p. 12). In order to facilitate

an understanding of the need for a difference-producing pedagogy, this dissertation will outline the progression of corporate ideology in relation to increased methods of control by discussing the initial concept of democratic governance and the rise of neoliberalism, the corporatization of higher education, the alienation of self from society, and possibilities for exploding the boundaries of containment. These boundaries produce individuals who are defined by words – things, like currency. Each section in this study is characterized by distinct bodies of theoretical and ideological works which include critiques of existing conditions, treatises for change, and psychodynamic principles for understanding human behavior.

The Chapters

Deconstruction of the ideology that supports late capitalism resides in the ability to understand the evolution of American government, from the liberal democracy (republic) espoused by John Adams - in which the principles of civility struck a balance between the rights of the minority and the majority – to the “disaster capitalism” (Klein, 2007) of Milton Friedman - a profit-driven authoritarian regime that has realized the endgame of true democracy, as the predominance of power lies not in the hands of elected representatives but in the coffers of the corporate elite. While the establishment of equitability is not possible in a true democracy - the majority would amass power at the expense of minority rights – the United States was initially based on the idea of a republic, a system of representation guided by the constitution and based on the balance of power among the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of government. Unfortunately, the politics of representation has slowly and insidiously evolved into a notion of democracy that equates freedom with the “invisible hand” of the free market, a particularly egregious form of citizenship in which profitability becomes the guiding force in political decision-making. Economic concerns prevail over constitutional rights, as the ability to implement social change is permanently fractured

by a notion of civic participation that devalues a significant portion of society on the basis of class, race, and gender. Chapter 1 will discuss the prevailing factors that contribute to the economic conditions of late capitalism, while outlining the basic framework of the paper.

In chapter 2, I will place myself within the field of curriculum studies, a multi-disciplinary approach to education that constantly searches for new ways of *becoming* without the constrictive boundaries of positivist methodology or the stupefying effects of ideologically-driven educational mandates. For the past seven years, I have worked as a professional counselor in various settings, primarily focused on the treatment of children and adolescents with substance abuse, mental health, and behavioral issues. During this time, I have noticed several disturbing trends in terms of the diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric disorders first diagnosed in childhood or adolescence, especially Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which have rapidly produced financial prosperity for pharmaceutical companies and convenient methods of control for teachers and parents. Psychiatric diagnoses are quickly replacing accountability at the same rate that discipline is being superseded by control. In Breggin's (1998) opinion, the treatment of ADHD through the administration of various stimulants is more aptly referred to as the "drugging" of children, since the major priority of a significant number of parents and teachers is control, a selfish desire that pharmaceutical companies are only too happy to accommodate. According to Breggin (1998), "a large percentage of children become robotic, lethargic, depressed, or withdrawn on stimulants," a condition that perfectly coalesces with the dullness of standardized schooling (p. 2). The further I progressed in my doctoral studies, it became clear that education is the first step to indoctrination, and that schooling in America is completely devoid of the diversity and creativity so important to the development of critical-thinking skills. It also became clear that I was an active participant in - not a recipient of - my

education, with the freedom to expand definitions of learning, to draw from my experience, and to create knowledge from diverse disciplines such as Buddhism, psychoanalysis, environmental studies, post-structural theory, and psychopharmacology. Real education is not composed of a regurgitation of facts at appropriate intervals (standardized tests), but resides in the ability to think critically and creatively about the surrounding environment, to dissect the discourse that dictates our subjectivity. According to the great Zen teacher Shunryu Suzuki (1970), the key to naturalness is to realize “nothingness,” not as a void where nothing exists, but as a creative life-force that arises when the mind is freed from past experiences and ideas. As Suzuki (1970) notes, “without nothingness, there is no naturalness – no true being. True being comes out of nothingness, moment after moment” (p. 109). In this paper, I will explore the path to “nothingness” – the idea that empty spaces are necessary for intellectual growth, as these spaces are filled with potential “lines of flight” that inject possibility into a world that is always already defined. “The point is to be ready for observing things, and to be ready for thinking” (Suzuki, 1970, p. 115).

Chapter 3 will discuss the civil democracy proposed by John Adams, a vital component of a constitution which not only guaranteed individual freedoms, but designated laws designed to ensure equality for *all* citizens. As previously mentioned, Adams was concerned about the potential for societal declivity in a populace guided only by majority rule, as the most powerful would inevitably seize control, construct laws conducive to the perpetuation of hegemony, and exert undue control over those in the minority. To avoid this fate, the new government would be constructed in the form of a republic, a representative democracy in which the populace elects representatives who act in accordance with the will of the people and the laws of the land. This chapter will trace the path from the American Republic to Corporate America, discussing the precipitous decline from a civil democracy to a system of governance that closely resembles a true democracy in the gross

disparities of power and the abuse of laws meant to protect those in the minority. The term *true democracy* can be defined as a form of governance without equal representation, a state whereby the ruling party – those with the most power – executes laws that ultimately perpetuate hegemony, leaving the majority of individuals without a voice. A market without controls can be compared to a true democracy, and that is precisely the guiding force of the recently disassembled Bush administration. The discussion will center on the “ideological crusade” that has elicited an array of identities and followers who refer to themselves noncommittally as neoconservatives, “free marketers,” “classical economists,” and neoliberals, all devoted to the elimination of the public sphere and the unencumbered reign of private corporations (Klein, 2007). Klein (2007) aptly refers to this system as “corporatist,” characterized by “huge transfers of public wealth to private hands, often accompanied by exploding debt, and the disposable poor and an aggressive nationalism that justifies bottomless spending on security” (p. 15). This discussion will set the framework for the following chapters, as the ideology that supports corporate America has thrust its populace into the throes of consumerism, a well-executed agenda designed to obscure the felonious treatment of the environment, education, and human rights.

The concept of “economic freedom” was first introduced in the philosophy of economist Milton Friedman, who vociferously proclaimed that “the free market is the only mechanism that has ever been discovered for achieving participatory democracy” (quoted in Bardhan, 2007, p. 2). Chapter 4 will discuss Friedman’s meteoric rise to the King of free-market fundamentalists and the bloody methods used to secure capitalistic freedom. According to Bardhan (2007), historically, countries that have been successful in the adaptation of capitalist economics do not necessarily ascribe to the tenets of participatory democracy, more often than not failing miserably in the preservation of human rights. This is particularly evident in China, where “the state never fails to clamp down on

political activities that have even a remote chance of challenging the monopoly of power of the central authority,” reinforcing the reality that “Asian values [are] market friendly, but not very hospitable to political dissent” (Bardhan, 2007, p. 3). This study will argue that late capitalism is not only conducive to depoliticized forms of authoritarianism, but in fact thrives on the free reign of power induced by unregulated markets, producing a form of democracy that John Adams warned against more than two centuries ago. In a letter to a friend Adams remarked, “democracy... while it lasts is more bloody than either aristocracy or monarchy. Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There is never a democracy that did not commit suicide” (quoted in McCullough, 2001). In late capitalism there is a distinct emergence of the type of democracy that Adams warned against, as governmental regulations are intricately connected to the market discourse established by Friedman, disrupting the balance between majority and minority rights based on the premise that economic freedom is the prerequisite for political stability. This argument is not meant to become a treatise for anti-capitalist sentiment, but does point out the need to maintain a level of control and governmental oversight to preserve the rights of *all* individuals, a stark contrast to our current form of government which is clearly aligned with the prosperity of corporate America.

Chapter 5 explores the driving force of late capitalism, the fantastic voyage into the world of consumerism where the manifestation of rational thought yields to the id-saturated drive for objects of desire. This is a world fueled by the production of goods and services meant to satisfy an egoist craving for self-enhancement through the acquisition of *more*, an existence driven by a collective externality of control that legitimates desire and fractures the persona into a dualistic entity composed of the true and the false self. The true self is the core of being (Winnicott, 1996), while the false self becomes the ego-driven façade that finds solace in the illusion of consumer-driven

self-actualization - a perpetual retreat into the throes of desire. This chapter will explore the capitalist production of desire and the discourse of consumerism by analyzing the societal consequences of corporate ideology, from the dissolution of public space (community) to the constant barrage of advertising that guarantees escape from the doldrums of postmodern existence. The message conveyed is that the magnificence of living resides in the ability to buy. Americans have succumbed to a new “politics of consumption,” and although a significant portion of society struggles with mounting debt in the form of credit cards, home mortgages, and car loans, the majority of individuals continue to consume significantly more than they need (Schor, 1999). According to Schor (1999), many Americans “fear we are losing touch with more worthwhile values and ways of living... but the discomfort rarely goes much further than that; it never coheres into a persuasive, well-articulated critique of consumerism” (p. 1). The discomfort of consumerism combined with the unarticulated desire for *more* translates into a schizophrenic existence that reduces “productive lines of flight” to a grappling assemblage of forces that bombard individuals into submission (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). This chapter will analyze these forces and discuss the ways in which the discourse of consumerism insidiously denies other ways of *being* - in this world, and with each other. In addition, the concept self in relation to consumer existence will be explored using the work of object-relations theorists Winnicott, Bion, and Klein.

When ideology is in firmly in control, the ability to explore the spaces “in-between” is obscured by the solace of the *known* – the accepted truth. As Foucault (1980) notes, “each society has its own regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; [and] the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth” (p. 131). The discursive formations of truth

surreptitiously invade every aspect of society, creating a submissive substratum of individuals who unconsciously subscribe to the consumption of predominant forms of knowledge. Corporate ideology is such a truth, and without an understanding of its etiological functions, it will continue to subvert knowledge to a consumable product.

Chapter 6 will begin to analyze the various ways in which the corporate ideology shapes the American “regime of truth,” beginning with a system of public education (schooling) that emphasizes abject compliance to standards, increased privatization, and the passive acceptance of knowledge consistent with apt participation in capitalist society. Public education has become a lesson in obedience, training students to be good consumers devoid of the critical awareness necessary to deconstruct the discourse of a “control society,” an endless form of surveillance that has emerged during the last half of the twentieth century (Deleuze, 1992). In disciplinary societies, individuals passed from “one closed environment to another, each having its own laws: first the family; then the school (“you are no longer in your family”); then the barracks (“you are no longer at school”); [and] then the prison” (p. 1). According to Deleuze (1992) the transition from disciplinary to control societies is a direct result of increased corporatization, a system of governance that pits individuals against one another in a highly competitive environment, ultimately transforming the transparency of discipline into a ubiquitous wall of control. This chapter will discuss the ramifications of a standards-based education, specifically focusing on the strict mandates for compliance and the subsequent rise in oppositional behavior – including school violence - among adolescents during recent years, a disturbing trend that has links to both the psychiatric profession and pharmaceutical industry.

In the current approach to education, adolescents are not only disavowed from exploration during a time in their lives characterized by a propagating form of angst, they are also the

unfortunate recipients of a conflicted message that extols the virtues of democratic citizenry while proselytizing rigid compliance to authoritarian rule. When adolescents do rebel – a natural developmental occurrence – the “herd mentality cultivated and reproduced in school and in the society” cannot accept deviance from the norm and executes a disapproving gaze upon the insolent perpetrator (Webber, 2003, p. 118). Instead of addressing the aspects of schooling that invariably contribute to increased displays of oppositional behavior, society has responded by creating a pathological dissonance between the acceptance of adolescence (developmental stage characterized by exploration and rebellion) and the ideological expectations of a democratic society, where violence cannot be explored as a manifestation of adult culpability. In essence, attention to violence may not be the result of *more* violence, but a legitimizing claim for tighter measures of control.

In chapter 7, the discussion centers on standardized “schooling” and the corporatization of higher education, a business relationship between the university and corporate America that has turned institutions of higher learning into job training centers, producing workers specifically trained to meet current market demands. University administrators have been complicit in the redaction of educational policies from those that support intellectually sustaining and autonomous institutions toward the current “for profit” business models that produce quotas (diplomas) based on corporate needs. This is especially evident in research institutions that develop pharmaceuticals, as the competition for lucrative financial deals increasingly outweighs the ethicality of clinical trials (Angell, 2004). To prevent the outsourcing of pharmaceutical research to private companies, academic institutions have a vested financial interest in publishing favorable results, as the failure to do so would result in the loss of corporate dollars. According to Angell (2004), “researchers serve as consultants to companies whose products they are studying, become paid members of advisory boards and speakers’ bureaus, enter into patent and royalty arrangements together with

their institutions, promote drugs and devices at company-sponsored symposiums, and allow themselves to be plied with expensive gifts and trips to luxurious settings” (p. 103). The injection of financial incentives into academia results in the inextricable link between the free market and academic freedom, as the dissemination of facts conducive to ideological control results in the obliteration of critical agency, ethical research, and support for programs inconsistent with current employment demands. As Aronowitz (2000) notes, “it is becoming harder to find a place where learning, as opposed to ‘education’ and ‘training,’ is the main goal... whatever content the school delivers, the point is to help the student adapt to the prevailing order, not assimilate its values in terms of her own priorities and interests” (p. 1). The corporate order threatens the professorate in multiple ways, from the increased use of adjunct teachers to the reduction of tenured tracks, the ability to subjectively critique political policy and social injustice is overshadowed by financial incentives for the schools that deliver the “goods.” This means that professors must possess the proper credential needed to attract students, who in turn will benefit by the attainment of employment following graduation (Aronowitz, 2000). “Accordingly, if the quality of credential, measured in the number of jobs and the salaries offered to recent graduates declines, the consumer will cease to come” (Aronowitz, 2000, p. 58). This chapter will discuss the egregious effects of corporatization in terms of the dissemination of knowledge as a commodity, the inability to establish an atmosphere conducive to critical inquiry, and the inherent associated with a curriculum that has been reduced to job training.

Chapter 8 will continue to focus on the deleterious effects of corporate ideology by exploring its blatant disregard for the human condition as evidenced by the strategic location of pollution-spewing plants, toxic waste dumps, and garbage disposal sites near poor, minority communities. This practice is referred to as environmental racism (also known as eco-racism) and has contributed

to the senseless devastation of communities across this land in the name of profit maximization. According to Cole and Foster (2001), “environmental hazards are inequitably distributed throughout the United States, with poor people and people of color bearing a greater share of pollution than richer people and white people” (p. 10). As this discussion will point out, the location of environmental hazards near economically deprived communities is borne of out calculated corporate planning based on a variety of factors that inhibit a defensive stance, including an inability to understand the political process and a gross deficiency in funds for legal council.

The second part of this chapter will shift the focus from environmental racism to the destruction of the environmental degradation, as globalization has further reduced man’s historical irreverence toward nature into an attitude of gross indifference, a view that characterizes nature as a perpetual haven of resources meant to gratify the insatiable needs of a global economy. Despite the conservative call to silence the “environmental whackos” and the left wing alarmists, there is no longer any doubt as to the ecological effects of unbridled consumption, evidenced by the extraordinary destruction of rainforests, global warming, rampant overfishing, and widespread pollution, all in the name of corporate America’s undeterred drive to maximize profits by any means necessary. This chapter will discuss the consequences of capitalism without controls, a vociferous, misanthropic machine that envelops cultural and environmental landscapes with a symbiotic decay, homogenizing diverse groups of people and turning the majesty of nature into a lifeless symbol of American ingenuity.

Mankind is intricately connected to nature, and the destruction of our home (planet earth) is not only a gross act of incivility, but an alarming sign of human weakness as the ability to respect *all* living and breathing creatures is superseded by the selfishness of material desire. Human beings have lost the ability to realize the fragile interdependence that exists in nature - the idea that all

living beings are intricately connected and that disturbance in one realm ripples through the entire system like waves on the ocean. Mankind has an all too virtuous opinion of himself, and as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1860) wrote:

But worse than the harping on one string, Nature has secured individualism, by giving the private person a high conceit of his weight in the system. The pest of society is egotists. There are dull and bright, sacred and profane, coarse and fine egotists. 'Tis a disease that, like influenza, falls on all constitutions. (pp. 2)

The egotistical position is one that elevates certain forms of knowledge above reproach, a perfect example being the ideological undertones of globalism, in which the luster of corporate demagoguery masks the violence it inflicts upon third world populations, the environment, and the multitude of species that inhabit our planet. The egotist feels too little and wants too much – the pathology of corporate ideology lies in the absence of empathy and the illusion of beneficence. Consequently, the spread of democracy is a complex guise for the implementation of authoritarianism espoused through a discourse that equates individual freedom with the persistent flow of market imperatives.

In environmental terms, this amounts to the indefensible betrayal of a system that sustains life in a delicate balance, constantly attempting to steady itself in the face of unrelenting punishment. According to Orr (1994), the management of planet earth “has a nice ring to it [but] what might be managed, however, is us: human desires, economies, politics, and communities... it makes far better sense to reshape ourselves to fit a finite planet than to attempt to reshape the planet to fit our infinite wants” (p. 9). This chapter will argue that environmental awareness is an important first step in the battle to prevent global warming, but awareness does not constitute action, and individuals will not be called to action unless they begin to understand the driving forces behind

environmentally destructive policies such as globalization and environmental racism. The move toward “Green” awareness has certainly provoked a renewed interest in environmental protection, but in accordance with the American way of life, corporations have capitalized on the global warming movement by creating a whole line of products designed to make one *feel* Green, when in reality they are simply participating in the perpetuation of a problem that cannot be solved by still more consumption. Participants in the Green culture will need to engage in a prolonged struggle to not only “act locally,” but to create active forms of resistance that politicize the public forum in an effort to expose the ubiquitous significations of neo-liberal ideology that strive to prevent conscious awareness of pathological behavior.

Chapter 9 will complete the discussion of the problems associated with the neoliberal ideology by exploring the epitome of corporate malfeasance – the pharmaceutical industry. The United States is one of two countries (New Zealand is the other) in the entire world that allows pharmaceuticals to be marketed to the general public, with an alarming laxity of regulations regarding the efficacy of drugs, guidelines for research, price regulations, and the extension of patents. As Angell (2004) notes, “now primarily a marketing machine to sell drugs of dubious benefit, this industry uses its wealth and power to co-opt every institution that might stand in its way, including the U.S. Congress, the Food and Drug Administration, academic medical centers, and the medical profession itself” (p. xxvi). Since the pharmaceutical industry is composed of for-profit corporations, there is nothing that separates Bristol-Myers Squibb from Wal-Mart in terms of minimizing costs, a practice that has the potential for deadly consequences when drugs are developed based on the principle of demand. The market must consist of paying customers and since profit is the driving force, the research and development of drugs for conditions such as depression and high cholesterol take precedence over Third World diseases such as malaria or

sleeping sickness, which primarily affect countries that cannot afford to buy expensive drugs (Angell, 2004). This discussion will outline the systemic problems that plague the pharmaceutical industry and directly affect public health, including the process of research and development, the prevalence of “me-too” drugs, the exorbitant amount of money spent on marketing, and the reduction in truly innovative drugs over the past two decades.

Chapter 10 will introduce reparation - of self and of society. To stop the destructive advance of neoliberal policies, individual consciousness must retract from the submissive haze of predictable consumerist behavior and begin to search for productive “lines of flight” that inject a paradigmatic shift in the nature of being. This begins with an understanding of self and the ways in which ideology impacts an individual’s predominant worldview. Ultimately, behavior is guided by a false version of self that is highly suggestible and immune to introspection. In order to make contact with the inner self – the core of being – an understanding of ideological control as well as insight into current behavior is an absolute necessity.

The operation of the “false self” appears to define the postmodern consumer, who anesthetically drifts through the maze of shopping malls, media images, and idealistic messages using an array of protective defenses to circumvent the destructive insurgence of anxiety. The ability to rationalize the emptiness of consumer existence is facilitated by a belief that happiness is always just one purchase away, whether it exists in the form of Prozac, Jenny Craig, or a sleek new pair of Diesel jeans. Adaptation to the postmodern realm moves one further away from the “true self” – the creative core of being – toward a strong association with an egoistic façade that strives to defend a mind-made version of self, a cultural construct that has lost touch with its creative core (Eigen, 2004). Consequently, society is in desperate need of a language that “expresses, opens, and discovers waves of what is most precious and personal, the core that must not be betrayed” (Eigen,

2004, p. 82). To gain a better understanding of the ways in which consumerism creates a pathological dissonance in our relationship to self and others, object-relations theory is a viable psychodynamic approach that shows how faulty relationships are formed and maintained. According to Klee (2000), “early in life we have little sense of ourselves, or our identity... it is through our relationships with significant people around us that we take in part others (objects) and slowly build a self-structure, which we eventually call a personality” (p. 2). The significance of early experience is evident as the child begins to grow and mature, interacting with the environment in ways that repeat early patterns of object-relations. As Klee (2000) notes, “the term ‘object-relations’ refers to the self-structure we internalize early in childhood, which functions as a blueprint for establishing and maintaining future relationships” (p. 2). In this respect, object-relations theory has important implications for understanding the ways in which individuals adapt to consumer demands. The consumerized self operates within an ideological methodology that beseeches a certain level of deadness in empathic awareness, while simultaneously initiating an acute perception of gratification in the attainment of outside, material objects. In essence, the ability to engage in satisfactory human relationships, a key to healthy psychological adjustment, is secondary to the individual’s capacity to participate in a world that equates self-actualization to pathological independence.

In a healthy individual, there is a “continuous” destruction of the fantasy object “and the birth of the real object, outside all of one’s psychic web-spinning” (Eigen, 1993, p. 113), but in postmodern society, the fantasy is never destroyed, always sought. The fantasy is pursued by the false self, creating the illusion of a knowing entity that strives to maintain a level of control. Unfortunately, the mechanism of control exists inside the boundaries of ideological discourse, a veritable prison that traps the consumer within the confines of her own mind. This chapter will discuss the

psychodynamic factors of materialist existence, specifically focusing on the environmental processes that contribute to a pervasive sense of deadness – the absence of creativity - as individuals relate to themselves and the outside world. This discussion is meant to subvert the boundaries of consumerism with a source of viability based on contact with the true self – the creative core. The ability to honestly look at oneself and accept responsibility for social change is not an easy task. As Webber (2003) notes (in her discussion on school violence), “the fundamental psychoanalytic rule of American society is not that practice moves in a certain direction, but that it runs away from the experience of sensation and all the messy (inefficient) feelings that accompany it” (p. 139). The retreat from “messy” feelings is accomplished through a love affair with consumption – a regression to childlike simplicity. In order to gain a better understanding of this concept, the work of Klein, Winnicott, Bollas, and several other psychodynamic theorists will be discussed, giving careful attention to the formation of a healthy self and the factors that lead to pathological dissonance. In theory, the failure to form satisfactory object relations early in life may permanently dismantle opportunities for creativity and “aliveness,” predisposing individuals to emotional instability that manifests as depression, anxiety, or a general lack of feeling – deadness. Ironically, schooling in America also appears to manufacture deadness, a perfect state for the passive inhalation of ideological truths. In accordance with Barber’s (2007) assertion that consumerism causes regression to infantile states of being, an understanding of psychodynamic theories, with a primary focus on object relations, may offer insight into this process and subsequently, a venue for change.

Although the main emphasis in this study is to provide an understanding of the faulty self as it relates to consumer existence, elements of post-structural pedagogy will assist in defining a framework for the initiation of “positive lines of flight” that ultimately dissect disciplinary regimes

of truth and extend dualistic modes of reason into multiplicities of thought and imagination. A post-structural pedagogy posits the existence of a productive, differentiating force that moves discourse outside the normalizing range of significations, challenging the dominant constructions of reality found in ideologies such as neoliberalism. As previously noted, each society has its own “regime of truth” that serves as an indicator of control, a supposedly innocuous form of discourse that is rarely considered as a counter-hegemonic force. Post-structuralism seeks to dismantle the discursive boundaries that exercise control throughout society by focusing on the etiology of power – how it works becomes the central question. In our system of education, power is exercised through indoctrination to a form of truth that demands rigid compliance to predetermined standards and inhibits critical thought by methodically dictating the methods of instruction, the content of curriculum, and the procedures for learning.

The basic premise of post-structuralism is that reality is constructed through language (discourse), and it is this construct that shapes our interpretation of experience. For this reason, education needs to move away from the arrogant assertion that pedagogy is always already defined, based on a Westernized, predominately white male version of history that is critical to the perpetuation of ideological hegemony. To counteract this narrow definition of a productive citizen, also referred to as a good consumer, curriculum should be composed of an interactive process in which students and teachers explore new modes of learning, identify multiplicities in meaning, and embrace the notion that discourse (language, books, movies) is a generative force as opposed to a constrictive measure. An integral part of this study centers upon the transition from disciplinary to control societies, marked by the elucidation of the market as a dispersed, unregulated flow that destroys cultural homogeneity and creates an individual consciousness incapable of grasping the

distinction between consumer and independent thinker. In essence, ideology must maintain immunity to interpretation, and our system of education ensures that nothing is left to interpret.

CHAPTER 2

A NEW ORDER

- *Consumerist capitalism profits only when it can address those whose essential needs have already been satisfied but who have the means to assuage “new” and invented needs – Marx’s “imaginary needs.” – Benjamin Barber*

In late capitalism, there is no longer a relationship between adequate production and the *real* needs of citizens, as rampant globalization has the intended consequence of marketing to the financially secure, whose *real* needs are easily met with the abundance of resources at their disposal, consisting of food, shelter, clothing, and basic healthcare. Consequently, corporations – fueled by the black line – focus on the creation of needs for consumers while the values of democracy and citizenship flounder under the weight of a socio-cultural mandate to achieve a “new and improved” version of self, accomplished by the purchase of a Starbucks, the ingestion of the latest anti-depressant, talking nonsense on a Blackberry, and driving a BMW. Consumerism is appealing to what Barber (2007) describes as the “infantilist ethos,” an emerging corporate trend in which marketing plans are focused selling to younger demographics while at the same time imbuing “older consumers with the taste of the young.” According to Barber (2007), the “avatars of consumer capitalism are seeking to encourage adult regression, hoping to rekindle in grown-ups the tastes and habits of children so that they can sell globally the relatively useless cornucopia of games, gadgets, and myriad consumer goods for which there is no discernable ‘need market’ other than the one created by capitalism’s own frantic imperative to sell” (p. 7). Unsurprisingly, a significant number of consumers are unable to participate in this flawed notion of democratic

citizenship, as the scales of social justice are unforgivably tipped toward the coffers of corporate profiteers. This chapter will provide a brief overview of the individual and societal manifestations of late capitalism, beginning with a proposition for a civil democracy - a democracy which has clearly eroded into a pathologically engineered assemblage of control, hopelessly indebted to a market that has no soul. This will provide an understanding for the argument proposed in this study, namely that the demise of a once burgeoning republic has devolved into the “true democracy” that Adam Smith warned against more than 200 years ago, as a lack of government intervention would quickly result in those with power dominating those without. In late capitalism, the market is the deliberator of a freedom that can only be achieved through a preponderance of buying-power, meaning that social justice is a “dead letter office” in a nation of consumers who giddily await the next product, diet, or drug that will suddenly fill the void of a meaningless existence. The remainder of this chapter outlines the thematic orientation of topics under discussion, ultimately asking us to reconcile the emptiness of consumer existence with a sustained attempt to identify the false self – the stalwart defense that perpetuates denial of the core being.

The Rise of Civil Democracy

In *An Inquiry into Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith (1776) methodically outlined the economic and social conditions required for the sustenance of a progressive nation. Smith played a significant role in the establishment of a capitalist economic system and the role of governmental intervention. In contemporary economics, arguments persist regarding the need to implement market controls or to allow the unfettered movement of the “invisible hand.” Smith “worried about the encroachment of government on economic activity, but his concerns were directed at least as much toward parish councils, church wardens, big corporations, guilds and religious institutions as to the national government” (Krueger, 2001, p. 1).

More importantly, Smith showed tolerance for government intervention, “especially when the object is to reduce poverty... when the regulation, therefore, is in support of the workman, it is always just and equitable; but it is sometimes otherwise when in favour of the masters” (quoted in Krueger, 2001, p. 1). The philosophy of Smith will be an important aspect in the comparison of a Republic and our current authoritarian form of governance. The discussion will also present several critiques of Smith regarding the insufficiencies of his theoretical contributions in creating an effective vehicle for effectively politicizing concerns on a social level.

In addition to Smith, John Adams will also be discussed as an important contributor to our notion of a republic, free from the controlling interests that restrict independence by defining the parameters of autonomy. When Adams decided to rail against congressional orders by signing a peace agreement with the British, thus breaking the agreement with the French to abide by the advice of their foreign minister, there was significant fallout in political support at home and abroad (McCullough, 2001). Adams responded by saying that “congress had ‘prostituted’ its own honor by surrendering its sovereignty to the French foreign minister... ‘it is glory to have broken such infamous orders,’ Adams wrote in his diary, infamous I say, for so they will be to all posterity” (quoted in McCullough, 2001, p. 283). Adams set an example that is rarely followed today – to make a decision based on a vision of hope and a sense of responsibility to the people.

Unfortunately, in present day America, this is a rare occurrence indeed.

Dewey’s Legacy

There is a large amount of literature regarding the need to establish experientially-based forms of education initially discussed by prominent theorists such as John Dewey, who went beyond the dictates of “stimulus-response” psychology by suggesting that students are not mere objects amenable to manipulation (Noddings, 1998). According to Noddings (1998), Dewey’s “insistence

that students, as active organisms, must be involved in the establishment of objectives for their own learning underscores his belief in the connection between purpose and activity” (p. 29). Dewey believed that imagination plays a central role in the learning process, as the ability to pragmatically develop an understanding of cause and effect relationships arises out of critical thought – the ability to imagine other than what is. This coincides with the rejection of dualisms inherent to Western culture by positing the existence of multiple viewpoints, a precursor to post-structural strands of philosophy. According to Garrison (1997), “Dewey’s holism rejected the separations and sharp boundaries required by the logical positivists and other modern philosophers... the notion that experience is a bunch of atomistic ‘sense data’ that are the same for everyone is just a bit of positivistic dogma that should be expunged from educational research” (p. 34).

Maxine Greene (2001) draws upon Dewey as an inspiration for aesthetic experience in terms of “breaking down the old dichotomies, the separations between ‘high’ and ‘low’ art, between the arts and popular culture... to find in the languages of the arts a means of clarifying our experiences” (p. 106). The significance of Greene’s body of work resides in the possibilities inherent to a disciplinary realm that cuts across cultural boundaries, finding solace in the engaging eyes and creative imaginations of individual beings. According to Greene (2001), “it is imagination that allows us to enter into fictional worlds, to bring paintings and sculptures into the domains of a lived experience, [and] to transform bodies in motion into time-space meanings” (p. 65). This transformation evolves from an experiential awareness that uninhibited interaction with the environment produces opportunities for growth, a lifelong process intricately connected to Dewey’s notion of a progressive education. We are all interconnected beings that are ultimately separated by rigidity of thought and lack of compassion, critical errors that continuously deny the actualization of humanity and contribute to the senseless destruction of our global environment. The theorists

outlined in this review are all focused on the preservation of social justice, a primary determinant of a civil society.

An important determinant of social justice is close attention to issues of race, gender, and socio-economic status in terms of equal access to education. For example, Delpit (1995) points out that the need to account for cultural power in the transmission of pedagogy, as “children from middle-class homes tend to do better in school than those from non-middle-class homes because the culture of school is based on the culture of the upper and middle classes – of those in power” (p. 25). In terms of educational standards, students are required to learn the same material in the exact same manner, regardless of important factors such as cultural values, definitions of intelligence, and economic status. In terms of higher education, Delpit (1995) feels that organizing classrooms “so that all students’ stories are heard and all opinions valued may make inroads into that persistent scourge of American society, racial prejudice and discrimination” (p. 127). The ability to interact with others in a meaningful way, to learn about different cultures without expecting passive assimilation into the predominant group is reminiscent of the Deweyan notion of community strength, an aspect of learning that is sorely missed in our current environment.

Another important contribution made by Dewey is the idea of social connectedness, as the ability to interact in meaningful relationships is a key component of education. As Noddings (1998) points out, “the schools need not prepare students for eventual communication by pouring into them the cultures specific values and knowledge... rather, children should be encouraged to communicate, inquire, and construct common values and knowledge” (p. 35). Dewey’s work has impacted untold numbers of educational theorists, who strive to develop curriculum beyond the boundaries of constrained thought. Most importantly, Dewey encouraged education for social justice so that individuals could seek an understanding of themselves in relation to the community,

conscientiously learning to co-exist with the environment in such a way that growth becomes a positive and creative force. According to Dewey (1932), “in the present state of the world, it is evident that the control we have gained of physical energies, heat, light, electricity, etc., without having first secured control of our use of ourselves is a perilous affair... without the control of our use of ourselves, our use of other things is blind” (p. 3). This statement foreshadows the era of late capitalism and the relentless pursuit of nondiscriminatory consumption, where the conditions of society truly encompass what it means to lose control of the “uses of self.” Critical theorists have written extensively on the rise of corporate ideology, a vast bureaucratic regime that swallows public institutions and combats dissension by converting citizenship into a consumer affair. The literature on this subject is integral to the framework of this dissertation, which utilizes the work of a variety of theorists in accordance with the field of curriculum studies, a multi-disciplinary approach that ultimately seeks to expand the boundaries of meaning by giving a voice to those who have been silenced. Educational theorists such as Dewey, Greene, Noddings, and Garrison have planted the seeds for the type of awareness that dissolves the silence of definition.

The Regime of Truth

Throughout this study, I will explore the extent of corporate ideology and its impact on education, the environment, and healthcare. Even in terms of culture, the reckless pursuit of power eventually turns civilized societies into melting pots of self-gratification, ultimately destroying societal cohesion. Possibly foreseeing the arrogance of modernity, Emerson (1860) wrote:

Whilst all the world is in pursuit of power, and of wealth as a means of power, culture corrects the theory of success. A man is a prisoner of his power. A memory makes him an almanac; a talent for debate; a disputant; skill to get money makes him a miser, that is, a beggar. Culture reduces these

inflammations by invoking the aid of other powers against dominant talent, and by appealing to the rank of powers. It watches success. For performance, nature has no mercy, and sacrifices the performer to get it done; makes a dropsy or tympany of him. If she wants a thumb, she makes one at the cost of arms and legs, and any excess in power in one part is usually paid for at once by some defect in a contiguous part. (pp. 1)

Critical theorists have been particularly outspoken regarding globalism's economic and social impact, particularly focusing on ideological formations that conceal methods of power, control, and corruption, such as corporate ideology. According to Deleuze (1992), "marketing has become the center or the 'soul' of the corporation... we are taught that corporations have a soul, which is the most terrifying news in the world" (p. 4). The reign of the corporation is a direct result of the premise that individual freedom can only be realized through adherence to a free market, a theory based on the principles of economist Milton Friedman. Friedman believed that democracy could not be achieved without the implementation of capitalism free from government intervention, a policy that essentially provided a convenient explanation for the existence of acceptable casualties such as poverty, environmental degradation, and the flight of American jobs to third world countries (Klein, 2007). Friedman's economic theories provide a backdrop for the reign of corporations through adherence to ideological truths such as neoliberalism, a form of political control which espouses the privatization of public services, deregulation of business policies, free trade, and an unrestricted market. These decidedly corporate-friendly policies have become a source of significant debate and criticism for educational theorists, who persist in their efforts to develop a curriculum that seeks to identify forms of social injustice, to create classrooms where students engage in open discussion of

relevant political issues, and to instill a sense of critical awareness in an environment that values hapless conformity.

In a market where services have transitioned from the production of goods needed for consumption toward a market that has to invent needs for its products, the value of marketing “far exceeds the ticket price” of individual prosperity. Deleuze (1992) points out that labor is usurped by the invisible assemblages of capital, creating ubiquitous forms of control that slowly replace human needs with market demands. As Deleuze (1992) notes, “man is no longer a man enclosed, but a man in debt... the conquests of the markets are made by grabbing control and no longer by disciplinary training” (p. 5). Foucault’s concept of disciplinary societies has given way to a notion of power that is indefinable, penetrating the consciousness of *being* through subtle displays of control manifested in the images on television and films, the allure of consumerism, pharmaceutical enticement, and self-absorbed media pundits that argue ad infinitum about utter nonsense. Unfortunately, society has been conditioned to consume nonsense, to really care about Brittany’s latest outing, Kid Rock’s brawl at the Waffle House, or Snoop Dog’s love of marijuana. Do we *really* care about Brad and Angelina’s latest adoption?

Americans have been conditioned to consume, and the consumption of nonsense removes us from the real problems that require critical action, a convenient remedy for the perpetuation of hegemony. The theorists discussed in this paper will support the idea that neoliberal ideology has successfully capitalized upon the societal fragmentation of postmodernism as an exploitive mechanism of control, obscuring the political posturing and corporate hegemony that consistently alienates individuals from participation in the public sphere, while promoting a notion of civic responsibility that demands the nondiscretionary consumption of education, market fundamentalism, and biased media. According to Giroux (2004), “under neoliberal globalization,

capital removes itself from any viable form of state regulation, power is uncoupled from matters of ethics and social responsibility, and market freedoms replace long-standing contracts that once provided a safety net for the poor, the elderly, workers, and the middle class” (p. 59). Even more distressing is the designation of knowledge as a marketable commodity, a trend that reinforces the dissemination and control of information through the privatization of public institutions that are historically responsible for critiques of societal injustice. For example, the function of the University has been to instill “self-knowledge,” a task that can only be achieved when students and professors are allowed to become autonomous surveyors of truth, unrestrained by ideological boundaries or economic restrictions that methodically derail intellectual freedom, cultural inquiry, and critical pedagogy. According to Readings (1994), “the University is becoming a different kind of institution, one that is no longer linked to the destiny of the nation-state by virtue of its role as producer, protector, and inculcator of an idea of national culture” (p. 3). Readings (1994) further notes that “the University is becoming a transnational bureaucratic corporation, either tied to transnational instances of government such as the European Union or functioning independently, by analogy with a transnational corporation” (p. 3). There is no longer any question regarding the urgency to restore critical agency to the role of the University, an institution that has succumbed to corporate America’s mandate for profit maximization, privatization, and adherence to prescribed forms of knowledge.

Additional theorist discussed in this dissertation will also outline the problems associated with corporate ideology. Cole and Foster (2001) bring awareness to the rising tide of environmental racism in a study that shows the disproportionate placement of toxic waste facilities in lower-income communities, a trend that is indicative of the corporate drive for financial viability, ultimately placing value judgments on citizens according to their race and socioeconomic status.

According to Cole and Foster (2001), a recent study (Been, 1994) “demonstrated that the percentage of African Americans or Latinos in a census tract in 1990 is a significant predictor of whether or not that tract hosted a toxic waste facility... it was working-class and lower-middle-income neighborhoods that contained a disproportionate share of facilities” (p. 57). There is a significant amount of literature supporting environmental racism, which will be discussed in this paper.

Finally, critical theorists such as McLaren and Apple have methodically outlined the problems inherent to neoliberal practices while offering solutions in the form of public resistance, educational reform, and the re-establishment of the university as an autonomous institution free of corporate control. Almost three decades ago, Lyotard (1979) observed that “knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production; in both cases, the goal is exchange” (p. 2). Lyotard’s astute observation is evidenced by the forces of late capitalism, as knowledge is patented and sold in industries that have a direct effect on lives of people. For example, research institutions responsible for the development of life-saving drugs now have lucrative deals with pharmaceutical companies, while knowledge of innovative drugs are protected under exclusive patents. University professors are pressured to conform to corporate expectations or face the wrath of profit-seeking administrators. And environmental concerns are superseded by the allure of financial prosperity. In keeping with the motif of consumerist culture, short-term gain outweighs the costs of moral obligation. As Gore (2006) notes, “those with the most technology have the moral obligation to use it wisely... And this, too, is a political issue” (p. 250). Unfortunately, profitability outweighs philanthropy in the United States, a country that is “responsible for more greenhouse gas pollution than South America, Africa, the Middle East, Australia, Japan, and Asia – all put together” (Gore, 2006, p. 250).

Clearly, moral principles have been rationalized to always act in the best interests of corporate America, a problematic truth that will be deconstructed in this paper.

Consumerism

Prior to the recent election of Barak Obama, the nation's attention was fixated upon the political talking heads vying for the most powerful position in the world – the president of the United States. The media airways were bombarded with pseudo-intellectual, self-righteous pundits who battled with adversarial opponents over every comment, perceived current position (because no one really knows), past position, and hypothesized future position of their respective party's candidates on a variety of issues that are deemed important to the American consumer. Also involved in this decidedly subjective process were the supposedly objective pollsters, who present for battle consummately armed with intricate graphs and real-time displays of individual response to candidate's discourse during live televised debates. Unfortunately, what many Americans fail to realize is that the political decision-making process is tainted with the irrationality of emotion, an unmistakable sign of the consumer-laden mindset that reduces intellectual propagation to fluctuations of mindless whimsicality. In keeping with the tradition of corporate America, individuals who excel in the political process are remarkably adept at influencing consumers based on emotional appeal, with the professedly unbiased analysts that blanket the media airways being no exception to the rule. A recent *Media Matters for America (2007)* report states that Frank Luntz, a prominent political pollster, was recently given the task of providing "public feedback" following a televised democratic debate. While outwardly professing scientific objectivity in the polling results, the article reveals that Luntz has previous ties to Rudy Giuliani and has been censured by his colleagues for intentionally skewing the results of polling data.

In the postmodern age of enhanced imaging, instant communication, and hyper-sensitized consumers, the role of the media has greatly superseded its value as a disseminator of accurate information, with huge conglomerates such as Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation often controlling the content and ideological position of current events. When this is combined with the media pundits' emotional appeal to the target audience, closet conservatives such as Luntz - who delights in graphically depicting audience response to political forums - can have an enormous impact on public opinion, often swaying voters to vote for a particular candidate. The emotional appeal that characterizes the political landscape is congruent with the cultural homogeneity of late capitalism, as society is overwhelmed with the marketing of disposable goods that have no value other than the instantaneous gratification of a fleeting desire. In the consumer realm, individuals become the targets of corporate marketing machines, incessantly focused on the diminishment of public institutions in favor of gigantic shopping malls, corporatized universities, and a nation of digitally and pharmaceutically enhanced neophytes. As Orr (2002) points out, "consumptive behavior is the result of seductive advertising, entrapment by easy credit, prices that do not tell the truth about the full costs of what we consume... the breakdown of community, a disregard for the future, [and] political corruption" (p. 175). This results in the insurgence of a culture that becomes entrapped in the confines of corporate ideology, unable to find relief from the relentless barrage of postmodern noise that places consumers into neatly prescribed categories, each having its own pattern of predictable behavior. The commonalities of American society are no longer based on constitutional notions of freedom and democracy, as the primary indicator of participatory citizenship is the ability to shop, an integral part of American culture that is methodically homogenizing culturally diverse populations in other parts of the world through the celebrated process of globalization. Barber (1995) refers to the rise of corporate ideology and subsequent

spread of consumerism as “McWorld,” a ubiquitous force that equates the spread of democracy with the invisible hand of the free market, surreptitiously subsuming cultural heterogeneity under an interdependent web of “transnational commerce.” According to Barber (1995), “while they produce neither common interests nor common law, common markets do demand along with a common currency, a common language... Although sociologists of everyday life will continue to distinguish a Japanese from an American mode, shopping has become a common signature throughout the world” (p. 16). The free market has become the primary indicator of a participatory democracy, as consumers are immersed in a discourse that increasingly rejects political outlets as a means to address social problems, preferring to view rampant poverty, lack of health insurance, and the relocation of American jobs to third world countries as collateral damage rather than a direct effect of unrestrained globalism. The corporate ideology has effectively conflated consumerism and democratic citizenship in such a way that individuals believe they are contributing to the enterprise of freedom by abject participation in the “buying game,” when in reality, the corporate ideology is a form of authoritarianism that deregulates business, privatizes public assets, promotes discriminatory free-trade practices, and engages in military and economic interventions against countries that resist the fabled manifest destiny. The corporate ideology is remarkably adept at securing its targets, as the promise of freedom and material success are quite appealing to unemployed peasants in third-world countries. According to Barber (1995), “the claim that democracy and markets are twins has become a commonplace of statesmanship, especially in light of the demise of state socialism, which has left capitalism’s zealots free to regard themselves not only as victors in the cold war but as the true champions of a democracy that (they are certain) markets alone make possible” (p. 14). Consumerism is eroding the subjective lens of prosperity, as

the search for meaning will always be an exercise in futility when one's sense of being is invested in the materiality of existence.

The corporate marketing machines are remarkably adept at creating needs which, in return, perpetuates a constant craving for more that leads the egoistic consumer on an infinite search for the right drug, car, personality, or brand name that will expedite their arrival to the perfect life. Unfortunately, consumerism also creates a desire that never ends, a depthless desire that penetrates the souls of unenlightened consumers who forage into the depths of materiality to find a measure of happiness, only to discover a reactionary id that thrives on instant gratification. For those who do achieve a measure of success - measured in material goods - the "desiring machine" continues to operate, even past the point when an individual feels that they have arrived, that there is nothing more in this life that could make them complete. The insatiability of material existence - the emptiness found within the walls of corporate ideology - is further evidenced by society's love-fest with prescription (and illegal) drugs, as even the gleaming aristocrats who have enormous wealth, adoration, and commercial success resort to chemically-induced euphoria in hopes of attaining a brief interlude of joy. The atmospheric realm of consumerism is intricately connected to the world of education and a highly skewed conceptualization of democratic ideals, as children learn that patriotism is synonymous with consumerism, accomplished by a curriculum that places conformity above individuality, and compliance to standards in place of experiential growth. Children are told what counts as knowledge, and as Barber (1995) points out, "capitalism seeks consumers susceptible to the shaping of their needs and the manipulation of their wants while democracy needs citizens autonomous in their thoughts and independent in their deliberative judgments" (p. 15).

Psychodynamics of Consumerism

Object-relations theory will be a catalyst for the exploration of what Eigen (2001) calls “damaged bonds,” a condition that has enveloped the postmodern consumer as the ability to forge contact with the true self is paralyzed by immersion in fantasy. This dissertation will explore the literature related to the psychodynamic aspects of self, offering an understanding of the ways in which consumerism subjects individuals to preoccupation with fantasy - the constant pursuit of meaning through a realm that has no meaning. Attachment to self, to material objects, and to the formulated identities of our culture leads to an unhealthy reliance upon the dictates of a higher authority, a process by which the awareness of interdependence is replaced by an implacable craving for lifeless ornamentals. Without a link to humanity, we are truly gripped by an existential angst that invites ideological servitude. We have lost the capacity to “be” as we are constantly besieged by the artificiality of existence, the interminable request to engage in self-destructive acts of consumption. This is in direct opposition to Winnicott’s concept of a healthy environment, which begins early in life as the infant is allowed to experience the absence of self, a product of good-enough mothering that allows the baby to search for an object as opposed to its immediate provision... “when this space is offered to a child, it develops the capacity for unrestricted, unimpaired awareness that becomes the foundation for looking *in* to the self in later years” (Epstein, 1999, p. 37). It is through the ability to look at self that we realize the interconnectedness of life, the idea that self only exists in relation to other living beings, that “rugged individualism” denies the mysterious flow of unrestricted consciousness. According to Epstein (1999), “separateness, independence, and clear boundaries are not glorified in Buddhism the way they are in our culture... they are seen instead as potent sources of suffering, as illusions that perpetuate destructive emotions like hatred, jealousy, and conceit” (p. 86). The ability to establish a connection with our planetary

cohabitants is highly dependent upon the institution of pedagogical possibilities, a discourse of knowledge that asks us to not only question the predominant regimes of truth in our society, but teaches us the value of interpersonal relationships, selflessness, and spiritual being.

The work of object-relations theorists will be discussed as their work is directly related to the forms of gratification found in the consumerist mindset, largely constructed through socialization patterns that associate “aliveness” with a fantasized object, a constant craving for materialistic possessions. According to Winnicott (1986), “the healthy persons’ inner world is related to the outer or actual world and yet is personal and capable of aliveness of its own,” but postmodernism has dealt a fatal blow to the creative self, as deadness permeates the self in the absence of outside objects (p. 31). This pervasive sense of deadness is masked by consumerism’s equation of buying power with vibrancy of life – individual consciousness is trained to seek pleasure through faulty object relations. This results in a feeling of incompleteness, a lack of wholeness that results in an intense craving for something to fill the hole within (Tolle, 1999). According to Tolle (1999), the “compulsive pursuit of ego gratification” becomes a striving for “possessions, money, success, power, recognition, or a special relationship, basically so that they can feel better about themselves, feel more complete... but even when they attain all these things, they soon find that the hole is still there, that it is bottomless” (p. 46).

In order to further understand this bottomless depth, the work of psychodynamic theorists such as Melanie Klein, Christopher Bollas, and Michael Eigen will be explored as a basis for the development of self-awareness, a critical aspect of a pedagogy designed to release individual consciousness from the “damaged bonds” of corporate ideology. According to Klein (1964), “when a person, whose sense of security is largely based on his greed – on the feeling that he has, or can get, as much as he needs of good things – sees that someone else has more than he, it upsets this

self-protective edifice of security; he feels reduced to poverty, as if he had little – ‘too little good’ – in him” (p. 27). When greed is the defining force of a culture, we *all* blindly follow the wisdom of the con man – willing to believe anything – to make us feel better.

Neo-liberalism

Neo-liberalism is a form of politics that decries governmental intervention in the areas of trade, market prices, and business policies, but welcomes the “invisible hand” of the market in the conversion of public institutions to private corporations. Increased privatization not only means decreased accountability, but further depoliticizes the public arena so that a collective backlash against egregious corporate practices is met with a conservative onslaught of accusatory discourse, categorizing its critics as anti-patriotic, socialistic, and devoid of intellectual prowess. The market is the mediator of public interest, and “social justice makes little more headway against market ideology than national self-interest” (Barber, 1995, p. 28). As Barber (1995) notes, “markets are by their nature unfair, and when confronted with state-generated public interest issues like justice, full employment, and environmental protection they seek above all to be left alone” (p. 28). Guided by the neoliberal ideology and imbibed with a pseudo-intellectual rationalization, the benefactors of corporate hegemony view the social problems inherent to late capitalist society as the unavoidable consequences of a free market, failing to realize that capitalism without a system of controls results in the displacement of power to the elite and increased division between the upper and lower socioeconomic classes. When the maintenance of power among the elite is coupled with the depoliticizing effects of corporate ideology, the ability to mount a collective resistance becomes squelched by the depersonalizing forces of unbridled consumption, leaving the majority of consumers desensitized to the plight of the homeless, the enormity of environmental degradation, and the insanity of a society that views pharmaceuticals as a lifestyle choice and knows more about

Brittany Spears than the current leaders of America. In essence, this mindset literally “buys into” the neoliberal agenda, as control emerges through the postmodern undercurrents of brand name existence, standardized education, and a jingoistic discourse that characterizes the imposition of an authoritarian regime as democratic benevolence. Globalization spreads the thick veil of capitalism over the cultural heterogeneity of every region it encounters, creating a massive, interconnected web of technology that slowly and methodically erodes diverse populations by converting distinctive ethnic and religious differences into a sea of unenlightened consumers. The neoliberal ideology does not respect cultural, ethnic, or religious boundaries, preferring to offer the hope of salvation in brand name existence. Corporations do not necessarily destroy the bonds of faith “but rather absorb and deconstruct and then reassemble the soul, [and] when the soul is enlisted on behalf of plastic – even protean – bodily wants, it can guarantee a market without bounds” (Barber, 1995, p. 83). The market replaces faith with an unquenchable desire for the acquisition of externalities, substituting the comfort of divine faith with the grand illusion that self-actualization lies somewhere in the near future, in a brand name version of self that wears Ralph Lauren, sips Starbucks, frequents Borders, sexualizes with Viagra, and medicates with Prozac. The cruel hoax is that desire always remains in the forefront of consciousness, never yielding to the comfortable complacency of being, the pathway to the inner self. The neoliberal vision has created a world in which everything has become a “vast supermarket,” where democracy is no longer a political concept, but an economic concept that excels in the assignation of blame from the dominant social groups onto state programs and poor people (Apple, 2001). This conveniently allows corporate ideologues to justify the inhumanity of unchecked market expansion by equating social injustice to individual ineptitude, as those who cannot find jobs, health insurance, or meet basic living standards are characterized as lazy, uneducated, and incapable of engaging in rational decision-

making skills. Furthermore, in referring to democracy as an economic rather than a political concept, the individual can be referred to as a “deraced, declassed, and degendered” consumer whose personal identity is analogous to a number on a graph, a form of policy-enhanced rationalization that Apple (2001) refers to as “arithmetical particularism.” The collateral damage inflicted upon a large segment of society is a necessary component of the neoliberal methodology, as the reduction of unnecessary labor – not social beneficence – is the unmerciful force behind all business decisions. As Apple (2001) points out, “for neoliberals, one form of rationality is more powerful than any other – economic rationality... all people are to act in ways that maximize their own personal benefits” (p. 38). Expansion of the business empire preempts all other considerations, reducing each culture it encounters into a prototypical American wasteland, where the ability to envision an interdependent, environmentally concerned, and socially equitable populace is reduced to the mind-numbing buzz of materialistic insatiability. In this realm, even the once sacred institution of education becomes a source for profit.

Interconnectedness

The greatest feat of corporate America’s plight to globalize the world is its ability to envelop various cultures, ethnic groups, and markets through a vast array of monopolistic conglomerates that control media outlets, telecommunications, energy resources, weaponry, and even the types of music that invade the far reaches of third world countries. The Americanization of Eastern and European countries is evidenced by such anomalies as the rapid spread of capitalism in China, McDonalds in Japan, and MTV in virtually every country on the planet. When Rupert Murdoch purchased the Hong Kong-based Star satellite network and became part owner of the British Sky Broadcasting, he virtually assured that two-thirds of the world’s population would be tuned-in to the same corporation that owns Fox News Channel (Barber, 1995, p. 102). As Barber (1995) points

out, “that means that several billion Asian ears are cocked in his direction... yet the only thing we know for sure about Murdoch’s intentions is that they include neither the preservation of indigenous cultures nor the democratic and civic uses of media and telecommunications networks” (p. 103).

Barber (1995) asserts that the reign of global markets has resulted in a complex web of interdependence, which slowly abolishes the sovereignty of nations by creating insurmountable dependencies on the natural resources and technological innovations of other countries.

Interdependence also means that our limited supply of resources must be fairly and equitably distributed so that prices and supplies remain stable in countries around the world. Unfortunately, “the unequal distribution of world resources skews and unbalances affairs, and turns McWorld – its virtues and its vices – into a playground for some and a cemetery for others” (Barber, 1995, p. 42).

For example, oil is a limited resource upon which the United States is highly dependent, not only in terms of unbridled consumption but also for exorbitant corporate profits, and when financial incentives are injected into equations for fairness, the concept of interdependence succumbs to greed and vulnerability. Neoliberal policies promote the concept of interdependence, but only when it favors the corporation. The perpetuation of corporate pomposity and reckless resourcefulness creates ill will among the world’s developed nations, causing the United States to create a skewed version of interdependency in which Middle Eastern countries must be secured not in the name of democratic freedom, but economic security.

The essence of interdependence lies in the ability to practice restraint, to effectively control resources by forgoing the rampant greed that inundates the souls of neoliberal profiteers. Freedom is equated to capitalism without controls, voraciously justified by an ideology that views the human race as the benefactor of world domination, with the earth’s resources specifically allocated for the perpetuation of the corporate machine. As Orr (2002) points out, “we are now provisioned with

food, energy, materials, entertainment, health, livelihood, information, shelter, and transport by global corporations that operate with little oversight... corporations dominate national politics and policy and, through relentless advertising, the modern worldview as well” (p. 206). Within this worldview, there exists a distinct inability to connect with other forms of life, to realize the value and the interconnectedness of each plant, animal, stream, forest, and human being that constitutes a living and breathing earth. The id has become the great mediator of postmodern existence, as America Incorporated is guided by a rationalizing dictate that places economic concerns above the long-term effects of environmental exploitation. The difficulty in addressing the problems caused by reckless human behavior is found in the negation of responsibility by corporate ideologues, who rail against the “wacko environmentalists” and the allegedly biased scientific research that supports global warming. While there is a staunch ideological defense against the intrusion of environmental policies such as Kyoto, increased awareness of the fragility of planet earth and the devastating consequences of hedonistic consumption are evidenced in individual acts of conservation. Unfortunately, even when corporations appear to promote conservation, society is still trapped within in a pseudo-environmentalist, consumerist-laden discourse that peddles Green products and sponsors Green rock concerts, while the id-saturated public *feels* good about spending money because, after all, it’s for a good cause.

Resolution resides in the ability to effect change not on a purely tangential level, but to impact the misguided souls of disillusioned consumers by confronting the epidemic of unconsciousness that permeates postmodern existence, and to educate society on the importance of conscious presence - of acute, moment-to-moment awareness that maintains focus on the *now* (Tolle, 1999). This is in sharp contrast to the future-oriented façade of brand name existence, promoting a version of self consumed with the acquisition of material items that are promised to quell the insatiability of

consumerism – the completion of self always lies just beyond the next purchase. Of course, this is only an illusion, ultimately creating a significant level of dissatisfaction with the present since the consumer can never be satisfied with their current state of being. The average person is consumed with thoughts about the future, of ways to satisfy an ego that has learned to associate happiness with the current fashion fads and diet trends that promise a new and improved *you*. As Epstein (1998) points out, “we are used to thinking of thinking as a good thing, as that which makes us human... it can be quite a revelation to discover that so much of our thinking appears to be boring and pointless while keeping us isolated and cut off from the feeling of connection we most value” (p. 59).

Transcendence of the consumer mindset begins with the realization that a future based on the acquisition of *more* will never lead to self-fulfillment, as the basis for conscious being is awakening to the interconnectedness that ultimately denies the separation of humans from other life forms. In essence, the world is one. As Tolle (1999) points out, “every being is a focal point of consciousness, and every such focal point creates its own world, although all those worlds are interconnected... there is a human world, an ant world, a dolphin world, and so on,” but ultimately all worlds are one (p. 199). The great scourge of Western civilization is that most people become prisoners of their own minds, trapped within a discourse that creates dissonance between what *is* and what should be – the present is always already denied. According to Tolle (1999), “in ordinary unconsciousness, habitual resistance to or denial of what *is* creates the unease and discontent that most people accept as normal living” (p. 74). Consumers walk around in a state of unconsciousness, oblivious to the present and fastidiously engaged in the search for meaning within the confines of a meaningless realm.

Occasionally, events will occur that momentarily trigger conscious awareness, a fleeting glimpse into the true nature of being that clearly sees the destructiveness of an ideology that elevates human

desire over natural order. For example, Katrina momentarily awakened the United States and the rest of the world to the repercussions of unbridled consumption, revealing a grotesque display of neoliberal ineptitude in the aftermath of the storm as thousands of victims wallowed in muck while aid slowly and unmercifully dribbled in. The land of opportunity suddenly became a sea of despair as consciousness revealed an ideology that places profits over people and corporate prosperity above planetary conservation. Unfortunately, the majority of the nation only experienced a brief awakening, as the “static of ordinary unconsciousness” reignited resistance to the present (Tolle, 1999), to the awareness that current patterns of behavior cannot be separated from the plight of neglected victims, the shrinking polar caps, dwindling rainforests, polluted rivers, and the rapid extinction of life forms due to gross human negligence.

The disconnected images and intense subjectivity of postmodernism is highly conducive to the perpetuation of a fragmented society, creating a mindset in which fellow human beings are always the “other,” a comfortable rationalization that safely removes unconscious individuals from the reality of the human condition. This is far removed from the various schools of Eastern philosophy in which the nondualistic nature of existence abolishes the objective lines of separation between the individual and her environment, creating awareness of the absence of inherent existence. In Zen Buddhism, the non-dualistic worldview fails to recognize the abject materiality, classification of experience, and constant labeling (good or bad, republican or democrat) that characterizes Western thought, leading to an existence that moves toward the true nature of being - the interconnectedness that defies categorization. The Buddhist concept of “no-mind” means that when the mind is working properly, things appear as they are, without the preconceived notions and visions of self that cloud judgment and negate the ability to look between the words, to dwell in the spaces in-

between. As Watts (1957) points out, “for if there is nothing which is not mind, the world belongs to no class, and has no limits, no definition... consequently, it contains no duality” (p. 73).

When the world is viewed through the lens of corporate ideology, the mind is constantly scanning the horizon in an attempt to satisfy the demands of an all-consuming ego, wholly unaware of the discursive boundaries that confound thinking and contribute to frustration, anxiety, and despair. The underlying current of consumer existence is an inexhaustible craving for *more*, creating a cultural affair with existential angst. As the Buddha taught, “the root of suffering is to be found in our constant wanting and craving,” an inescapable byproduct of a society that is remarkably adept at avoidance of the *now* (Tolle, 1999, p. 76). The present moment never arrives in a world where the unconsciousness of desire overshadows the possibilities of acute awareness, the interconnectedness that inextricably links every form of life by the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the spaces we share. The ability to stop the mind-numbing search for material bliss begins when resistance to the present is surrendered, creating a space for growth in the absence of compulsive thinking.

A Post-structural Interpretation

In what ways do we miss opportunities to act? How does consumer discourse construct reality? After all, the existence of a consumerist mentality is not a naturally occurring process, like the spring awakening of a slumbering grizzly, or the deafening solitude of a trickling stream. These are moments that emit a stillness that cannot be constructed, a part of nature that asks us to breathe slowly, to observe the present moment, and to retract from the stifling madness of a frustrating world. Unfortunately, corporate ideology insidiously denies the “spaces in-between” (Reynolds, 2004) the constant onslaught of consumer advertising, media images, political rhetoric, reality television, Hollywood films, and educational agendas that delineate every aspect of existence as an

opportunity for consumption. Higher education has succumbed to the allure of profitable alliances with soft-drink companies and pharmaceutical firms, while the average consumer has lost the ability to think critically about the world in which we live. The multiplicity of being is lost in definition, in the lines that tell the submissive consumer what to eat, drink, wear, think, and take, leaving little to the unembellished imagination.

Although the ultimate focus of this study is to engender awareness of *real* self, the core of being that object-relations theorists believe is the key to breaking through the defenses of an unconscious existence, there is also a need to analyze the ways in which language conditions the uncritical acceptance of predominant ideologies. In this respect, the language that defines educational standards insidiously rejects all other attempts to define, creating a methodically controlled environment where students are expected to automatically regurgitate previously learned facts at specific intervals during a process that is best described as consumer training. This results from an ideology that creates a realm of being within the confines of a particular discourse, a mode of communication that has lost the ability to think critically about the assignation of an array of identities that define consumerist culture. Possibilities for resistance occur when the teacher can reject her role as the mere disseminator of meaningless facts and encourage students to look for outlets “in-between” the lines of standardized information, when the corporate CEO learns to place people above profits, searching for new “lines of flight” that provide a healthy balance between business acuity and individual prosperity, and when the unconscious consumer can reject the prescribed obedience of postmodern existence by awakening to the madness of ideological servitude, embarking on a course of change characterized by a proliferation of inventive thought. Thinking must dwell outside of the known, in “multiplicities [that] are made up of ‘becomings’ without history, of ‘individuation without subject’” (Deleuze and Guattari quoted in Hwu, 2004, p.

186). The process of “becoming” is tainted by past remembrance, by a history that saturates the possibility of change with the ideological chains of definition. Everything is always already defined, leaving the unconscious consumer trapped within a discursive framework that blocks creative “lines of flight” by delineating freedom as a product of the free market. When this notion of freedom is coupled with the creation of insatiable desire and an education that denies criticality of thought, the result is a culture of “desiring machines” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) that automatically react to the dictates of consumption, readily available in advertising that promises pharmaceutically-induced self-actualization, personality change in a brand name, and the remarkable abatement of drudgery when a pill can be taken once a month as opposed to once a week (Boniva). Consumers have succumbed to the greatest societal faux pas since cigarette smoking was prescribed for respiratory problems, as the association of freedom with market discourse facilitates the establishment of authoritarian rule without the obvious implementation of power – the subjugation resides in the “regime of truth” (Foucault, 1980).

The constant demand for *more* leaves the individual both unable and unwilling to search for alternative ways of *being*, blissfully ignorant of their ascribed roles and monastically devoted to the attainment of material wealth. The ability to think, to explore other ways of existing in this world are confounded by a cultural complacency with the existing “knowledge factory,” as “students, many staff, and most faculty have learned that the university is a production site in which criticism of the status quo narrows with each passing year” (Aronowitz, 2000, p. 35). To counteract this trend, a post-structural pedagogy retreats from the deadness of standardized curriculum and attempts to *undo* the dualistic modes of inquiry that perpetuate a particular version of history, an ideological truth that attempts to dissolve all other forms of inquiry.

To merely critique problematic issues is not enough, as the subversion of dominant ideologies cannot be sustained without a distinct change in thinking, a paradigmatic shift that searches for alternative ways of *being*, infusing the deadness of definition with the veracity of multiplicity. This means that educators must recognize the value of generative thought, to search for openings that reinvent thought and to create awareness of the infinite possibilities found within a pedagogy that embraces the creative connections between students and teachers (Martusewicz, 2001). As Martusewicz (2001) notes, we must learn to not only search for passages among the possibilities in a “multiple pedagogical process,” but to “recognize those forms, behaviors, and processes that might shut down or block these creative possibilities” (p. 10). The current emphasis on standards, in conjunction with the corporate ideology, impacts the souls of unsuspecting students by denying the opportunities to explore the walls beyond the *always already* defined spaces of government schools. Without an opportunity to experience other ways of being, to freely experiment with unimpeded thought or critical introspection, the process of learning is confined to the dictates of submission, recitation, and the unquestionable allegiance to a brand of existence that restricts meaning to the symbolization of consumer demand. Corporate ideology subsumes every facet of existence, creating an infinity of needs that presides over the conscious realization of emptiness, the void that cannot be filled with *more* stuff. The potential for interpretive transformation is blocked by the impulsivity of thoughtless desire, the dualistic nature of Westernized ideology, and the passive acceptance of a discourse that filters experience through the language of consumerism. Without an education that expands upon the reinvention of thought, portals to new ways of being remain untested, and the text through which meaning is conveyed remains rigidly encapsulated in a web of ideological deceit. According to Martusewicz (2001), “classrooms, movies, books, and clothing, for example, all function ‘textually’... meaning is not just inherent in the text, or given by

the author, but rather created by the meanings and assumptions brought to it by the reader” (p. 11). In capitalism, the reader is schooled in the vices of corporate ideology, the individual is conditioned to read the world as market discourse. Drawing upon this discourse, the Deleuzian production of desire is integral to the perpetuation of the corporate machine. Essentially, the purpose of desire is to produce subordination to the machine. In this realm, nothing makes sense, and “without any sense, there’s nothing to interpret... interpretation is meaningless here” (Deleuze, 2004, p. 232).

In his analysis of the “desiring machines,” Deleuze (2004) posits the existence of a mechanistic entity that inundates the collective social arrangements in a capitalistic society, subordinating intellectual thought to an assemblage with a life of its own. The schizophrenia of capitalism exists in the assemblages that continuously propel individuals toward the depths of consumerism, while the futility of an ego-based existence intermittently climbs to the surface of awareness, only to be quickly squelched by the mechanisms of desire. As Deleuze (2004) notes, “the closer one gets to the periphery of the system, the more subjects find themselves caught in a kind of temptation: whether to submit oneself to signifiers, to obey the high orders of the bureaucrat and follow the interpretation of the high priest – or rather to be carried off elsewhere, the beyond, on a crazy vector, a tangent of deterritorialization – to follow a line of escape” (p. 15). The lines of escape must begin with an understanding of the production of desire, and when education withholds the anesthesia of definition by promulgating environmental exploration, critical awareness, and relentless curiosity, there is an enhanced ability to explore the spaces between the bureaucratic “high orders” and the text that symbolizes corporate ideology. A productive line of flight begins with the analysis of discourse, “not to answer the commonsense questions [that] appear to be naïve, obfuscating, needlessly difficult, or simply wrong, confused, or fuzzy... [but] to describe that the self-evident and commonsensical are what have the privilege of unnoticed power, and this power

produces instruments of control” (Reynolds & Webber, 2004, p. 8). Adroitness of control solidifies the “current regime of truth” (Foucault, 1980), as the discourse of consumerism generates a form of desire that fails to produce, wholly enveloped in the production of a *lack* (Deleuze, 1987). Desire manifested in the attainment of an object can never be sustained, “once the object of desire has been appropriated, it loses its status as desirable; possession means death” (Hwu, 2004, p. 189). The result is always a striving for more, a yearning to replace the object which has been killed.

The Comparable Self

The Western idea of *self* is based on the development of an ego that exists apart from the thinking mind, with a voluminous amount of effort sustained in the development of this hungry being. Madison Avenue has capitalized on the satiation of “me,” creating a plethora of brand name appearances that define a new and improved self, stringently focused on the attainment of celebrity identity. The thinking mind is inordinately focused on the defined self, oblivious to the overwhelming control that corporate ideology has on the behavior of the thought-entrapped consumer. The problem with this dualistic mode of existence - mind and self - resides in the reduction of productive thought - the self is always already defined by a mind that *must* defend the ego from perceived threats. The ingenuity of corporate ideology is the collective installation of compulsive thinking, the irrepressible desire to fulfill the ego by constant thoughts regarding an illusory future. As Tolle (1999) notes, “identification with your mind creates an opaque screen of concepts, labels, images, words, judgments, and definitions that block all true relationships... it is this screen of thought that creates the illusion of separateness, the illusion there is you *and* a totally separate ‘other’” (p. 15). The “other” is the conditioned mind, the uncontrollable noise that distorts the present moment by rapt identification with the past and a hopeful entreaty for a blissful future, completely oblivious to the possibilities that lie within the gap that is *now* (Tolle, 1999).

The ability to recognize the true self is accomplished through an awareness of the “noise” that constitutes the “conditioned mind,” the automated response to an ideology that supports corporate America and engenders the “desiring machines” (Tolle, 1999; Deleuze, 2004). In the quiet space of *now*, the Buddhist concept of “no-mind” gives rise to a non-dualistic entity that is able to realize the true nature of being without an unrelenting attachment to the thoughts, images, and objects that pull individuals into a conditioned, material existence. Corporate ideology insidiously creates an environment of fear by marketing domination, a form of intellectual and social prowess that occurs under the auspices of brand name existence – the sleekest car, the latest style, and the right drug are prerequisites for power and prestige. According to Krishnamurti (1969), “this craving for position, for prestige, for power, to be recognized by society as being outstanding in some way, is a wish to dominate others, and this wish to dominate is a form of aggression” (p. 40). The aggressive nature of Western culture, operating under the auspices of corporate ideologues, is readily apparent in the ruthless drive to maximize profits with all the zeal of a remorseless psychopath, leaving a path of environmental and social destruction in its myopic wake. Corporations justify their actions based on the acceptance of the market mentality, failing to realize that “the saint who seeks a position in regard to his saintliness is as aggressive as the chicken pecking in the farmyard” (Krishnamurti, 1969, p. 40).

Identification with the conditioned self breeds fear and contempt, a direct manifestation of a system that delineates the characteristics of success as “rugged individualism” and material wealth, a discursive truth which ultimately disenfranchises those individuals who seek other ways of *being*. The intellectual is a threat to hegemony, and public spaces provide a forum for collective resistance. To remedy these forms of critical citizenship there is a distinct anti-intellectual movement in Universities, public institutions are rapidly succumbing to privatized interests, and unregulated

markets are hailed as the only measures of a democratic society. To speak out against war is synonymous with treason, sparking a mixture of outrage and fear as the voices of reason are silenced by the “spread of democracy.” As Krishnamurti (1969) notes, “living in such a corrupt, stupid society as we do, with the competitive education we receive which engenders fear, we are all burdened with fears of some kind, and fear is a dreadful thing which warps, twists, and dulls our days” (p. 41). Krishnamurti (1969) argues that individuals create ways to cover their fears by developing a “network of escapes” in an attempt to avoid facing the true self, a practice which – paradoxically - only increases the level of fear. Consumerism is composed of a massive “network of escapes” that constantly reject the present moment by creating perpetual desire, the future is never certain, and uncertainty breeds fear. The escape is an illusion that always leads back into the maze of desire. According to Krishnamurti (1969):

At the actual moment as I am sitting here I am not afraid; I am not afraid in the present, nothing is happening to me, nobody is threatening me or taking anything away from me. But beyond the actual moment there is a deeper layer in the mind which is consciously or unconsciously thinking of what might happen in the future or worrying that something from my past may overtake me. So I am afraid of the past and the future. I have divided time into the past and of the future. (pp. 42)

Movement away from the present moment is further expedited by an entire “regime of truth” based on the transcendence of the spiritual into the material, a retaliatory retreat from within moving toward a false version of self that seeks an impossible solitude in the cogs of a thunderous machine. The fear *is* the false self, a conditioned, mind-made entity intricately connected to the discursive realm of form, unable to pause for the solitude of the present moment, when the mind no longer

associates with the form that is consumerism. These spaces “in-between” the past and the future - the movement away from conditioned thought into pure awareness – hold the possibility of viewing the environment, education, culture, and self as it really exists, apart from the salacious inducements of Madison Avenue and the life-enhancing allure of pharmaceutical utopianism. When self is no longer defined by objects of desire, but embarks on a sustained voyage into the unknown, new ways of being come into existence. As Krishnamurti (1969) notes, “if you have no foothold, if there is no certainty, no achievement, there is freedom to look, to achieve... and when you look with freedom it is always new” (p. 25). Definition breeds an illusory confidence, and “a confident man is a dead human being” (Krishnamurti, 1969, p. 25).

As Martusewicz (2001) has shown, there is an intricate connection between the spiritual realm (Buddhism) and post-structural interpretation, especially in the possibilities for creativity when the generative power of difference is brought into awareness. According to Martusewicz (2001), “difference is a productive force that always comes to undermine the ‘truth’ and certainty whether we want it to or not... pedagogy is a creative, difference-producing relation, resulting from a space between self and other where a kind of translation takes place and something new gets made” (p. 6). The self to which Martusewicz refers is not the mind-made self that reverberates with ideological sanctity, but thought itself, the complete absence of boundaries that allow for the production of “something new” in a relationship freed from the constraints of definition. Knowledge of self begins with an understanding of how discourse works, to simply observe how the “story of me” has become a fiction (Tolle, 1999) that amplifies postmodern existence, with its constant clinging to the past, the future, and objects which are deemed important by the discourse of consumerism. To observe the “story” is to become aware of the observer, a transcendence of the “mind-made opposites” that characterize western culture (Tolle, 1999). According to Tolle (1999), “the outer

surface of your life and whatever happens there is the surface of the lake... you are the whole lake, and not just the surface, and you are in touch with your own depth, which remains absolutely still” (p. 195). Stillness occurs when the madness of existence is reduced to a level of form that is understood as a small part of non-dualistic *being*, it is from this patient awareness that creativity flows.

As previously noted, a vital component in the deconstruction of a dominant “truth” is to understand how discourse works, how the disciplinary regime of psychiatry, for example, insidiously blocks all attempts to escape the label of a manic-depressive or a borderline, by creating an entire field of treatment that elevates the status of the psychiatrist to the guru of maladaptive behavior. In turn, the discipline of psychiatry is intricately connected to the larger social field, “a whole range of institutions, economic requirements and political issues of social regulation,” all of which serve a specific ideological function (Foucault, 1980, p. 109). When taken into context, into the form of a market economy, for example, the psychiatric institution has a vested interest in the profitability of the pharmaceutical industry, a corporate machine that not only markets drugs, but unabashedly promotes a range of psychiatric illnesses such as ADHD, ODD, Social Anxiety Disorder, Depression, and Bipolar Disorder, which can all be successfully treated by the simple ingestion of a pill. This is but one example of the connections between various disciplines and the overarching ideological beliefs, ultimately producing a conditioned society that lives on the “surface of the lake,” unable to realize the possibilities that lie within the depths of the true self.

The Buddhist concept of “emptiness” is readily applicable to the banality of the postmodern condition, as the script that defines consumerism – with the mind-numbing influx of images, trends, and useless information – serves as an obliquely patterned demand for compliance through the edification of market participation. Emptiness means to “let go” of attachments, to realize the open

spaces within the mind in the absence of past conditioning, ideological beliefs, and rigid expectations. According to Epstein (1998), “when we grasp the emptiness of our false selves, we are touching a little bit of truth... if we can relax into that truth, we can discover ourselves in a new way” (p. 20). Inherent to this process is the realization that emptiness is not a condition amenable to analysis, but a state of being intricately connected to the lines of creativity. And “only when we stop fighting our personal emptiness can we begin to appreciate the transformation that is possible” (Epstein, 1998, p. 16). The essence of transformation lies not in the identification of a comparable self perfectly modulated to the consumer machine, but in the ability to transpose the attachments of desire into the possibilities that lie within empty space.

CHAPTER 3

THE EXPANDING FIELD OF CURRICULUM

- *Daddy, what if they made playing illegal? Would they start arresting my friends?* - Dylan Edmonds
- *It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.* – Mark Twain

Schooling – Corporate-Style

My initial reaction to my seven year-old son’s surprisingly insightful question was to tell him that playing could never be illegal, but my study of curriculum over the past three years - along with my unhealthily suppressed anger over the idiocy of daily color-coded reports that take off points for normal elementary school behavior – has led to quite a different conclusion, that normal childhood behavior is being controlled by a hidden curriculum that demands strict obedience to predetermined standards, that “playing” is being treated as an offense subject to disciplinary action. Of course, playing *is* a distraction from “schooling,” but *not* learning. Our children are being “schooled” with the singular objective of passing mandated tests that will determine the course of

their lives, a curriculum that has little room for creative expression but ample time for memorizing facts and arguably meaningless information in the exact same manner and time-frame, regardless of all the variables that make us unique individuals. When thinking of this in a larger context, the field of curriculum is not simply a single discipline myopically focused on the types of materials used in classrooms, but a multi-disciplinary approach to education that considers the political, social, cultural, and institutional factors that contribute to the methods of instruction and subjects taught in public schools and Universities. How do we think? In what way does thinking become a signifier of control? According to Morris (2006), “the vertical hour of education is not the easy handshake... the vertical hour of education is when the doctor-professor can make that difference in the way students think about education and the world at large” (p. 6). As an upcoming curriculum theorist, a professional counselor, and a part-time professor, I am acutely aware of the ways in which children succumb to the dictates of an ideology that depends on the maintenance of control, beginning with mandated testing for children as young as eight years-old and ending with either a compliant high school graduate devoid of critical thinking skills or an oppositional delinquent that rebels against an unforgiving system. As a curriculum scholar (and father), I cannot possibly ignore the multitude of factors that influence my children’s perception of the world, a perception that is shaped by *No Child Left Behind*, brand-name sponsorship, perpetual war, rampant poverty amidst unbridled wealth, postmodernism’s haze of disconnected imagery, and the slow death of the intellectual. Critical thinking has no place in the corporate order; in fact, it is a poison that has been identified for eradication.

Culture of Defiance

In writing this dissertation, I have sought to identify the contributing factors to a *culture of defiance* that is rising exponentially among our middle and high-school students, a distinct trend

evidenced by increased diagnoses of conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder, extraordinary rises in psychotropic prescriptions for children and adolescents, and an expanding dropout rate among socioeconomically disadvantaged children (Tynan, 2008; Angell, 2004; Rothstein, 2008). Beginning with *A Nation at Risk* and reignited by *No Child Left Behind*, the narrowed curriculum has focused on math and reading scores at the expense of “diminished attention to history, civics, the sciences, art, music, physical education, character development, and social skills, to make more instructional time available for test preparation in math and reading” (Rothstein, 2008, p. 2). Rothstein (2008) further states:

From an irrational faith in the ability of standardized tests to inspire greater learning, and from an unwillingness to finance more expensive tests that would sample critical thinking as well as basic skills, we’ve again narrowed the curriculum to ‘minimum competency,’ precisely the 1970’s standard that *A Nation at Risk* denounced. From a belief that an alleged decline in student achievement must be attributable to a decline in teacher quality, at best, or to malfeasance (low expectations) of teachers, at worst, many districts have attempted to overcome this teacher incompetence by implementing scripted, or nearly so, curricula. (pp. 3)

This has resulted in the deskilling of educators as they must exclusively focus on the *Test*, which has become the primary objective in American education. Students who fail to pass the competency tests are labeled as failures and subjected to additional schooling (summer), repeat testing, and a significant decrease in vital extracurricular activities such as sports, hobbies, and time with family and friends. Prior to the administration of *A Nation at Risk*, a National Commission on Excellence report placed the blame for our nations declining economic system on our nation’s

schools, while failing to consider the responsibility of the nation's other "social and economic institutions for learning" (Rothstein, 2008). Continuing with *No Child Left Behind*, the same type of obligatory placation is observed in regards to calming the fears of an increasingly disillusioned citizenry, as the government once again points to the education system as a miserable failure in arming students with the proper tools for corporate warfare in the twenty-first century.

Unfortunately, the mandates that underlie *No Child Left Behind* are methodically oriented toward the production of compliant young automatons, devoid of critical thinking skills but wholly functional in their ability to fill the latest market void. University graduates are essentially marketed as usable products specifically trained to perform tasks that are deemed necessary for the fulfillment of market demands. During the nineties, thousands of students *trained* in computer technology suddenly found themselves without any marketable skills when the boom suddenly reversed course. Universities have reverted to job training programs since the ideology that supports *No Child Left Behind* has minimal use for well-rounded intellectuals adept at critically analyzing the world in which they live. As previously mentioned, it is virtually impossible to separate education from the multiplicity of societal forces that define the criteria for a properly educated student – a product with a specific use. In order to initiate a sustained engagement with corporate ideology, it is necessary to not only define the forces that induce control, but to also grasp the ways in which individuals become conditioned to the passive, uncritical acceptance of egregious governmental and corporate practices that deny a voice to the inner self. Democracy is no longer a vestige of liberty and freedom, but a conditioned choice on the postmodern highway of consumer demand. According to Barber (1995), "if the traditional conservators of freedom were democratic constitutions and Bills of Rights, 'the new temples to liberty,' George Steiner suggests, 'will be McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken'" (p. 7). It is in this vein that I approach this study, both

as a sustained indictment of the controlling mechanisms in American society and a methodical explanation of the conditioned self as it attempts to survive the onslaught of ideological discourse that seeks to define every aspect of existence. When individuals begin to understand the *conditioned* self, resistance is a real possibility.

As previously discussed, one of the ways in which ideology – specifically neoliberal ideology – attempts to gain control of individuals is through government actions that are perceived to be in the best interest of its citizenry, with the primary training grounds being our nation’s public schools. The *No Child Left Behind* act is a proficient method in mainstreaming education toward minimum competency standards predominately focused on reading and math while relatively little attention is given to the humanities curriculum, which is composed of courses such as social studies, literature, history, and the cultural arts, areas of study that refine critical thinking skills and engage the learner with various philosophical tenets. According to Weller (2002), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has as its primary goal to provide an environment conducive to basic learning skills for every child, but “in the last 35 years the ESEA has failed to provide a quality education for all students despite directing more than \$130 billion towards that goal” (p. 1). Furthermore, as Weller (2002) points out, “the new testing requirements may negatively affect curriculum and disguise school failure by setting the standard for proficiency so low as to be meaningless” (p. 1). Under the ESEA, *No Child Left Behind* becomes a federally mandated program that strictly enforces competency testing in reading and math while requiring schools track Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) over a twelve-year period, creating a huge vacuum in the flexibility of teaching methods, curriculum, and variation in student learning. In setting a 100 percent passage requirement within 12 years, “states will probably adopt relatively low standards for proficiency [which] may in turn reduce schools’ ability to help students excel... if a student with

an IQ of 150 barely achieves proficiency it serves institutional goals, but neither the students nor the school can truly be considered successful” (p. 4). With this in mind, the success of a school district must depend on a measure of mediocrity, as the ability to maintain compliance always already reverts back to the lowest common denominator. Furthermore, teachers are forced to “teach to the test,” meaning that both teacher creativity and student ingenuity are reduced to mere appendages on the test-taking timetable, a process that not only deskills teachers but also significantly decreases a students’ opportunity to explore self and the environment without the artificial demands of a mandated curriculum.

Mis-Education

When considering the ways in which individuals “buy into” the market version of freedom, and the government’s inexplicable desire to continue with educational mandates that do more harm than good, the question I often ask myself is: Why? What purpose does education serve? What purpose does *mis*-education serve? In his review of Chomsky’s book, *Chomsky on MisEducation*, Apple (2001) reacts to the notion of a neutral curriculum “linked to a neutral system of accountability which in turn is linked to a system of school finance... supposedly, when it works well, students will learn ‘good’ knowledge and get ‘good’ jobs” (p. 1). The inherent logic behind this plan is *good*, but only when it becomes a plan designed to inculcate the skills needed to promote difference, a type of difference that becomes the driving force for educational, political, and cultural change - difference in the Deleuzian sense of expanding upon interpretation, realizing the difference in each attempt at repetition. This requires an atmosphere conducive to the exploration of ideas, images, philosophical works, and various forms of art – an atmosphere that begs the mind to think critically. Unfortunately, the ability to learn critical thinking skills is not a component of good

schooling American style, as the system that provides education has a vested role in a specific type of learning. According to Apple (2001):

Its foundational claims about neutral knowledge are simply wrong. If we have learned anything from the intense and continuing conflicts over what and whose knowledge should be declared ‘official’ that have raged throughout the history of curriculum in so many nations, it should have been one lesson. There is an intricate set of connections between knowledge and power. Questions of whose knowledge, who chooses, how this is justified – these are *constitutive* issues, not ‘add-ons’ that have the status of afterthoughts. (pp. 1)

When governments and corporations decide what constitutes “good knowledge,” the curriculum is controlled, and the best way to exert control is to do it in such a way that individuals feel that they are in control – the skill of ideology lies not in the advancement of power through displays of force, but the utilization of knowledge as a means to subtly induce control, a perfection of repetition that methodically denies difference. As Apple (2001) notes, “the construction of good education not only marginalizes the politics of knowledge, but it offers little agency to students, teachers, and community members... it represents what Ball has called ‘the curriculum of the dead’” (p. 1). There is no life in a curriculum that forbids the creativity of play.

Winnicott (1986) describes the concept of creativity as a sense of “being” that becomes an integral part of living, a feeling that one exists apart from stimulus-response interactions. According to Winnicott (1986), “to be creative a person must exist and have a feeling of existing, not in conscious awareness, but as a basic place to operate from... impulse must be at rest, but when the word ‘doing’ becomes appropriate, there is creativity” (p. 39). Creativity grows out of play, a process that begins in infancy and continues throughout childhood when children are

allowed to explore their environment without the constant tension of abject compliance. In short, “creativity, then, is the retention throughout life of something that belongs properly to infant experience: the ability to create the world” (p. 40).

We need to find creative ways to bring community and education together, in such a way that children are not continually “dulled down” by a curriculum that has little to do with their current life situation – we are in need of a curriculum that empowers students and parents to make changes in their own communities without the undue influence of mandates that ensure continued loss of creativity.

Classic Image of Thought

Deleuze (1994) discusses the classic image of thought as a presupposition that a true thinker possesses good will, that a good method of thinking is coupled with a “presupposed image of thought” that will automatically produce goal-directed behavior. In other words, when thought is controlled through strict adherence to methodology, and the re-production of what is defined as “good nature” has been ascribed through societal norms and biased education, the ability to *think thought through* becomes an impossible task. According to Deleuze (1994), “we designate error, nothing but error, as the enemy to be fought; and we suppose that the *true* concerns solutions – in other words, propositions capable of serving as answers” (*emphasis added*, p. 3). Consequently, solutions become a byproduct of ideological servitude brought forth in the countless ways that Corporate America defines freedom (market-based), government defines democracy, and Western ideals define notions of goodness and truth. We are all governed by a “classic image of thought, and as long as the critique has not been carried to the heart of that image it is difficult to conceive of thought as encompassing those problems which point beyond the propositional mode; or as

involving encounters which escape all recognition; or as confronting its true enemies, which are quite different from thought; or as attaining that which tears thought from its natural torpor and notorious bad will, and forces us to think” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 3). Deleuze forces us to think by recognizing the entrapment of thought in the images consumed as we are indoctrinated through education, advertising, movies, television, and the media, a process that slowly erodes the ability to think beyond the image – the inability to interrogate the “heart” of the message.

When I think about my place in the field of curriculum, I am reminded that educational reform cannot occur without an understanding of the societal forces that constantly exert pressure upon bodies in the *system*, a dehumanizing mass of Deleuzian “assemblages” intricately aligned with ideological control. As a professional counselor, I constantly search for the etiology of behavior, the driving force behind what appears to be quite maladaptive in terms of self-awareness and rational decision-making. But to the average person, awareness fails to extend beyond credit card balances, ego-satiating desires, and materialistic self-enhancement. As a student of curriculum studies, I am acutely aware of the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to the field of education – I am intrigued by thoughts on thought in *Difference and Repetition*, humbled by aesthetic awareness in *Variations on a Blue Guitar*, and intellectually challenged by the curriculum theorists (professors) who taught me how to constantly and boldly scan the horizon as a means to escape the known (Deleuze, 1994; Greene, 2001). As corporations attempt to kill the intellectual, curriculum theorists are emboldened for battle. When thought can extend beyond the rational, depicting reason as an ingenious mechanism of control, awareness begins to seep into the cracks and crevices of ideological boundaries in such a way that consciousness evolves into conscientiousness – the precept for action. Freire refers to this process as “conscientization,” a critical consciousness that enables one “to analyze, to problematize (pose questions), and affect the sociopolitical, economic,

and cultural realities that shape our lives” (quoted in Pepi, 2004, p. 2). The ability to shape our environment and to transform ideological beliefs occurs through awareness and action, a process that Freire (1970) refers to as “praxis,” a necessary condition for sustainable change. According to Pepi (2004), “arguing that people cannot change a given situation simply through awareness or the best of intentions, or through guided action, he (Freire) contends that we, as active subjects, must continuously move from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action” (p. 4). We, as active proponents of progressive curricular change, must also continuously problematize, question, reflect, and act upon our theoretical analysis’ in order to expose ideological obscurantism, or as Bollas (1987) would say, the “unthought known.” The primary mechanism for collective social action is to incorporate critical awareness into the corporately-owned spaces of previously public institutions, a process that cannot occur until students learn how to think critically, begin to question egregious corporate practices, and mobilize community support for change – this all begins with conscientization and a sustained resistance to assimilate.

As a result of my curriculum studies, I have learned to constantly observe the media airways, the political landscape, the unreformed educational reformists, and the de-intellectualizing forces of corporate Universities in such a way that the possibility of interpretation is always already brought to an end, either by standardized tests, de-intellectualized teachers and professors, idiotic mandates, and zero-tolerance policies. There is simply no space in which to interpret. Alternatively, a post-structural pedagogy assumes that “meaning is not just inherent in the text, or given by the author, but rather created by the meanings and assumptions brought to it by the reader... each time we read, we are in the process of creating an interpretation and hence meaning in the text” (Martusewicz, 2001, p. 12). Each time we refuse to settle for that which *is*, we engage in multiplicity thinking and

a constant engagement with the *and*, always careful to avoid the definition that lurks behind ideological conformity.

As I discussed earlier, my argument against mandatory curriculum resides in the increasing prevalence of oppositional behavior among children and adolescents, resulting from an authoritarian approach to schooling, increased reliance on psychotropic medications in place of disciplinary techniques, and an education system that demands abject compliance to rules and regulations. When this type of schooling is compared to authoritarian parenting, the pervasiveness of control becomes readily apparent. Children of authoritarian parents are subjected to frequent punishment as opposed to discipline, rigid compliance, lack of encouragement, physical coercion, and a distinct absence of emotional connectivity. Furthermore, children exposed to authoritarian parenting become socially withdrawn and have difficulty making decisions, or more often, they begin to openly defy authority by engaging in risky behaviors such as sexual promiscuity, illegal drug use, petty crimes, and truancy. In a recent study conducted by Sharma and Sandhu (2006), they found that parenting dimensions had a significant effect on the externalizing behaviors of children (p. 1). According to Sharma and Sandhu (2006), “power assertive control though punitiveness/non-reasoning, verbal hostility and physical coercion is emotionally and physiologically arousing for children... such exposure lowers [the] threshold for emotional regulation, induces frustration, activates stress hormones and promotes angry cognitions and negative affects that may be translated into deviant activities, aggression, and defiance” (p. 8). These children are often diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder, or another behavior disorder that makes them prime candidates for a psychotropic medication, yet another method of authoritarian control. I have seen this countless times in my work with angry, depressed, and aggressive youth and adolescents, who have been the passive recipients of

authoritarian dictates from parents in the form of conditioned approval, physical punishment, and strict adherence to rules.

Furthermore, if their parents cannot “break” them, the school system will certainly attempt to do so through application of the same type of authoritarian dictates, including the evaluation of behaviors and attitudes “in accordance with an absolute set of standards,” unquestionable respect for authority and tradition, the discouragement of “verbal give-and-take” between teacher and child, and punitive measures for failure to act in accordance with prescribed mandates, regardless of their learning styles, creative abilities, or academic interests (Lakoff, 2005). According to Lakoff (2005), the “shaping” of children in accordance with a set of standards has a detrimental effect in a variety of areas, including “low self-esteem and internal locus of control.” In working with behaviorally disordered children over the years, I am seeing a significant increase in adolescents diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder, and even Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, along with subsequent increases in psychotropic medications such as mood stabilizers, atypical antipsychotics, and stimulants. It is no secret that many of the children diagnosed with ADHD do *not* in fact have ADHD, but in many cases are not challenged by a bland curriculum, are reacting to authoritarian demands, or even rebelling against a system that has no room for creative expression. This also means that the pharmaceutical industry is remarkably adept at influencing parents and teachers in the fantastic illusion that misbehavior can be treated with a pill, whether it is poor impulse control, aggression, or normal bouts of depression. Since playing is no longer legal, normal childhood behavior is treated as pathological and treated with a variety of pharmaceutical combinations. When children are drugged, they are compliant. And the school system cannot function when children show evidence of playfulness and creativity, just as the authoritarian parent cannot function when their rigid demands and strict discipline are subjected to the natural and

necessary inquisitiveness of a young child. In both cases, our children are being harmed by a form of control that prevents creative expression, environmental exploration, and independent decision-making. According to Lakoff (2005):

Strict discipline is supposed to make a child internally strong and able to control himself and thus produce in him a high sense of self-esteem. Again, the opposite is true. “Authoritarian parenting” is linked “with low self-esteem and external locus of control,” the need for someone else to be in control. (pp. 4)

As this study will argue, schooling demands a form of authoritarian compliance not unlike the dictator-like parent whose child reacts either through outright aggression and oppositional behavior, or begins to feel a discomforting gap between internal drive and external results, thus resulting in low self-esteem and a pathological reliance upon others. Furthermore, as Giroux (2004) points out, control is also exerted by the increased “militarization of public high schools,” citing a school district in Biloxi, Mississippi that had “surveillance cameras in all of its 500 classrooms... the not-so-hidden curriculum here is that kids can’t be trusted and that their rights are not worth protecting” (p. 37). Giroux (2004) also discusses the idiocy of zero-tolerance policies that readily turn students over to the juvenile justice system, justify officers aggressively patrolling school hallways, and an atmosphere focused on the maintenance of control with unquestionable allegiance to authority. This is certainly not the type of education that Dewey had in mind when he suggested that “education is the most important cultural functions... for Dewey, there is no supernatural, only the natural that is not yet known or created” (Garrison, 1997, p. 27). In our present mode of schooling, that which is “yet known or created” will remain a mystery, as the authoritarian forces of neoliberal ideology adamantly reject inquiry into the spaces “in-between.” The composition of our classed

capitalist system demands a certain level of poverty in order to function effectively, and mandatory schooling certainly accomplishes this task.

Like other curriculum theorists, I spend a lot of time thinking about other ways of being, becoming, struggling to create a progressive form of education that expands the mind to new forms of learning, not in the context of a controlled classroom, but in the countless opportunities for growth that can be found in aesthetics, complicated conversations, environmental awareness, reading, and engagement in the political process. For Dewey, “growth itself is the only moral end... Growing, or the continuous reconstruction of experience, is the only end” (quoted in Garrison, 1997, p. 29). According to Garrison (1997), “embracing this supreme value was Dewey’s way of answering the ultimate existential question: What is the meaning of life?” (p. 30). This is certainly a progressive vision of *becoming*, especially when compared to the dullness and mind-dissolving mandates that permeate postmodern education. As McNeil (1986) points out, educators are now controlling students by the content of curriculum, narrowed to a specific range of skills presented in a methodically boring manner, completely irrelevant to “real world” situations. Consequently, “defensive, controlling teaching does more than make content boring; it transforms the subject content from ‘real world’ knowledge into ‘school knowledge’” (McNeil, 1986, p. 191). Although the idea of education as a form of ideological control doesn’t occur to the majority of people, theorists working in the field of curriculum are constantly searching for creative “lines of flight” that put theory into practice. Again, the “vertical hour” in education arrives when the professor forces students to think critically about education, government policies, and the deterioration of public space - to put theory into practice by encouraging students to constantly engage the world in which they live (Morris, 2006).

CHAPTER 4

A SOFTER, GENTLER CAPITALISM

- *What improves the circumstances of the greater part can never be regarded as an inconveniency to the whole. No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the greater part of the members are poor and miserable. – Adam Smith*

Adam Smith

An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations is considered by a majority of corporate ideologues to be a treatise on the methodology of *laissez faire* capitalism, engendering support for the operation of a free market without the unnatural interference of governmental control. Of course, Adam Smith did support a market based on the principles of supply and demand, where the “invisible hand” of the market became the guiding force in the equitable distribution of goods and services. Smith (1904) viewed the market as the disseminator of public

good, as the division of labor constitutes a necessary arrangement for the fair price of goods and services, meaning that the invisible hand will ensure an appropriate balance between the amount of goods produced and subsequent demand. According to Smith (1904), “every man thus lives by exchanging, or becomes in some measure a merchant, and the society itself grows to be what is properly a commercial society” (p. 14). The surplus value of labor becomes the method for exchange, thus providing a measure of growth through the appropriate use of available resources. In its simplest form, Smith’s theory maintains that market strength will arise out of equity between supply and demand, thus producing a fair price for goods and services that ultimately provide a decent standard of living for the majority of the public. The perpetuation of capitalism based upon public good depends on the uninterrupted flow of capital without the undue influence of outside forces that would disrupt the natural processes inherent to a viable market. For this reason, Smith (1904) warned against governmental controls, insisting that any form of manipulation would always result in a favorable outcome for a specific group of people (special interest groups, corporations) while risking beneficence to the public domain.

The Possibility of Manipulation

Clearly, Smith was able to delineate the circumstances in which the market could be manipulated, as he warned not only against excessive government intervention, but also against the encroachment of “parish councils, church wardens, big corporations, guilds and religious institutions” (Krueger, 2001, p. 1). For the market to operate effectively – through a natural process guided by the “invisible hand” – there must be a measure of control over attempts to artificially manipulate the costs of goods and services. For example, the existence of monopolistic enterprises and special interest groups reduce the market’s ability to set fair prices, as the inequity of supply creates an unfair advantage for those who seek to maximize profits regardless of the social

consequences. In this realm, morality is abandoned to the insurrection of greed, creating a vacuum of prosperity where the purveyors of corporate wealth are blinded to the plight of a growing proletariat. According to Korten (2007), while corporate ideologues reject any restraint on the size or power of corporations, “Smith, on the other hand, opposed any form of economic concentration on the ground that it distorts the market’s natural ability to establish a price that provides a fair return on land, labor, and capital; to produce a satisfactory outcome for both buyers and sellers; and to optimally allocate society’s resources” (p. 1). Although Smith (1904) strongly felt that the market should remain free from outside interference, he also realized that human beings are conditioned for self-preservation and that each person will act in her own best interest. As Smith (1904) notes, “nobody but a beggar chuses (sic) to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow citizens, [and] even a beggar does not depend upon it entirely” (p. 9). Consequently, Smith theorized that the division of labor would account for a natural order of checks and balances in which the principle of reciprocity would be the guiding force in the preservation of social justice. Unfortunately, greed reduces reciprocity to an idealistic façade that slowly dissolves the realization of interdependence, a critical component of civil democracy.

When Smith wrote about a new economic system, the world was a different place – the market was confined to communities where individuals worked and traded with one another, attempting to earn a fair wage for honest labor. On a larger scale, Smith (1904) discussed the efficient division of labor as a decisive factor in the prosperity of a nation based on the specificity of job functions and the production of goods. According to Smith (1904):

In the progress of society, philosophy or speculation becomes, like every other employment, the principal and sole trade of a particular class of citizens. Like every other employment too, it is subdivided into a great number of different

branches, each of which affords occupation to a peculiar tribe or class of philosophers; and this subdivision of employment in philosophy, as well as in every other business, improves dexterity, and saves time. Each individual becomes more expert in his peculiar branch, more work is done upon the whole, and the quantity of science is considerably increased by it. (pp. 7)

In essence, the whole of society is subdivided into particular branches, each producing goods and services that ultimately benefit the entire populace. This model assumes an equitable distribution of resources followed by a steady rate of growth, a factor determined by the continuance of healthy competition and the absence of artificial controls. In theory, the *Wealth of Nations* lays the groundwork for a fair and balanced economic system based on labor as a source of value, a conception of capitalism that has current economists hailing Smith as their “intellectual patron saint” (Korten, 2007). According to Korten (2007):

Corporate libertarians maintain that the market turns unrestrained greed into socially optimal outcomes. Smith would be outraged by those who attribute this idea to him. He was talking about small farmers and artisans trying to get the best price for their products to provide for themselves and their families. That is self-interest, not greed. Greed is a high-paid corporate executive firing 10,000 employees and then rewarding himself with a multimillion-dollar bonus for having saved the company so much money. (pp. 2)

Selfish Desire vs. Inexhaustible Greed

On a certain level, Smith views the elucidation of selfish desire as an integral component of a healthy economic system, creating the necessary drive for individuals to pursue wealth through private interests... “from a person’s desire to seek his own advantages and improve his conditions,

wealth arises and an unintended or spontaneous order results” (Younkins, 2005, p. 4). In order for society as a whole to benefit from the “invisible hand” of the market, selfish desire must be separated from the contamination of inexhaustible greed, and the government must initiate a measure of control over egregious corporate practices that reduce competitive markets to agencies of oppression. In theory, the market has the ability to equitably disseminate a measure of economic prosperity to the populace, but in practice, the system cannot protect itself from the impulsive desires of unscrupulous profiteers. It should be noted that, while Smith’s theory initiated an economic system that placed a weighty portion of viability on individual desire, he does not establish political recourse as measure of governmental accountability when inevitably, corporations will transition from healthy desire to inexhaustible greed. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

In the *Wealth of Nations*, Smith (1904) struggles with the concept of moral responsibility, a concept that is explained by the sympathetic reciprocity that characterizes the nature of exchange and the principle of beneficence, but this points to a potential pitfall in capitalism without controls, as the “invisible hand” assumes that the pursuit of private interests will ultimately benefit all – that individuals will act in good faith. To rectify this problem, Smith (1904) “delineates two levels of virtues... his lower or commercial virtues are self-interested ones and include prudence, justice, industry, frugality, constancy, and so on, [while] the primary or nobler virtues includes benevolence, generosity, gratitude, compassion, kindness, pity, friendship, love, etc.” (Younkins, 2007, p. 1). Benevolence may generate reciprocity, but is not a moral imperative for the perpetuation of economic prosperity. Ironically, a benevolent disposition is a hindrance in late capitalism, where the ability to act in accordance with misanthropic certainty resolves the dilemma of moral consciousness. Smith believed that the majority of individuals surpassed the commercial

virtues and ultimately found happiness not in the pursuit of material wealth, but in the attainment of actualization through the primary virtues. Smith realized that many individuals never surpass the level of commercial values by falsely assuming that material wealth would bring happiness, but he maintained that the market would adjust to these “selfish desires” (Younkins, 2007). This assumption is certainly a significant theoretical flaw that has proved to be the downfall of late capitalism. However, “As an economist [Smith] teaches that capitalism can provide wealth... as a philosopher, however, he tells us that material possessions are not all that conducive to one’s happiness” (Younkins, 2007, p. 4). It is clear that Smith’s notion of human sentiments became a guiding force in his theory of economics, but faith in God’s natural orderliness cannot overcome the fallibility of a system that presupposes a level of rationality to the chaos of a free market. When Smith’s theory is viewed in the context of the postmodern era, knowledge has replaced labor as a source of value and corporations no longer operate within the boundaries of a particular nation – the rationality of the free market is based on a concept of a controlled chaos, but it is exactly this condition that creates corporate hegemony. The chaos allows for the ubiquity of control, a pervasiveness that defies tangibility.

In the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith (1790) contends that human nature is governed by a propensity to please others, to gain self-satisfaction through a sympathetic orientation to those around us. As previously noted, Smith believed that human nature would ultimately prevail as a stabilizing force in the creation of a better society, that “selfish desire” was a necessary component of growth but would ultimately be stabilized by the attainment of primary virtues. Smith viewed the majority of individuals as capable of empathic response based on the idea that happiness ultimately results from the favorable impression of others initiated by acts of benevolence. According to Smith (1790), “success... almost always depends upon the favour and good opinion

of their neighbors and equals; and without a tolerably regular conduct these can very seldom be obtained” (p. 41). Of course, not everyone will act in accordance with acceptable standards of conduct, but the natural order (invisible hand) of the market would minimize these deficiencies. As Younkins (2007) points out, “because justice is necessary for the preservation of society, God has designed nature as a system in which people pursuing their own interests in the economic realm, without thought to others or the whole, still act in ways that benefit society” (p. 4). This translates into a type of social justice based not on the initiation of controls that prevent corporations from acting egregiously, but on a divine rule of law that views human beings as innately conditioned to act in accordance with the precepts of morality. This would suggest that individuals do not act in accordance with free will, but that a higher order exists on the basis of moral sentiments – a fervent belief that the market will always adhere to the natural Goodness of mankind. In the Smithian era, where individuals were highly dependent on one another and the majority of communities were tied by common bonds of labor, there was a certain measure of accountability that belayed public malfeasance, but in late capitalism, the faceless consumers that inhabit the globalized arena have become immune to plight of fellow citizens as they plunder along in the haze of corporate ideology. The undeterred faith in God has slowly and insidiously evolved into a pious devotion to consumer satiation. Unfortunately, the corporations are so adept at the creation of desire that the infinite void of consumerism can no longer be filled by an all-knowing creator. Or, quite possibly – as in the case of neoconservatives – divine intervention is guiding the free-market prophets down a path that will lead to salvation. However, a more likely scenario – as Hitchens (2007) suggests – “is as if someone, offered a delicious and fragrant out-of-season fruit, matured in a painstakingly and lovingly designed hothouse, should throw away the flesh and pulp and gnaw moodily on the pit” (p. 283).

Despite Smith's adherence to a market free of external controls, he did advocate a form of economics based on the healthy competition of large numbers of firms responsible for the costs of production. As Korten (2007) points out, the basic tenet of cost internalization is that the majority of product costs are "born by the producer" and part of the selling price, but a common practice of monopolistic corporations is to externalize a percentage of a "product's costs to others not a party to the transaction... a form of subsidy that encourages excessive production and the use of a product at the expense of others" (p. 3). Neoliberals may point to Smith's theory of economics as the basis for adherence to the fundamentals of a free market, but he clearly did not advocate the reduction of social justice in favor of corporate prosperity – the corporation should be responsible for the entire cost of production, which will be passed on to the public at a fair cost. Korten (2007) discusses the practices of forest products corporations as an example of externalizing costs to outside sources, as they are allowed to "clear-cut government lands at giveaway prices," which in turn lowers the costs of timber products and encourages wasteful use. Why recycle when products are so cheap? When cost is externalized, the timber company makes a significant profit and the consumer may initially pay a lower cost, but "the public is forced, without its consent, to bear a host of costs related to watershed destruction, loss of natural habitat and recreational areas, global warming, and diminished future timber production" (Korten, 2007, p. 3). This is also true of the pharmaceutical industry, but in this case the public not only pays a significant portion of the production costs in the form of tax dollars (NIH funding, tax breaks), they also pay higher prices for the drugs that, in many cases, are necessary for survival. The failure to internalize costs is one that Smith never intended as an outcome of an unregulated market, as the primary motive of classic economic theory is to promote the public good, an intention which is grossly distorted by a neoliberal agenda that prioritizes private interests and reduces public institutions to the proliferated progeny of powerful

corporations. In contrast, Smith proposed a market in which a nation's citizenry benefited from the individual pursuit of wealth – “the invisible hand of the market translates the pursuit of self-interest into a public benefit” (Korten, 2007, p. 4). Local ownership and investment was a vital part of the public good:

By preferring the support of the domestic to that of foreign industry, he [the entrepreneur] intends only his own security, and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. (Smith quoted in Korten, 2007, p. 4)

It is evident that Smith's conception of a market economy was designed to promote a level of growth that had positive repercussions for all individuals, and that one's own security was highly dependent upon the prosperity of the nation as a whole. For this reason, adherence to cost internalization ensured that corporations did not transmit the expense of production to external resources, ultimately causing a systemic breakdown in the ties that bind a civil society.

Is it altogether possible that Smith's theory relied too heavily on the natural Goodness of mankind, a universe in which God endowed a measure of sympathy in even the harshest of life forms? According to Smith (1790), “the greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it” (p. 1). This certainly points to a flaw in Smith's theory, but he clearly understood the need for some type of oversight as he warned against undue influence from monopolistic entities that would interrupt the natural progression of growth. The idea of a market economy resulted in the vision of a nation using its own resources and buying power as a necessary component of wealth in terms of monetary value and public good, but in a globalized economy, the

market *is* the worldwide stage, where resources and labor are obtained from third world countries and corporations operate outside the boundaries of moral imperatives. Labor is no longer an indicator of a good's value, and the production of goods is no longer tied to a society's needs. If corporate ideologues truly wanted the market to operate in a "democratic fashion in the public interest... they would be calling for an end to corporate welfare, the breakup of corporate monopolies, the equitable distribution of property ownership, the internalization of social and environmental costs, local ownership, a living wage for working people, rooted capital, and a progressive tax system" (Korten, 2007, p. 5).

The combined impact of *The Wealth of Nations* and *Theory of Moral Sentiments* is to assess the moral nature of human beings as applied to an economic system based on a free market. According to Younkins (2007), "there is a logical flow from Smith's moral philosophy to his jurisprudence and political economy" as both books "provide a systematic and essentially unified whole in which moral and economic ideas are coordinated and integrated" (p. 1). Smith believed that human beings, although inclined toward selfish desire, ultimately act with a level of moral responsibility that will tend toward actualization of the whole, that the invisible hand of the free market will ultimately provide a level of prosperity for the entire nation. Unfortunately, the derivation of a socially just democracy based on a self-adjusting market does not lend itself to the moral precepts of postmodern America, as the relentless pursuit of power combined with an id-saturated nation of consumers produces gross disparities in wealth, rampant poverty, privatization of public institutions, and a political process controlled by corporate dollars. Although Smith was acutely aware of the propensity for malfeasance, he "assumed a natural preference on the part of the entrepreneur to invest at home where he could keep a close eye on his holdings... because local investment provides local employment and produces local goods for local consumption using local

resources, the entrepreneur's natural inclination contributes to the vitality of the local economy” (Korten, 2007, p. 4). While Smith's theory is based on sound economic principles, he not only fails to account for politicized avenues of accountability but also perpetuates a version of truth that categorizes the self as an object that naturally acts in accordance with the laws of the market, God's natural order, and a predictability that unmask the true aims of burgeoning capitalists. When applied to the era of late capitalism, where impersonal modes of communication, vast markets, and the breakdown of communities contribute to a lack of sympathetic reciprocity, moral imperatives bear little weight in the boardrooms of corporate America.

A Critique – Economies of Desire

In his analysis of Smith's theory of economics, Shapiro (2002) discusses the objectification of self as subjects are situated within a Foucauldian realm of truth that attempts to contain desire within the ideological boundaries, as the failure to control desire would result in the abolition of the moral order. While Smith could not have foreseen the deterioration of society within the bounds of late capitalism, his theoretical framework was dependent upon a discourse that effectively concealed power arrangements while promoting a notion of civic responsibility that failed to account for the self in relation to the political process. Essentially, the self is constrained by a “regime of truth” (Foucault, 1980) that elevates a priori or essentialist versions of self constrained by the power of discursive truths – the truth of a particular ideology. According to Schoolman (2002):

Through Foucauldian genealogical strategies Shapiro intervenes in established “discursive economies,” or systems of interpretation and exchange through which discourse acquires a range of values and gradually becomes entrenched.

The “linguistic impertinence,” as Shapiro describes it, of such intervention destabilizes these discursive economies and renders contingent and problematic beliefs that we accept as true and uncontested. (pp. xi)

This mode of inquiry challenges the democratic ideals espoused by Smith, which highlight the notion of the modern self as a repository of individual choice when in fact the “economy” should be intricately tied into cultural practices and texts, “though repressed and hidden from view, as are the systems authority and power to which the economy is related” (Schoolman in Smith, 2002, p. xii). Shapiro (2002) argues that Smith’s theory fails to address the possibilities of value in other forms, value that exists outside the prescribed boundaries of exchange involving money. According to Schoolman (2002), “recognition of these alternative forms of value production expose structures of power and authority that remain disguised by interpretive frameworks functioning to veil and mystify relations of domination” (p. xii).

Although Smith certainly laid the foundation for a notion of governance that adhered to the principles of representation, the fundamental ability to retreat from defining notions of self was preempted by the perpetuation of dominating philosophical tenets that categorize identities and ascribe a linguistic apparatus designed to inhibit individual freedom. In particular, Schoolman (2002) emphasizes Shapiro’s decidedly post-structural analysis which contends that “at a deeper, implicit level the community survives by closing off its moral boundaries... all systems and dynamics involved in signification, monetary and otherwise are severely restricted” (p. xii). Consequently, forms of desire are circumvented and managed by a system of significations that confines desire to narrowly defined boundaries that allow the presiding moral code to exert its power on the Self. As Schoolman (2005) points out:

In the absence of the Other who could arouse desire by being positioned with respect to

to all that which can be represented linguistically (signified) as desirable, the incitement of a desiring self is arrested. When models of desire do manage to evade the narrowly circumscribed systems of representation, the community wards off desire, repairs its boundaries, and mends itself by invoking its restricted linguistic economy. Desire is the value whose exchange must be closely regulated, for instability in the economy desire can render precarious and perhaps topple the moral order resting upon it.

(pp. xii)

This is an apt description for an economy that depends on the inhibition of various forms of desire in order to maintain the free-market establishment – the supreme corporate order that depends upon the edification of greed as the embodiment of desire. Late capitalism’s moral order resides in a form of religiosity that denies the ‘incitement of a desiring self’ by strict adherence to a God that supports conservative politics and the denial of various freedoms through a skewed interpretation of the bible and the delineation of certain desires as unconscionable sins. As McLaren (2005) points out, “for the true believers, God apparently regulates the world through the deregulation of the economy, where human beings can rise out of the ashes of poverty and into the well-spring of the American middle-class dream, if only the world would commit themselves to the trickle-down inevitability of capitalistic self-interest and trust the global robber barons to make life better for everyone” (p. 3). While Adam Smith certainly promoted moral responsibility as the cornerstone of a substantive democracy, he could not have foreseen the complete and utter breakdown of basic constitutional tenets under the auspices of religious fundamentalism and an arguably delusional concept of freedom.

In his discussion on Adam Smith, Shapiro analyzes the notion of sovereignty by first describing Hobbes theory of governmental control as a system “that institutes a strict form of inhibition that

stifles the exchange dimension of sovereignty with an obsessive concern for peace and safety... Because of this, the value emerging from the collective social relationship is compromised in that it is not re-experienced through continuous, participatory reactivation” (p. 7). Ultimately, Hobbes fails to account for the social component of exchange that expands flows and creates a notion of sovereignty that allows individuals to experience the Other, a necessary component in the production of a viable, productive community (Shapiro, 2002). According to Shapiro (2002), “precisely because of his emphasis on the original sovereignty of the subject, its ownership or authorship of its acts (as though conduct has meaning with a prior inscription of social inscription), Hobbes neglects that aspect of otherness – the symbolic exchange between self and other through which selves are constituted – that produces a socially available form of subjectivity” (p. 7). The strong adherence to a sovereign body aligns with Hobbes notion that monarchical forms of sovereignty allow for strict control of economies of exchange that, on a societal level, subvert individuality to the significations of a compliant social order. According to Shapiro (2002):

In exchange for the loss of control over meaning, subjects acquire the ability to enter into the social order within which the signification process is embedded and to which it refers. In short, to speak is not to *express* one’s individuality but to *suppress* it in order to participate within an institutionalized frame of intersubjectivity. A loss of individuality then is compensated, then, by a gain in sociability. (pp. 8)

The reduction of flows was the result of discursive system of obsequious rules and underlying significations that regulated social order and strengthened sovereign control.

In contrast, Smith was more concerned with economies of exchange, a social order in which “circulation and mobility” would produce a social configuration based on the flow of market exchange as opposed to a “ruler-ruled relationship” (Shapiro, 2002). Paradoxically, a system of

materialistic market exchange demanded a social configuration that was not only conducive to a predominately unregulated system, but one that posited an *individual* actor – one that was shaped by social interaction and a regulated discursive apparatus. Smith believed that “along with social interaction, social space and its dynamics must be shaped by governance... a management of flows rather than as the maintenance of a static sovereignty, a narrative incorporating the materialist version of government” that has ultimately led to the downfall of a government that places economic gain above societal beneficence.

In essence, Smith’s philosophy created a shift toward a predominately unregulated system of governance, although he did place significant emphasis on the need for adequate representation through the electoral process. Unfortunately, this form of government slowly dissolved into a market-based system that emphasizes individuality at the expense of sociability, a condition that is exemplified by a completely deregulated market based on a drive for material wealth. While Smith’s idea of a system composed of checks and balances within the three branches of government was certainly a step in the right direction, he failed to understand the propensity for greed and the preemption of moral responsibility based on the avarice of the human condition. Freud (2005) certainly recognized this as he describes a fundamental notion of progress that will be discussed in a later chapter, namely that countries “have attained a high level of civilization if we find that in them which can assist in the exploitation of the earth by man and in his protection against the forces of nature – everything, in short, which is of use to him – is attended to and effectively carried out” (p. 45). Furthermore, Smith made a distinction from a God that touched every facet of human existence to a God that remained graciously aloof from matters of the State. As Shapiro (2002) points out, “as important implication for Smith’s construction of the social as epistemological/sensational was its secularizing impulse... in a century still haunted by a deity

enchanted world, it was a significant departure for Smith to locate the control over morals within the physical/psychological orientation of persons toward the social” (p. 103). To many, the secularization of society is certainly a positive mechanism as the enactment of power is devoid of an adherence to the interpretations of an omniscient entity, but as Shapiro (2002) notes, “Smith’s secularizing was ultimately ambivalent... his language remained largely transcendental – he figured God as the great “author of the universe” – but his deity had retreated from human day-to-day existence, leaving behind mechanisms that Smith, in his unbounded optimism, believed to provide a structural guarantee that the self and the order would remain always attuned” (p. 103). This mode of thought has certainly set the stage for a notion of governance based on the enactment of constitutional guarantees, but functions through specific mechanisms of control that place the self as an unknowing recipient of ideological control. As noted throughout this study, the progression of corporate ideology has reached unfathomable egregiousness, beginning with a form of “schooling” that progressively inculcates children into a mindset that engenders compliance to the economic order and a culture that is controlled by a discursively appropriated economy of desire.

In postmodern society, the notion of economies of desire certainly is a vital component in the perpetuation of the corporate order. When desire is controlled – through a discursive and symbolic apparatus – there is always a “lack” which cannot be realized, accompanied by the loss of creativity and imagination necessary for critical awareness. Unfortunately, we are currently in the midst of an infinite, meaningless whole which can only be filled by the obligatory act of shopping.

John Adams

To say that our republic had a tenuous beginning would be an understatement of vast proportions. The founding fathers conceived a government based on the ideals of democracy and the pursuit of independence, but there was significant disagreement between the two parties

(Democratic-Republican and Federalist) regarding the extent of powers inherent to the governing bodies. For John Adams, independence from Britain was an essential component of economic and political freedom, a point he argued with “brilliance and persistence,” eventually becoming a member of the committee that drafted the declaration of independence (Padover, 2006). Although Adams adhered to the idea of a republic, he opposed the Jeffersonian belief that human beings were “naturally good and decent,” ultimately believing that most people were “greedy and selfish... the average person, he felt, could not be entrusted with power” (Padover, 2006, p. 4). Adams advocated for a government that would keep people in check, a government that would represent the will of the people, as opposed to the dictates of an ideology.

The Death of a True Democracy

While Adams views may seem overly pessimistic, he foresaw the rapid deterioration of a nation in the throes of a truly democratic government, where battles over power would preempt the constitutional guarantees of liberty and equal justice. It is clear from his writings that he viewed the presidency as a powerful position deserving of a talented individual who could make decisions based on the welfare of the nation as opposed to the political leanings of the majority party. The republican government envisioned by Adams is not the neoliberal reposit of financially-motivated ideologues that currently restrict our freedom, but an administration composed of intellectuals who could critically engage the problems that faced a fledgling nation.

An avid devotee to intellectual pursuits such as philosophy, political thought, and science, Adams was disheartened by the constant bickering within the party system and fought to preserve a level of authority in matters that concerned foreign policy and economic security (Padover, 2006). Adams was highly suspect of Republicans who were ready to engage France in war and remained steadfast in his deliberate negotiation of a peaceful resolution, a diplomatic victory that resulted in a

peace accord before the end of his term in office. In an era of such unrest, Adams fought to maintain diplomatic relations with countries that harbored a certain level of distrust and hostility toward the newly established government. In defense of his position regarding an aristocratic leadership, he most likely viewed many aristocrats during this time as intellectually superior and therefore quite capable of critically analyzing the course of decision-making that would dictate this country's future. Adams wanted to avoid war at all costs, as this would only fracture the much-needed economic relationships with Britain and France, as well as weaken the infrastructure of an already struggling republic.

According to Adams (1776), "fear is the foundation of most governments; but it is so sordid and brutal a passion, and renders men in whose breasts it predominates so stupid and miserable, that Americans will not be likely to approve of any political institution which is founded on it" (p. 1). For this reason, Adams felt strongly about the need to have checks on power along with a strong judiciary, as strict adherence to just laws allays collective fear and reduces the propensity for social injustice. When discussing the fundamentals of a republic, Adams was convinced that an electorate swayed by the frills of power would quickly degenerate into a government that resembled a true democracy, where the will of the people would be quickly usurped by a powerful minority. This is certainly true in late capitalism, where it can be argued that a true democracy – based on the dictates of a free market – has given free reign to a small but powerful section of the population (corporate America), whose policies clearly violate the constitutional rights outlined by the founders of this country. Adams's vision of a strong judiciary has devolved into a conservatively-based legal system through which corporations – represented by high-priced attorneys – argue *ad infinitum* about the need for corporate tax breaks, patent extensions on brand-name medication, trade

agreements, and monopolistic enterprises. It is clear that America is operating not as the republic that Adams' envisioned, but as the true democracy that Adams' warned against.

According to Adams (1776), "the dignity and stability of the government in all its branches, the morals of the people, and every blessing of society depend so much upon an upright and skillful administration of justice, that the judicial power ought to be distinct from both the legislative and executive, and independent upon both, that so it may be a check upon both" (p. 4). The "skillful administration of justice" would be the only way to ensure a government that obeyed the laws set forth in the constitution, which became a measure of civil obedience to those endowed with the power of legislation. Adams viewed this as a measure of accountability that was not a consideration of the monarchy from which America was attempting to gain independence. Adherence to just laws would have to be enforced by a strong and independent judiciary, as Adams truly believed that human beings would quickly degenerate into moral turpitude if left to their own devices. Adams's ability to rectify the demands of justice with the obligations of liberty is evident in his political thought, as he continuously expands upon notions of freedom and the fragility of true independence. As Thompson (2002) points out:

Liberty, for Adams, meant freedom from foreign domination, freedom from unjust government coercion, freedom from other individuals, and freedom from the tyranny of oneself. A free people ought to be jealous of their rights and liberties, and they must always stand on guard to protect them. Adams knew that genuine freedom is fragile, fleeting, and rare; few people have it and those that do must fight to keep it. (pp. 2)

The basis for Adams' political thought is certainly found in his zealous determination to keep America free from foreign domination, a cause that guided his constitutional philosophy and tireless

efforts to promote diplomatic solutions with Britain and France. Adams sought to instill a sense of freedom in the hearts and souls of fellow Americans that would protect individual rights from constant threats of oppression. While Adams sought to instill a preponderance of power in the aristocratic realm of society, he understood the necessity of balancing governmental authoritarianism with a careful eye toward the remediation of oppressive tactics. In constructing the governmental division of powers, Adams believed the first task “was to find some kind of constitutional device by which to neutralize the vices, but also to draw out and up the talents of the exceptional few... the second and related task was to constitutionalize the naturally occurring conflict between the wealthy few and the poor many” (Thompson, 2002, p. 2). As Thompson (2002) points out, “the great problem of constitutional construction was in reconciling aristocratic ambition with democratic envy” (p. 2). When Adams helped to construct the constitution, he felt that the only way to preserve peace was to instill a strong and educated executive branch of government, capable of rising above fractious party lines in order to make decisions that prioritized the establishment of diplomatic relations with other countries, negotiated trade agreements, and ensured fair representation for the citizens of the United States. This proved to be an especially difficult and unpopular task in an era where individuals were highly suspect of aristocratic control, falling on the heels of a violent and bloody revolution against a monarchy that had little tolerance for democratic citizenship.

Prior to the beginning of the war for independence, Adams pondered the state of affairs that existed in the new land, writing in his diary that “we have not men fit for the times... we are deficient in genius, education, in travel, fortune – in everything. I feel unutterable anxiety” (quoted in McCullough, 2001, p. 23). Times were difficult, and the conditions of existence did not forgive the faint of heart. Adams was relatively new to the political process, but could see the need for a

sustained intellectual and physical assault against the harbingers of oppression if America hoped to free itself from the monarchist rule of Britain. In early 1776, when Washington and his command left for Boston to engage the Red Coats, Adams reluctantly stayed behind to perform his duty in the “unglamorous labors of congress,” but always approaching public service with a tenacious resolve to ensure liberty for the new continent (McCullough, 2001). In doing so, he often upset members of both parties as he held no aversion to addressing issues without the pleasantries of tact or the boundaries of party lines. According to McCullough (2001), “while Jefferson wished to avoid the rough and tumble of life whenever possible, John Adams’s irrepressible desire was to seize hold of it, and at times his was to be the path of Don Quixote” (p. 113). When compared to the political undertones of postmodern society, a large majority of our vaunted politicians lack the fortitude to “seize hold” of the moment and to reject the ideological undertones that engage in war not for liberty but for profit, that cast votes based upon financial incentives as opposed to the will of the people, and that espouse empty political slogans based on a fanatical drive for power instead of a sincere desire to abolish oppression. In contrast, Adams made decisions based on responsibility to his fellow countrymen, despite the admonitions of those who felt that Adams passion for diplomacy clouded his judgement in matters that required military intervention. Regardless, as McCullough (2001) notes:

He had shown unflinching devotion to the cause of his country, “swim or sink, live or die.” He had never walked away from work that needed doing. He had never failed to speak his mind when it counted, to take a stand and fight for what he believed. Yet remarkably, he had never lost his temper or attacked anyone in a personal way, no matter the bitterness or inner fury to be found in some of his private writings. (pp. 163)

During the construction of the constitution, Adams worked tirelessly to gain independence without any concessions to representatives such as Lord Howe, who infamously declared that he would not acknowledge members of congress since they were a body that was not acknowledged by the king (McCullough, 2001). In his response to Lord Howe, Adams responded: “Your Lordship may consider me in what light you please... and indeed, I should be willing to consider myself, for a few moments, in any character which would be agreeable to your Lordship, except that of a British subject” (quoted in McCullough, 2001, p. 157). Do we have such individuals today – those who are willing to take a selfless stand against free-trade policies, unwarranted aggression, environmental degradation, or government waste? Is there anyone who can truly act in accordance with public service, without regard for personal power, prestige, or the ever present conundrum of re-electability? It is not surprising that politicians today are viewed with such skepticism and disdain, as the campaign slogans, jingoistic speeches, and promises for change slowly and insidiously dissolve into the catacombs of obligatory rhetoric, only to be resurrected when the bids for re-election elicit the calls for redemption.

An Honorable Notion of Liberty

During his term in office, Adams was plagued by unpopular sentiments from both the Republican and the Federalist parties, mainly due to his “stubborn independence” and zealous drive for peace in the face of bilateral pronouncements for war with France (Padover, 2006). After the Convention of 1800, in which peace with France was finally achieved, Adams said, “I desire no other inscription over my gravestone than: ‘Here lies John Adams, who took upon himself the responsibility of peace with France in the year 1800’” (quoted in Padover, 2006, p. 3). Despite the problems that plagued the Federalist Party, including passage of the “violently unpopular” Alien and Sedition Acts, Adams’s political philosophy and disregard for popular sentiment serve as an

example of the utter tenaciousness with which he fought for just laws and peaceful resolutions to threats from abroad, acutely aware that a war with the French Empire would have disastrous results for the fledgling Republic (Padover, 2006). For Adams, the notion of liberty was at the forefront of his ideas regarding a prosperous nation, along with a caustic determination to establish a government that objectively sought freedom and justice in its administration of power. Adams (1776) was adamant about the need to have frequent elections in order to maintain an electorate that could be held responsible for their decisions, and prosecution to the fullest extent of the law in cases where public officials engaged in any sort of impropriety or misbehavior. According to Adams (1776), the elections should be held on an annual basis, “there not being in the whole circle of sciences a maxim more infallible than this... this will teach them (officials) the great political virtues of humility, patience, and moderation, without which every man in power becomes a ravenous beast of prey” (p. 4). Throughout his political philosophy, it is evident that Adams had a basic distrust of human nature, and felt that an intricate system of checks and balances should be implemented in order to ensure an equal balance of power. It is also clear that Adams held the highest regard for public service, but developed a great aversion to a political process that he viewed as a necessary evil in the fight to preserve independence. As a result, Adams was passionate about his beliefs and engaged his political opponents with a tenaciousness that would not succumb to undue pressure, enticements for power, or political favors. As Adams (2008) once remarked, “in politics the middle way is none at all.” Independence was not gained through the passive coercion of a monarchy, but won by a relentless passion for liberty. It is in this vein that Adams serves as a staunch reminder of the need for individuals who refuse to compromise core beliefs, to actively place the responsibility of public service above the need for self-indulgence, and to forcefully defend a position based on collective beneficence as opposed to the appeasement of

those in power. In an era defined by corporate greed, political corruption, and unbridled consumerism, we are besieged by the ironic fate that a true democracy will implode the foundation of social justice as the harbingers of power slowly erode the balance of justice that Adams fought so hard to preserve. Freedom is now intricately associated with the free market, and corporate power has evaded every aspect of our supposedly democratic way of life. As previously noted, Adams asked us to remember that “democracy never lasts long... It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself” (McCullough, 2001). With this in mind, we need to ask ourselves whether we should passively observe a long, slow death, or begin to collectively resist the ideological haze that equates freedom with consumer choice, imparts democracy through corporate warfare, and destroys the fabric of society by privatizing the public arena.

CHAPTER 5

HARDBALL

- *The only way that has ever been discovered to have a lot of people cooperate together voluntarily is through the free market... And that's why it's so essential to preserving individual freedom.* – Milton Friedman

Uncle Miltie

During his reign as the economic guru of the last half of the twentieth century, Friedman has advocated a brand of capitalism that views an unfettered free market as the grand arbiter of individual freedom. In the tradition of classical economic theory outlined by Adam Smith in the *Wealth of Nations*, Friedman advocated a free market economy with a minimal amount of intervention from the Federal government, maintaining that the only route to political freedom was through economic freedom. While Friedman espoused many of Smith's views in regards to decreased government intervention, it is clear that he delineated the Fed's role as vastly different in regards to monetary policy and intervention in matters of social justice. For Smith, government intervention should occur when undue influences attempt to restrict the flow of free trade, such as

monopolistic enterprises or pressure from special interest groups. Friedman also advocated decreased government intervention, but clearly separated the micro and macro levels of economic policy as he specified monetary controls as an integral part of stimulus growth. According to Rothbard (1971):

The idea is that there are two sharply separated and independent worlds of economics. On the one hand, there is the "micro" sphere, the world of individual prices determined by the forces of supply and demand. Here, the Chicagoans concede, the economy is best left to the unhampered play of the free market. But, they assert, there is also a separate and distinct sphere of "macro" economics, of economic aggregates of government budget and monetary policy, where there is no possibility or even desirability of a free market. (p. 3)

The inherent difficulty of separating the two spheres of economics is the inability to inject fiscal control while ignoring the free markets maximization of decreased intervention on the micro level, a scenario that is currently being played out among the American public as Exxon recently posted the largest profit in the history of American corporations, while consumers are reeling from skyrocketing fuel prices, inequitable taxation, and the siphoning of tax dollars into an inexplicable war that has enriched CEO's and brought misery to countless numbers of innocent victims. In Friedman's view, government intervention on the micro level – price controls – would be an artificial injection of control and therefore inhibit the “invisible hand” of the market, ultimately preventing the competitive nature of businesses vital the appropriation of fair prices. On the other hand, Friedman advocates economic intervention on the macro level in terms of monetary control and taxation, an approach that has earned Friedman and his “Chicago School” followers the label of “monetarists.” According to Mundell (1983), “the Friedman monetarists... focus on the role of the

money supply, without any belief in wage control – they expect wages to be controlled over a longer period by unemployment which will cause wage demands to be reduced or at any rate moderated” (p. 49). When comparing this approach to that of the Keynesians - who focus on the control of wages and incomes policies – Friedman believed that supply would be automatically controlled by demand, leaving the government largely responsible for the production of money and the creation of an environment conducive to the privatization of the public domain. Consequently, Friedman (1963) believed that “inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon,” and that the role of the government should be significantly restricted in terms of economic guidance. According to Mundell (1983), “monetarism under the regime of Milton Friedman has come to mean instability and excessive inflation, a breakdown of discipline both monetary and budget, [as] budget deficits are simply financed through inflation” (p. 47). The point of emphasis is on the introduction of policies designed to decrease government intervention while subsequently increasing reliance on the free market, ultimately placing the responsibility of economic feasibility into the hands of private corporations. As Jones (2006) points out, “Friedman and his disciples worked for decades on macro-econometric models that were supposed to provided a rigorous edifice for a monetarist perspective – that inflation is the only macroeconomic problem demanding a policy solution, and that inflation is a monetary problem... excess money supply, and the inevitable inflation, is the fault of the government” (p. 2). Although this is an oversimplification of Friedman’s thinking, it does point to the fact that monetary control is the foundation of the Chicago School’s theory, along with the subsequent belief that government policies should only be designed to control money supply. When the market is able to function without artificial controls, perfect competition will result in the fabled microeconomic wonderland of political freedom, ideal wage and price controls, optimum employment, and moderate levels of growth. Unfortunately, economic freedom does not mean

political freedom, and the annihilation of government control can only proceed under the “shock” of a monumental crisis.

The monetarist theory grew out of Friedman’s work at the University of Chicago’s Economics Department in the 1950’s, “a place intensely conscious of itself not just as a school but as a School of Thought... it was building and strengthening the Chicago School of economics, the brainchild of a coterie of conservative academics whose ideas represented a revolutionary bulwark against the dominant ‘statist’ thinking of the day” (Klein, 2007, p. 49). Following the Great Depression, the need for government regulation was acutely evident and the economic proposals of Keynes combined the kind of “mixed, regulated economy” that initiated a transformation in public policy, ultimately leading to the progressive ideas outlined in the New Deal (Klein, 2007). During this time, government intervention in terms of health care, education, and wage controls combined with a capitalist foundation ensured a healthy level of growth while engendering the type of governmental oversight that protected citizens against the fundamentalist *laissez faire* policies inherent to the Chicago School’s brand of capitalism. According to Klein (2007), “the Chicago School strain of capitalism does indeed have something in common with other dangerous ideologies: the signature desire for unattainable purity, for a clean slate on which to build a reengineered model society” (p. 20). Consequently, any type of government intervention is viewed as a potential source of contamination in a virtual reality that relies on the purely hypothetical conceptualization of perfect competition, a condition that will invariably lead to ideal wages, stable growth, and low unemployment. It is in this vision of a utopian-like economic doctrine that strains of neoliberal thought begin to emerge, resounding in the corporatized splendor of rampant privatization, school vouchers, borderless economies, and Friedman’s (1962) false premise that “economic freedom is also an indispensable means toward the achievement of political freedom”

(p. 7). Unfortunately, the conditions needed to support a free-market are more conducive to the repression of democratic rights and the outlets for collective resistance, as the basis for competition resides in the resolution of the more powerful opponent – there is a winner and a loser. Without intervention, resistance is futile.

A Clean Slate

In order to implement a model of perfect competition, Friedman and his followers would need an environment conducive to the introduction of monetarist policies, free of governmental restraints and prohibitions against social injustice. Consequently, Friedman sought to create conditions that would provide a “clean slate,” a veritable ideological cleansing that would remove all traces of economic and social conditions in order to implement the doctrine of free-market fundamentalism. To achieve this goal, Friedman was acutely aware of the need to act in times of crisis, to take advantage of psychological “shock” as the basis for sweeping reform, ultimately perfecting the Chicago School’s power to resurrect unbridled corporate power from the depths of the Great Depression. According to Klein (2007), the “desire for godlike powers of creation is precisely why free-market ideologues are so drawn to crises and disasters... non-apocalyptic reality is simply not hospitable to their ambitions” (p. 20). Klein (2007) convincingly argues that the neoliberal vision advanced by Friedman and the Chicago School is invested in a notion of change found in the unspoken annals of the “shock doctrine,” a celestial vision of economic harmony that can only occur amidst the societal disequilibrium of a major disaster. According to Klein (2007):

For thirty-five years, what has animated Friedman’s counterrevolution is

an attraction to a kind of freedom and possibility available only in times of cataclysmic change – when people, with their stubborn habits and insistent demands, are blasted out of the way – moments when democracy seems a practical impossibility. Believers in the shock doctrine are convinced that only a great rapture – a flood, a war, a terrorist attack – can generate the kind of vast, clean canvases they crave. (pp. 21)

It is in these “cataclysmic” moments when human beings are “psychologically unmoored and physically uprooted, that the artists of the real plunge in their hands and begin their work of remaking the world” (Klein, 2007, p. 21). Evidence of “shock” policies abound in the pseudo-democratic principles of neoliberal ideology, as the introduction of free-market fundamentalism to countries around the world is invariably aligned with a form of repression that dissolves social cohesion by adherence to staunch individualism, drastic cuts in government aid, and a depoliticized public arena. Friedman’s idea of economic freedom is certainly not a precursor to political freedom, as the ability to impose Chicago School reform is dependent upon the passive acceptance of an ideology that, in many cases, can only be imposed through authoritarian means. A prime example of this is methodically outlined by Klein (2007) as she discusses the application of the shock doctrine in Chile during the mid 1970’s, when Chilean economists educated under Friedman at the Chicago School implemented monetarist policies in the military government of General Augusto Pinochet.

The Chilean Experiment

Pinochet gained control of the country in September 1973, following the ruthless overthrow of Salvador Allende, who ascended to power in 1970 through democratic elections and a “platform promising to put into government hands large sectors of the economy that were being run by

foreign and national corporations” (Klein, 2007, p. 64). Prior to 1970, the Chicago School fundamentalists specifically trained Chilean students in the ideology of free-market capitalism as part of a larger U.S. policy to counteract nationalist economics in Latin America, all at the expense of American taxpayers (Klein, 2007). In turn, the Chilean students – ardently trained in the basics of corporate ideology – returned to their homeland in hopes of converting thousands of economic students into disciples of Friedman, ultimately transforming Latin American countries into a vast, borderless proving ground for capitalist expansion. In the decade before Allende was voted into office, the Chicago School experiment did not have the effect hoped for by U.S. officials, as “the main economic debate in the Southern Cone was not about *lasses-faire* capitalism versus developmentalism but about how best to take developmentalism to the next stage” (Klein, 2007, p. 62). According to Klein (2007):

It was in Chile – the epicenter of the Chicago experiment – that defeat in the battle of ideas was most evident. By Chile’s historic 1970 election, the country had moved so far left that all three major political parties were in favor of nationalizing the largest source of revenue: the copper mines then controlled by U.S. mining giants. The Chile Project, in other words, was an expensive bust. As ideological warriors waging a peaceful battle of ideas with their left-wing foes, the Chicago Boys had failed in their mission. (pp. 63)

It soon became apparent to U.S. corporations, who had invested heavily in Latin American countries, that “staggering” losses were on the horizon as Chile set the stage for the denunciation of free-market capitalism and its concordant prescriptions for governmental control (Klein, 2007). Consequently, the U.S. initiated an offensive collaboration with Pinochet in order to initiate a coup - an intricate, top-secret plan coordinated with the CIA and the Chicago Boys designed to initiate

massive shock onto the population of Chile, procuring the psychological and physical debilitation needed to produce a “clean slate” onto which a new ideology could be introduced (Klein, 2007). The end result was the ruthless overthrow of a sitting president, massive human rights violations, torture, and the senseless deaths of thousands of accused left-wing dissenters who dared to invoke their right to free-speech. In the end, “the shock of the coup prepared the ground for economic shock therapy,” and “out of this live laboratory emerged the first Chicago School state, and the first victory in its global counterrevolution” (Klein, 2007, p. 71). In this respect, neoliberal ideology cannot be construed as a necessary counterpoint for political freedom, but a sufficient condition for authoritarian rule.

Following the overthrow of Allende, the Chicago Boys “recommended the application of what Friedman had already taken to call ‘shock treatment’ or a ‘shock program,’ immediately halting the printing of money to finance the budget deficit, cutting state spending twenty to twenty-five percent, laying off tens of thousands of government workers, ending wage and price controls, [and] privatizing state industries” (Grandin, 2006, p. 1). This effectively dismantled government control of the economy and provided fertile ground for the procession of corporate warfare, allowing companies to assume ownership of state resources without the accompanying provisions of state regulations and social beneficence. As an added bonus, the junta ensured the complete repression of all forms of resistance by waging a campaign of terror against anyone suspected of sympathizing with the former regime. According to Grandin (2006), “Allende’s downfall came because he refused to betray Chile’s long democratic tradition and invoke martial law, yet Friedman nevertheless insisted that the military junta offered ‘more room for individual initiative and for a private sphere of life’ and thus a greater ‘chance of a return to a democratic society’” (p. 2). The flawed irony of Friedman’s statement reeks of ideological delusiveness, as the introduction of

democracy should be the result of a collective societal movement to reject governmental oppression and not a military operation designed to inflict psychological and physical devastation. When this is compared to recent conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan, the “shock and awe” of the initial military strike was designed to rapidly destroy the fabric of Iraqi society as a means of producing a “clean slate,” a position from which the U.S. could initiate economic policy that would coalesce Iraqi resources into an extension of the global market.

In the 2005 State of the Union speech, Bush declared that “it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the democratic movements in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny around the world” (quoted in CNN, 2005, p. 1). At face value, this policy is seemingly magnanimous in appeal, but the implementation of democracy “American style” means that free-market ideologues will dissolve the economic foundations of susceptible countries and embark on a sustained attempt to privatize every aspect of existence, ultimately laying waste to government regulation of capital markets and state ownership of natural resources. The type of free-market ubiquity promoted by Friedman and the Chicago School is disguised as a venue for democratic freedom, but countries such as Russia and China exemplify the worst type of repressive regimes under which corporations continue to thrive. Friedman’s assertion that “economic freedom is an essential component of political freedom” redefined the “post-WWII belief that political liberty was dependent on some form of mild social leveling... where pre-New Deal conservatives positioned themselves in defense of social hierarchy, privilege, and order, post-WWII conservatives instead celebrated the free-market as a venue of creativity and liberty” (Grandin, 2006, p. 2). According to Grandin (2006), Friedman’s principles are also evidenced in Bush’s National Security Strategy, “which mentions ‘economic freedom’ more than twice as many times as ‘political freedom’” (p. 2). Even a cursory attempt to define the situation in Iraq cannot ignore the influx of

corporate strategizing that immediately followed “shock and awe,” with companies such as Halliburton, Bechtel, and Exxon-Mobil capitalizing on the massive sell-off of state assets and security contracts. As Klein (2007) notes, “the architects of this invasion were firm believers in the shock doctrine – they knew that while Iraqis were consumed with daily emergencies, the country could be auctioned off discreetly and the results announced as a done deal” (p. 326). As Iraqi citizens slowly awakened from the dreary haze of massive shock therapy, they found themselves amidst massive brigades of armed soldiers, bombed-out towns and villages, daily fighting, rampant unemployment, and the complete loss of wage and price controls. Furthermore, in the worst sort of indictment on U.S. policy, many Iraqi’s actually preferred the marginal existence under the brutal dictator Hussein, where they could at least rely upon a measure of consistency in wages and employment, however meager the standard of living. Not unlike the fabled “Chile Miracle,” corporate ideology has pounced on the disillusioned citizens of yet another destabilized nation, whose hopes for prosperity and freedom have been deadened by a neoliberal regime that reduces the fundamentals of democracy to the equalization of economic opportunism. Again, the strongest survive, and the shock of war disables even the most resilient of human beings, thus producing a susceptibility to psychological distress, physical illness, and the blind acceptance of an ideology that weakens resistance to a new “regime of truth” (Foucault, 1980).

According to Reuss (2006), “in a famous 1982 column in *Newsweek*, Friedman described Chile under the dictatorship not only as an ‘economic miracle,’ despite the dramatic rise in poverty and inequality under the regime, but also as an ‘even more amazing political miracle’” (p. 1). With the dictatorial regime in full control, the “political miracle” is apparently an allusion to the freedom with which corporations wield their mighty parasitic machines, undeterred by state prerequisites for social responsibility or environmental control. Under these conditions, the free-market allows

corporate ideologues to march unfettered into a state devoid of capital controls, while any hint of resistance is quickly and methodically silenced through the psychological shock of authoritarian control. Friedman's (1962) postulation that economic freedom is a necessary component of political freedom has proven to be a particularly egregious form of propaganda, as countries such as China have adapted quite well to the dictates of free-market fundamentalism while maintaining a decidedly intolerable position toward human rights. According to Einhorn and Elgin (2006), the "communist government is holding at least 260,000 people in ideological 'reeducation' camps... among those detained are pro-democracy activists and members of the Falun Gong spiritual movement, which the government considers an illegal cult" (p. 2). In order to track down members of movements such as Falun Gong, American companies such as Oracle and Cisco "are supplying China's police with software and gear that can be used to keep tabs on criminals and dissidents," a direct violation of an American export law designed to limit the sale of "crime control or detection instruments" to China following the massacre at Tiananmen Square (Einhorn and Elgin, 2006, p. 2). Like most laws, corporate attorneys are remarkably adept at identifying loopholes that allow banned items to be categorized under the same criteria as items that are deemed innocuous to political oppression. As Einhorn and Elgin (2006) point out, "American manufacturers say they have no obligation or ability to determine whether Chinese security forces use the technology for political oppression... on the contrary, American capitalism improves the lot of ordinary Chinese, some executives contend" (p. 2). Apparently, the Chinese executives haven't ventured away from their premier offices in Beijing, as "ordinary Chinese" are hardly the benefactors of political freedom, evidenced by their continued denial of free speech, suppression of the internet, censorship of the media, torture of prisoners, and the ongoing tyranny of the Tibetan people. Ironically, the economic conditions conducive to laissez faire capitalism have produced an even greater form of

authoritarianism as the Chinese government has effectively relinquished social responsibility for a large portion of its citizens, opting to disengage from necessary regulation of the private sector in terms of unfair labor practices and the allocation of corporate dollars for welfare programs. As Steingart (2006) notes, “capitalists are the new ruling class and property in China is now bestowed with more rights than the people... no other country in the world courts its entrepreneurs to the extent that China does” (p. 3). Corporations are naturally drawn to a breeding ground for the relinquishment of governmental control, since the absence of regulatory policies directly translates into financial gain. According to Steingart (2006):

Death has been accepted as an unpleasant but acceptable side-effect of rapid economic growth. According to Western estimates, there were around 100,000 fatal workplace accidents in China in 2005 – some 10,000 of those the result of mining accidents. These are the largest such fatality figures that any country has ever reported. Another dimension often brushed off as a side effect is child labor. To promote exports, a significant part of the economic boom, around 7 million Chinese children are sent out to work. (pp. 3)

While a small percentage of the population is profiting from the corporate bonanza, China still suffers from massive unemployment and a work force that has no alternative but to accept low-paying factory jobs for a fraction of the wages paid to American workers. In essence, the state acts as a “firewall” to ensure that wealth from the core is never released into the “fringes” of society, as any amount of social beneficence may protract from the desire to seek employment in the industrial sweatshops that blanket the countryside (Steingart, 2006). In Western countries, the unemployed are a burden on the economy, but the opposite is true in China where those out of work “are the

energy reserve of the future – and are useful to the economy because their presence helps keep wages down for those who do not have jobs... they ensure that the Chinese workers already employed stay cheap and cheerful” (Steingart, 2006, p. 5). China’s new form of communism not only promotes the utilization of the free-market for the purposes of enriching the capitalist despots, but draws upon an endless supply of cheap labor to fuel the hungry machines of corporate America.

According to Friedman (1962), “the kind of economic organization that provides economic freedom directly, namely competitive capitalism, also promotes political freedom because it separates economic power from political power and in this way enables one to offset the other” (p. 8). Friedman (1962) also points out the need to have a system of checks and balances that prevent the centralization of power, a “dispersal and distribution” of the power that cannot be dissolved through a free-market. The fundamental flaw in this theory resides in the ability to eliminate coercive forms of power in a competitive free market, as the reduction of political power actually removes the system of checks and balances necessary for true economic freedom. In a competitive free-market such as the United States, political freedom succumbs to the dictates of corporate control as politicians are ultimately pawns in a financially-driven environment, where special interest groups and the allure of corporate dollars quickly replaces the will of the people. The American people are held captive to an administration that continues to sink billions of taxpayer dollars into a corporate-friendly war while the economy is spiraling out-of-control due to high gas prices, record foreclosures, and a mounting deficit. The U.S. is certainly the recipient of more subtle forms of repression than the “shock” of a military overthrow or the blatant violation of human rights, but the egregious effects of corporate ideology are evidenced by the increasing gap between the lower and upper socioeconomic classes, lack of healthcare, the privatization of public space, economic racism, and educational policies such as “No Child Left Behind.” Arguably,

competitive capitalism is an abrasion on political freedom, as the majority of power is found not in the dispersive mechanisms of the free-market, but in the hands of corporately owned politicians whose value of money “far exceeds the ticket price” of moral certitude.

The Corporate Agenda

In his description of Friedman’s policies, Jones (2006) criticizes the idea of “perfect competition” as the cornerstone of laissez faire capitalism, calling this the “granddaddy of tangibly unrealistic expectations... [delivering] a brilliant double whammy – analytical simplicity for the ivory-tower mathematicians (all agents are price takers so there are no complicated mutual dependencies), and ideological purity” (p. 4). In this idealized version of market freedom, “power is obliterated from the system at the stroke of a philosophical pen” (Jones, 2006, p. 4). For this reason, the “Chile Miracle” turned out to be a brilliant example of flawed irony, as the obliteration of power was not the result of “ideological purity,” but a ruthless exercise in authoritarian control. In late capitalism, the advent of a globalized economy has precipitated a ubiquity of repression as the venues for collective resistance continue to disappear. In this environment, the notion of freedom is inextricably linked to a meaningless relationship with consumption - an ideologically conditioned existence in which the methods of control are pervasive, yet indefinable. Individuals are no longer defined by cultural connectivity or moral responsibility, as the hallmark of American citizenship resides in the ability to homogeneously blend into the myopic world of consumerism. The neoliberal ideology is the cornerstone of late capitalism, as the move from a production to a consumption economy is made possible by a government that accommodates corporate America by the rampant privatization of public institutions, enormous tax breaks, lucrative contracts, and the

deregulation of capital markets. According to Giroux, corporate culture refers 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” (quoted in Reynolds, 2004, p. 21). This is accomplished in a variety of ways, beginning with an educational system that demands strict compliance to predetermined standards, a perpetual advertising blitz that equates self-actualization to unbridled consumption, and the denunciation of neoliberal critics as unpatriotic dissidents. The driving force behind the neoliberal agenda is the decisive call for “conspicuous consumption,” as the corporate ideologues have engaged in a sustained campaign to “saturate all aspects of American society with the urge to drive home the need to buy and spend beyond one’s means... the act of buying [has] transformed from something that was necessary for survival into forms of entertainment, education, self-identification, and even therapy” (Sexton, 2006, p. 2). In essence, the road to self-actualization is paved by the glow of consumption.

There is a significant amount of literature regarding the effects of neoliberal ideology, but it is important to note that a primary cause of submissive behavior is the individual perception of control, a belief that market freedom is synonymous with democratic freedom, that control is predicated upon decisions regarding consumer behavior and not through a collective retaliation against the existing power structure. Instead of viewing democracy as a heterogeneous collectivity of social and cultural values, corporate ideology supports a notion of participatory citizenship that negates the democratic ideals of equality and civic responsibility by promoting an atmosphere of cutthroat competitiveness, stark individualism, and suspicion of public institutions. For this reason, a large majority of U.S. citizens (consumers) fail to understand the full extent of hegemonic forces as they are insidiously denied entrance into the political process by the death of public space.

Citizens now equate market freedom with political freedom as they churn through the shopping malls of life, vaguely aware that extensive shopping sprees for disposable products has nothing to do with solving the crisis in healthcare, ending the war in Iraq, or controlling environmental devastation. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to this unavailing reconciliation of capitalistic existence as a type of collective schizophrenia, as individuals inevitably succumb to rapid changes in identity, lack of differentiation between self and the world, and the blurring of reality and fantasy. Brief moments of clarity are quickly silenced by the desire for consumption - the retreat from reality. In *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari posit the existence of capitalism as a “polymorphous destroyer of codes... It continually breaks down the cultural, symbolic, and linguistic barriers that create territories and limit exchange” (Peretti, 1996, p. 4). The consumer exists in a confounded maze of incongruities, divisive flows, and fragile notions of self that are subjected to the continuous allure of market-based identities and media-induced versions of reality. In this realm, capitalism - like schizophrenia - produces a split from within, disengaging the ego so that the detached self becomes intimately linked to the machine that drives unbridled consumption. Desire is pushed to the brink, always ending in an empty reservoir of meaningless assemblages.

In order to understand the driving forces of neoliberal ideology, it is necessary to explore the ways in which public discourse creates narrowly defined economic positions from which individuals perceive their worlds. According to Giroux (2004), “within neoliberalism’s market-driven discourse, corporate power marks the space of a new kind of public pedagogy, one in which the production, dissemination, and circulation of ideas emerges from the educational force of the larger culture... the powerful ensemble of ideological and institutional forces whose aim is to produce competitive, self-interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain”

(p. 106). Consequently, the ability to resurrect meaningful political conversation is circumvented by a system that depoliticizes every facet of existence, turning public institutions into venues for corporate profitability, a practice that denies a forum from which individuals can escape the definition of consumer. This is especially troubling in the area of education, where the injection of corporate dollars means that Universities are no longer independent beacons of intellectual development, but willing participants in a market-based plan designed to maximize profits through the increased use of adjunct professors, curriculum directed toward current job demands, distance-learning programs, intellectual copyrights, and student unions filled with ATM's, Starbucks, and Burger Kings. Public schools are not immune to the infusion of corporate dollars either, as the atmosphere of academic achievement is blatantly transformed into a child and adolescent training ground for market participation. This is compounded by the neoliberal mandate for a standards-based education, creating a readily available supply of individuals programmed for inclusion into the homogenized culture of American consumers. Those who fail to adapt to the "hidden curriculum" are eventually forced out of the system and reduced to mere appendages on the capitalist machine, resigned to work in low-paying jobs, live in substandard housing, and raise families without adequate healthcare. The existence of poverty is a necessary part of corporate domination, and conveniently explained as a choice made by certain categories of individuals - whether it is based on class, race, or gender - who are condemned as lazy, poorly educated, or lacking the competitive nature necessary for survival in the postmodern landscape. According to Giroux (2004), there is staunch resistance in the translation of "private sufferings into public issues," an ideological aberration that prevents the utilization of a collective movement against important issues such as health care, education, free trade, and the environment. Furthermore, the ability to denounce the corporate-military machine is viewed as a direct assault on the hallmarks of

democratic freedom, as Bush's infamous declaration "that you're either with us or against us" applies not only to the "axis of evil," but to the unpatriotic Americans who dare to question the war in Iraq.

According to Klein (2007), "today's multinationals see government programs, public assets and everything that is not for sale as terrain to be conquered and seized – the post office, national parks, schools, social security, disaster relief and anything else that is public administered" (p. 242). This is certainly not conducive to the nobly conceived experiment to spread democracy to all parts of the world, but a sustained attack on the ability to retaliate against blatant authoritarianism. The most effective way to remove platforms for dissent is to take ownership of public space, effectively utilizing the corporate machine to incentivize "for-profit" transactions that ultimately place greed above social beneficence. The response to hurricane Katrina is an example of the complete ineptitude of an administration that hides behind a façade of public service, when in reality the political heads of state are wholly out of touch with the needs of the American people, allowing corporations to assume responsibility for national defense, healthcare, education, and the environment. According to Giroux (2004), "Halliburton gives war profiteering a new meaning as it is granted corporate contracts without any competitive bidding and then bilks the U.S. government for millions, [while] the environment is polluted and despoiled in the name of profit-making just as the government passes legislation that makes it easier for corporations to do so" (p. xiv). This is in direct contradiction of the "balance of power" espoused by John Adams, in which each branch of the government would have the ability to provide checks and balances on one another, thus ensuring adherence to constitutional law and social equality. Under neoliberal policies, power resides within the profitability forecasts of unscrupulous corporate elitists, whose concern for the citizen-consumer is predominately composed of the ability to predict their buying patterns.

In terms of education, the ability to control the thought content of young and upcoming consumers is an important component of ideological indoctrination. In the introduction to *Dumbing Us Down* - Gatto's (1992) biting expose of the hidden curriculum - Albert sums up the main point of the book in the following passage:

Let's put it plainly: in Gatto's view, the Combine needs dumb adults, and so it ensures the supply by making the kid's dumb... While there is always a need for a highly circumscribed number of technocrats to replace themselves, the Combine has only limited use for hundreds of millions of self-reliant, critically thinking individuals who engage in conversation and who determine their own needs as individuals and communities free of the Combine's enticements and commands. In fact, when such individuals exist, the Combine fears them. (pp. xxv)

The Combine is a representation of the Deleuzian machine, a vociferous assemblage of unbridled desire that grows stronger as it confines knowledge to an uncritical affair with consumption. As Deleuze (1992) notes, "man is no longer a man enclosed, but a man in debt... the conquests of the markets are made by grabbing control and no longer by disciplinary training" (p. 5). Control is exercised through a discourse that essentially creates invisible walls of confinement, a movement away from distinct methods of discipline toward the hidden assemblages of late capitalism. Desire is always pushed to the brink, but perpetually unfulfilled. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), "it is the assemblage, as it freely appears in this discourse, that explains all the voices present within a single voice, the glimmer of girls in a monologue by Charlus, the languages in a language, the order-words in a word" (p. 80). The voices within a voice allude to the irreconcilability of objective deliberation and ideological formations, as the assemblages that

transgress personal boundaries emit ubiquitous forces of control over formulations of discourse. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) expose the noncorporeal forces of ideology as assemblages that dictate not only the subject positions within a society, but individual enunciations that ultimately obscure authoritarian demands. Corporate control cannot exist without the repletion of desire and the depersonalization of the machine. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), political action cannot proceed without an understanding of current regimes of truth, how they work, and what effect they have upon society. The Combine detests this type of critical interrogation, and has therefore initiated compulsory schooling with a mandatory curriculum to ensure conformity to the economic and social order - a sustained attempt to dumb us down (Gatto, 1992).

The Tower of Control

According to Gatto (1992), schooling is composed of “an essential support system for a model of social engineering that condemns most people to subordinate stones in a pyramid that narrows as it ascends to a terminal of control” (p. 13). In order to fully ascertain the extent of the “pyramid,” it is necessary to understand the need for a significant number of individuals in the lower tiers – the base of the structure – which support the upper levels of society by working in low-paying but essential jobs that compose the service sector of the economy. These are the individuals that emerged from the cacophonous display of governmental malfeasance in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when the eyes of the world witnessed the harsh reality of an administration that acts in accordance with the dictates of the corporate machine. The United States spends billions of taxpayer dollars to fund corporations in Iraq while millions of its citizens are hopelessly emerged in a sea of poverty, unable to afford basic healthcare as they are resigned to work in low-paying, minimum wage jobs that offer little hope for advancement. For this tier of society, life is composed of survival – participation in the political process is usurped by the frustrating demands of daily life.

According to McLaren (2005), “the very meaning of freedom has come to refer to the freedom to structure the distribution of wealth and to exploit workers more easily across national boundaries by driving down wages to their lowest common denominator and by eviscerating social programs designed to assist laboring humanity” (p. 29). For those unfortunate individuals in the lower socioeconomic class, formerly known as the lower class, there can be no semblance of free-market participation since poverty-stricken communities are subjected to higher prices for necessary goods, lack of public transportation, substandard schooling, high crime-rates, economic racism, and isolation from the community at large. Consequently, the concept of freedom is limited by a static class structure, as the neoliberal agenda could not sustain a mass exodus of critically educated individuals from the confines of lower class neighborhoods. For youth in these areas – predominately youth of color - the escape routes to freedom are contained by a society accepts a certain amount of collateral damage from the corporate power structure. According to Giroux (2004), the justice department reported in “April 2000 that ‘black youth are forty-eight times more likely than whites to be sentenced to juvenile prisons for drug offenses’... there is a cruel irony in the fact that when poor youth of color are not being warehoused in dilapidated schools or incarcerated, they are being recruited in the Army to fight the war in Iraq” (p. 91). Of course, the embellished voices of conservative ideologues would argue that equal opportunity avails in the United States, but reality dictates significant race and class differences in access to healthcare, quality of education, and rates of incarceration. In this respect, the depoliticized arena resulting from rampant privatization and the sustained isolation of the lower class has contributed to the successful rise of globalization and the subsequent repression of third world laborers, who work for a fraction of the income paid to U.S. workers. When all of this is taken into account, the Combine can be construed as a truly successful assemblage.

When looking at the next level of the “socially engineered” pyramid, the middle and upper-middle class citizens have an increased ability to participate in the consumer-driven world of the free market, but their ability to escape from the ideological umbrella is hampered by a feeling that they are in full control, that their ability to make independent choices is based solely on their own free will. Although there are a plethora of choices in the land of consumerism, the majority of individuals lack the realization that independent thinking is hampered by ideological conditioning, a process that begins in early childhood with a mandated curriculum and followed by a life of unrelenting exposure to blatantly biased media, relentless advertising, and a postmodern barrage of images that result in an anesthetically disconnected society. In this realm of existence, the ability to empathize with other human beings is denied by immunity to the various forms of suffering that seem to disappear in the rapidity of a news flash. Within a span of seconds, consumers have the ability to view third-world repression, American soldiers being blown to pieces, environmental destruction, fake politicians, housewives in desperation, American idols berated, happiness in a drug, Texas polygamists being arrested, Dr. Phil saving the world, and tornado victims unabashedly paraded in front of cameras for shock value. Unfortunately, consumers are not easily shocked, as the images on television and the internet are easily tuned-out by the flick of a mouse and the deliberation of the next item for consumption. Americans are now besieged by the consumption of images, which ultimately blocks critical awareness and perpetuates submission to the Combine. According to Giroux (2004), “the good life, in this discourse, ‘is construed in terms of our identities as consumers – we are what we buy’” (p.50). If you cannot buy, the Combine has little mercy.

As the pyramid ascends, there is a distinct change in the power afforded to individuals and corporations, as the neoliberal agenda holds the upper echelons of society as their most valued customers. As Giroux (2004) notes, “the needs of the poor, working-class, and middle-class

Americans are now under siege by the federal government, which instituted massive tax cuts for the richest 1 percent, increased corporate welfare, bankrolled a massive military machine, and turned a 2001 government surplus of \$127 billion into a deficit of \$521 billion by 2004,” a number that is still rising (p. 4). Meanwhile, the nation is crippled by a housing crisis initiated by greedy credit institutions, rising health-care costs, unconscionable oil companies, a renewed proliferation of nuclear weapons, and a war based on corporate greed and a myopic vision of world stability. In *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Barber (1995) discusses the results of a global manifestation of material greed coupled with the battle against the “jihadic warriors,” who attempt to dismantle the neoliberal power structure that advances freedom in the name of a secularized free market. According to Barber (1995):

As the world enters a novel stage of shadowed warfare against an invisible enemy, the clash between Jihad and McWorld is again poignantly relevant in understanding why the modern response to terror cannot be exclusively military or tactical, but rather must entail a commitment to democracy and justice even when they are in tension with the commitment to cultural expansionism and global markets. (pp. 1)

The outcome of this struggle is a movement away from democracy toward an ongoing struggle that attempts to overcome resistance through perpetual war and a veiled agenda to inject the global market into every corner of the world. This results in a preponderance of control within the upper levels (individuals and corporations) of the pyramid, as they are afforded the luxuries of tax breaks, easy access to healthcare, laxity of environmental regulations, and relative ease in the formation of monopolistic entities. Essentially, the corporations control politicians. Consequently, corporations can retreat into the safety of hopelessly incomprehensible politico’s and a legion of well-armed

attorneys when they are confronted about ongoing egregious practices, which include environmental racism, artificial controls on petroleum, widespread deception in drug companies, and policies that place profits over people – the corporation over democracy.

According to Barber (1995), “the claim that democracy and markets are twins has become a commonplace of statesmanship, especially in light of the demise of state socialism, which has left capitalism’s zealots free to regard themselves not only as victors in the Cold War but as the true champions of a democracy that (they are certain) markets alone make possible” (p. 14). The ingenuity of the neoliberal agenda is the perception that control lies not in the hands of authoritarian regimes, but in the endless amounts of free choices provided by a free market, which is hailed as the pinnacle of freedom-seeking consumers. Freedom is an illusion, as there is a multiplicity of ideological mechanisms that prevent awareness of the ways in which individuals are controlled, from highly persuasive and utopian-like happiness depicted in pharmaceutical ads to the endless array of images that initiate a conditioned response, not unlike Pavlov’s drooling canine. If these measures fail to work, outright military action has a twofold purpose: it allows for the control of lucrative markets and produces huge profits for corporations through no-bid contracts. As McLaren (2005) points out, “it should come as no surprise that military contractors are also the biggest war boosters... of course, this becomes easier to understand when you realize that, for them the ‘liberation’ of a country is synonymous with a ‘profit’ for the military developers of the occupying power” (p. 206). An additional method of control is found in the blatant attacks on individuals deemed unpatriotic due to opposition against neoliberal policies which have now materialized into perpetual war, cultural homogenization, and rampant exploitation of third-world laborers. As Giroux (2004) notes, “the culture of intolerance and patriotic jingoism is readily shared and legitimated by the corporate controlled media and an army of intellectual cheerleaders, largely

bankrolled on powerful conservative money machines including the Olin, Heritage, Coors, and Scaife Family Foundations” (p. 6). Furthermore, “such absolutes, of course, have little respect for difference, dissent, or even democracy itself” (Giroux, 2004, p. 6). Corporations rule with an “iron fist” and constantly attempt to subvert the boundaries of freedom through the use of a discourse encumbered by controlled choices (Nike or Reebok, Polo or Lacoste) and an overzealous determination to block critical awareness by transforming the University into a breeding ground for consumerized automatons. The intellectual is a dying breed.

As Reynolds (2004) points out, there is culture of hesitancy in the formation of resistance against the commercialization of public schools and Universities, mainly due to their dependency on financial aid and the tantalizing allure of technological equipment, new sports stadiums, and the funding of research programs. Government oversight of corporate practices is virtually nonexistent, mainly due to a distinct absence of protest from the public and the corporate-politico financial machine that masquerades as freedom-loving jingoists when in fact they are primarily concerned with the accumulation of profit. There are countless examples of their skillful debauchery, from the war in Iraq (oil) to the ongoing spread of globalism - guised as democracy - to the far corners of the world.

The ability to trust democracy has been eroded by waves of disingenuous talking-heads that are more in tune with corporate profits than the values of public service and civic responsibility, along with a public that is forced to imbibe on a version of freedom based on the consumption factor. Citizen-consumers “recommend markets without believing in them: without being persuaded for an instant that markets can secure citizenship or civic liberty or much of anything beyond the material goods that no longer satisfy their yearning spirits” (Barber, 1995, p. 281). Yet, they are unable to resist – the schizophrenia of existence has ceased to be an anomaly designated to those individuals

who appear to be driven by a devious machine. In terms of American culture, the devious machine has been identified as neoliberalism.

CHAPTER 6

IGNORANT BLISS

- *Having more and newer things each year has become not just something we want but something we need. The idea of more, ever-increasing wealth has become the center of our identity and our security, and we are caught up by it as the addict is to by drugs. – Paul Wachtel*

The Regression Factor

In his searing indictment of corporate America's devilish plan to dissolve the concept of responsible citizenship, Barber (2007) outlines the methods used to impart childlike simplicity upon a nation where demand is driven by the manufacture of desire in a market that is saturated by non-essential material goods. According to Barber (2007), the primary determinant of a mesmerized consumer is "the consequence of a powerful new cultural ethos, felt more than recognized... it is an ethos of induced childishness: an infantilization that is closely tied to the demands of consumer capitalism in a global market economy" (p. 1). The newly christened "ethos of infantilization" cannot be surmised as an exclusive product of savvy marketing plans, as the entire culture is inundated by an ideology that engenders a form of capitalism that can only exist through the repression of critical thought and the subordination of public space to private corporations. The

prevalence of simple-mindedness doesn't occur independently from the variety of institutional forces that shape human behavior and our ability to think about the environment in which we live, or more aptly, exist. The success of consumer culture is inextricably linked to the neoliberal insignnia of power through purchase, a form of free-market fundamentalism that reduces civic responsibility to the jingoistic pursuit of freedom through a love affair with reactionary consumption. Every aspect of existence is rapidly becoming an impersonal and thoughtless adventure fueled by a social credence for instant gratification, as the possibility of complicated conversations are replaced by the banality of email, a new language of text (messaging), cell phone conversations about nothing, satellite channels ad delirium, and mobile office packages (Blackberry) that offer the added bonus of minimal human interaction by the combination of internet, voice, and data all in one *easy* package, since *easy* is the new buzzword for a "dumbed down" America. The infantilization ethos is found in the technological facility that reduces the necessary complexity of life by minimizing meaningful human contact, evidenced by wireless capability in supposed repositories of conversation such as Starbucks, where even a cursory glance will reveal robotic images of consumers plugged-in to ipods while voraciously scanning the internet and gallantly sipping on the obligatory Grande Latte (Barber, 2007).

Like kids in the proverbial "candy shop," adult consumers peruse through the colorful array of emotionally persuasive images found in every aspect of technology, urging us to consume the little blue pill, drive the silver Lexus, or dine with Jenny Craig as *easy* ways to achieve sexual appeal, status, recognition, and a celebrity-like (fake) body. As Sexton (2006) points out in his discussion on "conspicuous consumption," "the advertising industry spends billions in both dollars and man-hours to convince us 24 hours a day that status is something that can be purchased... how much more desirable you will be to the opposite sex, how many friends you can get, how much more

superior you can feel to others?” (p. 1). The ingenuity of the corporate-political machine - which has methodically created millions of desirous ids - lies in the schizophrenic nature of “branding” – even when we realize the façade, we cannot avoid the temptation. In order to save the free-market from the overproduction of unnecessary goods, “it didn’t take long for American industry and politics to figure out that they needed to saturate all aspects of American society with the urge to drive home the need to buy and spend beyond one’s needs” (Sexton, 2006, p. 3). Former citizens – currently known as consumers – meticulously scroll through internet web sites and bombard the malls of America in hopes of finding a life-enhancing product that will provide instantaneous relief from the doldrums of postmodern existence, an endless trek that is filled with the joys of buying and the inevitable sorrows of countless broken promises. The South Beach Diet eventually succumbs to a Dunkin Donut, the Razor is “the bomb” before the iPhone debuts, and the purchase of a Gucci handbag engenders self-actualized prowess until the Visa bill arrives in the mail. Unfortunately, operating under Barber’s ethos of infantilization, adults are hopelessly encapsulated in a state of regression that rationalizes an existence that is seemingly guided by free-will, when in reality the marketplace has elicited a condition in which “the body is left free, and the soul is enslaved” (Tocqueville quoted in Barber, 2005). In the 2005 Berkley Commencement Address, Barber stresses the importance of liberty as a decidedly public endeavor:

There can be no viable idea of public liberty outside of the quest for a moral and a common life defined by purposes that to some degree are public in character; no securing of liberty that is not also grounded in moral limits and hence in education and civic participation. In the current political climate of globalizing markets, free trade and mandatory privatization, and under the sway of an infantilizing ethos that dumbs down consumers, this strong view

of liberty is not well tolerated. (pp. 1)

Public liberty was the driving force behind constitutionalists such as Adams and Jefferson, when the idea of a civil democracy demanded civic responsibility and a degree of moral limitation, but America's current idea of responsible citizenship is firmly grounded in a private notion of market participation, or more appropriately termed – shopping.

Dumb and Dumber

Shopping has become America's favorite pastime, with an entire "regime of truth" built around the elucidation of what it means to be a socially-engineered, self-actualized, sexually-charged, and technologically-equipped buying machine, devoid of the weighty intrusions of introspective thought and critical awareness. Like the teaching process discussed by Freire (1970) - which still defines education today - consumers are mere depositories of useless information that is automatically regurgitated when prompted by the sight of a shopping mall or the aroma of Starbucks, as they automatically succumb to the deposits made by corporate America's marketing elite. The uncritical mind is convinced that status can be purchased, that success is measured in the empty values of an existence centered on the acquisition of more stuff. For the vast majority of Americans, the importance of shopping far exceeds the "ticket price" of social justice - to borrow a phrase from the folks at Visa. As Ehrenreich (2008) notes, "the President recently observed, in one of his more sentient moments, that unemployment is 'painful' ... but if a pink slip hurt, what about a letter from Citicard announcing that you've been laid off as a shopper" (p. 2). Due to the recent increase in gas prices (Exxon continues to break records for the highest quarterly earnings of any corporation in history), there has been a *minor* change in the driving habits of many Americans, but a cursory glance at any techno-yuppie, suburban enclave will reveal a carbon-copied soccer mom careening

down the street in an oversized SUV, talking incessantly on a cell-phone (nothingness pervades), gingerly sipping coffee, casually attired in the obligatory tennis outfit (they don't *really* play tennis), on the way to a world that is more tantalizing than any level of human contact or intellectual pursuit – the shopping mall. For the *real* citizens who existed many decades ago, the thought of shopping malls replacing town-halls and other public arenas as popular destinations for civic responsibility must have seemed like a cruel joke, but today's citizen-consumers are psychologically conditioned to thrive on the notion of material wealth as they are incessantly bombarded with discourse, symbols, and images that depict success through buying-power as opposed to public good. This can only be accomplished when an atmosphere of anti-intellectualism is replaced with renewed focus on critical forms of education and a form of capitalism with controls. Susan Jacoby (2008) of the Washington Post recently remarked: "call me a snob, but we're really a nation of dunces" (p. 1). Jacoby (2008) further states:

Dumbness, to paraphrase the late senator Patrick Moynihan, has been steadily defined downward for the past several decades, by a combination of heretofore irresistible forces. These included the triumph of video culture over print culture (and by video, I mean every form of digital media, as well as older electronic ones); a disjunction between Americans' rising level of formal education and their shaky grasp of basic grasp geography, science and history; and the fusion of anti-rationalism with anti-intellectualism. (pp. 1)

The pervasiveness of anti-intellectual sentiment is evident in every aspect of America's formerly public institutions, such as the corporate control of universities and public classrooms, an unmistakable increase in adjunct professors and a reduction in tenured positions, mandated curriculum (No Child Left Behind), significant cuts in funding for the arts, and an adult population

that has regressed toward a fixation on technological gadgets (toys) as opposed to intellectual pursuits such as reading, complicated conversations, and civic responsibility.

To speak of a culture in the midst of a Romanesque decline can no longer be misconstrued as a conspiratorial leftist indictment of conservative politics, as the truth behind the emptiness of consumerism lies in the ideology that supports a necessary level of ignorance, made possible through mandatory curriculum and a complete lack of governmental oversight. As Barber (2008) notes, there is “an accelerating process of internal disintegration – and the engine, consumerism, that drives it” (p. 1). Fueled by an addiction to shopping and imbued with a cultural mandate for materialized perfection, the ability to critically analyze *real* problems is preempted by corporatized fictions that depict problematic issues as resolvable by the purchase of products – the consumer is consumed with acquiring life-enhancing stuff, completely oblivious to the futility of their existence. Conspicuous consumption is the new buzzword among cultural critics, as the era of “productivist capitalism, molded by a Protestant ethos conducive to work, investment, deferred gratification, and service, has long since given way to consumerist capitalism, defined by an ethos of infantilization conducive to laxity, impetuosity, narcissism, and consumption” (Barber, 2008, p. 1). In essence, thinking has succumbed to being, and responsible citizenship has become an exercise in free-market participation, with the government depending on “dumbed-down” consumers to stimulate the economy without taxing the mind. Instead of appealing to corporations and government-sanctioned nation-builders in the battle to control monopolistic price gouging (Exxon, Halliburton), Bush and co. look toward the American consumer –via stimulus checks – in order to spend our way back into blissful harmony. Once again, the bandage is applied, but the wound continues to fester through an ideology that methodically denies a public voice by removing the venues for possibility, previously

found in ideals that supported responsible democratic citizenship and a moral obligation to act in accordance with the public good.

In his discussion on the historical forms of tyranny, Barber (2007) points out the difference between “vicious tyrants... totalitarian parties, and illegitimate states” that maintained control of the body through coercive, forceful measures, and the tyranny of postmodern existence, which views the psychological assimilation of the consumer as the ultimate measure of submission. According to Barber (2007), “the modern tyrant hopes to impede our aims, divert our purposes, and reformulate our goals... he is not the democratic majority or the public good, he is the enforcer of consumer capitalism’s need to sell” (p. 125). To the average consumer, the modern tyrant is obscured through an obsessive preoccupation with material pursuit and the pseudo-comforting idea that freedom is alive and well, but for the millions of Americans living below the poverty line, the tyrannical forces of late capitalism deny upward mobility by immobilizing modes of collective response. For the poor and working class citizens, the ability to shop is preempted by rapt attention to the basic necessities of life such as the acquisition of health insurance, transportation, and nutritious food. With the advent of “No Child Left Behind,” children are given the opportunity to transfer from schools that continue to make Adequate Yearly Progress, but how is a poor inner-city working mother going to take advantage of this *magnanimous* offer from our benevolent corporate-governmental power-structure? Of course, this is no accident, as capitalism cannot function without an *acceptable* number of casualties, with education leading the way in “dumbing us down” (Gatto, 2005). According to Gatto (2005), “the truth is that schools don’t really teach anything except how to obey orders... this is a great mystery to me because thousands of humane, caring people work in schools as teachers and aides and administrators, but the abstract logic of the institution overwhelms their individual contributions” (p. 22). This bodes perfectly well for an

ideology that could not possibly function with an education system that produces thousands of well-rounded, creative, articulate, and critical students who understand the schizophrenia of consumer existence. Corporate marketing machines need for us to be dumb.

Creative Capitalism

There are various plans to generate a new *feel* to capitalism, one of which is the plan created by the world's most ruthless entrepreneur turned philanthropist, David Gates. According to Gates (2008), "we need a more creative capitalism: an attempt to stretch the reach of market forces so that more companies can benefit from doing work that makes more people better off" (p. 1). In order to generate excitement for this plan, Gates (2008) suggests that companies will creatively invest in untapped markets – predominately third world countries enveloped in poverty – when they are given a "real incentive to apply their expertise in new ways, making it possible to earn a return while serving the people who have been left out" (p. 3). For example, instead of relying of corporate goodwill - if there is such a thing - Gates would enlist the aid of governments and nonprofits to help create profitable markets. While this is a step in the right direction, Gates proposal presents serious flaws that cannot be overcome without increased government control over corporations. Gates (2008) is rather vague about the exact role of government and nonprofit groups, but does suggest such incentives as increased publicity for aiding the poor, as well as financial incentives for pharmaceutical companies that create drugs for "neglected diseases like malaria." What Gates fails to realize, or perhaps neglects to mention, is that corporations such as pharmaceutical companies already receive government funding for research and development

(R&D), which is used to create patented drugs sold to consumers for exorbitant profits. According to Angell (2004), “as hard as it is to believe, only a handful of truly important drugs have been brought to market in recent years, and they were mostly based on taxpayer-funded research at academic institutions, small biotechnology companies, or the National Institutes of Health” (p. 2). Therefore, the government is already providing incentives – taxpayer funded research – for Big Pharma in order to assist in the research of new and innovative drugs, but there is minimal oversight in the production process and the subsequent cost to consumers. In essence, taxpayers are paying Big Pharma to produce patented drugs that are versions of drugs already on the market, with the sole purpose of increasing profit margins. In turn, these are sold back to the consumer, who has already paid for the production of the drug. According to Angell (2004):

The industry is hardly a model of American free enterprise. To be sure, it is free to decide which drugs to develop (me-too drugs instead of innovative ones, for instance), and it is free to price them as high as the traffic will bear, but it is utterly dependent on government-granted monopolies – in the form of patents and Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved marketing rights. If it is not particularly innovative in discovering new drugs, it is highly innovative – and aggressive – in dreaming up ways to extend its monopoly rights. (pp. 3)

Gates fails to realize that profits are the driving force behind any corporation, and there is little in the way of non-monetary incentives that will change their reckless disregard for social justice. Gates is essentially saying that we must give even more taxpayer dollars to corporations such as Pfizer or Merck in order to cajole them into research for drugs to fight third-world diseases such as malaria, *when we are already funding the research*. The logic is confounding but predictable when one considers the pervasiveness of free-market fundamentalism, an ideological movement that

Gates knows all too well – after all, he’s not a billionaire because of *creative capitalism*.

Consequently, creative capitalism is not giving the corporations more taxpayer dollars or *bribing* them to market more cell phones in Africa, but exercising more governmental control to ensure a measure of social justice, environmental awareness, and the abolishment of our static class structure. As Gates notes (2008), pharmaceutical company executives “tell me that they want to do more for neglected diseases – but they at least need to get credit for it” (p. 44). This attitude constitutes the height of corporate arrogance and misguided elitism, as they are already making a fortune by peddling “me-too” drugs as life-enhancing pharmaceuticals that dupe consumers into paying “big bucks” for patented versions of generic medication. Furthermore, Exxon recently posted the biggest profit in American Industry – Does Gates really believe that public recognition would generate humanitarian reciprocity? Can we *really* expect corporations to behave?

In a recent article entitled “The Panda Paradox,” Poniewozik (2008) questions “the buzz” whirling through the American press about the introduction of Americans to the people of China. Are we missing something? Hasn’t this already been done? As Poniewozik (2008) questions: “The world’s oldest civilization? Home of 1.3 billion people? Tireless exporter of goods and importer of jobs? Introduced? Haven’t we already met?” (p. 1). Furthermore, do Americans really care about introducing a consumer pop culture to a nation in the grips of communism, where the majority of workers live well below the poverty level? The real China is vastly different from the film-makers depiction in blockbusters like the *Kung Fu Panda*, where cozy, furry animals prance around a “pre-industrial” countryside, immune to the pressures of communistic oppression. According to Poniewozik (2008), “contemporary China is a trickier subject... it’s vibrant and fascinating but also an economic rival with human-rights and environmental issues” (p. 1). Modern-day China is a world where Tibetans are methodically punished for their religious beliefs,

political dissent is subject to capital punishment, and cities such as Beijing and Linen are health hazards due to pervasive and uncontrolled pollution. According to the Worldwatch Institute, “sixteen of the world’s twenty most-polluted cities are in China... despite the efforts of environmental agencies, China’s pollution continues to worsen and spread far beyond its borders” (Fincher, 2006, p. 1). Furthermore, “China admits that its environmental crisis is getting worse,” with estimates from environmental researchers that more than 300,000 premature deaths a year are directly linked to pollution (p. 1). Simply stated, the reality of China would not bode well for our business relationships – exposing the real China would impede the flow of capital. Consumerism depends on the “repressive authoritarian state,” so it is necessary to avoid the bad and the ugly, while highlighting the glamour of the Olympic games and the pseudo-cultural cornucopia that exists in the staged markets outside the “Bird’s Nest.” China is certainly getting its way, but as Poniewozik (2008) suggests:

Why shouldn’t China expect to get its way? It’s used to Western Companies becoming morally flexible rather than risking lucrative business. The Games are worth \$1 billion advertising to NBC, and that’s not counting the parent company General Electric’s investments in China. (pp. 3).

Put simply, American corporations and consumers are willing to overlook a communist dictatorship with a disdainful human-rights record in order to avoid any type of obstacle that may hinder our favorite pastime – shopping. According to Sophia Richardson (2008), Asia advocacy director at Human Rights Watch, “the Olympic sponsors claim to be good corporate citizens, but as they enjoy the Games from the comfort of their seats in the Olympic stadium, they should reflect on their failure to speak up for the Chinese citizens who built the stadium and their hotels, clean their hotel rooms, serve their meals or, in the case of Chinese journalists, try to bring them their news” (p. 1).

The temptation to expose the *real* China is overcome by a tangible fixation on the bottom line – profits above people, as Chomsky has remarked.

Is there a way out of this indecipherable catch-22? The United States is finding itself overly-dependent on a vast world market that has left us with very little “moral flexibility” in dealing with human rights abuses, environmental issues, unfair trade practices, and control over energy prices. When this is coupled with a cultural fascination with material success and a growing disregard for civic responsibility, the ability to impact decisions on a national level is greatly reduced. Yes, gas prices are high, and Exxon’s public appeal is nil, but are we really committed to changing our behavior? One way to gauge spending patterns is through the amount of credit card debt, which has rapidly risen over the past 10 years and has reached crisis proportions in conjunction with the mortgage crisis, another example of corporate malfeasance that will be paid for by American tax-dollars. In accordance with the infantilization ethos, credit card companies capitalize on our need for instant gratification and uncanny ability to rationalize excessive spending – to forego the reality that credit card debt explodes in exponential proportions. Phillips (2006) compares the enormity of personal debt to “involuntary servitude,” as independence is pre-empted by a mind that becomes consumed with the payment of debt and threatened by the loss of property. According to Phillips (2006), “involuntary servitude can be summed up thus: the number of good jobs shrink, wages decline, consumer appetites remain constant or intensify, credit cards are pitched endlessly and misleadingly, the credulous sign up, and cards are issued... rates and charges eventually change, pain begins, and on go the plastic shackles” (p. 325). Instead of pursuing life goals, engaging in intellectual activity, or planning for retirement, most Americans are completely engrossed in the reduction of debt while failing to control the obvious – the reduction of spending. This is the schizophrenia of consumerism. As previously discussed, the “creative capitalism” suggested by

Gates is at least an acknowledgement of the problem, but corporations will not behave unless we have policies designed to monitor the financial sector's egregious lending practices, whose profits are directly linked to their ability to escalate the debt of the American people.

Screwed

According to Hartmann (2007), FDR and the New Deal was a driving force in the creation of a "new middle class," as the creation of policies demonstrated that "the government can and must 'promote the general welfare' because only government can create the conditions that make a middle class possible" (p. 29). The appropriation of policies that provided government intervention in order to protect individual rights was a key component of democracy's revitalization during this era, but this is the exact opposite of the prevailing ideology of our current form of government, in which neo-cons and neo-liberals unscrupulously advance the notion "that a middle class will naturally spring into being when the kingdoms of corporate power are freed from government restrictions" (Hartmann, p. 30). Unfortunately, "business without rules won't work... in a corporate kingdom – a *corporatocracy* – those rules are made by the businesses themselves and will inevitably screw workers and citizens" by privatizing every aspect of public life (Hartmann, 2007, p. 31). Hartmann (2007) analyzes the anti-democratic forces that encapsulate citizens in a realm of being that fails to realize the extent of repression, a proposal that also happens to be the basis for this dissertation. We cannot begin to understand how citizens – especially the middle class – get *screwed* without dissecting the channels through which corporate ideology controls the enactment of democratic rights, particularly in the form of free-market fundamentalism. The modes of

operation are found in continuous war (more contractors than soldiers in Iraq), the creation of a consumption economy, and the privatization of education. According to Hartmann (2007):

The cons, however, see education as a commodity, like shoes or carrots. And if it's just a commodity, like shoes or carrots, there must be a simple way to measure it. So, instead of measuring its impact on society, they say, "Let's just see how well our kids are doing at memorizing some of the things that we think are important." (pp. 149)

If we think about the priorities of actors in the postmodern world, there is rarely mention of civic responsibility, education, or the principles of effective government, as the average consumer of fractured images, reality TV, and supposedly life-enhancing pharmaceuticals is reduced to a pawn of corporate hegemony, blissfully unaware that life has become a prolonged, bipolar journey into the recesses of corporate servitude.

When observing the behavior of postmodern consumers, it is important to dissect the causes for an increasingly benign reaction to images of body parts strewn across the streets of Iraq, pictures of starving children in Ethiopia, or the devastated survivors of hurricanes, earthquakes, and tornados. Part of this supposed disregard for human suffering is due to the ease with which images can be turned-on or tuned-out, the ability to instantly disconnect from a heartbreaking tragedy in Tibet to a "real problem" on *Big Brother* or *Dancing with the Stars*, to view websites depicting utter brutality one second (beheading of American hostages) while looking at a dancing dog on U-Tube the next, or to float from a cell-phone conversation about nothing (anytime calling) to a video game about death and destruction within the span of a few uneventful minutes. Giroux (2002) discusses pop cultures increased threshold for shock by providing examples of "gratuitous" violence in films such as those of Tarantino, who has the "ability to focus on highly charged issues such as drug dealing,

murder, corruption, rape, sex, and sadism and recast them in an aesthetic formalism that undercuts their social and moral significance” (p. 218). In his discussion of *Pulp Fiction*, Giroux (2002) focuses on the scene in which Jules (Samuel L. Jackson), while “spewing out judgment day prophecy,” blasts the life out of an innocent college student “just for effects.” Giroux (2002) also points out that the “effects are no less shocking when Vincent accidentally blows off the head of a black kid who appears to be barely 17 or 18 years old... these are disturbing representations of violence, endorsed by a director who appears to have ‘turned murder into a performance art’” (p. 219). There is little difference between viewing Tarantino’s “hyper-real” cinematic violence and the shocking displays of cruelty seen on the media airways. We are a nation of voyeuristic media-seekers craving the next “hit” of shock to rescue us from the banality of pop culture, where acts of violence are seen as slightly uncomfortable events that always occur to the “other.” There is a subversive form of pleasure found in the ability to view graphic violence from the safety and comfort of our technologically-equipped domiciles, where the confluence of images seem to emerge from the studios in Hollywood as opposed to the streets of Baghdad. Tarantino has capitalized on the cultural mandate for the immediacy of effect, a heightened response to the de-intellectualizing forces of postmodern existence; after all, there has to be some relief from shopping. According to Giroux (2002), Tarantino “empties violence of any critical social consequences, offering viewers only the immediacy of shock, humor, and irony without insight as elements of mediation... none of these elements gets beyond the seduction of voyeuristic gazing so as to enlist audiences’ critical engagement” (p. 219). In essence, the ability to consume has begun to surpass weekly trips to the shopping mall and the daily Latte, although these are certainly important events, but we must now have something more tantalizing, emotionally-stimulating, in order to obtain a daily dose of instant gratification – momentary relief from a “dumbed-down” world. When it comes to the advancement

of critical thinking, responsible civic-mindedness, and the resurrection of the intellectual, we will continue to gaze into the postmodern world without any *real* concern other than an unconscious entitlement to entertainment, whether it is footage of Hurricane Gustav slamming the gulf coast, a Tarantino film, or the pseudo-psychological narcissism of Dr. Phil. If we continue along this course, it is reasonably certain that as “one nation under” corporations, we are *screwed*.

The Drugging of America

Another egregious byproduct of consumer culture is the allure of happiness in a pill (more on this in Chapter 6), a particularly profitable form of advertising since a large proportion of citizen-consumers have lost the ability to find peace within – they are living their lives through a false version of self that irretrievably bonds with the external objects of postmodern existence. Analyzing this from an object-relations view, it’s as if the consumer is infinitely attached to an object that she does not know, unconsciously searching for the “holding environment” in which *real* transformation occurs (Bollas, 1987). According to Bollas (1987), “the object casts its shadow on the subject... in much the same way the infant experiences the mother as a process that transforms his internal and external environment, but he does not know that such transformation is partly sponsored by the mother” (p. 39). As Bollas (1987) notes, “the experience of the object precedes the knowing of the object” (p. 39). Conversely, in terms of consumer behavior, individuals are struck with the unidentifiable pursuit of an object that is never known, as material existence prevents the link between experiencing a relationship and expanding meaning – between buying the latest Yoga DVD and experiencing the meditative transformation of practice. Bollas (1987) refers to “transformational-object-seeking [as] an endless memorial search for something in the future that resides in the past... the subject is seeking the transformational object and aspiring to

be matched in symbiotic harmony within an aesthetic frame that promises to metamorphose the self,” whether it be a mysterious relationship, a new version of self, or a drug that offers a robust, hyper-sexualized lifestyle (p. 40). The work of Maxine Greene is a testament to the power of aesthetic awareness, particularly in the transformative effects of a piece of art, a symphony, or a dance, moving the individual into an interpretive space that offers possibility – an opportunity to metamorphose the self so that the object ceases to be unknown. Greene is attempting to point out the futility of experience without possibilities for transformation – a Lexus can offer a good driving experience, but hardly transforms the inner self. Viagra may result in a meticulously planned romantic interlude with a saintly yet impassioned Mrs. Brady-like wife, but it hardly engenders a life-fulfilling sing-a-long (Vive Viagra) with a group of sexually-satisfied and embarrassingly joyful comrades, gloating about their nighttime escapades while sitting around a roaring campfire. Is this *really* supposed to sell the product? The answer is a resounding yes, and the ability to impact the “self as object” may be the result of a faulty holding environment, one in which the primary object (mother) is also a byproduct of consumer existence. In order to facilitate change, the individual must become aware of the underlying discourse that prevents one from knowing the “internal other,” thus creating “a more generative way of holding the self as an object of care” (Bollas, 1987, p.62). As Bollas (1987) points out, “until this moment the person has been speaking a dead language, its meaning unknown to himself and frequently experienced by, but unknowable to, his friends” (p. 62). This is the language of consumerism, and the pharmaceutical industry has capitalized on the America’s preoccupation with “aliveness” by presenting prescription drugs as the “yellow brick road” to actualized existence.

The use of psychotropic drugs has exponentially increased during the past ten years, with the children’s market leading the way with drugs for ADHD, depression, and even bipolar disorder (the

new trend in childhood diagnoses). Big Pharma has elicited the aid of parents, teachers, and school administrators in the “drugging of children,” as slick advertising campaigns, industry representatives, and biased research has led to the conclusion that the majority of disciplinary problems are more accurately labeled as psychiatric illnesses. Recognizing the need for convenience in the marketplace, Big Pharma is advertising more practical methods of “drugging” to the harried parents of twenty-first century children, including once a week pills and the application of a “Ritalin patch instead of a Boy Scout patch” (Breggin, 2001). As Breggin (2001) points out, “now parents won’t even have to fuss over the responsibility of handing pills to their children once or twice a day... they can have the doctor stick on a patch and then forget about it” (p. 272). The consumerism of medicine is presenting significant problems in terms of access to healthcare and the acquisition of drugs that will prolong life for patients fighting a variety of diseases, as the cost of truly effective drugs set so high that insurance companies only pay a fraction of the cost. Furthermore, many people cannot afford basic necessities of life such as “heat or food” due to their need for truly life-saving drugs – they make take them less often than prescribed or simply elect not to get the prescriptions filled (Angell, 2004). Big Pharma is also remarkably adept at selling a variety of drugs that are very similar to the drugs already on the market (“me-too drugs”) in an effort to create new patents and generation of revenue. For example, expensive anti-depressants such as Lexapro are remarkably similar to the other SSRI’s on the market such as Prozac and Paxil, which now have generic brands that are sold at a fraction of the price when compared to patented versions of the drug (Breggin, 2001). Although the majority of SSRI’s and antipsychotics are not approved for use in children, Big Pharma provides physicians – particularly psychiatrist – with expensive perks such as paid vacations, financial incentives for prescribing a certain drug, and supposedly unbiased workshops where pharmaceutical companies pay for extravagant trips and

training hours in an obvious attempt to gain their loyalty. Pharmaceutical marketing is big business, with the industry spending billions of dollars yearly for magazine advertisements, commercials, and pharmaceutical reps in the hopes of promoting a particular drug, which in many cases is no different from a generic brand already on the market. According to Kahn (1999), “this may seem logical for a culture that has come to expect overstated claims for products and advertising pitches that rely on sex appeal, but for some it is going too far... Should prescription drugs be marketed like cars, beer, and shampoo? (p. 1). Essentially, the ads are not selling the drug, per se, but a brand of life based on the emotional appeal of spending more time with the grandchildren (arthritis drug), waking up full of energy and vitality with the glow of sunshine streaming into the room (antidepressant), or the freedom to leave home without the inconvenient necessity of scrambling to the nearest john every five minutes (IBS medication). As Kahn points out (1999), “pharmaceutical advertising combines medical information for the lay public with images of a healthy and carefree lifestyle... there are photos of smiling vital people and colorful hot air balloons, along with pages of text – both basic information in normal-sized type as well as paragraphs of medical indications, side effects and disclaimers in micro-type” (p. 2). The side effects of these drugs are often deemed to be innocuous inconveniences, but many of the psychotropic drugs may cause medical complications that are more severe than the initial diagnosis.

Adults are not the only market that Big Pharma has infiltrated, as they are now focusing on the introduction of drug ads to a highly captive audience – schoolchildren. According to a recent article in EdNews (2008), the highly controversial Channel One, which mandates the viewing of ads as part of the curriculum for grades six through twelve, has violated its one user agreement with schools – “not to market prescription drugs to its young audience” – by running ads for the prescription acne medication Differin and BenzaClin. One of the advertisements links the children

to “Acneheroes.com, a kid-targeted website created by the pharmaceutical company Sanofi-Adventis to promote BenzClin, a prescription drug for acne... the website features Cody Linley, who introduces himself as one of the stars of *Hannah Montana*” (EdNews, 2008, p.1). As Dr. Susan Linn points out, “it’s outrageous that Alloy (the marketing firm) is abetting a pharmaceutical company’s cynical exploitation of children by linking a popular program like *Hannah Montana* to a branded prescription drug” (quoted in EdNews, 2008, p. 1). There is really no market off limits for unscrupulous marketers that work either work for or in conjunction with Big Pharma, as they aggressively pursue advertising strategies that present many pharmaceuticals as innovative sources of self-renewal, when in reality a majority of drugs are really no different than drugs already on the market. According to Angell (2004):

Over the past two decades the pharmaceutical industry has moved from its original high purpose of discovering and producing useful new drugs. Now primarily a marketing machine to sell drugs of dubious benefit, this industry uses its wealth and power to co-opt every institution that might stand in its way, including the US Congress, the FDA, academic medical centers, and the medical profession itself. (Most of its marketing efforts are focused on influencing doctors, since they must write the prescriptions). (pp. 1)

There is no doubt that Big Pharma is capitalizing on the ardors of consumer culture by creating an air of excitement for a “dumbed-down” populace that tenaciously seeks a product that will end the constant craving of postmodern existence.

The general population is completely oblivious to the fundamental precept of free-market fundamentalism, which thrives under the illusion that the acquisition of *more* will void the chronic, unfulfilled state of consciousness that plagues the minds of American consumers. Consumerism

presents an unnatural state of craving, one in which gratification is based on external wants and desires as opposed to fulfilling relationships, the pursuit of knowledge, interest in the arts, or the sense of internal stillness created by forms of meditation such as yoga or Zen. According to the late Lama Thubten Yeshe (1998), “if you know the nature of desire, you can really control your mind because you are able to question and understand your own view of desire’s object... otherwise, you cannot see the mind’s trick, with its constant ‘I feel, I want,’ desire plays tricks on you, leading you to a constant restlessness that can mess up your life” (p. 5). In a review of this book, Bell (2007) describes the type of problematic desire that encapsulates the consumer is wanting “the latest electronic gadget or a new DVD [as] the most efficient route to pleasure,” which only provides momentary appeasement without changing the way we *think* about desire (p. 2). Bell (2007) further states:

Having the pleasure is not problematic: it’s our relationship with the pleasures.

It’s not the gratification itself, but the story about it. “Ah, now I can relax now that I have a whirlpool bath.” Or, “now that I’m married, I can get on with the business of life” as if these projects truly make us happy.

Not that you shouldn’t get a whirlpool bath or get married – just don’t center your story so superficially. (pp. 2)

The corporate ideology relies on the superficiality of desire in order to promote a notion of freedom based on the ability to participate in the free-market. Individual choice is infinitely abundant but corporate ideology produces an obsequious restrictiveness that lies just below the surface of awareness, creating an unrelenting journey into the clutches of material existence.

CHAPTER 7

CONFLICT, CONTROL, AND SURVEILLANCE: EDUCATIONAL MANDATES AND
DEFIANT YOUTH

- *The sense of economic and educational decline, the belief that private is good and public is bad, and so on is coupled with an often unarticulated sense of loss, a feeling that things are out of control, an anomic feeling that is connected to a sense of loss of one's 'rightful place' in the world (an 'empire' now in decline), and a fear of the culture and body of the Other. –*

Michael Apple

- *And these children that you spit on as they try to change their worlds, are immune to your consultation, they are quite aware of what they're going through. – David Bowie*

The Rising Tide

During the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of incidents of school violence, with media attention focused on hyper-real acts of aggression such as the killing rampage at Columbine and the recent shootings on the campus of Virginia Tech. These events are symptomatic of a disturbing trend in which children and adolescents are increasingly engaged in

oppositional forms of behavior, thus exacerbating the deleterious rates of school failure and the volatility of classroom settings. The underlying current of frustration felt by today's youth can be referred to as a culture of defiance, evidenced by the widespread use of security and an atmosphere of surveillance in our nation's schools, which are invariably becoming pseudo-academic penal institutions. Dedicated to the stalwart administration of "No Child Left Behind," schools across the country have become breeding grounds for rebellion as students engage in oppositional forms of behavior to counteract the alienation of a curriculum that prioritizes unquestionable compliance to rules, strict adherence to standards, and an unwavering commitment to scientific efficiency. Students are forced into a *brand* of democratic citizenry that has lost sight of practical experience – a Deweyan exploration of the environment - by emphasizing a westernized version of character education that ultimately trains individuals to become good consumers. This subtle display of authoritarian ingenuity methodically erodes our supposedly democratic society by maintaining a class-based system that equates constructive inquiry to oppositional behavior, an escalating trend in adolescent diagnoses (Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder, etc.) that is often dealt with through the implementation strict disciplinary measures and psychiatric medication meant to control behavior. This is accomplished through the "hidden curriculum" in schooling, a process which Apple describes as "a network of assumptions that, when internalized by students, establishes boundaries of legitimacy... This process is accomplished not so much by explicit instances showing the negative value of conflict, but by nearly the total absences showing the importance of conflict in subject areas" (Apple quoted in Webber, 2003, p. 3). Critical inquiry is squelched by a system that demands strict compliance, and for adolescents who already have a built-in propensity for rebellion, the natural result of authoritarian demands is to react in an oppositional manner.

In the absence of problem solving skills, an integral component of a democratic society, the resolution of adolescent conflict is defined by an unwavering commitment to adult compliance and the passive incorporation of character traits that are deemed necessary for active participation in our free-market system. In essence, adolescents are not only disavowed from exploration during a time in their lives characterized by a propagating form of angst, they are also the unfortunate recipients of a conflicted message that extols the virtues of democratic citizenry while proselytizing rigid compliance to authoritarian rule. When adolescents *do* rebel – a natural developmental occurrence – the “herd mentality cultivated and reproduced in school and in the society” cannot accept deviance from the norm and executes a disapproving gaze upon the insolent perpetrator (Webber, 2003, p. 118). Instead of addressing aspects of *schooling* that invariably contribute to increased displays of oppositional behavior, society has responded by creating a pathological dissonance between the acceptance of adolescence - a developmental stage characterized by exploration and rebellion - and the ideological expectations of a democratic society, where violence fails to be recognized as a manifestation of adult culpability. As Webber (2003) notes, “student violence (erupting in a variety of forms) mimics a return of repressed elements to do battle with a debased form of community that not only cannot assimilate these individuals into its customary functions, but cannot even *bear witness* to the validity of repressed claims” (p. 119). The message results in a type of irreconcilable double bind in which the overarching demand of school is to engage in unquestionable compliance with pre-established rules and standards, while the ideological underpinnings of a democratic society value the principles of self-individuation, resourcefulness, and integrity. These are not overtly communicated messages, but part of a hidden curriculum that ultimately denies an experientially-based education by consistently blocking adolescent attempts to truly test the bounds of existence.

In light of the publicized school shootings that have occurred over the past decade, emotional volatility has become associated with an overwhelming propensity for violence that can only be contained through increased control and surveillance. According to Webber (2003), “from the formal curriculum students learn that conflict or disagreement over the subject matter in class is invalid and, needing to express the disagreement they experience, they channel this frustration into the spaces where the teacher is no longer in control” (p. 3). The retreat from adult interaction only reinforces the double bind as students are asked to be themselves, while at the same time the underlying message is a staunch reminder that the *true self* will not be tolerated. The contradictions are “acute for adolescents who are in a transitional space in their lives: on the brink between adulthood and childhood, wanting freedom but getting desperately mixed messages about how to attain it or act it out” (Webber, 2003, p. 3). Many students, already taxed beyond the capability of fragile psyches, react to the hidden curriculum by dissolving the spaces for interpersonal contact and retreating deeper into the recesses of an emotionally- inhibited and socially-disconnected world. In some cases, the oppression turns to anger, and violence erupts. Like all human beings, adolescents succumb to the same type of disturbances, or “bugs,” that test emotional stability and set the basis for their ability to contain antisocial impulses. But, as Eigen (1999) notes:

In our eyes and especially on our skin bugs are a nuisance and at times a menace. They disturb us with buzz, bite, itch, swellings, disease. We learn, too, that our world and our bodies are populated by invisible as well as visible bugs, and we are unwilling hosts at their mercy. (pp. 57)

The hidden curriculum is the invisible bug, and without the resources to fight its’ irascible sting, many adolescents become the “unwilling hosts.”

This chapter will explore the culture of defiance that has slowly engulfed not only our education system, but society as a whole, drawing upon the work of important theorists such as Giroux,

Deleuze, Webber, and Apple. Also discussed will be the culture of defiance and possible causations, specifically targeting the aforementioned double-bind approach that is surreptitiously concealed within the ideologically-laden hidden curriculum. This will be followed by a discussion on pathological behavior and the various ways in which school violence is presented to the public in terms of ideological control and media sensationalism. As previously mentioned, rather than looking within the strict boundaries of “control societies,” acts of violence are frequently cited as individual acts of desperation evolving from highly dysfunctional relationships within the family of origin. Finally, discussion will center upon the lethal combination of the psychiatric and pharmaceutical industry (Big Pharma) and their complicity in the creation of adolescence as a diagnosable and treatable mental illness. As Harris (2007) notes, “the best selling drugs... are now being prescribed to more than half a million children in the United States to help parents deal with behavior problems despite profound risks and almost no approved uses for minors” (p. 1). Drugs have simply become another mechanism of control.

Public Pandemonium

As a result of the school shootings at Columbine, the national debate over school violence reached a new level of intensity, with media pundits and mental health experts (many self-proclaimed) offering an endless array of detailed analysis’ regarding the psychological states of the alleged shooters. As Webber (2003) discusses, “preferring to leave analysis of societal problems at the doorstep of the deviant individual, American behavioral psychology has made it virtually impossible for analysts who study aggression and rage to view it as anything other than a lack in individuals to be remedied by medications, and when financially possible (and time permits), therapy” (p. 83). Webber (2003) points to the value of psychoanalysis in understanding child aggression as a societal (rather than individual) problem by referring to Freud’s notion that human

beings are bound to lag behind technological innovations, inevitably producing frustration which, in some cases, leads to extreme forms of defiant behavior. Freud's notion of civilization posits that human beings are not innately drawn toward discipline and order, but attempt to adhere to an idealized assemblage which ultimately detracts from notions of a genuine self and leads to unrealistic demands that result in neurotic behavior. Although discipline and order are important components of healthy behavior, *control* is a deleterious practice in regards to demands of compliance and refusal to acknowledge the opinions and arguments that are so important to intellectual growth. According to Webber (2003), "the use of this contractarian idealism (and leap of faith to civilization) is that it enables (or demands) that the subject and the community forget this darker side of practice, the death drive, and even to a lesser extent parapraxes... the culture has little respect for the psychology of its practices" (p. 84). This lack of respect is facilitated by a culture in which consumerism has become the hallmark of existence, with technological innovations such as the Apple I-Phone unabashedly projecting a societal id that characterizes the shallowness of the American psyche. Pavlov's drooling dog has certainly become a cruel reality.

Bernard Stiegler describes our technologized culture as an increasingly unnatural state in which human beings are becoming indistinguishable from technology itself. According to Stiegler (1998), "as a process of 'exteriorization,' technics is the pursuit of life by means other than life" (p. 17). In *Technics and Time*, Stiegler (1998) questions the notion of a human being as distinct from technology since there is no absence of inherent existence – humans are both the producers and receivers of technological innovation. An integral part of technics is the ways in which human beings interact, or become a part of, technology, but also in the rules of conduct that govern the ways in which we interact with one another. Are actions governed by biological determinants, or

have we become indistinguishable from the objects that we create? Are human beings *one* within the machine?

Stiegler (1998) discusses the opacity that defines late capitalism in terms of defining the “who” and the “what.” The “who” has been replaced by the “what,” as humans (consumers) may no longer be considered the inventors of technology, but objects of a technology that govern the design of civilization. According to Stiegler (1998), “humanity is thereby threatened by its own power *qua* technics; and along with humanity’s nature, nature as such is threatened by humanity, by the threat it represents for its own nature... a threat on the ‘nature’ of ‘Nature:’ on being” (p. 92). While technology is certainly a necessary and integral tool for the betterment of human life, it has arguably contributed to the Deleuzian notion of a machine, in which the individuals become an intricately connected assemblage indistinguishable from the machine itself. Stiegler (1998) suggests, as he considers the growing power of technics, that:

A strange problem is posed: the greater humanity’s power, the more ‘dehumanized’ the world becomes. The increasing intervention of humanity in the course of nature, and by the same token in its own nature, makes it incontestable that humanity’s power can reaffirm itself imminently as the power of destruction (of the world) of humanity and the denaturalization of humanity itself, if it is true that worldness is essential to the human and that the essential characteristics of worldness itself have apparently been destroyed by the technoscientific ‘world,’ the germinative body of the human itself having become accessible to technical intervention. (pp. 90)

As previously discussed in this dissertation, the human body has become an extension of technology, as we *are* the conditioned “what’s” of a denaturalized “worldness.”

Freud's postulation of civilization is difficult to disavow as the television projects images of deliriously giddy automatons exiting the nation's retail outlets, I-Phones in hand, while throngs of salivating consumers rejoice as if the Second Coming was in full procession. These images – symptomatic of the postmodern condition – methodically detract from the realities of a society well-versed in the art of self-deception as we engage in the massive repression of reality that threatens the psychological health of an entire nation, from the unintelligible war in Iraq to the millions of citizens without basic health insurance. A disaster such as the current financial bust certainly demands our attention, but the desire to go shopping is hardly contained. For this reason, episodes of violence remain securely detached from the average citizen-consumer, who can rest assured that the latest casualty report from Iraq will only be a momentary blemish in an endless cascade of images that reflect America's consumer appeal. Within this spectacularly flawed cultural abyss lies an entire generation of adolescents whose lives are increasingly pathologized by an educational system that demands compliance and a society that rejects collective discussion of important social issues. According to Giroux (2003), "instead of complex social analyses, the public is treated by the dominant media to the incessant celebration of those individuals who decide to 'go it alone' through the sheer will of their competitive spirit... the tools for translating personal considerations into social issues gradually disappear" (p. 34). This creates an especially untenable situation for students required to strictly adhere to the nonnegotiable demands of schooling, but are also asked to become lexicons of individuality capable of independent decision-making. This is the double bind of the hidden curriculum, an undetectable message that requests unwavering compliance to institutional rules while the ideological truth reveals a notion of democracy that upholds personal freedom and the virtues of "rugged individualism." Also lurking within this double bind is "the corporate language of schooling, in which the rhetoric of competition, self-

reliance, and individual choice dominate the discourse of high-stakes testing, the standards movement, the school choice agenda, and the charter school movement” (Giroux, 2003, p. 33). In essence, school outwardly demands compliance but inwardly promotes anti-intellectualism, the absence of critical-thinking skills, and a brand-named society. In psychological terms, the value of schooling is reduced to the students’ ability to detect the double bind, to differentiate between the hidden curriculum, or compliance to the neoliberal ideology, and the overriding need to simply play the game, to forgo the natural tendencies of adolescence in order to become a rigidly focused student (consumer of information) who refuses to question authority. For many students, playing the game is an unacceptable choice, and they embark upon a long and arduous road of frustration that cannot be counteracted by logical arguments or rational decision-making skills. According to Webber (2003), the frustration is felt because of societies’ inability to accept the normal growth patten of adolescents – to “hold” the child where they are able to experiment with certain behaviors and ideas without fear of retribution. Furthermore, Webber (2003) states:

The obvious link that is missing between the adult and the child in society is a shared respect for the cultivation of practical experience, which gives children the knowledge that helps them understand why they should or should not do certain things or engage in certain behaviors. All childrearing and discipline cannot be simply a series of dos and don’ts without the ‘doing’ attached to them. As Winnicott would argue, the child must test the morality of the parents and the society, and the society must ‘hold’ firm in its position as this occurs. (pp. 153)

Webber (2003) convincingly argues that parents have surrendered psychological control of themselves and their children to the bureaucratic institutions that supposedly support the American way of life. In this respect, “the control that they would gain through practical experience and the

cultivation of a holding environment with their children is the same control that they give up when they agree to let bureaucratic agencies legislate all the minutia of their daily lives” (Webber, 2003, p. 156). Of course, there are some children who are going to engage in antisocial behavior regardless of the circumstances, but a large majority of adolescents are not met with an adaptive “holding environment” when they engage in rebellious behavior, and are instead confronted with their parents own anxieties about the difficulties of adjusting to societal demands. Webber (2003) asks: “How are the youth of today to see the differences between themselves and their parents when adult society takes ‘victimhood,’ a disposition previously reserved for youth, and turns it into a source of entertainment and self improvement?” (p. 157). We are becoming a nation of spectators, peering through the lenses of the electronic superhighways in order to get another shot of adolescent insurrection. For adolescents, there are no outlets for frustration – they either become submissive recipients of useless information or reject the authoritarian dictates of standardized curriculum by acts of rebellion that expel them from a system that has little tolerance for normal adolescent behavior. To add to their frustration, the teachers defensive posturing and need to maintain strict control of the process “does more than make content boring; it transforms the subject content from ‘real world’ knowledge into ‘school knowledge,’ an artificial set of facts and generalizations whose credibility lies no longer in its authenticity as a cultural selection but in its instrumental value in meeting the obligations teachers and students have within the institutions of schooling” (McNeil, 1986, p. 191). For many children, this is simply too much to bear, and they resort to a mode of defiant (and sometimes violent) behavior toward the adults who have denied their normal adolescent excursions into the postmodern world – the natural process of learning is denied. Ironically, these same adults, who operate under the firm control of a market-based

ideology, must now seek to establish control over a generation of adolescents who have been denied adolescence.

The Treatment of Normalcy

The disavowal of emotional turmoil is a significant precursor to the students' inability to incorporate the negative expressions of adolescence with accepted modes of technological efficiency. Children's negative emotions are now viewed as treatable mental illnesses by a culture of consumers whose immediate goal is to satisfy their own desires. As Eigen (1999) notes, "today's chemical technology encourages such people to use medication to get rid of anxiety and depression... This fits in with their ideology of power and control [as] one ought to be able to master anxiety and depression, as one master's demographics and competitors" (p. 59). The hidden curriculum promotes this alienation by dissolving the boundaries between adolescence and adulthood, ensuring that children cannot escape the bounds of a control society through the creative outlets of uninhibited expression. Parents and adults receive the message that rebellion and experimentation are forms of mental illness, an abnormal affliction disconnected from society as a whole. When violence erupts, the parents are at fault, and the undercurrent of the hidden curriculum (neoliberalism) remains conveniently aloof. Giroux (2003) discusses this curriculum as a violent insult to our intelligence, as the ideological leaders would have us believe that "character is... developed by memorizing dates and facts, on the one hand, while on the other the history of great men overrides any understanding of those struggles waged by labor, feminists, and civil rights movements that have shaped the history of the United States" (p. 91). Control is an integral component of schooling, as well as a significant causality for the culture of defiance that has enveloped today's youth.

The discussion of youth violence cannot be complete without an inquiry into the public's responsibility regarding the protection of children's rights. The majority of mental health practitioners and self-proclaimed child-rearing experts consistently deflate society's culpability toward oppositional and defiant youth, preferring to inject dysfunctional familial relationships as primary causalities for antisocial behaviors. In many cases there is a history of abuse or neglect in the family of origin, but this does not account for the burgeoning culture of defiance that has inundated our nation's youth, a deleterious trend which is symptomatic of the societal denigration of community based on unbridled consumerism and the media-hyped atmosphere surrounding hyper-real acts of violence. Media representations of school violence would indicate that our nation is under attack by a generation of antisocial deviants, as schools helplessly surrender to the need for fortification and increased surveillance. Clinical psychologist Dewey Cornell (2006) reports:

The belief that America had produced a generation of young superpredators dovetailed nicely with the perception that schools had become dangerous places. Each report of another violent incident at school seemed to confirm a radical change in the safety of all schools. In reaction to one incident in a New York school, the cover of *Newsweek* magazine brazenly presented 'A Report from America's Classroom Killing Grounds.' The use of hyperbole such as 'killing grounds' is an obvious attempt to reach a sensational conclusion.(pp. 16)

This type of overzealous hyperbole fits nicely into the ideological web that would have consumers believe that incidents of school violence must be met with force of retaliation, not unlike the armed battalions marching through the streets of Iraq or the inflammatory rhetoric used toward countries with conflicting ideological beliefs. And for the average consumer who views these events during the evening news, or in-between the latest reality shows, there is a sense of disconnectedness that

feeds into the belief that acts of violence are tucked safely away in the innocuous images of postmodern existence. After all, life cannot be that bad if Paris Hilton's incarceration is the biggest news story. According to Cornell (2005), "the question, 'How safe are our schools?' can be addressed in multiple ways, but the answers should be based on facts rather than images of mass shootings... the facts consistently show that American schools are remarkably safe" (p. 18). This does not reject the notion of an underlying current of oppositionalism, but does help to explain the depth to which media and ideology attempt to control every aspect of American culture, which is arguably the definitive factor in the rising tide of oppositional behavior. As previously mentioned, the concept of adolescence has undergone a distinct metamorphosis in recent years, from a growth period characterized by necessary and distinct physical/psychological changes, experimentation, and positive personality development, to a maligned emotional rollercoaster characterized by a pathological propensity for violence. The question that must be answered is whether this is a direct cause of increased school violence, or symptomatic of an ideology that seeks to control every aspect of society?

It has become increasingly apparent that students are rebelling against parents who cannot "hold" their rage and a system that dismisses their identity. Media attempts to control public perception are contributing to the atmosphere of adolescent containment, while zero tolerance laws in schools across the country are increasingly responsible for the disenfranchisement of many of our nations youth. As Cornell (2005) reports, "the fear that drives zero tolerance has been fed by two biasing influences: news media attention to extreme cases that do not reflect the circumstances in most schools, and errors and exaggerations in expert opinions and academic research on youth violence" (p. 9). This only contributes to a heightened sense of security for our education/penal system and reinforces the hidden curriculum's demand for subservient consumers. The increase in

alienation can be attributed to a society tuned-in to the media and turned-off to community, proselytizing the values of consumption while individual acts deviance are regurgitated through media outlets as the irrefutable result of unvigilant policing. As Guattari notes, “if we want to explain alienation, or the repression which the individual suffers in the capitalist system, if we want to understand the real meaning of the politics of appropriation of surplus value, we must bring into play those same concepts to which one turns to analyze schizophrenia” (quoted in Deleuze, 2002, p. 233). For teachers and adults in our society who have grown accustomed to this schizophrenic existence, acquiescence to control has become a natural, and unintelligible, part of living. After all, the psychotic is quite happy to be delusional. But for the millions of children who are entering a stage in their life – adolescence – characterized by intense environmental acuity and resistance to control, the denunciation of independence can truly invoke feelings of hostility and a progression toward defiance. Teachers and parents cannot offer assistance when they themselves remain oblivious to the entrapments of ideological control. The prevailing logic becomes: “I’m quite happy to be a consumer, so what’s your problem?” Coupled with media hyperbole and the hyper-vigilant demands for security, adolescence as a pathological condition becomes a category for containment, with the requisite metal detectors, armed guards, and school buildings based on the panopticon of penal institutions. The discourse of containment operates in a subtle display of ingenuity, exercising control throughout a society that truly believes they are the creators of their own destinies. As Foucault notes:

This is today’s great unknown: who exercises power? and where? Today, we know more or less who does the exploiting, where the profit goes, into whose hands, and where it gets reinvested, whereas power... We know very well that power is not in the hands of those who govern. But the notion of ‘ruling class’ is neither clear nor

well developed. There is a whole loosely knit group of notions that need analysis: ‘dominate,’ ‘manage,’ ‘govern,’ ‘state apparatus,’ ‘party,’ etc... Power is being exercised everywhere we find it. (quoted in Deleuze, 2002, pp. 211)

The ways in which hegemony operate make it exceedingly difficult to mount a sustained resistance. Power is pervasive yet undetectable to the average citizen-consumer who struggles to meet the demands of a market-based existence. For the adolescents who struggle to make sense of senseless standards and narrowly focused educational objectives (disconnected from real-life struggles), the sense of helplessness and the distinct inability to discern an opposing force – the punks hated the aristocracy – creates an interminably protracted release of frustration in the absence of a target for transgression. The intensity of power is realized, but “no one person, properly speaking, holds it; and yet it is always exercised in one direction and not another, by this group in this case, by this other group in this other case... the discourse of struggle is not opposed to the unconscious, it’s opposed to the secret” (Foucault, 2002, p. 211). The true self is surrounded by an impenetrable wall of anger, unconsciously projecting the pain within to the externalities of postmodern decay. The subtleties of hegemony conceal the true targets of aggression by dispersing power in such a way that authority itself is viewed as the progenitor of control, whether its parents, teachers, counselors, or officers of the law. This is the secret struggle of adolescence, and signifies the essence of a “control society.”

Desiring Machines

Deleuze (2002) discusses the notion of “desiring machines” as the basis for the unconscious, postulating that psychoanalytic attempts at interpretation constitute meaningless acts which ultimately fail to explain conscious decision-making. According to Deleuze (2002), “desiring consists in interrupting, letting certain flows through, making withdrawals from those flows, [and]

cutting the chains that become attached to the flows... the problem is knowing how the unconscious works” (p. 232). In this respect, an understanding of “machinic assemblages” provides the basis for deconstructing power relations that permeate the postmodern framework, with the unconscious viewed as a sight of production instead of a highly subjective sight for interpretation. In relation to ideological aspects of control, the “desiring machines” of capitalist society become ubiquitous methods of production that continuously undermine individual attempts to grasp the operation of power. As Deleuze (2002) notes:

Indeed, what produces statements in each one of us is not ego as the subject, it’s something entirely different: multiplicities, masses and mobs, peoples and tribes, collective arrangements; they cross through us, they are within us, and they seem unfamiliar because they are part of our unconscious. The challenge for a real psychoanalysis, an anti-psychoanalysis analysis, is to discover these collective arrangements of expression, these collective networks, these peoples who are in us and make us speak, and who are the source of our statements. (pp. 275)

The struggle to find one’s own voice during adolescence is complicated by the people within, the multiplicity of voices that portend compliance to the senseless norms, standards, and institutions of our consumerist culture.

As previously mentioned, one way in which this is accomplished is to pathologize the category of adolescence and treat the symptoms as if they were the result of a mental disorder. In combination with Big PhRMA, the psychiatric profession has not only contributed to the drugging of children and adolescents, but has also helped to create one of the most successful capitalistic ventures in the history of our nation. As Breggin (2001) notes, “America’s children are being deluged by psychiatric drugs... there has been a tenfold increase in the production of

methylphenidate (Ritalin) in the United States in the last decade, and the rates are probably rising” (p. 1). Psychiatrists have convinced parents and teachers that normal child and adolescent behaviors are the result of brain disorders that must be treated with psychotropic medications. There has been a staggering increase in the number of children diagnosed with impulse control disorders, depression, and Oppositional Defiant Disorder, along with subsequent increases in the number of prescriptions written for these *highly-marketable* mental disorders. The most alarming part of the “drugging” craze is that a large majority of these children are in fact, normal. Teachers and parents, convinced that impulsivity and excessive playfulness are abnormal youth behaviors, react to the drive for extreme educational compliance by forgoing the decidedly outdated phenomena of discipline and transporting their unsuspecting child to the nearest child psychiatrist, who obligingly issues the diagnosis of ADHD and unhesitatingly writes the prescription for the elixir of despondency – Ritalin. Breggin (2001) refers to pediatrician William Carey as he asks whether ADHD is a valid diagnosis:

[Concluding] that the behaviors associated with the diagnosis reflect a continuum or spectrum of normal temperaments rather than a disorder. He declared that ADHD ‘appears to be a set of normal behavioral variations’ that lead to ‘dissonant Environmental interactions.’ That is, when the varied but normal temperaments of children bring them into conflict with parents and teachers, the adults try to end the conflicts by diagnosing children with ADHD. (pp. 13)

This effort is greatly enhanced by the pharmaceutical industries’ collusion with psychiatrists, who are unethically bound to the corporate machines by unabashedly accepting gifts, free medication samples, and financial reimbursement for fulfilling quotas for certain drugs (measured by prescriptions written). According to Angell (2004), “in 2001, drug companies gave nearly \$11

billion worth of ‘free samples,’ [which] were almost always the newest, most expensive me-too drugs (versions of popular drugs already on the market)... the companies knew that when the samples ran out, you and your doctor would be hooked on them” (p. 115). The pharmaceutical industry is predominately a marketing machine, focusing the majority of its time and energy convincing doctors to prescribe certain drugs while presenting itself as a research-based industry to the public. As Angell (2004), notes, “it is crucial for Big PhRMA to maintain the fiction that these expenditures (conference sponsorship, informative seminars) are for education, not promotion, because doing so it can evade legal constraints on its marketing activities” (p. 136). Furthermore, while drug companies cannot explicitly market drugs for uses other than those provided under FDA approval, they are quite schooled in various ways to skirt the law by feigning educational opportunities. For example, “if drug companies pretend they are merely informing doctors about other potential uses, they can circumvent the law, and that is what they do... they sponsor make-believe education, and often buttress it by references to flimsy research studies they sponsor” (Angell, 2004, p. 137). This has important implications for child psychiatry, as doctors are currently prescribing a bonanza of drugs for off-label uses, such as atypical anti-psychotics for sleep, mood stabilizers for depression, and anti-depressants for a wide variety of somatic complaints, including insomnia and anxiety. In reference to stimulant drugs used for ADHD, Breggin (2001) outlines the various side effects caused by the ingestion of psychotropic medications such as Ritalin and Adderall, which invariably create symptoms that leads to additional diagnoses such as depression or bipolar disorder. Breggin (2001) describes the diagnostic pandemonium as follows:

First the child is put on Ritalin or Adderall for minor school or family problems.

When the stimulant causes insomnia, a sedating drug like klonopin or clonidine is

added at night. When the drug combination makes the child depressed, an antidepressant like Prozac or Paxil is added. When the three drugs impair the child's emotional stability, making them aggressive and unpredictable for the first time, the parents are told that their child's 'bipolar' or 'manic-depressive' disorder has emerged. Now lithium or Depakote is added as a mood stabilizer. (pp. 7)

Once the endless progression of medication begins, children often react with defiance and aggression, the unfortunate result of brain-numbing psychotropics and hopelessly futile attempts to gain control of their pathologized lives.

It is increasingly clear that children and adolescents are being 'drugged' in order to control normal behavior that has been deemed abnormal by a generation of teachers and adults who are hopelessly entombed by the schizophrenic existence of postmodern society. The drugging of children provides immediate gratification to teachers and parents who no longer believe in the value of practical experience, simply because it is easier to accommodate mindless automatons rather than energetic schoolchildren. The readiness with which parents 'drug' their children is symptomatic of a culture that has lost touch with the value of complicated conversations and hopelessly driven by the futility of rampant consumption. Children cannot consume knowledge when they want to play, so play must be controlled. The sad truth is that play is one of the most important creative outlets for children, especially when they are beginning to explore the unexplored spaces of an exciting new world. Unfortunately, parents have literally bought into the psychiatric industry's message that playful children and normal adolescent behavior is a pathology which can be successfully treated with the latest concoction of innovative drugs. As Breggin (2001) notes, "28 million Americans took antidepressants last year, many more than the APA's official estimate of 16 million adults suffering from depression... the market is flattening, and the pressure to find new consumers drives

the companies toward the relatively untapped market of children” (p. 273). A recent New York Times article discusses the collusion of Big PhRMA and the psychiatric industry, stating that “the intersection of money and medicine, and its effect on the well-being of patients, has become one of the most contentious issues in health care, [especially] in psychiatry, where increasing payments to doctors have coincided with the growing use in children of a relatively new class of drugs known as atypical anti-psychotics” (Harris, Carey, & Roberts, 2007, p. 1). Minnesota is the only state required to disclose drug company marketing payments to doctors, but their statistics are most likely indicative of national trends, with “prescriptions of anti-psychotics for children in Minnesota’s Medicaid program [rising] more than ninefold” from 2000 to 2005, and pharmaceutical company payments to psychiatrists rising more than sixfold during the same period (Harris et al, 2007, p. 2). In short, Big PhRMA has gained control of psychiatry, and the psychiatric profession – if it can be referred to as so – has gained control of our children.

The techniques of control are expedited by the ideological production of desiring-machines, reinforcing the message that mental and emotional growth are stunted in the absence of material desire. In turn, these ubiquitous forces of production inundate the unconscious undercurrents of society, leading the unsuspecting citizen-consumer toward a materialistic journey that can only end when desire is satiated. Unfortunately, the satiation of desire is an unlikely occurrence in consumer culture, where the forces of production continuously evade detection by a complex system of signification and indefinable allure. Technology is the great enticer and the great destroyer. Does the I-Phone really signify technology? In a social formation, “there is always one line through which it escapes, undoes itself... One never knows if the messenger will arrive” (Deleuze, 2004, p. 15). Defiance is an escape for youth who are resisting control but have not learned appropriate ways to resist. Resistance is portrayed as futile (native-Americans resisted) without buying-into the

system. The ‘drugging’ of children is also futile, but for those who *buy into* corporate ideology, the futility of existence is momentarily obscured by the next techno-gadget. As Deleuze (2004) notes, “the closer one gets to the periphery of the system, the more subjects find themselves caught in a kind of temptation: whether to submit oneself to signifiers, to obey the high orders of the bureaucrat and follow the interpretation of the high priest – or rather to be carried off elsewhere, the beyond, on a crazy vector, a tangent of deterritorialization – to follow a line of escape” (p. 15). The lines of escape must begin with an understanding of the production of desire. What constitutes power? What signifies control? How are ‘desiring machines’ produced? These are questions that must be answered in order to understand the culture of defiance and the means through which adolescents can develop productive lines of flight, without the anger and frustration that characterize loss of control. As Gatto (2005) points out, “we’ve got to give kids independent time right away because it is the key to self-knowledge, and we must reinvolve them with the real world as fast as possible so that their independent time can be spent on something other than abstraction... This is an emergency – it requires drastic action to correct” (p. 32).

It is clear that the ideology supporting a consumerist society and “No Child Left Behind” engenders the belief that youth have become harbingers of violence that must submit to the dictates of authoritarian adults. Parents and teachers – eager to be good consumers – have eagerly *bought into* the idea that discipline is an outdated and useless phenomena, easily replaced by the technologically savvy drugs that convert energetic children into overly-compliant melancholics. Further compounding the problem, Gatto (2005) sarcastically notes that we probably won’t “get rid of schools any time soon, certainly not in my lifetime, but if we’re going to change what’s rapidly becoming a disaster of ignorance, we need to realize that the school institution ‘schools’ very well, though it does not ‘educate’ – that’s inherent in the design of the thing” (p. 23). “Schooling”

children is certainly an apt description, with Glasser's (1969) description of education over thirty years ago still ringing true in today's culture:

The goals of education are to give people the mental tools to deal effectively with new situations, to place fewer restrictions on their lives caused by fear of difficult problems, and to enable people to deal with new situations rationally instead of emotionally. None of these goals can be attained by the present emphasis on the certainty and measurement principles. The result of this emphasis has been to cause some young people to seek illogical and angry alternatives in problem situations that have no right answers. (pp. 43).

When the adolescents naturally turn to adults for the right answers - to contain their emotionality - they are immediately referred to the identified experts (psychiatrists, teachers) who supposedly have the tools to address rebellious (normal) adolescents. Today's "youth have lost the capacity to 'play' and use imagination to rebel against their situation in a 'firm, holding environment' ... rebellion is co-opted or absorbed by adult society to such an extent that youth today cannot find any means to rebel that are their own" (Webber, 2003, p.146). The categorization of adolescence as a treatable mental illness has slowly eroded the existence of community-based problem solving, as parenting has been taken out of the hands of parents and placed into the waiting arms of capitalistically malignant child-rearing experts. As Breggin (2001) notes, "selling mental illness to the American public is one of the most vigorous and successful advertising campaigns in history... the new marketing strategy entails marketing the disorder as well as the drug [and] it is now being directed at the drugging of America's children" (p. 275). The marketing campaign has been very successful, and the backlash is beginning to result in the alienation of an entire generation of technologically-laden adolescents, who are interminably disconnected from the natural progression of

experimentation and obligatory rebellion. Even “well intentioned, formal education cannot compete with the larger educational effects of highways, shopping malls, supermarkets, urban sprawl, factory farms, agribusiness, huge utilities, multinational corporations, and nonstop advertising that teaches dominance, power, speed, accumulation, and self-indulgent individualism” (Orr, 2002, p. 31). Part of this self-indulgence lies in the ability to deny practical learning in favor of a brand of schooling that relies on quick fixes and the dissolution of critical thinking skills. After all, the ability to think critically does not bode well for a system that relies on impulsive reaction. More importantly, methods of control circumvent collective arrangements as power is circulated throughout society in a seemingly innocuous fashion – the ‘desiring machines’ are everywhere, but nowhere. Most people are not aware of the existence of these machines – they are automatic. In order to identify the basis of action, the power-relations that operate in capitalism, it is important discover the discourse which makes “truth” function, and to create alternative realities by the introduction of multiplicity - “lines of flight” that penetrate undetected formations of hegemony. As Foucault (1980) notes:

Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (pp. 131)

For the millions of youth who are searching for truth, they are met with the clueless gaze of adults, who have failed to realize their own true nature. The senseless demands of curriculum,

along with the rush to contain an increasingly discontented generation of adolescents, has heightened the allure of diagnosticians who provide readily available, pathologized “truths” to explain quite normal modes of behavior. In conjunction with Big PhRMA, psychiatrists provide a plethora of stimulants, anti-psychotics, antidepressants, and mood stabilizers to treat that latest category of treatable illnesses, including ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, depression, generalized anxiety disorder, and Bipolar disorder. In response to the rampant alienation, adolescents are increasingly engaged in defiant behaviors, not due to a pathological condition, but due to the schizophrenic existence in which they find themselves. The defiance plays into the hands of the self-proclaimed experts of education and mental health, who are finding significant societal support in the further containment of youth through the methods discussed in this paper. In order to remediate the culture of defiance, the challenge is to find new ways to reach adolescents, to reject the stifling modes of corporate control (education, psychiatry, big pharma) by engaging in discursive struggles that reinvigorate notions of power and alienation – power arrangements must be exposed. Society must also find alternative modes of education that present a multitude of possibilities for both students and adults to consider, such as social justice, social welfare, and suffering (Martusewicz, 2001). As Matuszewicz (2001) notes, “to make a journey, one must leave home, depart, cut oneself off from what is familiar and safe... to put oneself on the path of education is to become a nomad in the search for passages toward more just ways of being” (p. 27). To teach adolescents in this way embraces creativity and encourages a critical view of the world in which we live without the threat of retaliation. In the words of Foucault (1980), “the problem is not changing people’s consciousness – or what’s in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth” (p. 133). Once the production of truth is exposed, the struggle against oppression can begin in earnest.

CHAPTER 8

THE AGE OF FUNDAMENTALISM: RELIGIOSITY, MARKETS, AND THE CRISIS IN
EDUCATION

- *Luck, bad if not good, will always be with us. But it has a way of favoring the intelligent, and showing its back to the stupid.* – John Dewey

What Is Private, Is Good

In a sarcastically profound sort of remembrance, Deleuze (1990) once remarked, “it’s a familiar sight: whenever a great thinker dies, idiots feel a sense of relief and kick up an unholy row” (p. 84). Great thinkers – intellectuals – are increasingly resigned to a rendezvous with retributive backlash in a corporatized culture that prioritizes individual gain at the expense of collective prosperity. Ours is a culture that precipitously negates the theoretical elocutions of intellectuals in favor of the empty oratorical promenades of corporate ideologues. Quite possibly, these *are* the idiots to which Deleuze refers, and oh how they rejoice when their underlying motives become immune to question. This chapter explores the methods of immunity, the rampant crisis of fundamentalist

propagation that voraciously consumes every aspect of society based on a messianic adherence to free-market principles and a depoliticized government that penetrates the fundamentals of democracy. According to Singh, Kenway, and Apple (2005), “the neoliberal vision is to institutionalize the extension of the state/market alliance throughout the social fabric of the nation ... individuals are expected to learn to equate their interests with the creation of a globally-oriented enterprise culture and a state that disinvests in the collective social and economic security needed for citizens to exercise their public and private autonomy” (p. 16). The disinvestment in collective security effectively immobilizes a politically oriented agenda by fragmenting the critical voices of social consciousness hailing from the devitalized halls of academia. This chapter will discuss the ways in which neoliberalism and neoconservatism have capitalized, defined, and contributed to the demise of collective social prosperity by an incessant focus on the markets, the standardization of education, and the invocation of religion as an unquestionable appendage of questionable action.

We are currently in the throes of a corporatized environment in which the poor and the humble masses have an undeniable urgency to question “whether we can maintain a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, or whether we will timidly accept the economic, social, and political consequences of a government of the corporations, by the corporations, and for the corporations” (Kucinich, 2004, p. 1). The throes of capitalism have usurped the once privileged status of the intellectual in favor of a burgeoning neoliberal pseudo-intellectual, righteously – in their own minds – adept at promulgating economic prosperity to the selected elite, while the foundations of democracy are slowly eroded by the polyrhythmic beats of “consumer choice” and bombs over Baghdad.

The corporatization of America is a conspicuously noxious byproduct of “good ole” capitalistic ingenuity in the eyes of the socially maligned, radically branded elitists of academia, but to the

pundits of neoliberal profundity, the injection of critical inquisitiveness is the downfall of prosperity and subsequently, the focus of attack. The neoliberal mindset is characterized by a scathing rejection of programs that rely on government funding or intervention, with the exception being the privatization of schools or the spread of authoritarianism under the brand name of democracy. As Apple (2001) notes, “for neoliberals, the world is in essence a vast supermarket,” and “consumer choice is the guarantor of democracy ... education is seen as simply one more product like bread, cars, and television” (p. 39). Unfortunately – or fortunately – human beings are not consumable items like “bread, cars, and television,” but in an ironically twisted state of affairs, increased privatization and rampant consumerism have reduced countless lives to impersonalized statistics that drain the bottom line. With millions of citizens embattled by the consequences of minimum-wage jobs, lack of health insurance, and substandard housing, our neoliberal mavericks continue to march toward a fatally skewed version of democracy that prioritizes war and scandalizes the poor, a vision so flawed that it wreaks of whimsicality. But maybe that’s the point. The ultimate result of “this very process of depoliticization makes it very difficult for the needs of those with less economic, political, and cultural power to be accurately heard and acted upon in ways that deal with the true depth of the problem” (Apple, 2001, p. 45). The effects of depoliticization are also evidenced in academia, as an atmosphere of “anti-intellectualism” permeates universities that increasingly rely on corporate funding. Corporate America is beseeched by an obligatory paranoia that critical inquiry into the globalized marketplace may result in the unfettered exposure of market savoir-fare. In addition to neoliberalism, other forms of ideological rationality ubiquitously reside in the American landscape, emerging as disguised roadblocks to prosperity in the fabled “land of opportunity.” For example, neoconservative pundits have attacked public education in favor of big business, and unflinchingly inject God as the ultimate guide in all decision making. After all, how

can we question God? The first order of business for neoconservatives became the overhaul – perhaps destruction – of the education system, which was blamed for the nation’s ills. According to Giroux & Giroux (2004), “reconceived as a ‘big government monopoly,’ public schooling was derided as bureaucratic, inefficient, and ineffectual, producing a product (dimwitted students) who were singularly incapable of competing in the global marketplace ... a clever strategy to be sure, which provided a ready scapegoat to legitimate the flight of U.S. manufacturing to overseas markets” (p. 3). The ultimate guise of the neoconservative and neoliberal ideologies resides in the promotion of the free-market as the arbiter of prosperity, “spinning” the truth by preying on the exigencies of unsuspecting citizens (consumers). In a particularly effective form of ideological persuasion, “the separation of public and private is largely rejected by the Christian right ... what many people would consider the most private of all matters – one’s religious and moral beliefs – are instead viewed as critical resources for the moral reformation and ‘healing’ of a society as a whole” (Apple, 2001, p. 142). The injection of God has also been a decisive factor in many decisions made by our current administration, including an integral role in the invasion of Iraq. Did God really tell G.W. to invade? In essence, the age of fundamentalism has yielded a raucous display of neoliberal and neoconservative ideologues who inject religion, the market, and anti-intellectualism into persuasive yet disingenuous displays of patriotic fervor. The death of the intellectual becomes an integral component of unrestrained globalization and the uncritical acceptance of the market mentality. As Giroux & Giroux note, possibility must become a public project, and “underlying such a public project is a firm commitment to intellectual rigor, social justice, and civic courage ... at stake here is a deep regard for matters of compassion and social responsibility aimed at broadening the possibilities for critical agency” (p. 99).

The Universal State

According to Deleuze (1990), in capitalism, “there’s no universal state, precisely because there’s a universal market of which states are the centers, the trading floors ... but the market’s not universalizing, homogenizing, it’s an extraordinary generator of both wealth and misery” (p. 172). The wealth can be seen in the pestiferous actions of corporate CEO’s, who operate below the laws of morality by placing economic prosperity on a plane indifferent to the lives of human beings - known as consumers - possibly out of a concerted effort to objectify the harshness of reality. In a recent CNN report on global warming, the monopolistic oil companies were found to have paid significant sums of money to scientist’s who could excoriate the claims of greenhouse emissions, citing biased research based on highly skewed statistical analysis’. This is the same type of tactical maneuverability used by neoliberal ideologues in the creation of incentives for the privatization of educational institutions, a beckon call for a healthy competitiveness within the ranks of academia, not unlike the price wars between our local grocery store chains. As Apple (2001) notes, “there are now increasingly convincing arguments that while the supposed overt goal of voucher and choice plans is to give poor people the right to exit public schools, among the ultimate long-term effects may be the increase of ‘white flight’ from public schools into private and religious schools and the creation of conditions where affluent white parents may refuse to pay taxes to support public schools that are more and more suffering from the debilitating effects of the fiscal crisis of the state” (p. 40). This amounts to the imposition of economic sanctions on our educational system, creating a heightened urgency to produce, to place well-trained – as opposed to well-educated – consumers of education (skills training) into positions deemed employable by current market trends. This market fundamentalism has not only caused a crisis in education, but the effects of neoliberalism extend into every facet of human existence by capturing our attention in subtly profound ways, from the drugs we’re prescribed to the types of education available. According to Slaughter and Rhoades (2004), “corporations in the new economy treat advanced

knowledge as a raw material that can be claimed through legal devices, owned, and marketed as a product or service ... corporations have moved beyond protecting individual pieces of intellectual property, such as books, and have started to copyright education programs and services” (p. 17). This egregious display of educational marketability increasingly curtails freedom of thought as the intellectual becomes an outdated and expendable resource with high potential for harm when engaged in critical inquiry.

In terms of higher education, the neoliberal “risk-reduction program” has a decidedly anti-intellectual flavor. The potential for profit diminishes when consumers become critics. The intellectual is usurped by market forces that effectively pre-empt research based solely on public good by injecting the tainted allure of financial incentives. As Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) note:

Colleges and universities have a (somewhat) hidden extracurricular course of instruction in consumption capitalism and as a milieu of use for technologically sophisticated corporate products. Universities instruct students in consumption capital before they enter through their own complex and subtle, irregularly discounted pricing structures. Once they are on campus, students have greatly increased opportunities for consumption, ranging from luxury dormitories to minimalls in student unions.

Colleges and universities have formal agreements with corporations in which they serve as test beds for new products, offering a milieu impossible to duplicate in a laboratory. (pp. 19)

Unbeknownst to an entire generation of consumer savvy adolescents, the educational arena has become an intractable appendage of corporate greed based on the undeniable transgression of public trust in the last vestiges of American democracy. The halls of higher education are slowly awakening to the fact that intellectual freedom is “fair game” to market fundamentalists, who

tactfully deny the attainment of knowledge deemed economically insecure by withholding research funds and branding intellectuals as impenitent radicals who rejoice in the dissemination of false information. In this atmosphere of unbridled individualism, “public space is portrayed exclusively as an investment opportunity, and the notion of the public increasingly becomes a metaphor for disorder ... as democratic values give way to commercial values, intellectual ambitions are often reduced to instruments of the entrepreneurial self” (Giroux & Giroux, 2004, p. 67).

Market fundamentalism is the progenitor of a decaying society as the democratic values of freedom and collective unity are repressed by the defense mechanisms of rationality and denial. A majority of Americans would find it hard to believe that the neoliberal agenda is engaged in a sustained battle to deny intellectual freedom, to intentionally corporatize the university, to only fund research deemed profitable, to cover-up global warming, and to start a war based on economic gain. Not in the “land of opportunity?” According to Kenway and Bullen (2005), “the market motif is now the guiding metaphor of our times,” equating consumerism as pleasure and constantly inundating us with advertising designed to incite desire and promote the interminable quest to satisfy an insatiable appetite for materialistic wealth (p. 34). The market has effectively reduced critical inquiry to an unproductive sabbatical for the disconnected intellectual, resigned to intemperate theorizing while their cohorts bow to the demands of corporate dollars. Ours is a culture of desire, and as Guattari (1990) notes, “people’s interest will never turn in favor of revolution until lines of desire reach the point where desire and machine become indistinguishable, where desire and contrivance are the same thing, turning against the so-called natural principles of, for example, capitalist society” (p. 20). Capitalistic desire, for lack of a better analogy, equals destruction.

God and Politics

As if the closefisted tactics of market fundamentalists were not enough, both the neoliberal and neoconservative agendas undauntedly adhere to the high moral ground of Christian fundamentalism, an extra-precautionary measure designed to cast the wrath of God on those disillusioned souls who dare to question our messianic quest to spread democracy to the far reaches of the world. The method for this quest is hailed by Bush and company as the infinite war and “presented to the public as a journey toward the transformation of the Homeland into a new moral order promised on the pillars of Judeo-Christian faith” (McLaren, 2005, p. 193). With God firmly ensconced in our nations defensive arsenal, those who aren’t “with us” must surely be on the side of the terrorists. And if you aren’t “with us,” you cannot possibly be on the side of truth, since “it is not only that an unchanging and universal ‘truth’ exists, but evangelicals often see themselves as the ones to whom God had revealed it” (Apple, 2001, p. 132). The injection of religiosity into the neoliberal machine creates another method of ubiquitous control, a seemingly inescapable notion that God has given the marching orders to the Texas tornados (Bush and Co.). As McLaren (2005) states, the method of control is based on a “generalized fear” that emanates from a “well-heeled cabal of feral right-wingers, media pundits, religious fundamentalists, and government officials [who] are using McCarthyite methods to engage in a witch hunt and brand people who express opinions critical of U.S. foreign policy as unpatriotic and even as traitors who give ‘aid and comfort’ to the enemy” (p. 198). This melds into the anti-intellectual mindset that automatically labels a significant portion of the professorate as openly hostile to the American way of life, an existence defined by the uncritical acceptance of mass standardization, privatization, and Globalization. Neoliberal and neoconservative policies are devoid of the restorative contingencies indicative of an interdependent society, such as collective struggles against perceived injustices or a healthy reliance on public institutions that resist interference in private matters. For the Christian

right, “there is no simple dichotomy at work here – private is good, public is bad ... bringing the ‘private’ into the public sphere around (their) religious values is good,” but “bringing ‘public’ values into (their) private sphere is bad... Hence, public can be good only when it mirrors evangelical beliefs” (Apple, 2001, p. 142). The undeniable hypocrisy of the evangelistic right is compounded by the blatant disregard for an objective moral stance, finding solace in God’s decision to initiate unprovoked hostility yet embellishing the art of astonishment when an intellectual attempts to approach a subject with a touch of criticality. Unrestrained enthusiasm for mindless automatons is the hallmark of neoliberalism, hopelessly and helplessly imbibed with the tantalizing allure of brand names and materialistic gain, supported by faith, and absorbed with daydreams of uncomplicated conversations.

The preoccupation with the id results in a society that resists the intellectual tasks of thinking, theorizing, and questioning by existing in a semi-conscious state, intermittently awakened by the aroma of Starbucks or “last call” at the local bar. We live in a culture where we can check email, surf the internet, send text messages, play games, download music, and yes, even make phone calls from our mobile office stations (Blackberry); but when asked to imagine new ways of being – to think critically – we are hopelessly lost. This sets the stage for a conciliatory consumer whose motivation for existence lies not in the acquisition of critical insight, but the rapid acceleration of materialistic accumulation. The constant demands of consumer existence renders the average person incapable of diverting the required attention to such matters as intellectual growth or third world poverty, a way of being aligned with the agendas of ideological tacticians, as the passive acceptance of markets and religion (Christian right) becomes a sedating dose of neoliberal ingenuity. Consumers haplessly meander through the misanthropic maze of commercialized mayhem while the corporate profiteers vociferously rejoice over the latest gadgets of desire. Of

course, the rampant rise in poverty and the subsequent gap between the middle and lower classes can be attributed to the rejection of the American way - the failure to “buy into” God and the markets. This highlights the fact that we are increasingly “moving toward ‘control societies’ that are no longer exactly disciplinary ... societies that no longer operate by confining people but through continuous control and instant communication” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 174).

Hidden deep beneath the advertised glamour of technological gadgets and weight loss miracles lays the devastating reality of a corporatized society – the millions of poverty-stricken Americans that will never realize the American dream. They can only desire without any hint of gratification. Like the intellectuals who are branded as disconnected “radicals,” the nation’s poor are part of a growing number of “outsiders,” those unfortunate souls left behind – shunned – in the race to realize the ultimate American value, that of a “good consumer” (Reynolds, 2004).

The Death of the Intellectual

Finding relief from the constant barrage of neoliberal assaults on democratic freedoms is an especially daunting task when the cultural commentators of higher education are deliberately and efficiently silenced through economic sanctions and vociferous attacks by right-wing pundits such as Bill O’Reilly and Rush Limbaugh. Higher learning is no longer an intellectual endeavor designed to transcend the meaning of basic facts – it is void of the creativity that opens the soul to alternative realities, a prerequisite for the intellectual who steadfastly resists the urge to define. Rather, education has become job training, as “most colleges and universities are part of an academic system in American society whose success is measure by, among other criteria, how much it contributes to the economy” (Aronowitz, 2000, p. 11). Knowledge has lost its significance as an entity of the mind, of infinite possibilities, by being compartmentalized and commodified as a measured resource in the mechanistic maelstrom that defines corporate America. As Aronowitz

(2000) notes, “far from the image of the ivory tower where, monk-like, scholars ponder the stars and other distant things, the universities tend to mirror the rest of society ... some have become big businesses, employing thousands and collecting millions in tuition from fees, receiving grants from government and private resources” (p. 11). The injection of corporate dollars into academic research has resulted in blatantly biased and deceptive research outcomes, conveyed to the world by the corporate “spinning machines” that reject global warming and the insignificance – or unprofitability – of conducting pharmaceutical research to treat third world diseases. It should come as no surprise that “faculty and administrators of leading research universities have shifted some of their attention from the government – which still provides considerable support – to private corporations” (Aronowitz, 2000, p. 36). Furthermore, as Aronowitz (2000) notes, “it is no longer difficult to discover that officials and faculty of these institutions rush to tailor their intellectual and cultural capital to the needs of these corporations” (p. 36). The increasing corporatization of the university leads to an untenable relationship between administrators and faculty, making existence especially futile for the untainted academicians whose struggle to produce critical discourse is overcome by the need to comply with market demands. Like an embattled ego whose defenses can no longer contain the demons of the past, the university will eventually implode under the weight of corporate hegemony. For an entire generation of students, marketable knowledge irrevocably secures a brand of existence that can only “buy into” a hollow dream, devoid of interpretive capacity and full of insatiable desire. As Graff (2003) notes, “though students are told that it is good to analyze and criticize, they also infer that it’s not good to wade too deep and that the waters of analysis can be corrosive” (p. 97). One has to look no further than the nightly cable newscasts to find evidence of caustic adversarial analysis, where pseudo-intellectual gladiators engage in relentless battles regarding the sanctification of ideological positions. For the intellectual who

hopes to enter into a complicated conversation – or any conversation at all – there is an egregious ensemble of digitized characters that interact with media pundits like clamorous drunkards in a barroom brawl. Just as the intellectual thrives in complicated conversations, “students write better when they have conversations to enter” (Graf, 2003, p. 158), and these conversations are realized when students are forced to enter into the uncharted waters of dialogical possibilities without resorting to the enumeration of basic facts. Of course, a new generation of complicated conversationalists would not bode well for a global economy that relies on the blind allegiance of eager consumers and the faithful cooperation of university researchers imbued by allure of the almighty dollar. As Readings (1996) notes, the “excellence quotient” is just another byproduct of consumerism, as “choosing a particular university over another is presented as not all that much different from weighing the costs and benefits of a Honda Civic against those of a Lincoln Continental in a given year or period” (p. 28). Readings (1996) further states:

The notion of excellence, functioning less to permit visual observation than to permit exhaustive accounting, works to tie the University into a similar net of bureaucratic institutions. “Excellence,” that is, functions to allow the University to understand itself solely in terms of the structure of corporate administration. (pp. 29)

The corporate structure has inundated the “ivory towers,” creating a level of bureaucracy that increasingly demands “output” in conjunction with short-term economic goals, at the expense of long-term societal values.

A Proactive Stance

The neoliberal and neoconservative agendas have increasingly undermined the foundations of higher learning, leaving a significant portion of the professorate at the mercy of market forces. As Giroux and Giroux (2004) note, “the conservative assault on public education has only strengthened

under the Bush administration ... President Bush has no trouble asking congress for \$87 billion in supplemental funds to rebuild Iraq, but refuses to allocate \$6 billion needed to fund his educational reform program” (p. 5). In view of the overwhelming corporate assault on public education and higher learning, there is still more than a semblance of hope in the eyes of undeterred educators who recognize that “pedagogy should be open and discerning, fused with a spirit of inquiry that fosters rather than mandates critical modes of individual and social agency” (Giroux & Giroux, 2004, p. 8). To many of us, the ideological babblings of corporate America’s delusional puppeteers are no more than diaphanous mandates to comply with market forces, regardless of the political and social consequences for society at large. With this recognition, “academics will have to assume their responsibility as citizen-scholars by taking critical positions, relating their work to larger social issues, and offering students knowledge, debate, and dialogue about pressing social problems” (Giroux & Giroux, 2004, p. 8). Educators must engage in the creation of alternative modes of inquiry, new avenues that negate the common path by searching between the cracks and crevices of unexplored spaces. As Martusewicz (2001) notes, we must be willing to “constantly ask what our work means in relation to a whole range of social, political, and cultural forces ... we must care for the truth as an infinite translational process and thus must always be in the process of becoming different” (p. 20). To reside in this transformational process, a mode of existence whereby we are constantly challenged to “become” and to reject the impossibilities of definition, is to revive the engagement of critical pedagogy. In this respect, “educators now face the daunting challenge of creating a new discourse, pedagogical practices, and collective strategies that will offer students and others the hope and tools necessary to revive the culture of politics as an ethical response to the demise of democratic public life” (Giroux & Giroux, 2004, p. 9). This cannot be accomplished without a firm commitment to challenge the status quo and to reject the depoliticized

agenda of corporate America by critically debating the injection of economic incentives as the cure for social ills. To understand is not enough. We must develop alternative strategies that search for creative outlets through “the constant reinvention of thought” while recognizing “those forms, behaviors, and processes that might shut down or block these creative possibilities” (Martusewicz, 2001, p. 10). This is the challenge before us today, posed as a viable possibility for those who dare to question, refuse to submit, and unhesitatingly respond to the calls for change.

CHAPTER 8

ECO-RACISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

- *Men have become the tools of their tools – Henry David Thoreau*

Corporate Insolence

An integral part of this dissertation is to expose the egregious nature of corporate ideology not only in terms of an unrelenting privatization of all things public, but in the market's need for a certain level of human depravity as a necessary byproduct of "being in the black." While mandated curriculum effectively disenfranchises the majority of children growing-up in the midst of wealth and poverty (inner-city schools), the corporate agenda capitalizes on this weakness by the introduction of hazardous jobs and pollution-spewing plants in the middle of economically-depressed, minority towns. Without viable possibilities for employment, along with a need to support their families, inhabitants of these communities are willing to work in conditions that may impact not only their health, but the health of the entire community. This chapter will focus on ecological racism as a purposeful means of maximizing profits while minimizing the risk of retaliation by locating medical waste facilities and huge garbage incinerators in areas where the high costs of litigation – necessary for engaging corporate malfeasance – are a significant impediment to retaliation. . For the majority of inner-city residents, escape borders on the impossible, as the education they receive - based on mandated standards - fails to address their subjective positions in society and ability to learn the same material in the exact same manner as a child in an upper-class, suburban neighborhood. It is necessary to have a certain level of ignorance, as the free-market *requires* a level of subjugation as a means to survival. People are seen as objects, completely devoid of an understanding of self. As in the case of Katrina, when the self is

treated as a distanced object devoid of critical introspection, a state of being that corporations rely upon, disaster expels a wave of collective upheaval, striving to be recognized as individuals – not objects.

Toxic Town

Early one morning in the summer of 2005, thousands of American citizens slowly came to life on a field of artificial grass that was littered with garbage, human excrement, several dead bodies, and an electric undercurrent of frustration. The overwhelming stench compounded the nauseating anxiety felt by helpless individuals as they wandered aimlessly through the veritable morass of human misery, frantically searching for a relative or friend, someone who could reassure them that help was on the way. The majority of victims wandered around for days without police protection, existing on bits of spoiled food and an occasional bottle of warm water – a virtual gangland. Finally, on the third day of confinement, the inconceivably disengaged federal government rendered the oppressive fortress uninhabitable, forcing thousands of people into human corals designed to maintain control and prevent further outbreaks of violence. Many residents found themselves precipitously standing on the edge of a large dome surrounded by a toxic sea, blankly staring at a watery wasteland called New Orleans.

Forced to exit the pinnacle of corporate athleticism – the Superdome – thousands of victims lingered on the edge of the watery grave for several more days until help finally arrived in the form of a disjointed assemblage of emergency relief workers from the Federal Emergency Management Relief Agency (FEMA). New Orleans lower socioeconomic class was exposed, and its unfortunate, economically-deprived citizens were finally air-lifted to relief centers across the country in an operation that could be likened to a mass cattle-call that ultimately impinged on every ounce of human dignity. The residents of New Orleans represent a vast segment of our population that must

suffer through the inequities of social justice and acquiesce to the demands of an ideology (neoliberal) based on the premise that a certain amount of depravity is a necessary component of a “well-oiled” corporate machine. The abhorrent treatment of the victims of Katrina is indicative of the inequity in our socio-economic system, as those in the lower class have become the hidden appendages of a failed system.

The conservative pundits lambasted the victims as somehow responsible for their sad state of affairs, endlessly professing the “stupidity” of the inner-city residents for *choosing* to remain, despite repeated calls to evacuate. These hopelessly bombastic statements highlight the disconnection between the upper and lower classes of society. The people in the Superdome were there not because they chose to stay but due to the fact that they had no way out. They didn’t have access to transportation nor the money to pay for gas, shelter, clothing, and food – the basic necessities of existence. It became blatantly obvious that the people abandoned by our Federal government did not hail from the upper-class sections of New Orleans, with access to transportation and financial resources to live away from the city for an extended period of time. In the weeks following the disaster, it also became clear that the Federal government knew about the vulnerability of the levee systems but chose not to invest in a reparative infrastructure. If Beverly Hills was threatened by substandard levees, would the necessary aid be available? The answer is a resounding Yes, and therefore indicative of our nations’ dirty little secret that was ignominiously exposed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina – the lives of lower class African-Americans, Hispanics, and other minority groups are of unequal value in a land that supposedly drips with opportunity.

The depths of environmental racism (hereafter referred to as eco-racism) in America could no longer be hidden behind the veil of “equal opportunity” as the faces of despair were broadcast around the world. The government’s response was a dismal failure and serves to highlight the

interminable gap between upper and lower socio-economic groups - a glaring example of the unequal distribution of resources in a free-market economy. According to Flanagan (1994), the “basic premise of this fact of environmentalism (eco-racism) is that certain elements of the population face greater risks from exposure to environmental hazards than do others... unequivocal class and racial biases (are evidenced) in the distribution of environmental hazards” (p. 1).

Flanagan (1994) outlines a multitude of resources that exemplify the extent of environmental inequity, including “health information on lead poisoning in inner city children, dietary exposure to toxics through fish consumption in Native Americans, pesticide exposure in farm workers (p. 1),” public health issues for minority residents of towns in close proximity to waste facilities, toxic power plants, and factories that indiscriminately spew massive amounts of pollution. A significant cross-section of minorities can be compared to the endangered species that have fallen prey to the unbridled destruction of natural resources under the illusory postulation of corporate ingenuity. As a result, the hidden consequences for corporations are the increased difficulties of hiding eco-racist policies that place a large percentage of the population in jeopardy, all in the name of profit maximization.

The filthy truth of corporate America lies in the reality that the poor minorities are defenseless consumers who struggle to meet the basic demands of existence, with few resources to combat the toxic invasion of their decaying communities. Corporate America is engaged in an implacable desire to control planet earth, obsessed with an aversion to nature that Orr (1994) refers to as biophobia, a common phenomena “among people raised with television, Walkman radios attached to their heads, and video games and living amidst shopping malls, freeways, and dense urban or suburban settings where nature is permitted tastefully, as decoration” (p. 131). Adherence to corporate ideology perpetuates eco-racist domestic policies by allowing biophobic corporations to

exert hegemony over easy prey – defenseless minorities. Minority populations are the unfortunate recipients of corporate America’s reckless drive to control mother-nature. As Orr (1994) points out, “undefiled nature is being replaced by a defiled nature of landfills, junkyards, strip mines, clear cuts, blighted cities, six-lane freeways, suburban sprawl, polluted rivers, and superfund sites (p. 134),” disproportionately placed in poverty-stricken minority communities. The toxic-towns of America are the unmistakable result of corporate malevolence and their blatant disregard for the welfare of those in the lower socioeconomic class. The indiscriminate pillage of planet earth has extended beyond the rainforests, animals, and natural resources, turning its power toward the part of society that is unable to mount defensive action. Late capitalism has reduced the victims of New Orleans to yet another expendable resource, but one that has cast an indelible mark upon the unregulated free-market.

The Human Toll of Profit

According to Bullard (2004), environmental racism refers to any policy, practice or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or colour...it combines with public policies and industry practices to provide benefits for corporations while shifting costs to people of colour” (p. 1). And the costs are enormous, as the unwilling recipients of egregious corporate practices are forced to eke out an existence under a bleak cloud of corporate waste products in the form of air pollution, water pollution, and low-wage employment in hazardous occupations. For example, “thousands of (migrant) farm workers and their families are exposed to dangerous pesticides... [eco-racism] institutionalizes unequal enforcement (of laws), trades human health for profit, places the burden of proof on the victims rather than the polluters, legitimizes human exposure to harmful chemicals, pesticides and hazardous substances, promotes risky technologies, exploits the vulnerability of

economically and politically disenfranchised communities, and subsidizes ecological destruction” (Bullard, 2004, p. 1). Eco-racism insidiously envelops disenfranchised communities as the promise and hope of new industry slowly gives way to the devastating effects of pollution, low property values, and the emergence of various health problems. Since profit maximization is the driving force behind massive corporations, their pollution-spewing factories must be placed in strategic locations where a low probability of retaliation exists. Since collective resistance must take place through expensive litigation, poverty-stricken minority towns are prime real estate for the establishment of coal-burning power plants, medical waste facilities, and garbage incinerators. In the small town of Chester, Pennsylvania, Ewall (1999) discusses the horrors of environmental toxicity, a situation that Charles Lee (the chairperson of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee to the Environmental Protection Agency) has denounced as “the worst case of environmental racism he’s ever seen” (p. 1). Chester is the home of the “largest garbage-burning incinerator in the state (and 7th largest in the nation),” located within yards of a residential housing section where ninety-five percent of the residents in the neighborhoods closest to the facilities are African-Americans, with a poverty rate three times the national average (Ewall, 1999, p. 1). To add insult to injury, “literally next door to the incinerator lies the largest infectious and chemotherapeutic medical waste autoclave in the nation, Thermal Pure Systems...while operating, it wasn’t unusual to find medical waste lying in the grass outside the boundaries of the plant, where children are free to play” – workers are reportedly being “stabbed by needles” and falling prey to numerous, unexplained medical problems (Ewall, 1999, p. 1).

The inescapable forces of corporate malfeasance and ideological trickery are pervasive elements of the intentionality behind eco-racism, a practice that, if discovered, would certainly taint the faux images of socially-conscious conglomerates that are inordinately concerned about the health and

welfare of our nation. The basis of the Darwinian-based “only the strong can survive” mentality is that poverty is not only an acceptable, but a necessary component of late capitalism. Without poverty, and the powerlessness that accompanies it, how could corporations become so powerful? How could profits be maximized? Without eco-racism, there would be *no* underground migrant sweatshops, *no* migrant farm workers, *no* polluting factories (strategically located in minority neighborhoods), *no* toxic drinking water, and *no profits*. Capitalism, more specifically – the neoliberal brand of capitalism – thrives on eco-racist policies and gross inequities in wealth that remain undetected by supposedly objective government regulatory agencies.

To deny a racist undercurrent in corporate planning is not an option when “studies have shown that waste facilities (particularly hazardous and nuclear waste facilities) tend to be located in communities of color, above and beyond class considerations... middle class communities of color will end up with more waste facilities than poor white communities tend to” (Ewall, 1999, p. 5). Communities of color become extractable and expendable resources to corporations who consider the retributive capacities of poverty-stricken individuals to be relatively low. They cannot afford high-priced attorneys willing to wage an uphill battle against the politically savvy and litigiously inclined corporate war machine, nor do many of these individuals have the ability to mobilize a collective resistance needed to fight pervasive corruption. It is increasingly evident that corporations are not blind purveyors of racial injustice, as the reality of environmental devastation in low-income, heavily populated minority areas is readily apparent. As Hatfield (2003) notes, “an estimated 50% of African-Americans and 60% of Hispanics live in a county in which levels of two or more air pollutants exceed governmental standards... half of all Asian/Pacific and American Indians live in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites” (p. 1). Furthermore, “in the United States, African-American children are five times more likely to suffer from lead poisoning than

white children,” depicting a clear connection between minority communities and “dirty” industries, which are noticeably absent in the “wealthier or white” communities (Hatfield, 2003, p. 2).

Eco-racism has deluded the souls of corporations, as they have discovered another method for maximizing profits that perpetuates a sadistic form of torture that slowly sucks the life out of human beings – a gas chamber in slow motion. Eco-racism is being exposed as a methodical compilation of unwritten Jim Crow laws that place African-Americans in subjugated positions without the *written* signs for “colored” drinking fountains and the forced segregation of schools. Instead, the writing is found in the unwritten laws that attempt to displace corporate malfeasance into societal decay. The grand narrative of neoliberal ideology is to inhibit class movement. To deny a corporatized/governmentalized agenda focused on the control of minorities through educational and environmental means is to engage in the same type of destructive mindset that rationalizes poverty by stating that “only the strong survive.” Unfortunately, survival is more than a matter of evolutionary prowess when the environment has become a toxic cesspool that inevitably weakens body, mind, and spirit. Life for the victims of eco-racism is a matter of survival. They are the bottom rungs in big business, where even the Madison Avenue demagogues have decided to abandon the demographics. How can one dream of Nikes when basic survival is the goal? As McLaren (2004) notes, “instead of addressing the gaps in public health needs and the safety net for workers, young people, and the poor, the Bush administration pushed through both houses of Congress a stimulus plan based primarily on tax breaks for the wealthy and major corporations (p. 127),” further destabilizing environmental control and increasing corporate hegemony.

To understand the misanthropic nature of corporate ideology, the statistics for Chester, Pennsylvania should be highlighted on the evening news; but this would be viewed as liberal attempt to create cognitive dissonance – this doesn’t *really happen in America*. Chester has “the

highest infant mortality rate in the state, the highest percentage of low-weight births in Pennsylvania, and 60% of the children in Chester had unacceptably high levels of lead in their blood” (Ewall, 1999, p. 4). While the Bush regime continues to focus on the stalemate in Iraq, globalism, and the evasion of conservation (Kyoto), the United States is slowly devolving into a cold, disconnected society controlled by the utopian illusion that existential relief will come from Madison Avenue’s latest offerings. Bush’s rejection of Kyoto strengthens eco-racist policies since the Kyoto Accord would force corporations to make significant financial investments in order to reduce toxic emissions, thus reducing mortality rates among minority populations. Since Bush believes “he is on a direct mission from God (McLaren, 2004, p. 27),” should the American public believe that God places more value on the lives of rich corporate executives as opposed to the lives of poor African-Americans in Chester? As Giroux (2004) points out, “surrounded by born-again missionaries and directing his appeals to God, rather than looking to the basic tenets of American democracy as a source of leadership, Bush has relentlessly developed policies less on social needs than on a highly personal and narrowly moral sense of divine purpose” (p. 27). This semi-delusional state of governing has led to a precipitous decline in environmental protection that coincides with increased rates of illness among minority populations. “And getting sick poses special hardships to the uninsured (1 in 5 Americans)...the uninsured rate for African-Americans, Latino Americans and Native Americans is more than one-and-a-half times the rate for white Americans” (Bullard, 2002, p. 2). In a lengthy report by the Philanthropy and Environmental Justice Research Project, Krieg and Faber (2001) outlined hundreds of environmental injustices in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which left no doubt as to the extent of eco-racist policymaking that favors corporations. For example, “in Massachusetts, communities of color and low-income communities experience a far more profound exposure rate to Department of

Environmental Protection hazardous waste sites than do wealthier and/or white communities, indicating that race and class appear to be significant factors in determining the location of both serious (Tier I-II) and less serious (Non-Tier) hazardous waste sites” (Krieg and Faber, 2001, p. 3). Furthermore, an even more alarming statistic reveals that “communities of color also witness government penalties for violations of hazardous waste laws which are on the average only one-sixth (\$55,318) of the average penalty in predominately white communities,” with government cleanup of toxic waste dumps taking an average of 20 percent longer in minority communities (Krieg and Faber, 2001, p. 3). In thousands of rural and urban communities across the United States, the horrors of eco-racism are evidenced as the air, waterways, and soil are purposefully contaminated by corporations acting under the unwatchful eye of governmental regulatory agencies. The value placed on the life of a poor minority - in the eyes of the governmental/corporate regime - can be compared to that of the Spotted Owl, the Manatee, or the thousands of other endangered species that have impeded the illusory notion of progress?

Of course, progress has contaminated the ocean and its’ creatures, destroyed the ozone layer, decimated the rainforests, polluted the rivers, and dehumanized untold numbers of minority residents in poor communities. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the invisible divide between white and black Americans – especially poor minorities – became a blatant form of oppression that was broadcast around the world, much to the dismay of the Bush administration. According to Bullard and Wright (2005), “the African-American population in the coastal communities where Katrina struck ranged from 25 percent to 87 percent black,” with nearly 1 in 3 New Orleans residents living below the poverty line (p. 3). Katrina has exposed the unequal treatment of African-Americans, who face numerous obstacles to recovery due to predominately segregated neighborhoods and unfair treatment in the insurance industry. “Generally, people of color have

higher levels of physical damage, but lower dollar losses than whites largely due to segregated housing in older, poorly built homes,” which are less likely to be insured, and if they are insured, receive lower rates of compensation than whites with similar financial losses (Bullard and Wright, 2005, p. 6). To add to the misery, the African-American population has been dispersed to hundreds of relief sites across the country with few resources for survival once short-term government aid runs out. Furthermore, “it appears that some black New Orleanians may be willing to return to the city and take unnecessary health risks to fend off what they perceive as a “landgrab” plot by government and developers,” which is a distinct possibility (Bullard and Wright, 2005, p. 9).

The enormity of eco-racist practices in corporate America – backed by conservative ideologues – is an undeniable atrocity that places a vulnerable population of Americans in an untenable position, where the givens of existence (food, clothing, shelter) are preempted by the costs of production. The next section of the chapter will focus on the ideology behind the creation of a psychopathically-inclined mindset that permeates the fabric of corporate policy. Racism is far from over in the fabled “Land of Opportunity,” as the claws of capitalism have “latched-onto” a more subtle method for the subjugation, humiliation, and denunciation of human beings based solely on race and class, a practice that speaks volumes about the despicable policies that promote financial solvency over common decency. The “colored fountains” are still in existence, but the writing is no longer on the wall. The writing is nowhere, but everywhere. There is an inescapable sense of deadness in toxic communities as life has engaged in a rapid free-fall toward the depths of utter despair. To create a sustained, heightened awareness of the issues facing minority populations, a collective praxis must emerge that not only challenges hegemony, but produces a malleable plan for the eradication of eco-racist behavior. In short, lessons can be learned from the deadness. As Eigen (2004) notes, “I do get something going through the worlds of deadness...I get something in the

fall, something sticks, grows, a blind appreciation of what we are up against, what we are, what we can go through” (p. 18). The ultimate lesson to be learned – the lesson that evades an uncivil society – is that “the bottom is important as the top” (Eigen, 2004, p. 18).

The Dispassionate Ideology

What factors contribute to the downfall of a supposedly civilized society? How can a regime that proselytizes “compassionate conservatism” allow/promote a corporate philosophy that categorizes African-Americans as expendable resources? According to McLaren and Farahmandpur (2003), “neoliberalism (capitalism with gloves off or socialism for the rich) refers to a corporate domination of society that supports state enforcement of the unregulated market, engages in the oppression of nonmarket forces and anti-market policies, guts free public services, eliminates social subsidies, offers limitless concessions to transnational corporations, [and] permits private interests to control most of social life in the pursuit of profits for the few” (p. 41). Neoliberalism ensures the proliferation of inequality through state-sanctioned discriminatory practice. The new buzzword for the mythology of equal rights is diversity, but the undeniable truth in corporate America is that diversity training is an irrefutable sham – a half-hearted approach to appease a growing tide of resentment regarding the unequal treatment of minorities. Diversity training allows the simple-minded, religiously fundamental, and embarrassingly phony corporate executive to proclaim that his company isn’t racist due to their state of the art, half-day seminar on cultural diversity - guaranteed to promote racial harmony.

According to Orr (2004), “many of the same forces that erode biological diversity jeopardize diversity of all kinds, including that of languages and culture...the modern world, it seems, is at war with difference while professing devotion to it” (p. 80). Intolerance for difference is the defining characteristic of our current neoliberal – borderline fascist – administration/regime that “is

increasingly abandoning democracy altogether, as it descends into the icy political waters of a new form of authoritarianism” (Giroux, 2004, p. 11). Neo-fascism may be an appropriate term for blatant authoritarianism that has slowly infiltrated various American institutions in a top-down fashion, with “increasing repressions established under the Bush administration as well as the violations of civil liberties put into place by John Ashcroft” and the Patriot act (Giroux, 2004, p. 13). The authoritarian impingement created by the current administration leaves a gaping hole in the struggle for equity among the oppressed citizenry in our *classed* and *raced* society, devoid of upward mobility due to the capitalistic necessity of inferiority and poverty.

The new racism is a proving ground for the emergence of eco-racism, as the government/corporate ideologues – under the guise of individualism – eagerly relegate the unfortunate, poverty-stricken minorities to the trash-heap of humanity who fail to take advantage of the supposedly infinite opportunities afforded to every American, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, or national origin. To believe this statement is either the height of rationalization or the pathology of delusion. The latter may be the case when one considers that President Bush believes he is on a mission from god. And as corporate power usurps public space, “marketplace ideologies now work to erase the social from the language of public life so as to reduce all racial problems to private issues such as individual character and cultural depravity” (Giroux, 2004, p. 57).

Furthermore, the neo-liberal strategy to avoid race as an issue has made race even more of an issue – its proponents seek to control every facet of society, so that individual rights are superceded by a market-driven ideology that will eventually destroy the last vestiges of democracy. The “top-down” maintenance of power has usurped the democratic way of life by unscrupulously producing a nation of reactionary consumers without recourse for collective action. This results in a defensive posture of fear and distrust – a private battle for public reconciliation. But, as Giroux (2004) states,

“the incessant calls for self-reliance that now dominate public discourse betrays a hollowed-out and refigured state that neither provides adequate safety nets for its populace, especially those who are young, poor, or marginalized, nor gives any indication that it will serve the interests of its citizens in spite of constitutional guarantees” (p. 107). The constitutional guarantees are now at the mercy of the right-wing ideologues who unleash terroristic laws – ironically ensconced in the Patriot Act – on the newly branded, post 9-11 “traitors” who dare to question unjust wars (Iraq and Afghanistan) and illegal acts of surveillance that have transformed “we the people” into a nation of suspects.

The pursuit of “life, liberty, and happiness” is a hopeless façade expatiated by neoliberal pundits that appear oblivious to the realities of the majority of Americans, who experience only temporary, fragile states of happiness that end when the credit card bill arrives in the mail. Consumerism ensures that meaning is intricately connected to increasing amounts of consumption, a never ending cycle of desire that provides temporary relief from the harsh reality of a society structured on the basis of brand names. The pictures of the stranded, African-American, media-branded “refugees” in New Orleans were an unwelcome site for the upper-class, pseudo-intellectuals who - upon seeing a true glimpse of compassionate conservatism - frantically attempted to switch the satellite back to the latest reality show. These same people found welcome relief in Fox News channel broadcasts that showed pictures of only the “black looters” and reported (falsely) on gang violence in the Superdome – this somehow made the racist undertone of the Federal government’s response, acceptable.

The Hidden Curriculum

William Pinar (2004) discusses the ways in which racism has become institutionalized in the South with the aid of right-wing ideologues who find solace in the religiosity of the bible-belt and the uncontested inequality that has existed between blacks and whites for the past 200 years. As

Pinar (2004) states, many forms of institutional life remain underdeveloped today in the South...to reclaim the public as American, not residually confederate, space will require reclaiming the history of its disclaiming” (p. 120). The disintegration of racial equality continues to progress amidst a southern, white, multi-classed society that operates under the illusion of beneficence, spewing Christianity and cultural charm. Dwelling just below the surface of interminable hospitality and hypersensitive religiosity lie’s a wasteland of semi-conscious incongruities – the disowned parts of self and society. These disowned appendages are hidden in the throes of ideological fervor, maintained by the subtleties of prejudicial action and a façade of sympathetic discourse that calls for unity and equality. Pinar (2004) maintains that “the educational task is to take the cover stories we as Americans tell ourselves and look to the back pages...we must teach what the cover stories hide, exposing and problematizing the hidden curriculum” (p. 39). The hidden stories of corporate America’s eco-racist agenda has become a global problem. As Bullard notes (2004) “transboundary shipments of banned pesticides, hazardous wastes and toxic products, and the export of risky technologies from the United States, where regulations and laws are more stringent, to nations with weaker infrastructure, regulations and laws, smacks of double-standard” (p. 1). Bullard (2004) further notes that “unequal interests and power arrangements have allowed poisons of the rich to be offered as short-term domestic remedies for the poor (p. 1),” exemplified by the significant impact that waste facilities and “dirty” industries have on low-income and minority populations. Under the watchful eye of the Environmental Protection Agency, corporations that defile communities of color are rewarded with lower fines and less stringent enforcement.

Operating with a guiding philosophy that it is “easier to ask for forgiveness than permission,” corporations ignore statistics that indicate “human exposure to hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) can result both in acute and chronic health effects [including] damage to the respiratory or nervous

systems, birth defects and damage to reproductive systems, neurological disorders, as well as cancer” (Faber and Krieg, 2001, p. 18). Ours is a country where millions of people die from corporately produced alcohol, cigarettes, chemically-laden foods, and pollution-spewing factories, but the President’s colonoscopy gets more press. Neoliberalism thrives on control through economic dependence – a situation ripe for the exploitation of poverty-stricken minorities who have few, if any, resources to fight back. The exploitation is not contained to U.S. soil as evidenced by the continued subjugation of poor workers in third world countries. Americans who speak out against human rights violations and capitalistic conglomeration are not adhering to the neoliberal call for subservience. Control *is* the driving force behind neoliberalism. The method for subservience is maintained by gross inequities in income distribution perpetuated by globalization on a massive scale, with many third world countries hopelessly indebted to world financial institutions and paralyzed by restrictive trade agreements. The creation of dependency is paramount to the death of democracy, and ironically, “if the United States is the greatest defender of democracy, then why over the last five decades has it funded, advised, and sponsored the overthrow of democratically elected reformist governments that attempted to introduce egalitarian redistributive economic programs” in countries around the world (McLaren, 2005, p. 197). United States domestic policy mirrors its foreign policy in its insatiable and egregious drive for exploitation.

Targeting the Defenseless

Under the thinning veil of secrecy that obscures eco-racist policies, children who reside in toxic communities engage in an ongoing struggle to meet the basic demands of existence, making it even more difficult to obtain an adequate education. The standards movement has effectively negated any opportunity for upward mobility as inner-city, minority children are expected to undergo

exactly the same type of “schooling” afforded to middle and upper class students. As Watkins (2004) notes, “slavery and continuing inadequate and unequal formal education have meant that informal education has been indispensable in equipping African-Americans for life under conditions that require diverse skills” (p. 156). No Child Left Behind has effectively placed minorities on unequal ground in terms of educational achievement, as there is no opportunity to engage in academics capable of enhancing the life skills indigenous to the realities of the inner-city environment, nor is there an opportunity to explore areas of interest that may actually make education an enjoyable experience and therefore a motivating factor for minority children (or any other child). Unfortunately, education has become “schooling” – a formal indoctrination that negates the differences of race and class. To further complicate matters, the deleterious effects of eco-racism have a significant effect on physical, psychological, and mental capabilities, placing minority children in an even more difficult situation. How can the acquisition of robotic “schooling” be a main priority when the basic necessities of life are a daily struggle? Furthermore, education has become a system “hell-bent” on the absolute control of individuals regardless of extraneous factors that impact their ability to learn.

The corporate order has created a profit-driven atmosphere that depends on the control, manipulation, and subjugation of a classed society, and eco-racist policies are an efficient way to ensure the dependence of a poverty-stricken proletariat. The chance for reform slowly diminishes under a profit-driven machine, as the neoliberal ideology depends on the subjugation of consumers for survival, a feat accomplished by predatory advertising campaigns that feed off the need for instant gratification and continued domination of the id. The tools for the banishment of critical discourse – needed to overcome oppression - are found in the standardization of curriculum, the petty appeasement of marginalized citizens, eco-racism, and the relentless promotion of the fear

factor – terrorism. As McLaren (2005) states, “the search for social transformation in the form of redistributive justice – that is, striving to equalize material resources under existing conditions of global capitalism – often works to console those who are oppressed rather than to provoke them to rise up against the world of capitalism” (p. 283). This skewed philosophy is the driving force behind a market-driven society in which needy consumers have become incessantly focused on the acquisition of material goods. Eco-racist policies ensure the obliteration of collective recourse by placing minorities in dangerous communities, totally dependent upon government assistance for survival. The situation appears bleak to residents of toxic communities as property values plummet, health declines, and rates of unemployment increase. The fear factor is working overtime in these communities as residents are manipulated by environmental conditions, unable to engage in collective action due to a pervasive fear of retributive action. Educational opportunities also suffer as teachers flee from the polluted fortresses of despair - dying communities in which the “Land of Opportunity” appears to be a fantastic creation from a perverse fairy tale. Beneath this culture of depravity lies a virtual “powder keg” of pent-up frustration waiting to explode. Authoritarianism breeds contempt, and poverty-stricken minority students –devoid of critical discourse – operate under the assumption that they have nothing to lose. The creation of this oppositional stance toward schooling has occurred “at a time when the invisible hand of the market has become a clenched fist and neoliberalism has given it brass knuckles” (McLaren and Farahmandpur, 2005, p. 40). The clenched fist has become a defining feature of eco-racism, as there is no escape from a system that thrives on the interminable control of environmental resources and human minds. The corporate/penal educational institutions are unforgiving reminders – and mirrors – of society at large as the wheels of prosperity favor the students in the wealthier suburbs while relegating the inner-city children in to prolonged state of isolation and frustration.

Financial incentives have replaced intellectual growth as the primary objective of academia – a bleak reality for minority children. After all, who wants to invest in a toxic waste site? As Nolan and Anyon (2004) note, “high-stakes testing holds appeal for both conservatives and neoliberals because on the one hand they help to carry out the conservative agenda by maintaining tight control over what constitutes official knowledge, while on the other hand these exams fit nicely into the new corporate logic as they help to shift the blame onto students, foster competition, and create new markets within the burgeoning testing industry” (p. 141). The designation of curriculum as “official knowledge” automatically deskills the teaching profession as they become hapless disseminators of textbook jargon and misanthropic rules, hopelessly frustrated by their distinct inability to instill a critical understanding of the world in which we live. But isn’t that the point of the corporate/penal educational institution? To maintain strict boundaries – to constrict the lines of flight that may disrupt the compartmentalized modes of knowledge that “keep us in our place.” Schooling – to be schooled - creates a defensive posture in children whose last measure of free-will has been usurped by the rhetorical discourse of standardized education. The students who rebel against the system view oppositionalism as their only means of control in a world of senseless rules and authoritarian demands for compliance. Who wouldn’t become frustrated under these circumstances? According to Mabe (2001), authoritarian discipline has been linked to a “broad array of negative outcomes that include aggressive behavior, delinquency, noncompliance, substance abuse, a lessening of the children’s sympathetic orientation to others, poor social attachments, and low self-esteem” (p. 8). Our education system clearly operates in an authoritarian style based on strict mandates for compliance and the negation of autonomy, erasing individual aspirations in favor of an institutional vision for conservative replication – all students must comply or leave the system.

For minority children, especially those in toxic communities, the authoritarian system – coupled with extreme environmental conditions – creates a situation where escape seems impossible. Hopelessness pervades. As Giroux (2004) notes, America is a “social order – headed by a pro-gun, pro-capital punishment, and pro-big business conservative (George Bush)...whose priorities suggest to urban youth that American society is willing to invest more in sending them to jail or the frontlines of a dubious war than in providing them with high-quality schools and a decent education” (p. 92). In this social order, difference equals death.

This discussion is by no means an exhaustive study of eco-racism in America, but serves as a brief introduction to the pervasiveness of environmental discrimination and the ideological convictions that contribute to the decay of minority communities. As Orr (2004) notes, “we once fought a revolutionary war to establish political democracy in western societies, but have yet to democratize the workplace and ownership of capital...the assumption that corporations are legal persons and thereby granted rights of privacy that place them beyond effective public scrutiny, control, and, often, law is foolishness and worse” (p. 27). In terms of eco-racist policies, corporations act in accordance with a mindset that has evaded the gaze of the general public.

Although the situation may appear hopeless, eco-racism as a corporate policy must be identified as an illegal practice to be rejected in the same manner as slavery and “Jim Crow” laws – eco-racism is a mere extension of these horrendous practices. The initiation of praxis “requires an active, engaged, and sometimes outraged citizenry” focused on the identification of eco-racist policies and demand for political reform (Orr, 2004, p. 28). Furthermore, Orr (2004) maintains that “we should all expect far more out of our leaders than we presently do...we cannot be ruled by ignorant, malicious, greedy, incompetent, and shortsighted people and expect things to turn out well” (p. 29). The initiation of change will have to begin with the development of a sustained,

collective upheaval designed to uproot and unbalance destructive eco-racist policies by engaging in constructive discourse and political action, not unlike the civil rights movement under the guidance of Martin Luther King. The method for change begins with a solitary effort, translated into an interdependent, complicated conversation that unflinchingly questions the past, to present a new history, and to create a future based on an understanding of the past. As Winnicott (1986) points out, “social health is dependent on individual health...society cannot get further than the common denominator of individual health, and indeed cannot get so far, since society needs must carry its unhealthy members” (p. 21). This begins by the initiation of complicated conversations. Consequently, complicated means testing the boundaries, “scrutinizing manifest and latent meanings, conscious and unconscious content of language, as well as the political subtexts of such interpretation and reflection” (Pinar, 2004, p. 58). Complicated means going beyond the bounds of conservative religiosity and corporate pomposity to search for disowned parts and repressed memories as a prerequisite for healing. Complicated means self-reflection as a precursor to social reflection – to question the unquestionable, to keep searching for a momentary glimpse of “aliveness.” As Reynolds (2004) notes, “we always have to develop new lines of flight – lines of flight (becomings) that allow, however, contingently, briefly, or momentarily for us to soar vertically like a bird or slither horizontally, silently like a snake weaving our way amid the constant reconfigurations, co-optations, and movements of brand-name corporate order” (p. 31). For the poverty-stricken African-American the task can seem overwhelming, but the risk is worth taking. The risk becomes the opportunity to find new ways of thinking, to go beyond the death of certainty. As Winnicott (1986) states in the following passage:

The nightmare of the scientist is the idea of complete knowledge. He shudders to think of such a thing. Compare this with the certainty that belongs to religion,

and you will see how different science is from religion. Religion replaces doubt with certainty. (pp. 14).

With certainty, the complicated conversation ends, eco-racist practices continue, and lines of flight come to a crashing halt.

Desire in Control

Desire – the indefinable force that dwells deep within the unconscious, creating modes of behavior that deny satiability and perpetuate individual aspirations to reach the stage of enlightenment that Buddhist's call Nirvana, or the cessation of desire. Human beings are on a relentless quest to find meaning, to fill the void created by a sense of loss that accompanies the developmental stages of growth, drifting further away from the mother's womb into the postmodern panacea of disconnected imagery. Reality is characterized by impersonal modes of communication and the delineation of buying-power as the ultimate measure of self-efficacy. According to Campbell (1996), "at the core of our sense of self, then, is our feeling of loss and the desire for unity that is born of loss... Loss makes us what we are, and desire is an empty force (not dependent on any object we might want at any given time) which always drives us but can never be satisfied" (p. 134). In our current environment, the creation of desire has been perfected by waves of ideological control that equate self-actualization with the dictates of stellar consumerism, leading to the illusion that the fulfillment of desire can only be achieved through the power of purchase ("the power of gold" according to the Visa ad). With each successive purchase comes a sense of control, a feeling that the self has mysteriously been enhanced by active participation in the "buying game." Consequently, this creates a "false self" that mistakenly attributes individual action to conscious decision making, when in reality the basis for determination is the result of an entire regime of signifying practices that give the illusion of control. According to Foucault, an individual is "a

node within a network” (quoted in Campbell, 1996, p. 132). The network extends across every aspect of consumerist culture, mysteriously blocking the productive “lines of flight” that constitute the possibilities for a pedagogy that seriously questions our unwavering faith in technology and the ignorance of a society that denies its inextricable link to all forms of life on this planet. As Campbell (1996) notes, “we can’t do anything without causing lots of side effects because everything is connected, nothing is isolated... human beings are no longer the center of value or meaning” (p. 132). Unfortunately, the ideology that supports free-market fundamentalism also posits the existence of individuals who are firmly in control of their destinies as the purveyors of Western knowledge, as well as “the centers of intelligence and spirit and therefore value in this world” (Campbell, 1996, p. 133). This attitude constitutes the height of arrogance and becomes the most difficult obstacle to overcome in the fight to “Save the World,” an inherently empty slogan that encourages the “false self” to believe that one is intricately engaged in a noble cause.

Environmental awareness is an important first step in the battle to prevent global warming, but awareness does not constitute action, and individuals will not be called to action unless they begin to understand the driving forces behind environmentally destructive policies such as globalization and environmental racism. Participants in the Green culture will need to engage in a prolonged struggle to not only “act locally,” but to create active forms of resistance that politicize the public forum in an effort to expose the ubiquitous significations of neo-liberal ideology that strive to prevent conscious awareness of pathological behavior. With the “false self” firmly in control, the consumer fails to recognize their undeniable link to and subsequent effect upon every aspect of our ecological system. To believe that we are somehow disconnected from this process is the unmistakable result of ideological messages projected through various forms of media, “schooling,” and government/corporate institutions. As Campbell (1996) points out, “there is no such thing as a

self-enclosed, private piece of property, neither a deer nor a person nor a piece of land... Ecology insists that we pay attention not to the way things have meaning for us, but to the way the rest of the world – the nonhuman part – exists apart from us and our languages” (p. 133). An analysis of the neo-liberal ideology not only negates the value of environmental concerns, but perpetuates methods of control that envelop the unconscious minds of unsuspecting consumers. Progress is equated with consumption, and who could aspire to deny progress? The result of corporate innovation becomes the “American myth [that] the most astonishingly unnatural places on earth would be certain regions of the American from which the presence of the dominant species – us – had been meticulously removed, as if a million acres had been cleared of earthworms,” referring to the wilderness (Turner, 1996, p. 40). In order to better understand our interconnectedness to the environment, it is also helpful to explore the Buddhist concept of “no self,” and the importance of retreating from rampant self-indulgence to a form of existence that anticipates systemic consequences for even the smallest act of environmental indifference. Consequently, one cannot abandon the environmental debate to the binary dictates of a broken system, so it is essential that individuals become open to possibilities for change through a deep awareness of alternative modes of being. A post-structural pedagogy can be helpful in this process.

Thinking as a Replacement for Feeling

According to Winnicott (1986), “man’s understanding of human nature is not yet so complete as to enable thinking things out entirely to replace feeling... the danger is partly that the thinkers make plans that look marvelous” (p. 170). At one point in our history, democracy was a marvelous thought, but the scientific rationalism that became the guiding force of the free-market slowly began to inject an ideology of control into the unconscious minds of America’s burgeoning consumers. As the ideology consumes the thought process, “each flaw as it appears is dealt with by

a still more brilliant piece of thinking out, and in the end the masterpiece of rational construction is overthrown by a little detail like GREED that has been left out of account – the next result being a new victory for unreason, with its consequence: an increase in the public distrust of knowledge” (Winnicott, 1986, p. 170). In essence, capitalism depends on the maintenance of a “false self,” as the perpetuation of market forces are sustained under the pretense that technological progress will lead to a utopian existence, and this can only be accomplished when the unconscious is fully imbibed with the ideological message that self-fulfillment results from the consumption of marketed products. On a conscious level, active participants in the “desiring game” react to the corporate bombardment of the psyche by engagement in a decision-making process that determines which products will most likely provide life-enhancing benefits, with choices ranging from a wide array of pharmaceutical concoctions, diet potions, cell phones, computers, business opportunities, relationship companies, automobiles, cleaning products, and the list goes on. Materialism prevails, and self-actualization is a rare prospect indeed when happiness is dependent on the attainment of something outside oneself. This raises important questions about the intelligence of a supposedly advanced society. For example: How can the masses be duped into the false belief that materialism will lead to a more enhanced existence? The belief is that we can somehow “manage” the natural processes of the ecosystem by using the technological prowess and systems of control which, paradoxically, have caused the destruction that we are currently attempting to remedy. As Orr (1994) points out, “managing the planet has a nice ring to it, [but] what might be managed, however, is us: human desires, economies, politics, and communities... it makes far better sense to reshape ourselves to a finite planet than to attempt to reshape the planet to fit our infinite wants” (p. 9). However, the creation of desire is the hallmark of neo-liberal ideology, as societal impulses for immediate gratification far outweigh the supposedly innocuous of a government/corporate machine

that “places profit over people.” The methods of control are ubiquitous and effective, maintaining a classed system in which lower socio-economic groups are methodically disenfranchised by an ideology that denies participation to those who are unable to *buy into* the American dream. To complicate the problem, Orr (1994) highlights the problem of globalization:

The desperate and the hungry will not be particularly cautious with risky technologies. Nor will the wealthy, fed and supplied by vast, complex global networks, understand the damage they cause in distant places they never see and the harm they do to people they will never know. Knowledge has its own limits of scale. Beyond some level of scale and complexity, the effects of technology, used in a world we cannot fully comprehend, are simply unknowable. (pp. 144)

Under our current system of knowledge, the “false self” takes note of the problems inherent to globalization, but believes that complicity to the devastating effects of pollution, child labor, and corporate hegemony is in the hands of someone else, an “unthought known” (Bollas, 1987) that never manages to penetrate conscious awareness. Even when the shocking images of Katrina were plastered across television screens, many Americans *blamed the survivors* as somehow responsible, that they should have left New Orleans via their imaginary cars, to reside in hotels via imaginary financial resources. This marks a disturbing trend in which citizens in the lower socio-economic class are not only removed from the political process, but actually held accountable for events beyond their control.

Awareness of What?

This attitude resonates throughout the American persona, as many citizens plaster empty slogans across their bumpers (Save the World) and tune-in to events such as Live Earth, but fail to initiate critical action. Bringing awareness to the environmental crisis is certainly the first step in effecting change, but individuals will need to do more than extemporaneously relate to celebrities promoting a cause. An event such as Live Earth is undeniably important, but will the message of conservation translate into individual action? As Santana (2007) points out, “critics say that Live Earth lacks achievable goals, and that jet-setting rock stars whose amplifier stacks chew through power may send mixed messages about energy conservation... on her tour last year, Madonna produced an estimated 485 ton of carbon dioxide in four months” (p. 1). Buying a Green product is good, but corporations are now selling the Green culture and the notion that environmental activism can be purchased along with the whole assemblage of life-enhancing products. The “belief that our culture is the pinnacle of human achievement... represents cultural arrogance of the worst sort and a gross misreading of history and anthropology” (Orr, 1994, p. 12). This belief not only disables critical agency, but also generates a lack of trust for those who attempt to integrate interrogative forms of discourse into public arenas such as education and politics. Technological innovation should not equal environmental destruction, as significant strides have been made toward the efficient use of energy in the form of alternative fuel sources, wind farms, and solar energy. Unfortunately, the conversion of technology involves significant changes in the corporate culture that will require initial financial expenditures, and as the great protector of corporate America, our current administration has declined participation in important environmental initiatives such as Kyoto in favor of extending democracy to every corner of the globalized world. In fact, a significant amount of resources are spent on the denial of environmental decay, as evidenced by

widespread environmental racism and an army of corporately-sponsored special interest groups that deny the existence of global warming.

Despite attempts to marginalize the problem, it is clear that “environmental hazards are inequitably distributed in the United States, with poor people and people of color bearing a greater share of pollution than richer people and white people” (Cole and Foster, 2001, p. 10). Equally frustrating in the targeting of these disadvantaged communities is the fact that corporate America methodically preys upon minority and lower income groups due to their perceived inability to resist and the arrogant assumption that financial resources can overcome human dignity. Unfortunately, in the ideological environment that offers “blanket protection” to corporations, targeted communities are subjected to utterly despicable tactics. According to Cole and Foster (2001), “low-income and communities of color enter the decision-making process with fewer resources than other interests in the decision-making process... these communities have less time, less information, and less specialized knowledge about the legal, technical, and economic issues involved” (p. 109). Furthermore, corporate leaders are well aware that financial incentives are often powerful sources of motivation to lure community leaders into lucrative deals, offering significant tax revenues for struggling communities and high-paying jobs for unskilled workers. As members of the community begin to obtain information regarding proposed waste sites, they slowly realize the potential for corporate profitability and the significant risks for public health, which include higher rates of cancer, birth defects, and an assortment of other health-related problems. As Cole and Foster (2001) point out in their analysis of Chester, “one of the barriers the residents initially faced stemmed from their inability to understand the highly technical language the facility representatives used” (p. 41). In addition, “government and industry officials employed various tactics to keep the residents in the dark about issues that fundamentally affected their health and

quality of life” (Cole and Foster, 2001, p. 41). These tactics are hardly surprising. In the corporate culture, profitability outweighs beneficence, and the harsh reality of American existence is the illusion that freedom and equality are guaranteed rights to all individuals regardless of race or socio-economic status. The “false self” maintains this façade, retreating into the secure confines of middle class existence, finding solitude in the illusion that they are somehow immune to the disconnected images of violence and corporate malfeasance that innocuously drift through the postmodern landscape, and into the unconscious soul of the “desiring machine.” It becomes a schizophrenic existence. According to Deleuze (2006):

The schizophrenic lives in machines, alongside machines, or the machines are in him, in her. The schizophrenic’s organs are not provisional machines but function only as external parts, random components, connected up with other external components (a tree, a star, a light-bulb, a motor). Once the organs have been connected to a power source, they have been plugged into flows, the organs then comprise larger, complex machines. (pp. 17)

The larger, complex machines are the forces of capitalism. How do we separate the flows? How do we attach consumers to other machines? As Deleuze (2006) notes, “the schizophrenic appears as someone who cannot *recognize* or *place* his or her own desire” (p. 25). Precisely – the power of capitalism.

Orr (1994) proposes that knowledge should carry “with it the responsibility to see that it is used well within the world... knowledge of how to do vast and risky things has far outrun our ability to use it responsibly” (p. 13). Technological progress comes with a price, as the need to fortify postmodern existence with utopian-like facility has arrogantly placed the desires of human beings as the central focus, while ignoring every other form of life on the planet. This can only be

explained by an ideology that cannot disconnect the need for corporate viability from the notion of technological progress. Technology must be a profitable enterprise for corporate America in order to be deemed useful, while unprofitable technology – such as alternative fuels sources – is branded as futuristically possible but currently “untenable” as a result of economic downturn (i.e. oil is guaranteed profit). The moral argument holds that healthy communities will realize the importance of interconnection, that human activity is not inseparable from the network of “flux and flow” that characterizes the earth’s ecosystem. Unfortunately, the same ideology that spews scientific rationalism also conveys the ignorant position that human actions do not impact the rest of the world (environment, oppressed workers in third world countries). In fact, significant resources are devoted not only to deflect criticism of environmental policies, but to attack those who dare to accuse the stalwarts of American patriotism – the corporate/government machine - of willful neglect and blatantly unethical practices. As Orr (2002) notes, “denial is manifest in ridicule and hominem attacks... people inclined to think that present trends are not entirely positive are labeled doomsayers, romantics, apocalyptics, Malthusians, dread-mongers, and wackos” (p. 86).

A New Pedagogy

The production of an environmentally progressive pedagogy is a distinct necessity in order for our society to move beyond the confines of rampant consumerism and scientific rationalism. Individuals will need to disarm the dualistic modes of thinking that characterize Western culture and begin to recognize the value of interdependence – the necessity of “empty mind.” This cannot be accomplished under our current ideological system, in which education has become “schooling” for consumption, based on the dictates of technological efficiency and a “hidden curriculum” that promotes submission to control instead of opportunities for exploration. According to Orr (2001):

Whatever they once may have been, institutions of higher education have

become vast and expensively operated machines much like any for-profit corporation. Students are fed through a conveyor belt of requirements, large classes, deadlines, and general busy-ness. What they learn seldom adds up to anything like a coherent, ecologically solvent worldview. The scale of institutions is not conducive to human interaction. (pp. 153)

Institutions of higher education and public schools have become the proving-grounds for the government/corporate machine, graduating technologically self-conscious individuals into the world of consumerism with the understanding that ego strength comes from purchasing power. Those who fail to graduate are deemed ideologically challenged and expelled from the system, living out meek existences as the unwilling victims of environmental racism, job discrimination, and unscrupulous healthcare practices. Consequently, this highlights the need for an environmentally sound pedagogy that not only addresses issues such as global warming and deforestation, but takes into account the human toll of ruthless corporate practices that occur under the unwatchful eyes of neo-liberal practitioners. The first step involves a heightened awareness of corporations who engage in environmental racism by organizing community-based organizations that resist the power-tactics of ruthless ideologues. As Cole and Foster (2001) point out, “communities have organized to resist toxic intrusions, created and strengthened networks to support each other’s struggles, begun to elect their own sympathetic state and local officials, [and] pushed legal and environmental groups to increase their activity in the field” (p. 133). Critical engagement in the environmental process is also a necessary component for those in the “privileged” classes, but they must first understand the harmful effects of their actions and the ideological processes which ultimately control their “desiring machines.”

The majority of middle and upper class citizen-consumers are firmly ensconced in the illusion that they are fully engaged in an autonomous decision-making process that is free from the dictates of ideological control. A critical pedagogy rejects this assumption and allows individuals to question their drives, to understand how consumerism is the controlling mechanism of a “false self” operating under an unhealthy external locus of control – capitalism. To counteract this belief, Bowers (2001) proposes a “different kind of primary socialization – one that develops the conceptual basis necessary for communicative competence in addressing cultural issues that range from family and community to globalization (p. 188),” but this must begin with the teacher’s awareness of how primary socialization patterns influence the child’s ability to learn new ways of thinking (p. 188). This also begins with parental understanding of issues which affect their child’s ability to learn, including the ideological basis of education (No Child Left Behind), infatuation with new forms of technology (video games, cell phones), and a psychiatric industry that professes control through medication. In addition, an eco-justice pedagogy will need to “break hold of Enlightenment thinking that continues to privilege the abstract over cultural context, the expert over intergenerational knowledge and responsibility, and the vision of ever-expanding material progress over living within the sustaining capacities of earth’s ecosystem” (Bowers, 2001, p. 207). This highlights the need to question prevalent forms of communication that prioritize text messaging and email over “complicated conversations” and critical action. A critical pedagogy will create awareness of *individuals as consumers*, operating under the mysterious guise of an ideology that strives to limit conscious awareness by hyperbolizing the virtues of desire. A critical pedagogy means changing our ideas about culture. As Turner (1995) discusses:

For Americans, culture means to a large extent technology; indeed, the latter will be named more frequently as the opposite of nature. If nature, in our

myth, is eternal, unchanging, pure, gentle, wise, innocent, balanced, harmonious, and good, then culture (qua technology) must be temporary, progressive, polluting, violent, blind, destructive, distorted, and evil. At its best, technology is an euphoric escape from nature; at its worst, a diabolical destruction of it. (pp. 45).

As Americans, we are currently witnessing in the “land of opportunity” a technological nightmare, as the innovation of progress is determined not by the beneficence of the ecological system, but by the financial viability of investment expenditures. As Orr (2001) points out, “advertised as the essence of rationality and control, the technological system has become the epitome of irrationality and in which means overrule careful consideration of the ends” (p. 19). A critical pedagogy, as well as a distinct understanding of the self in relation to objects), is required in order to address the caution with which technological progress is advanced and the underlying rationale of supporting a type of education that supports collective resistance and political process. This type of pedagogy will also produce a post-structural denial of inhibitory dualisms and essentialist modes of being by stressing the importance of multiplicity – the understanding of difference through repetition. With each reading comes a new translation, but the point is to keep searching, to overcome the barriers by relentlessly engaging in new “lines of flight.”

As human beings, we must be aware that we have choices to make that extend beyond the consumerist notion of desire. As Campbell (1995) notes, “our choices, it seems to me, depend on the shape of our lives – where we live, how we spend our days, how we’ve been taught – and especially on the role the land itself has playing in what we might call the writing of our textuality” (p. 134). When we begin to think in this way, each day will expand beyond the dictates of materialistic desire, and into the multiplicity of perpetual interpretation.

In conclusion, the Smashing Pumpkins proclamation that “the world is a vampire” certainly rings true in the age of globalization, marked by an inhumane adherence to technological progress while the cultural production of desire strongly adheres to free-market fundamentalism. This chapter has outlined the detrimental effects of corporate America’s resounding adherence to a false version of self,” narcissistically imbibed with the gratification of the id, while displaying an uncanny ability to rationalize the unfortunate collateral (i.e. catastrophic) damage of unbridled growth, such as global warming and environmental racism. To an outside observer – if outside observation is still a possibility – it would appear as though the “land of the free” has become a sociopathic appendage of neo-liberal ideology. The pathological state of corporate America is blatantly obvious when looking at the highly unethical and egregious acts of discrimination in the location of waste facilities. As Cole and Foster (2001) note, fostered by biased socioeconomic studies that tout the community benefits from a proposed facility, “developers’ proffers of increased employment opportunities and host feels are often called ‘environmental distortion’ by residents faced with the trade-off between jobs and health” (p. 77). In response to these environmentally harmful practices, a variety of approaches ranging from post-structural, critical, and object-relations theory can offer an understanding of consumer behavior. Essentially, the deconstruction of the ideological “self” is a necessary beginning in the quest to initiate new forms of desire.

The Buddhist concepts of interdependence and “no self” can be a force in the transition from mindless consumption to a prolonged state of mindfulness in which individuals consider the environmental consequences of every action. This is now becoming more of a necessity than an option, since the survival of the planet depends on the power of transformation, to read the world as an open text with infinite translation. Through each translation, we come ever closer to the realization that we are inherently empty, but acutely aware of our responsibility to “Save the Earth.”

According to the Gore (2006), “the truth about the climate crisis is an inconvenient one that means we are going to have to change the way we live our lives” (p. 286). A simple message that, if ignored, could signal the end of our affair with desire.

CHAPTER 10
THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF GREED, ADDICTION, AND THE PSYCHIATRIC
MACHINE

- *On Sid Vicious: I could take on England, but I couldn't take on one heroin user.*

- Johnny Rotten

The Addict

Not again. Unmercifully, without reproach, the addict compulsively acts on another irresistible urge to open the dopamine floodgates, unwilling and unable to consider the consequences of instant gratification. This *really is* the last time.

The insanity of addiction, as echoed in the meeting rooms of NA and AA, is to keep doing the same thing with the expectation that somehow, this time, things will be different. The repentant addict emerges from a drug-induced stupor with a sincere desire to stop the insanity, to stay away from drugs and alcohol at all costs, as it is quite obvious that with each successive binge life is voraciously engaging a new and improved depth of hell. Then, it happens. The last binge is surreptitiously concealed in the far recesses of the brain, the id takes over, and the insanity begins again. The addict is certain that it will be different *this time*. And so the cycle continues, with the defense mechanisms of rationalization and denial promoting an unforgivable fortress against the logic and determination of a sober mind. According to Farrenkopf (2002), “the social stigma attached to addicts reflects the wide gap that exists between scientific knowledge and the public perception of addiction... drug addiction continues to be seen as a character flaw instead of the biological problem that it is” (p. 1). In addition to the biological component of addiction, there is clearly a social and psychological context in which therapeutic modalities are directed. The

biological processes of addiction cannot escape the environmental and psychological cues that inevitably contribute to the incessant cravings, unrequited obsessions, and the inexhaustible compulsions of the addicted individual. At some point, a glimpse of clarity penetrates the embattled mind of the addict, as a momentary retreat from the madness elicits the notion that the drug use must end. Life cannot continue with drugs, but how can life continue without drugs? Searching for another high, the addict may attempt to substitute alcohol for cocaine, marijuana for alcohol, or methamphetamine for heroin, only to find that addiction does not know the *type* of drug – it only knows the mind of the addict. For this reason, abstinence from all mood-altering chemicals is a necessary component of recovery - a drug is a drug is a drug.

Recovery can be filled with potential pitfalls in a hopelessly materialistic society that places the id as the driving force behind all decision-making. Pharmaceutical companies capitalize on the insatiability of post-modern existence by offering tantalizing concoctions that promise instant relief from depression, anxiety, PMS, pain, restless leg syndrome, gastric reflux, and a variety of other ailments, all in the form of a pill. Unfortunately, many of these pills are potential mind-fields for the recovering addict, as medical doctors are notorious for irresponsibly prescribing addictive medications to unsuspecting consumers. The recovering alcoholic who is prescribed Xanax – a highly addictive benzodiazepine – is well on her way to a successful relapse. For many doctors, the drive for profits and the incessant conditioning of unscrupulous pharmaceutical representatives perpetuates a primary emphasis on prescribing drugs, a dangerous practice that ultimately negates the beneficial effects of lifestyle changes such as exercise and a healthy diet. A physician who writes a prescription for certain drugs – without strict oversight – can initiate physical dependence without the patient having any prior history of addiction. A large majority of patients in rehabilitation facilities are addicted to prescription drugs due to their physician's lack of knowledge

– or incompetence – about the drug’s propensity for physical and psychological addiction. Drugs such as Ritalin and Dexedrine - used to treat ADHD - are now classified as Schedule II pharmaceuticals that also include cocaine and morphine, which indicates a strong potential for abuse with adverse physical consequences (Breggin, 2001). As Breggin (2001) notes, “addicted adults have used their children’s Ritalin prescriptions to foster their own habit” (p. 101). Furthermore, Breggin (2001) states that “intoxication with stimulant drugs such as Ritalin, amphetamines, and cocaine can produce particularly vicious symptoms in the abuser, including psychosis with paranoia, hallucinations, and delusions... lives are frequently ruined” (p. 102).

There is no doubt that the addict is their own worst enemy, but the voracious consumption of chemicals is only part of the story. Addiction is a complicated process, not easily classifiable and dauntingly slippery, as the use of drugs is fueled by a combination of factors that negotiate an escape from reality, and the drug companies have certainly offered a viable solution. As purveyors of corporate greed, Big PhRMA consistently places profits ahead of conscience, forgoing vital research on unprofitable diseases (malaria) by maximizing patents on existing drugs and spending exorbitant sums of money on marketing. As Huffington (2002) notes, “there has got to be a very special place in hell for corporations willing to sacrifice the health of their customers on the altar of increased profits” (p. 2). Unfortunately, an ideological position that supports the corporatization of drugs and education exists on an irrevocable collision course with collective social action, leading to a blight of human depravity as countless numbers of individuals succumb to market forces. For Big PhRMA, the cost of doing business provides limited consideration for ethical concerns, which ultimately become obfuscated in pages of statistical ingenuity that create the illusion of consumer safety and satisfaction. In capitalism, an individual is a statistic, and the ability to equate cause and effect is an illusion found in the methods of market- savvy statisticians. Morality cannot lead to a

predictable solution, as “market forces have no intrinsic moral direction, which is why, before he wrote ‘The Wealth of Nations,’ Adam Smith wrote the ‘Theory of Moral Sentiments’ ... ethics should precede economics, but it doesn’t have to” (quoted in Huffington, 2002, p. 1).

This chapter will explore the social manifestations of corporate greed and the egregious onslaught of Big Pharma in the lives of the capitalistically-defined consumer. Addicts are normally perceived as homeless vagrants that have little self-control, but the face of addiction is often that of a nurse, physician, or housewife that has bought-in to the idea that prescription drugs are socially permissible, while street drugs are morally wrong and dangerous. Most consumers do not realize that Oxycodone is basically synthetic heroin, that Valium has the exact same effect and addiction propensity as that of alcohol. The chapter will define Big Pharma and provide a general overview of operating guidelines driven by *the* primary incentive of profit. This will include a biopsychosocial analysis of addiction, exploring facets of corporate greed and the conditions that lead to learned helplessness and a visceral urge to escape the confines of a control society. As Eric Burdon and the Animals exclaimed in the utterly profound Vietnam anthem: “We’ve gotta get out of this place” (Burdon, 1965). If not physically, mentally is always an option. Consequently, the psychiatric profession has joined forces with the pharmaceutical industry in the creation of diagnosable conditions that can only be treated with certain types of medication, a practice that completely ignores therapeutic modalities designed to focus on cognitive and behavioral changes without the aid of chemically-induced states of being. Children and adolescents are not immune to the methodically engineered “drugging” of America, as a distinctly oppositional form of behavior has emerged which in part has been created by a wave of medical practitioners who have succumbed to the pharmaceutical industry’s alluring tale of a drug-induced utopia, where children should be controlled, not understood.

The Unscrupulous Profiteers

America – the beautiful. “Till selfish gain no longer stain, the banner of the free” (Bates, 1913). Somewhere along the path, we have strayed. When Katharine Lee Bates wrote the final version of *America the Beautiful* in 1913, market forces had already begun to shape the economic and social foundations of a nation in the grips of the industrial revolution. Known as the Progressive Era, entrepreneurs such as Henry Ford introduced the assembly line in which factory workers contributed to the effective utilization of wage labor. The assembly line would prove to be an invaluable tool to a country on the brink of its’ First World War. It was during this time that Marxian notions of alienation became startlingly apparent as the exploitation of labor contributed to vast sums of wealth and abject poverty. Bates’ declaration that selfishness may “no longer stain the banner of the free” began to sound like a distanced soliloquy to the millions of Americans working in abysmal conditions, including children who “were hired to work in factories, mills, and mines for long hours in unsafe and unhealthy conditions” (Whitley, 2006, p. 2). As Whitley (2006) notes, “monopolies continued in spite of the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 [while] social problems flourished... labor unions continued to grow as the middle classes became more and more unhappy” (p. 2). There was a disconnection, an aching realization that *America the Beautiful* did indeed offer distinct opportunities for enterprising entrepreneurs, but underneath the tales of individualized fortuitousness lay a disillusioned and disgruntled segment of society that was experiencing the results of corporate hegemony. Although popular culture was a welcome escape to the doldrums of factory work, “a commission found that up to 20% of the children living in the cities were undernourished, education took a second place to hunger and while children worked, only one-third enrolled in elementary school and less than 10% graduated from high school”

(Whitley, 2006, p. 3). This resulted in a gross inequity between the rich and the poor, resulting in a vast overhaul of the education system led by theorists such as John Dewey, Harold Rugg, Ralph Tyler, and many others.

Fast-forward to our current world – the postmodern era. We are products of the “me” generation. Factory work is now in the hands of third world countries where women and children work for a fraction of the pay of American workers in conditions that resemble the sweat-shops of the early 1900’s. Large corporations like Exxon and Wal-Mart have replaced the icons of industrialization such as U.S. Steel, engaging in practices that can only be construed as intimidation and corruption while operating under the auspices of a corporately-aligned, neoliberal ideology. This is a reality in which a large portion of our society wishes to escape – the ideological confinement encloses the mind and body in a suffocating tomb that can only be relieved by a chemically-induced retreat from the world. Postmodern chaos combined with increasing poverty creates an atmosphere conducive to mood-altering, life-changing, mind-numbing, and pain-reducing chemicals, a void that is creatively filled by the marketing machines of Big PhRMA. Pharmaceutical companies are currently engaged in a dangerous and unethical game, engineered by corporate giants (Bristol Meyer, Squibb) who place economic concerns above public health. The definition of disease is often indicative of the types of drugs that are deemed profitable. As Angell (2004) notes, “markets can be created, as well as enlarged... some of the normal accompaniments of aging are now treated as diseases” (p. 86). The litmus test for drugs has become the marketability of disease:

Once upon a time, drug companies promoted drugs to treat disease. Now it is often the opposite. They promote diseases to fit their drugs. Nearly everyone experiences heartburn from time to time. The remedy used to be a glass of milk or an over-the-

counter antacid to relieve symptoms. But now heartburn is called “acid reflux disease” or “gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)” and marketed, along with the drugs to treat it, as a harbinger of serious esophageal disease – which it usually is not.

As a result, in 2002, Prilosec was the third best selling drug in the world. (pp. 86)

Big Pharma remains impervious to the dictates of ethicality as an alarmingly unregulated member of the corporate machine, possessing an uncanny ability to consistently escape liability in the countless numbers of lives ruined by medical misconduct, incompetent research, and the reckless prescribing of addictive drugs. The pharmaceutical industry has continued the tradition of corporate malfeasance that began under the monopolistic conglomerates in the early 1900’s, wholeheartedly supported by a neoliberal ideology that extols the virtues of rugged individualism at the expense of social collectivity. In this world profit outweighs philanthropy.

In the eyes of many Americans, capitalism is the panacea of modern civilization while social inequality has become an acceptable misfortune. Civilization is succumbing to Wall Street plunder, as “free-marketers have been given the New World Order’s *imprimatur* to loot and exploit the planet’s resources and to invest in global markets without restriction... everywhere we look, social relations of oppression and contempt for human dignity abound” (McLaren, 2005, p. 22). The recent government bailout of major financial institutions is a prime example of governmental malfeasance, as \$700 billion dollars of our money is being used to support the gross incompetence of corporate America. To heighten the outrage that many Americans feel, the CEO’s of several firms are being allowed to keep their multi-million dollar compensation packages despite harsh criticism from many Congressmen and Senators. The magnitude of corporate irresponsibility is especially evident in the halls of Big PhRMA, where the cost of doing business far outweighs the value of human life. Research on highly curable diseases succumbs to a profit-driven mentality that

dictates research and funding, so “if you get bitten by a rattlesnake, you may not be able to get antivenin, but you can certainly get something for your cholesterol” (Angell, 2004, p. 93). The driving force behind pharmaceutical research resides in the financial forecasts that place an inordinate amount of resources on the marketability of a new drug, which means that child vaccines hardly contribute to an enthusiastic marketing campaign. As Angell (2004) notes, “drug company profits are so large that one would hope the companies would be willing to make less profitable but vital drugs as a social service – and a thank-you to the public that subsidizes them so handsomely... but that is not the way this industry works” (p. 92). The television airways are hopelessly inundated with excitable celebrities hyperbolizing the benefits of the latest pharmaceutical concoctions, while the technologically imbibed consumer drools over the possibility of drug-induced salvation. Bob Dole recently reinvigorated America’s sex drive, and Sally Field has unabashedly promoted an osteoporosis medication (Boniva) that has to be taken once a month, instead of weekly, since our citizens are simply too busy to take a pill once a week. How does she keep a straight face? There is a commercial for every drug, with each one depicting deliriously joyful upper-middle class extroverts who are dancing, laughing, cycling, sculpting, and cooking their way into a utopian existence, all with the help of the latest pill. America *really is* beautiful when a pill is readily available. While the commercial rolls, an authoritatively friendly voice discusses the possibility of rare but possible, temporary, and mostly innocuous side effects, such as diarrhea, anxiety, high blood pressure, kidney damage, cardiac infarction, dizziness, suicidal ideation, blindness, and the possibility of death in certain cases. As the salacious consumer mulls over the possibility of drug-induced happiness, death *really does* seem like a minor inconvenience.

Adults are not the only targets of Big PhRMA, as “advocates of psychiatric drugs have escalated their efforts to push their chemical wares on children... the marketing of older drugs in a new

package is one method of promoting stimulant drugs” such as Adderall and Concerta (Breggin, 2001, p. 5). The pharmaceutical companies have expanded their efforts to *drug* children by the introduction of antidepressant, antipsychotic, and mood stabilizers into the chemical protocol for child psychiatrists, a truly innovative marketing scheme that further highlights the incredible lack of ethical standards in the industry. As Breggin (2001) notes, “selling ‘mental illness’ to the American public is one of the most vigorous and successful advertising campaigns in history... it’s all about marketing – drugs are an industrial product” (p. 274). And marketing is the key to Big PhRMA, since a large majority of current drugs are remarkably similar to drugs that have been on the market for years. According to Angell (2004), “every now and then drug companies bring innovative drugs to market, but mainly they turn out a seemingly inexhaustible supply of leftovers – ‘me-too’ drugs that are versions of drugs in the distant past” (p. 75). For the consumer with a rare form of cancer, this is especially bad news, since the pharmaceutical industry is strictly for-profit and will not expend the financial resources devoted to a drug that could never be widely used – i.e. profitable. The ease with which “me-too” drugs are approved is truly incomprehensible. Angell (2004) identifies this practice as a gross failure of government control:

This travesty is made possible by one crucial weakness in the law – namely, drug companies have to show the FDA only that new drugs are “effective.” They do not have to show that they are *more effective than* (or even as effective as) what is already being used for the same condition. They just have to show they are better than nothing. And that is exactly what companies do. In clinical trials, they compare their new drugs with placebos (sugar pills) instead of with the best current treatment. (p. 75).

A healthy dose of free-market ingenuity allows Big PhRMA to pinpoint technicalities in regulations as a way to systematically dupe consumers while at the same time launching millions of dollars into marketing campaigns designed to extol the benefits of the newest breakthrough drug. In most cases, the breakthrough drug may have been so many years ago, but the ability to patent new drugs with remarkable similarities to drugs already on the market has become a very profitable endeavor. In terms of social responsibility, Big PhRMA audaciously portrays an industry that works for the public good while in reality they staunchly maintain a strong adherence to free-market principles - and moral turpitude is certainly not one of those principles. Big PhRMA surreptitiously evades the hazards of public backlash by incessant promotional campaigns that suggest a stalwart adherence to the principles of beneficence and an undaunted commitment to research, when in fact they are spending a large percentage of their funds on marketing “me-too” drugs (Angell, 2004). According to Angell (2004), “Big Pharma likes to refer to itself as a ‘research-based industry,’ but it is hardly that... it could best be described as an idea-licensing, pharmaceutical formulating and manufacturing, clinical testing, patenting, and marketing industry” (p. 73).

A large percentage of the victims of these egregious practices happen to be the most vulnerable citizens in America, such as children and senior citizens, who depend on many of these medications for survival. According to a recent report from the National Coalition of Health Care (2007), “nearly 47 million Americans, or 16 percent of the population, were without insurance in 2005,” a number that rose by 7 million individuals since 2000 (p. 1). The NCHC (2005) also reported that “8 in 10 uninsured people came from working families,” with the majority having employers that did not provide health insurance (p. 2). These statistics point to continued social stratification that dates back to the Progressive Era, an ironic name for a period in history that witnessed the degradation of women and children amidst the monopolistic wealth of Industrial America. In

essence, drug companies have simply continued the tradition set forth in the early days of the twentieth century. The upper class continues to accumulate wealth while the lower and middle classes struggle to eek-out an existence under the weight of rising healthcare costs', the flight of working-class jobs to third world nations, and a corporate ideology that rationalizes the presence of acceptable casualties as a necessary cost of doing business. Neoliberalism is an apt description for the inequities currently experienced in our classed society. As McLaren (2005) notes, "neoliberalism ('capitalism with the gloves off,' or 'socialism for the rich') refers to a corporate domination of society that supports state enforcement of the unregulated market, engages in the oppression of nonmarket forces and antimarket policies, guts free public services, eliminates social subsidies, offers limitless concessions to transnational corporations, [and] permits private interests to control most of social life in the pursuit of profits for the few" (p. 31). This is certainly an apt description for Big PhRMA, as they are ultimately responsible for an integral part of American society – the nation's health. Apparently, this responsibility is taken lightly, as they continue to capitalize on policies that allow free reign over our nation's healthcare system.

Escape

It is no secret that drugs are a scourge of the American landscape, devastating millions of lives and creating a crisis in healthcare as the cost of treatment for alcohol and drug addiction continues to grow. There are a growing number of lawmakers that would like to see drugs such as marijuana made legal, taxed, and used to finance addiction treatment centers. It is certainly a viable argument that alcohol costs billions in taxpayer dollars in terms of addiction treatment, automobile fatalities, healthcare, and broken homes, while the link between the use of marijuana and the damage inflicted upon society is minimal at best. It should be pointed out that the same argument cannot be made for highly addictive drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine, benzodiazepines, and morphine-

based painkillers. No one chooses to be an addict, but any society that instills itself with the vitiating consequences of unrestrained globalization is ripe for a culture of chemically induced escapists, and our culture has certainly been conditioned to modify reality by the ingestion of drugs. As McLaren (2005) notes, “global capitalism [is] a form of wealth which, regardless of the level of human productivity, guarantees humanity a future tormented by the perpetual existence of scarcity and escalating divisions between the rich and the poor” (p. 147). This depressing realization doesn’t necessarily perpetuate a cultural fascination with “dropping-out,” but it does help to explain the reality of many people who choose to engage in the use of mind-numbing intoxicants. Of course, the alteration of reality is highly dependent upon the type of drug ingested, with hallucinogens offering the surest methods of perceptual disturbance. As Huxley (1954) describes a past mescaline trip, he realizes that “space was still there; but it had lost its predominance... the mind was primarily concerned, not with measures and locations, but with being and meaning” (p. 20). Meaning is preceded by thinking, and ideological control is threatened by those who think.

The operation of the id is the surest method to avoid contemplation, and ours is a society imbued with instant gratification. Like thousands of other individuals who have delved into the world of hallucinogens, Huxley (1954) emphasizes the composition of insight as he observes that “the man who comes back through the Door in the Wall will never be quite the same as the man who went out... he will be wiser but less cocksure, happier but less self-satisfied, humbler in understanding his ignorance yet better equipped to understand the relationship of words to things” (p. 79). For many of the individuals who have written about drugs, there is a fascination with altered states of being, a way to gain insight into a world that has become drudgingly incomprehensible. For others, a more sanguine outlook is expressed - a drug has beckoned the mind’s indulgence in an effort to escape the psychological decay of postmodern existence. Drugs

provide instant – albeit temporary – relief from anxiety, depression, and anger, destructive emotions that are quickly resolved when the addict impetuously ingests their drug of choice, from the instant euphoria of cocaine to the mind-numbing rush of crystal methamphetamine, emotional turmoil quickly turns into chemical bliss. For those who wish to escape the insanity of postmodern existence, a temporary escape may be a welcome respite, but for individuals afflicted with the disease of addiction, insanity is the ultimate result. The allure is simply irresistible. Life may be intolerable, but there is a temporary fix. As Cocteau notes, “Opium leads the organism towards death in a euphoric mood... everything one achieves in life, even love, occurs in an express train racing toward death” (quoted in Boon, 2002, p. 71). Ultimately, “to smoke opium is to get out of the train while it is still moving – it is to concern oneself with something other than life or death” (Cocteau quoted in Boon, 2002, p. 71).

For many in our culture, the allure of drugs is synonymous with jumping out of a fast moving train, comfortably landing in a field of poppies while the pressures of existence float softly away. The alienation produced by constant demands to produce - to become individual beacons of rugged individualism - proves to be an insurmountable task for many people who are trapped in the confines of neoliberal profundity. The allure of mind-altering drugs is indicative of society’s need for instant gratification and Big PhRMA’s message that untoward emotional states are grossly intolerable and easily remediated. As previously mentioned, drugs such as marijuana and LSD allow the user to experience altered states of being, to think beyond the unthinkable, while in reality, the drug ultimately consumes the soul and the addict invariably return to a disintegrative state of being. As Boon (2002) reveals in his discussion of hallucinogens:

Mescaline’s visual pyrotechnics are gifts that pour out of the Gnostic modernist darkness, to save the psychonaut from the heaviness of the world. But this is a

temporary phenomenon, just as childhood is, a regression that cannot hold back forever the storms of history. (p. 238)

The addict has an uncanny ability to rise above the chaotic chorus of a maniacal existence by dwelling in the of rationalization, a defense mechanism that rejects the voices of reason by focusing on the next fix. The addict may ingratiate herself with the virtue of unique introspection, but the haze of euphoria ultimately vanishes under the harsh light of reality. Drugs such as hashish “could heighten perception and magnify the senses to extraordinary degrees, but it [brings] its users nothing really new, ‘nothing miraculous, absolutely nothing but an exaggeration of the natural’” (Baudelaire quoted in Plant, 1999, p. 37). Addiction traps the user in extremes, a balancing act that relishes the euphoric highs while helplessly awaiting the ever-present crash – it is simply unavoidable. Escape from society is ultimately an escape from self, as the addict must avoid an honest self-assessment in order to continue with the chemically-induced charade. And sometimes, an honest self-assessment is too much to bear when the decision is made to quit. According to Burroughs (2003):

When you give up junk, you give up a way of life. I have seen junkies kick and hit the lush and wind up dead in a few years. Suicide is frequent among ex-junkies. Why does a junkie quit junk of his own will? You never know the answer to that question. No conscious tabulation of the disadvantages and horrors of junk gives you the emotional drive to kick. (pp. 127)

For many drug users, the notion of a prolonged bought of euphoria brings welcome relief from the doldrums of existence, especially those who are permanently entrapped in the throes of poverty, hopelessly unaware that drug addiction is an infinitely destructive and coldly unforgivable disease. Resistance is futile when thinking has dissolved. For others, “sex and drugs are both entangled in

these spirals of power and resistance, regulation and escape, and there is nothing to be freed or liberated at work in either of them... the confinement of drugs has produced and multiplied the thrills it chased” (Plant, 1999, p. 155). Drugs become a way to resist the status quo, to exert control over a portion of reality that is off limits – a paradoxical thesis given the fact that drugs are often the deniers of control. Foucault utilized drugs to expand the mind, but ultimately he likened drug-induced thought to a trance, to “dangerous adventures in unmapped, unmanned worlds [where] the risks are great and the price can be high” (quoted in Plant, 1999, p. 156). The greatest thinkers of our time have been reduced to mere appendages of chemical substances as they collapse under the weight of paranoia, depression, and mania. Of course, drugs such as LSD and marijuana can appeal to the spiritual senses, inviting Leary’s perceptive audience to “turn on, tune in, [and] drop out,” but at some point there must be a return to civilization.

For others, hallucinogens have expanded the senses into a pseudo-reality that propels the uninhibited self into the deepest recesses of the human mind, an incredibly daunting experience for the faint of heart. Those who have experienced a “bad trip” have briefly subsisted inside the gates of hell. For many others, psychedelic drugs are a commencement to altered states of being, where the forces of normality disintegrate under the strain of intense observation (staring at newfound wonderments for hours), waves of exuberating colors, vivid hallucinations, and a “trip” that takes absolute precedence over a decidedly mundane reality. According to Plant (1999), “Foucault described LSD as a kind of short-cut between and beyond the categories of illusion and reality, the false and the true... it induced an accelerated thinking which ‘no sooner eliminates the supremacy of categories than it tears away the ground of its indifference and disintegrates the gloomy dumbshow of stupidity’” (p. 161). In Foucault’s estimation, “drugs have now become part of our

culture... just as there is good music and bad music, there are bad drugs and good drugs” (quoted in Plant, 1999, p. 162).

Drugging America

Although there have been justifiable arguments for the legalization of marijuana, especially when compared to the devastating effects of alcohol, the use of addictive drugs is an undeniably destructive force in American society. Pharmaceutical companies and prescription-wielding doctors eagerly dispense addictive medications to treat a wide range of physical and mental disorders. For anxiety, benzodiazepines (Xanax, Valium, Klonopin) are remarkably similar to alcohol in their propensity for physical addiction, bodily harm, and withdrawal. Unbeknownst to the consumer with panic disorder or social anxiety disorder, addiction is a distinct possibility unless the doctor closely manages the dosing schedule, a rare occurrence in our current corporate-fueled healthcare environment. Furthermore, pain medications such as oxycontin and methadone are synthetic forms of heroin with potentially fatal consequences to the patient who crosses the line from abuse to addiction. The line is subtle, but the results are deadly. Drug use takes a turn for the worse as the mechanisms of control surreptitiously evade detection. Primary responsibilities are reduced to arbitrary tasks, physical health erodes, and mental prowess succumbs to debilitating rounds of self-aggrandizement and intense loathing. Burroughs (1953) aptly portrays the physical suffering as a dwindling supply pushes him toward oblivion:

The last of the codeine was running out. My nose and eyes began to run, sweat soaked through my clothes. Hot and cold flashes hit me as though a furnace door was swinging open and shut. I lay down on the bunk, too weak to move. My legs ached and twitched so that any position was intolerable, and I moved from one side to the other, sloshing about in my sweaty clothes. (p. 23).

This is the result of opiate addiction, and millions of Americans are currently in the throes of insanity under the legal auspices of their family physician. The physical addiction of opiates, benzodiazepines, and alcohol make withdrawal an especially daunting task, but the psychologically dependent drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine, and marijuana also have serious and sometimes deadly consequences. According to a 2004 National Institute on Drug Abuse report, “approximately 22.5 million Americans aged 12 or older need treatment for substance abuse and addiction, but only 3.8 million received it” (p. 1). Of the 3.8 million people who received help, only a small percent maintained sobriety. The statistics are overwhelming and the societal effects are devastating, with costs to the American public in excess of \$181 billion (NIDA, 2004). Addiction is not a choice, and treatment is complex. The mind plays tricks that leave the addict at the mercy of irrationality. As Wurtzel (2002) describes the ritual of “ripping hair” from her legs at the height of her addiction, the insanity is tangible:

My goal becomes finding a bone, getting far enough into my leg to touch ossified ivory mass, to massage my own skeleton with my Tweezerman scalpel. I work on this task for hours. Blood spurts everywhere, the white tile on the bathroom floor is covered in stains, blood drips down my leg, there is blood on my hands, blood on the sundress I wear, and I am too busy trying to find a bone to notice. (p. 91).

This chapter is not meant to be a treatise on treatment modalities, but serves to highlight the complexity of drug use and the ease with which millions of Americans subscribe to a flight from reality. Many physicians readily support this indulgence and have an alarmingly simplistic knowledge of addiction. It certainly defies logic that alcohol and Xanax are perfectly legal, while marijuana possession constitutes a serious offense. When Foucault discussed good drugs and bad drugs, it is doubtful that he supported the use of alcohol, which reduces the most astute mind to a

languid modicum of insensibility. LSD may also do this, but beyond the catatonic posturing and startled demeanor of the uninitiated user, quite possibly exists a meaningful line of flight – a mode of escape. And for a significant portion of society, a momentary exodus from postmodern existence is well worth the trip.

Psychiatric Debauchery and the Methods of Control

According to Deleuze (2004), psychoanalysis “is a complete machine, designed to prevent people from talking, therefore producing statements that suit them and the groups with which they have certain affinities... one talks in vain; the entire psychoanalytical machine exists to suppress the conditions of a real expression” (p. 274). Psychiatry is grounded in the Freudian mechanisms of interpretation and desire, built upon a classification system that neatly compartmentalizes individuals according to certain traits deemed pathological in nature. In Freudian terms, everything comes back to the presence of repressed sexuality, regardless of the mitigating circumstances of presenting problems and the viability of other explanations. Furthermore, “psychoanalysis uses a small number of collective statements, which are those of capitalism itself regarding castration, loss, and family, and it tries to get these small number of collective statements specific to capitalism to enter into the individual statements of the patients themselves” (Deleuze, 2004, p. 276).

Following the lead of psychoanalysis, psychiatry has become a relentless adherent to systems of classification, often rejecting the verbalizations of their neurotic patients as they peruse the DSM in search of viable diagnoses. The patients no longer have any meaningful presence to the psychiatric practitioner, as communication is simply an intolerable obstacle in their quest to substantiate the diagnostic criteria. Without a diagnosis, they cannot get paid. With this in mind, competent treatment for children and adolescents is an especially daunting task, since they are surrounded by figures who consider themselves authorities on child disorders. As Deleuze (2004) notes:

In certain schools, for example, in certain schools for problem children, dealing with character or even psychopathology, the child, in his work or play activities, is placed in a relationship with his educator, and in this context the child is understood as an expressing subject. Whatever he does in the group in terms of his work and play will be compared to a superior authority, that of the psychotherapist who alone will have the job of interpreting, such that the child himself is split; he cannot win acceptance for any statement about what really matters to him in the relationship or in his group. (p. 275).

The child is disengaged from deliberation regarding his behavior, as authoritarian practitioners are remarkably adept at pathologically translating child and adolescent behaviors in order to present diagnosable conditions with profitable treatment modalities. In terms of childhood maladies such as ADHD and ODD, the diagnosis is synonymous with control, a systematic method for parents, teachers, and practitioners to justify the unmanageability of the unruly child by creating a treatable mental health condition.

In keeping with the tradition of Big Pharma and the neoliberal ideologues, salvation can be purchased at the local drugstore without the hassle of extended counseling sessions or parental accountability, the ultimate benefactors being corporate CEO's and an education system that disavows itself from dealing with children who are neatly classified as "emotionally disturbed." They can be " Furthermore, this is an especially profitable venture for the psychiatric profession, as they can reap the rewards of increased prescriptions for stimulant medications while having to spend little to no time talking to the parents or the identified patients, whose verbalizations they reject as the innocent and illogical ramblings of stimulant-deprived organisms. The generative control of psychiatric medicine can be found in a discourse that constructs acceptable *versions* of

truth and the classification of individuals according to pathologically-construed mental health conditions. There are rarely individuals whose behaviors could not fit into a diagnostic category, as everyone experiences disturbances in normal mental health functioning throughout their lives, including anxiety, anger, irrational fears, and other negative emotions that are temporary in nature. For example, it is quite normal to experience sadness after the death of a loved one or a traumatic divorce, but clinical depression results when feelings of sadness cause significant impairment in activities for a prolonged period of time (longer than 2 months), including weight loss, insomnia, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness, and “clinically significant distress” in social and occupational areas of function (APA, 2000). Psychiatric practitioners and family practice physicians – in their drive to prescribe drugs and appease the patient’s conditioned craving for a magical pill – often forgo diagnostic criteria and place the patient on antidepressant or atypical medication when there is no evidence of clinical depression. Patients who present with anxiety, possibly due to a temporary life event, are prescribed addictive medications such as Xanax and even placed on SSRI’s such as Paxil for extended periods of time, when the condition could have been treated through counseling and the acquisition of effective coping skills. Unfortunately, in our consumerized society individuals are looking for a “quick fix” without the unnecessary hassle of learning how to resolve issues in lieu of prescription drugs.

According to Harris, Carey, and Roberts (2007), objective and ethical conditions are becoming obsolete requisites for practicing psychiatry, as pharmaceutical companies are a driving force in the types of prescriptions that doctors write, and the psychiatric profession has become the most egregious offender. During the past decade, “increasing payments to doctors have coincided with the growing use in children of a relatively new class of drugs known as atypical antipsychotics... those who took the most money from makers of atypicals tended to prescribe the drugs to children

most often” (Harris et al, 2007, p. 2). The majority of atypical anti-psychotics, as well as anti-depressants, have not been approved for use by children, but the allure of financial incentives and lack of government regulation have allowed this disturbing trend to go unnoticed. Minnesota is the only state that requires drug companies to issue marketing payments to the public, with psychiatrists collecting more money from drug companies than any other specialty (Harris et al, 2007). Essentially, psychiatry has become a consumerized profession that has lost professional objectivity and seriously damaged the principal of beneficence by allowing financial incentives to replace responsible medical care. Seroquel, an expensive anti-psychotic, is now slowly taking over inexpensive drugs such as trazodone and vistaril, which are just as effective for insomnia but unprofitable for drug companies and psychiatrists since their patent has expired.

The psychiatric profession has created an entire realm of truth around the treatment of mental illness, creating a compartmentalized version of “truth” in which diagnosable conditions become excuses for maladaptive behavior. According to Foucault (1980), accepted versions of truth create the effects of power, as “each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true” (p. 131). Beginning with Freud’s construction of neurotic and psychotic individuals, psychiatry has capitalized on the production of classifications that denote problems in living, more aptly referred to as mental illness. Of course, there are brain-based diseases such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and even addiction, but the psychiatric profession would disintegrate in the absence of a mental-health model that focused on adaptive coping skills as opposed to the indiscriminate dispensation of medication. The diagnostic criteria for a large majority of disorders in the DSM are highly subjective and open to a wide range of interpretation. As Breggin (2001) notes, “most physicians seem to spend only a

few minutes making the initial diagnosis of ADHD... given the criteria they are using – a mental checklist of behaviors – it’s no surprise that so little time is required” (p. 154).

Despite the utter facility with which a diagnosis is reached, parents eagerly await the educated opinion – guess – of the esteemed psychiatrist, a self-proclaimed authority on childhood disorders stridently marching toward his monthly quota for stimulant scripts. In reality, “children are being diagnosed and medicated on the basis of personal, subjective impressions offered to physicians who then make their own personal, subjective impressions” (Breggin, 2001, p. 155). The insanity is only compounded by a DSM-IV warning to diagnosticians “that children may not show signs of the ‘disorder’ when they are doing something interesting, when they are involved in novel situations, [or] when they receive rewards for a job well done” (Breggin, 2001, p. 155). When children act like children, psychiatry views this as a disorder. When children misbehave, the focus is not on parental disciplinary techniques, but on an indefinable pathology that subjectively exists. As noted earlier, Deleuze remarked that psychoanalysts only hear interpretations, and to consider misbehavior as an abnormality to be treated with stimulant medication is a gross misperception of human behavior – an interpretative illusion promulgated by a profession hopelessly entwined in the debauchery of Big Pharma.

Marketing Medication

The FDA only adds to the public’s fascination with medications as they have “loosened rules governing media advertising, unleashing a deluge of magazine and TV advertising for psychiatric drugs for special uses such as ‘social anxiety disorder’” (Breggin, 2001, p. 227). The psychiatric profession is given free reign over alternative uses for a variety of drugs, many of which are advertised in their own journals. The pharmaceutical ads can be compared to the tobacco industries depiction of young, vibrant adults engaged in healthy activities, while puffing away on the magic

fountain of youth. As Breggin (2001) notes, a recent Ciba ad “displays a picture of a child happily sitting still and raising his hand in class,” while a small portion of fine print on the back page notes Ritalin’s adverse side effects (p. 226). These false and misleading ads contribute to the public’s reliance on psychiatry and the discursively constructed truth that the remediation of mental illness is found in a bottle of pills. The public is never shown the harmful effects of many psychotropic drugs as the supposed harbingers of beneficence (physicians) hide behind statistical studies engineered by pharmaceutical companies designed to illuminate the efficacy of potentially profitable drugs. Deleterious side effects are simply dismissed as temporarily inconvenient necessities of breakthrough treatments. The consumer, formerly known as the patient, should welcome the opportunity to be drugged by the omniscient psychiatrist. In the words of Angell (2004):

I find it hard to imagine that a system this corrupt can be a good thing, or that it is worth the vast amount of money spent on it. But in addition, we have to ask whether it really is a net benefit to the public to be taking so many drugs. In my view, we have become an overly medicated society. Doctors have been taught only too well by the pharmaceutical industry, and what they have been taught is to reach for a prescription pad. (p. 169).

This is especially disconcerting when children are the recipients, as they cannot comprehend the effects of medication and simply do not understand why they are being drugged. The harsh reality is that psychiatry offers a way to control children, to counteract poor disciplinary practices and to allow for greater compliance to authoritarian dictates such as “No Child Left Behind.” In many ways the psychiatric profession has become a willing participant in Big Pharma and the neoliberal

ideology, maintaining strict adherence to profitability while ethicality has evolved into trite condolences to recently diagnosed and heavily medicated consumers of psychiatry.

It is widely known that physicians receive financial incentives for prescribing certain drugs, a practice that is especially troubling in the psychiatric profession,, where diagnostic criteria can often be confusing and of a highly subjective nature. When this is coupled with lucrative incentive packages such as paid vacations to attend company-sponsored seminars, free continuing education credits, and a variety of perks from pharmaceutical companies, many physicians readily prescribe expensive and highly profitable drugs that, in many cases, are no better than drugs already on the market (Angell, 2004). According to Harris et al (2007), “the drug industry and the many doctors say that... promotional lectures provide the field with invaluable education [while] critics say the payments and lectures, often at expensive restaurants, are disguised ‘kickbacks’ that encourage potentially dangerous drug use” (p. 4). An emerging trend in the field is the treatment of mental health disorders is the widespread use of atypical antipsychotics, expensive drugs that ultimately control inappropriate behavior by “numbing” the brain to outside stimuli. The new highly controversial trend in the field is the rapidly increasing diagnosis of bipolar disorder, thus justifying the use of drugs such as seroquel, depakote, lamictal, and other brand-name, patented drugs to treat a variety of extreme behaviors that are more appropriately diagnosed as conduct disorder, oppositional-defiant disorder, or impulse-control disorder. The use of these drugs highlights a consumer society that demands instant gratification in place of the working-through problematic behaviors through counseling or parental discipline. Consequently, teachers and parents can forgo the necessary instilment of discipline by medicating their children to become compliant young automatons that can easily be controlled. And since we are currently living in a society of control, evidenced by strict educational mandates, globalized repression, and a government for corporations

as opposed to citizens, there is rarely opposition to the control of children by whatever means possible.

Drugging children has replaced therapeutic modalities that ultimately provide effective coping skills and healthy alternatives to recklessly prescribed mood stabilizers, antipsychotics, stimulants, and antidepressants. In a glowing example of the pervasiveness of incompetence in the corporate-pharmaceutical complex, Dr. Annete M. Smick, who lives outside Rochester, Minnesota, was paid “more than \$689,000 by drug makers from 1998 to 2004,” stated that due to her demanding schedule for company-sponsored seminars, “I was finding it hard to see patients in my clinical practice” (quoted in Harris et al, 2007, p. 5). Such a statement hardly engenders trust in a profession that is entrusted with the care of the members of our society who are most susceptible to exploitation – the mentally ill.

An even more egregious example of the collusion between pharmaceutical companies and psychiatrists is exemplified by one of the case of one of the nation’s most influential psychiatrists, Dr. Charles B. Nemeroff of Emory University, who “earned more that \$2.8 million in consultation with drug makers from 2000 to 2004... [he] failed to report at least \$1.2 million of that income to his University and violated federal research rules (Harris, 2008, p. 1). Although Dr. Nemeroff engaged in a particularly blatant form of *unethical* and *illegal* conduct, this case illustrates an industry-wide problem in which psychiatry and Big Pharma skirt federal regulations and University research guidelines by obscuring marketing budgets, sponsorship of supposedly unbiased drug seminars by well-paid physicians, and healthy financial incentives for meeting a quota of prescriptions written for a particular drug. Increasingly, corporate control of Universities has resulted in for-profit research and the possible loss of valuable corporate funding when clinical

trials are not favorable to the marketing of a profitable drug. Public tax-dollars are a major part of funding for research institutions and are increasingly susceptible to the demands of the free-market.

Sadly, psychiatry has ceased to explore the human mind since it is no longer a cost-effective practice. Psychoanalysis, a predecessor to psychiatry, delves into the human persona in order to understand behavior, but somewhere along the way attempts to understand behavior were usurped by methods to control behavior. Hence, human expression was lost. According to Deleuze (2004), “the challenge for a real psychoanalysis, an anti-psychoanalytical analysis, is to discover these collective arrangements of expression, these collective networks, these peoples who are in us and make us speak, and who are the source of our statements” (p. 276). These statements, these people, are in us, but they are destined for solitude unless the psychiatric profession begins to place patients ahead of consumers, and understanding in place of control.

Becoming

Psychiatry and Big PhRMA have joined forces to capitalize on the corporate-friendly FDA, whose regulatory policies endanger public health and allow pharmaceutical companies carte blanche over the research, formulation, and distribution of drugs. This discussion has outlined the pro-big-business environment in which Big PhRMA is allowed to operate, as they capitalize on a system which places profitability over accountability and corporate viability over public health. This discussion has also centered upon some possible causes of addiction, including a social environment that fosters learned helplessness and an overwhelming desire to engage in escapist behavior. Furthermore, Big PhRMA and the psychiatric industry facilitate desire by incessant advertising regarding the utopian bliss of breakthrough chemical formulations and the message that mental illness can only be treated with a pill. As previously discussed, the reliance on legal and illegal drugs has created a society inundated with addiction, and quite ironically, a large percentage

of addicts have unsafely entrusted their health to supposedly competent physicians. Of course, nobody chooses to be an addict, and there are many people who use drugs and alcohol without severe consequences. But for those individuals who succumb to the disease of addiction, they are firmly entrenched in the throes of insanity. Ultimately, a retreat from the pressures of society guarantees the loss of individual autonomy and constructive thinking. In this sense, the addict succumbs to only one desire, which is that of the drug. All other desiring mechanisms cease to exist, and the body becomes an empty shell of undifferentiated existence. For Deleuze and Guattari, the endgame for drug use is the futility of “launch[ing] false and artificial lines of flight: becomings that *imitate* rather than reach new becomings or *planes of consistency*... any positive lines a drug user experiences will always be overridden by lines of death” (Malins, 2004, p. 93). The “downward spiral” of addiction results in the loss of creativity and a distinct inability to produce new lines of flight - the addict embarks on “a spiral toward a botched body (without organs) in which no desire can flow” (Malins, 2004, p. 93). In the words of Deleuze and Guattari:

Instead of holes in the world allowing the world lines themselves to run off, the lines of flight coil and start to swirl in black holes; to each addict a hole, a group or individual, like a snail. Down instead of high. The molecular microperceptions are overlaid in advance, depending on the drug, by hallucinations, delusions, false perceptions, phantasies, or paranoid outbursts... Instead of making a body without organs sufficiently rich or full for the passage of intensities... the causal line, creative line, or line of flight immediately turns into a line of death and abolition. (quoted in Malins, 2004, p. 93).

In essence, drugs seep desire in the same manner that capitalism creates desiring machines, unable to focus on creative lines of flight due to a relentless drive for immediate gratification. In this

respect, a nation of materialistically-driven and drug- addicted individuals are a welcome sight to corporate America, as the opportunity to engage in critical insight is seriously hampered when the id is firmly in control. Creative lines of flight can only occur when the body escapes categorization or fails to act in a prescribed manner. As Malins (2004) notes, “bodies become ordered and delimited according to hierarchical binary presuppositions: human/animal, man/woman, healthy/unhealthy... clean/junkie” (p. 86). To facilitate change one must recognize control, and this paper has attempted to outline the methods in which Big Pharma and the psychiatric profession perpetuate control. Addiction can be the unfortunate result of attempts to resist control, but ultimately, misguided attempts to “drop out” only reinforces hegemony.

According to Angell (2004), “prescription drugs are far too important to the nation’s health for us to ignore the need for thorough, ongoing reform,” but the pharmaceutical industry has purposefully blurred the distinction between helpful and dangerous drugs in their drive to increase profits (p. 276). The key to reform is to recognize the viability of creative lines of flight, to resist the debilitating effects of inflexible categorization and to connect with fellow human-beings. Undeniably, certain levels of drug use are beneficial and may expand the mind into new horizons of thought, but the danger of addiction is always present. Malins (2004) elaborates upon this idea:

A drug is not intrinsically bad: it becomes bad when it harms a body (overdose, liver failure) and good when it benefits a body (pain relief, joy, enhanced sensation). What is important is that bodies are able to go on connecting with other bodies, creating new flows of desire and undertaking new becomings. (p. 98).

New becomings are an essential element in the plight to initiate change, but for Big Pharma and the psychiatric industry, a nation under the influence is certainly a welcome sight.

CHAPTER 11

TRANSFORMATION – REACHING THE INNER CORE

- *One of the many interesting and surprising experiences of the beginner in child analysis is to find in even very young children a capacity of insight which is often far greater than that of adults - Melanie Klein*

We, as a society, have devolved into a selfish, symbiotic buying-machine that fails to realize the insanity of our own behavior, obsequiously controlled by the pervasiveness of an ideology that normalizes the external pursuit of happiness. Previous curriculum theorists have successfully outlined the problems inherent to our society, offering possibilities for change through various philosophies (post-structuralism, critical theory) and modes of understanding, but there is a need to address ideological containment on an individual rather than societal level. How is our notion of self constructed? What are the forces that delineate impenetrable boundaries between the false self and the inner core of being – the true self? Object-relations theory offers viable possibilities for insight that may create self-awareness and reduce blind allegiance to corporate control by challenging us to re-own the disconnected and fragmented parts of our being, to consciously act from within instead of unconsciously reacting to the without.

Cetina (1998) discusses the process of de-socialization as a defining characteristic of our current condition, exemplified by the emptiness of social structures and the cultural meanings that contribute to experiential growth and the vitality of human relationships. According to Cetina (1998), there is a second “structural condition” that further removes objects of human interaction to objects of material desire, brought about by an “enormous expansion of object words with the social

world – of consumer goods, technological devices, and scientific objects; an expansion in sheer volume, but also in the value we attribute to these things” (p. 1). As noted throughout this study, the emptiness of existence is detrimentally opposed to the reparation of self, as the unconscious introjections of childhood form the lens through which the externalities of existence are played-out in infinitely-elusive strivings for self-gratification. While individuals collapse social relations into an indefinable schema of self-knowledge, the *other* invariably becomes a projection of abnormality that rationalizes material consumption by minimizing the importance of human relationships (my materialistic desire is intolerable, so I will project my intolerance onto social relations). In response, society’s obligatory response is to create a wave of impersonality that justifies *shopping* as a healthy replacement for failed relationships. In describing “post-social society,” Cetina (1998) notes to the “referential connectedness of objects, their existence in temporal series and their extendability into the depths of a dark closet... object melt into indefinite beings and become transmutable for different reasons” (p. 10). Cetina (1998) points out that human beings are now encountering each other in new and impersonal ways through the “purely symbolic space of electronically mediated communication” (p. 10). It is the individual’s subjective experience of society that creates dissonance between the “inner core” of being – desirous of intimate contact – and an outer self that grasps for meaning in a realm of emptiness. In this chapter, I will use object-relations theory to analyze the disconnection that occurs early in life, creating a post-social society that replaces the repressed need for satisfying relationships with an irrepressible striving for objects of temporal satisfaction.

Melanie Klein

According to Cushman (1996), Melanie Klein's pioneering work in object-relations "paved the way for her followers to develop the successful new Post-World War II therapeutic ethos, an ethos infused with the most powerful ideology of the era: consumerism" (p. 22). Klein extended Freud's ideas about the processes of introjections and projection, the death instinct, and object-relations, while further highlighting the significance of early experiences in regards to the composition of self (Cushman, 1996). When analyzing Klein's theory, it is apparent that the infant's early struggles with good and bad objects and the unavoidable destructiveness of emotions such as envy and greed are inherent to the human condition, with these unconscious processes in a constant battle for power. Although Cushman (1996) describes Klein's theory as an infinite individualized struggle to contain an "unquestionable backdrop of violence, hatred, scapegoating, persecution, envy, and acquisitiveness," she also focuses on the resolution of these processes by bringing awareness to the complexity of projective identification, introjections, and splitting, as well as the failure of the environment in the creation of faulty coping mechanisms (p. 45). This has important ramifications for late capitalism, as the battle for good objects (nurturing) and bad objects (destructive) play an integral role in understanding the ideological methods of control that engender an unconsciously motivated post-social environment, consisting of objects that are utterly devoid of experiential meaning. Klein understood the preconditions for the deterioration of societal cohesion as ultimately, "consumer society was achieved through the construction of a self that was empty, a self that feels naturally and irresistibly driven to consume in order to fill up the emptiness" (Cushman, 1996, p. 46). As Cushman (1996) points out:

The self described in Melanie's theory, while not yet a totally empty self, has certainly moved in that direction. It is a self that is continuously bingeing

and purging; it must feel empty in order to consume the way it does; it must feel hungry and covetous of what is 'outside' itself. (pp. 47)

In his critique of Klein's theory – while also pointing out the value of her contributions – Sullivan unwittingly elevates her uncanny ability to describe the inner processes of the consumer self – the tremendous struggle between the external and internal worlds indicative of the postmodern decay of societal cohesion.

Splitting

In the next section of this chapter, I will provide additional insight into object-relations theory and important contributions from the British School of Psychoanalysis, with a primary focus on D. W. Winnicott and Melanie Klein. In addition, I will discuss the contributions from modern day theorists such as Christopher Bollas and Michael Eigen, who continue to analyze the intricate connections between unconscious motivation and observable behavior. Klein, a key figure in this field, was particularly focused on the impact of early relationships as a determinant of future behavior based on the infant's ability to successfully integrate "good" and "bad" objects. Hiles (2001) describes the basis for Klein's theory:

For the infant, the first object is a *part object*, e.g. the mother's breast.

The infant does not respond to the mother as a whole person, but simply as "breast, a survivor of its needs. In turn, the breast becomes an object of desire in its own right. The *ego* is strengthened by finding "good" objects. Their internalization (introjections and identification) is important for the development of psychic structure and mental functioning. (pp. 3)

Klein's theory maintains that infants internalize these primary objects and begin to make the distinction between good (pleasurable) and bad (non-pleasurable) parts of the same object (Hiles,

2001). For example, the breast can be a source of pleasure when it provides nourishment, but is also viewed as a bad object since inevitably, it causes frustration as the mother will fail to provide instant gratification of the infant's needs. As Hile's (2001) points out, "the innate conflict between love and hate leads to the internalization of *good objects* and *bad objects*... thus, *conflict*, and the need to overcome it, is seen as fundamental to human creativeness" (p. 4). The ability to resolve the conflict between good and bad objects is accomplished by a process known as *splitting*, an unconscious defense that prevents the ego from being overwhelmed by aggressive impulses – the infant inevitably directs anger at the mother for withholding nourishment, which later leads to feelings of guilt and anxiety. The splitting is a consequence of "the ego's early lack of cohesion, and acts as a *defence* against primordial anxieties, achieving a dispersal of the destructive and persecutory anxieties and offering a mechanism for the ego to be preserved" (Hiles, 2001, p. 4)

When the defenses break down, the internalized fears overwhelms the ego and result in dysfunctional behavior later in life. I propose that one of the main component of society's drive for material *objects* is the breakdown of these defenses and the faulty introjections of an environment that that rejects the capacity for creative outlets, while methods of ideological control channels desire into objects that are both good and bad, resulting in an involution of gratification and emptiness that ultimately resists the defenses of splitting. The object that is loved is also hated.

According to Hiles (2001), this "is exactly the condition which can precipitate human envy, and is possibly a conflict that is necessary for us to confront very early in our development, indeed throughout our lives... in this respect, it can be seen that envy is the central challenge to our psychic growth, i.e. resolving the "paradox" of loving and hating the same object" (p. 9). This creates a societal double-bind in which the pursuit the fulfilling object is always already the object of emptiness. The death of public space and the subsequent deterioration of meaningful

relationships results in the loss of the good object. Without the ability to introject the good, reparation of self and society is a hopeless endeavor.

As previously stated, splitting occurs during infancy as a form of protection against annihilation from within - the infant “splits” good from bad feelings and projects them onto external objects, thus splitting the “ego (self) and object” (Spillius, 1994). In the normal developmental spectrum, splitting becomes a healthy defense as the introjection of the good subdues the destructive forces of the bad, thus protecting the ego from harm. In adulthood, splitting becomes a protective mechanism that allows us to separate the good from the bad, to view whole objects (material goods, individuals) as having both positive and negative aspects. It also becomes a “defensive way of dealing with difficult emotions... we split our worlds into right and wrong, good and bad, because we can’t cope with the snowstorm of emotions that accompanies frustration and misunderstanding” (Meakins, 2003, p. 2). Splitting, a defense mechanism, fails to protect the ego when the discernment between objects become enmeshed in a web of gratification and disappointment. This is clearly evident in late capitalism, as the drive for material wealth occludes the detrimental effects of market fundamentalism, causing a distinct failure to link unbridled consumerism to its destructive forces. The pathological orientation to consumer behavior cannot be explained without analyzing the defenses that maintain the false self – the external self that attempts to survive the destructive onslaughts of anxiety as the internal core defends against the introjection of bad objects. This underlying feeling of anxiety is a prevalent aspect of privatized society, possibly explained by the fragmentation of objects that were formerly the basis for public spaces and intimate communication. Klein describes the “paranoid-schizoid” position as a pathological state which leads to primary envy, and when envy attacks the good object, “it arouses a premature state of depressive anxiety about damage to the good object, and interferes with the primal differentiation

between good and bad in the object and in the self” (Spillus, 1994, p. 6). As individuals in our society are ceaselessly bombarded with false promises of supposedly life-enhancing objects, ingrained strands of individualism elicit a level of greed that preempts the ability to consider the negative aspects of materialized existence. The anxiety is produced by the subtle interplay of guilt and greed, but in every individual there exists an internalized image of a good object that flows out of a primary relationship, and every so often - in the chaos of postmodern society - contact is made with an object (person, place, art form) that connects with the inner core. It is in this connection that reparation of self, and ultimately society, can slowly be realized. In Klein’s view, the basis for reparation begins with gratitude, which ultimately evolves into a trusting relationship with another human being (Hiles, 2001). Hiles (2001) emphasizes Klein’s focus on relationships:

The wish to preserve and spare the good object then predominates. The healthy ego integrates the early conflicts, and if envy is not overwhelming, then gratitude overcomes and modifies envy. A full gratification at the breast means the infant feels she has received from the loved object a unique gift which she wants to keep. This is the basis of gratitude. Enjoyment therefore is the basis of gratitude. Such enjoyment is the basis of all later happiness, and the feeling of unity with another person. (pp. 8).

In our society, envy is a pervasive element of the greed that inundates every facet of existence, ultimately denying true happiness. The object pursued is forever emptied of “inner wealth.”

The Barrier to Freedom

How can we reinvent the pursuit of happiness? What is the etiology of a psyche that dissolves into a distanced soliloquy between the object-seeking self and the true core of being? The answer to these questions will provide possibilities for counteracting the boundaries that contain the ego in

a state of dissonance, vying for an object that supplies temporary “hits” of satisfaction. Like the junkie who strives for his next fix there is temporary relief from reality, but the crash that follows each successive high is met with a soul-breaking pain that eventually strangles the life out of its unsuspecting victims. There is no recognition of this process, that life has become a monotonous drill in exercising the societal demand for unthinking and unfeeling aggregates of consumption. Eigen (1993) refers to Winnicott’s concept of a “true” and “false” self, with the false self acting as a type of defense mechanism that distorts reality as a mode of self-protection. According to Eigen (1993), the true self feeling involves a sense of all-out personal aliveness, more than simple animal aliveness because it includes an awareness of being or feeling real” (p. 128). Through the process of introjection and projection, the true self succumbs to the mind-numbing effects of an ideology that insidiously removes feelings or “realness” through a socialization process beginning in primary schooling and extending into adulthood through the corporate branding of universities, sports, leisure activities, medicine, clothing, and eventually, self. According to Eigen (1993), Winnicott believed that “the essential battle is over one’s sense of realness: does one feel real to oneself or merely a phantom or splinter self?” (p. 128). The sense of realness is connected to as the “unity of differentiation” as the use of an object becomes a healthy coping mechanism when awareness of both love and destruction increases knowledge of self and other (Eigen, 1993). Winnicott’s account of the healthy object relations postulates “that an *I love you* spontaneously arises in the wake of the *I destroy you*, and this *I love you* makes destructiveness creative... the two together lead to a fuller, richer awareness of self and other, a revitalizing sense of otherness as such” (Eigen, 1993, p. 128). This process is integral to the realization that the true self will slowly deteriorate when destructiveness is blinded by the defenses of “falsity.”

Under the auspices of corporate ideology, the destructive tendencies of brand-name existence are hidden by the allure of self-actualization through the purchase of supposedly life-enhancing products, leading to a false sense of realness as contact with the true self becomes a distinct impossibility. In terms of object-relations, Eigen (1993) discusses Winnicott's concept of the "incommunicado" core:

Not only is it inaccessible to everybody but oneself; it may be somewhat beyond the subject's reach as well. The subject both participates in true self feeling at the same time that he (sic) strives toward (more of) it, an inexhaustible paradox built into the very structure of self feeling. The true self feeling may become defensively abused, so that true and false self mix-ups arise (evil seems good, and good evil). (pp. 128)

Inevitably, "in such instances some overall skew or offness in the personality will press for recognition, until the core subjective quality of what it feels like to be a person gets set right or is given up on (Evil, be my good)" (Eigen, 1993, p. 129). This certainly correlates well with the deleterious effects of an ideology that has been thoroughly exposed in this study, as the meaning of life is enveloped by strict adherence to materialistic existence. The true self feeling *is* "defensibly abused" in the early stages of life by the need for abject compliance to senseless rules and standards, which are designed to mass produce individuals devoid of critical thinking skills and the creativity that is a necessary component of individuality. In his description of various fields of study (psychoanalysis, religious, educational), Eigen (1993) stresses the notion that "creativity thrives at the boundaries between the fields... there are so many ways to go and room for so many different kinds of contributions" (p. 273). Unfortunately, we have lost our way between these

fields, we are unable to navigate various ways of being – the process of becoming – when lifeless commodities are the evil that seems good.

The Indefinable Life

Notions of normalcy defy analytic interpretation as there is a delicate, subtle interplay between the voices of reason and the extreme vicissitudes of psychological life. The interminable quest to avoid insanity may serve as the unconscious force that paradoxically maintains the pathology that one seeks to avoid. As Winnicott (1986) notes, “we need to remind ourselves that a flight to sanity is not health...health is tolerant of ill health; in fact, health gains much from being in touch with ill health in all its aspects, especially the ill health called schizoid” (p. 32). Traumatic experience may serve as the catalyst for domination of the false self – a defensive structure that evades knowingness and protects the inner psyche from further damage. The protection of this inner space – a place of imponderable significance – requires an elaborate display of well-placed defenses that mediate relations to the external world, an environment which serves as a constant menace to the stability of subjective sanity. Undoubtedly, brand-name existence could not exist without an elaborate defense around the inner core. As previously noted, Winnicott calls this space the “incommunicado self,” an well- protected “core of cores, the self beyond reach, the self that is essentially private, one’s psychic heartbeat” (Eigen, 2004, p. 81). There are numerous questions that can be asked of postmodern existence and the individual consumer such as: What are the implications of violating this inexplicable space? How does this effect mental health on a collective level? Should any area of the psyche be off-limits in the analytic arena? The analytic arena being the awareness of these issues and the subsequent work required to identify faulty defense mechanisms. As a prelude to awareness, Eigen (2004) contrasts the incommunicado self with the id as a space that can be used as a staging area for unintegration and to link up with the unlinkable [to] open a path of experience

and expression for what is most true and real and free about oneself” (p. 81). We must uncover the façade that maintains emptiness.

The Winnicottian notion of self-preservation is intricately linked to a vast array of psychoanalytic theories regarding the life and death drives, defense mechanisms, splitting mechanisms, object-relations, and instinctual drives. Winnicott’s “incommunicado self” may be a well-fortified psychic space, but is also a necessary component in the ability to feel aliveness. In terms of ideological control, unbridled consumption produces individuals who relentlessly undermine the currents of experience by engaging in mind-numbing “variations of psychic deadness,” a condition that Eigen (2004) refers to as a “popular clinical theme” that slowly envelops the psyche in a persistent state of emptiness and affective dissonance. The clinical manifestations of traumatic events or faulty object-relations (material objects) intensify the formation of protective mechanisms that diminish the individual’s capacity to experience “life on life’s terms” – to borrow a popular 12-step aphorism. Defense mechanisms such as repression, introjection, or projection protect the ego from being overwhelmed by threatening stimuli, while neuroses such as obsessive-compulsive disorder (compulsion to buy) bombard the ego with thoughts that inhibit the expression of negative impulses. For Freud (1966), these impulses were of an “excessively strong sadistic sexual” nature and “in accordance with the structure of an obsessional neurosis, serve predominately as a defence against [those] wishes or give expression to the struggle between satisfaction and defence” (p. 383). In essence, a neurosis can develop due to the inhibition of “aliveness,” even if the “aliveness” may be construed as a precursor to madness or a symptom of perversion. The innate drive for life is continuously challenged by the inability to quell the destructive forces that lurk just below the surface of conscious awareness, a signification of “aliveness” but encountered as death.

According to Eigen (2004), “Klein places Freud’s death drive at the center of psychic life...not only does she share Freud’s conviction that the death drive plays a constitutive role in psychic phenomena but she also contributes original variations on the theme” (p. 28). Klein emphasizes the role of “annihilation anxiety” as a definitive link to the “destructive force within,” a primal drive that seeks containment through implementation of projection-introjection mechanisms, ultimately protecting the ego from being overwhelmed (Eigen, 2004). The identification of anxiety-producing stimuli is not an easy task, as patients often refer to a “free-floating” anxiety that has no identifiable causality. Could this be what Klein refers to as “annihilation anxiety?” The inescapable corporeal angst that produces a sense of impending doom, an unidentifiable gut-wrenching nervousness that reduces the most outgoing personality to that of a paralyzed, fearful introvert. Anxiety is not limited to the death drive since “anxiety may collude with and express death, life, or both...anxiety is floating, colorless, at home with many masters” (Eigen, 2004, p. 33). Anxiety may serve as a conscious warning signal, but the majority of defenses operate below the surface of awareness, impeding individual growth and increasing the vacuous space that diminishes vivacity and inhibits growth, a free-floating anxiety without an identifiable source, always lurking beneath the surface of awareness – the realization that something is wrong but momentarily quelled by the compulsion to buy. When the defenses can no longer contain the destructive impulses, or when the neurotic tendencies override the ability to engage in the most perfunctory of tasks, the solitude of submission will become the motivating force behind the initiation of therapeutic work both individually and collectively. Undoubtedly, the thought of a self-enhancing object, or nourishment, can also be a sign of danger – “a nourishing object is a dangerous object; nourishment and destruction are fused” (Eigen, 2001, p. 34). Brand-name existence is viewed as a means to nourish the soul but ultimately

becomes a danger to self and society as a whole. Deadness is pervasive, and movement away from deadness creates anxiety.

This study would not be complete without an analysis of the breakdown of defenses, the deterioration of self-preserving processes that signal the onslaught of deadening psychic material. As Eigen (2004) notes, “for some people, the sense of deadness is pervasive...they describe themselves as zombies, the walking dead, empty and unable to feel” (p. 3).

In order to create necessary lines of escape from walls that contain *deadness*, it is important to wrestle with restorative methods of analysis, to test the boundaries of madness as a point of departure toward a resounding sense of “aliveness.” Paradoxically, the pursuit of sanity may inhibit the life drive. In terms of education, the prefatory to deadness is the terroristic aspect of curriculum, as the pursuit of knowledge can only be extended to a prefabricated, standardized version of existing facts. “For Jacques Daignault, as for Michele Serres, to know is to commit murder, to terrorize...thus, we can attempt to engage in academic terrorism if we choose knowing as simply defining and objectifying” (Reynolds & Webber, 2004, p. 16). This will be further explored later in the chapter.

The Unhealthy Drive for Sanity

In *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, Paul Schreber describes the onset on psychosis and his subsequent deterioration, eventually leading to many years in “insane asylums.” While I do not wish to insinuate that consumerism is a psychosis, his memoirs outline the assertion that a portion of psychotics are “not conscious enough” (Eigen, 2001), a state of being not unlike a society conditioned to automatic behavior. As an example of the psychotic’s perception of reality, Schreber (2000) writes about the “divine rays” which incessantly intruded upon the core of his existence, stating that “this influence showed itself relatively early in the form of compulsive

thinking – an expression which I received from the inner voices themselves and which will hardly be known to other human beings, because the whole phenomena lies outside of human experience” (p. 55). For Paul Schreber, the ability to evade the constant assault on his psyche precipitated an unavoidable decline into the depths of madness – compulsive thoughts moved beyond the realm of neurotic defensibility into the unforgiving depths of psychotic horror. Schreber’s descent into darkness was marked not by deadness, but by an overwhelming sense of aliveness, which paradoxically contributed to suffocation of the life drive. Schreber (2000) describes this paralyzing sense of aliveness as a merciless invasion of miracles that inhibits his attempts to play the piano, “the difficulties which were put in my way defy description...my fingers are paralyzed, the direction of my gaze is changed in order to prevent my finding the correct keys, my fingers are diverted on to the wrong keys, [and] the tempo is quickened by making the muscles of my fingers move prematurely” (p. 158). The onset of psychosis shatters the psyche, leaving the defenseless victim in a state of unaltered vulnerability. As Eigen (2001) notes, the psychotic’s unconscious seems to “pour out,” as “some psychotics are too conscious of the unconscious, or not conscious enough, or unconscious (or rejecting) of important aspects of the unconscious” (p. 47). The psychotic is not a good candidate for analysis since the ego has become enmeshed in a depersonalized, dreamlike state unable to distinguish the conscious from the unconscious. Many psychotics are convinced that they have already attained insight, so therapy would be a senseless endeavor. For example, Schreber not only believed he was being persecuted by God, but that he was also in direct communication with other life forms through an infinite extension of nerves. According to Schreber (2000), “God is inseparably tied to my person through my nerves’ power of attraction which for some time past has become inescapable; there is no possibility of God freeing Himself from my nerves for the rest of my life – although His policy is aimed at this – except

perhaps in case my unmaning were to become a fact” (p. 251). Schreber believes that if he turns into a woman – a distinct possibility for him – God would be released from his nerves. The elaborate fantasy created in the mind of the psychotic may in fact become stronger due to the presence of persecutory beliefs, when someone attempts to derail his delusional thought processes. While it would be negligent to compare the consumer to a psychotic, there is a childlike fascination with fantasy that serves as a detachment from reality that borders on delusion – life will be grand when I ingest the latest pill.

In terms of corporate ideology, the identification of pathological behavior is the first step in remediation, but there is also a need for an in-depth analysis that offers a way out – an escape from control. This can be likened to psychoanalysis, which offers unique possibilities to explore the hidden recesses of the psyche in order to rid ones self of neurotic symptoms. According to Freud (1966), the symptoms are an indication of underlying pathology – the obsessional neurotic is quite aware of his symptoms but “cannot help himself...he can displace the obsession but not remove it” (p. 321). Unlike the psychotic, the neurotic is painfully aware of the pathological nature of the presenting symptoms but is unable to exhibit control. Ultimately, “the whole position ends up in an ever-increasing degree of indecision, loss of energy and restriction of freedom,” ultimately leading to a significant disruption in the ability to carry our even the most mundane tasks (Freud, 1966, p. 322). Since psychoanalysis is focused on the resolution of negative symptoms, the exact nature of pathology becomes a legitimate question for those who struggle with the delineation of madness. What constitutes madness, and should we all strive to be sane? According to Winnicott (1986), “creative living involves, in every detail of its experience, a philosophical dilemma – because, in fact, in our sanity we only create what we find” (p. 53), we can only be creative if we venture outside the realm of sanity. Furthermore, “even in the arts we cannot be creative into the blue

unless we are having a solo experience in a mental hospital or in the asylum of our own autism,” otherwise, the movement away from societal norms invites a perplexing gaze from the self-proclaimed normotic (Winnicott, 1986, p. 53; Bollas, 1987). Sanity may be a sign of stagnant manageability, an unaltered existence that resists change by staunch refusal to veer off the prescribed course of muted awareness. According to Bollas (1987), “as psychotic illness is marked by a turning inward into the world of fantasy and hallucination, normotic illness is distinctive as a turning outward into concrete objects and towards conventional behavior...the normotic flees from dream life, subjective states of mind, imaginative living and aggressive differentiated play with others” (p. 146). The normotic individual is an undifferentiated byproduct of a consumer-driven, free-market society, easily identified by a cursory glimpse into any American mall or department store. The normotic individual pushes the boundaries of sanity by becoming relentlessly sane. Furthermore, “as they need a supply of material objects to enrich their personal happiness, they are far more dependent than other sorts of people on the flux of economic life” (Bollas, 1987, p. 146). The normotic individual would rather spend hours engaged in senseless cell phone babble while shopping at the local Target than ten minutes of quiet reflection in a serene environment. The object-relation has been externalized. The expression of feelings is limited to impersonal comments about concrete objects as the psyche has become an impervious wall incapable of sustaining affective interaction. As Bollas (1987) notes, “normotic families develop a library of material objects...if a child is working on some inner psychic problem or interest, the family usually has an external concrete object available for the transfer of the psychic into the material” (p. 151). The normotic has lost the affinity for play as life has become an exorbitant attempt to avoid creativity. The normotic is oblivious to the pervasive deadness that characterizes daily existence, and has lost

touch with the emotional component that gives one a sense of aliveness, a capacity to feel the positive and negative influx from interpersonal relationships and creative endeavors.

McDougal (1989) also discusses the pathologically normal and refers to them as “normopaths,” a large population of individuals “who, while deeply disturbed, seemed to seek shelter behind a wall of pseudo-normality that was relatively devoid of awareness of emotional experience” (p. 93). McDougal (1989) refers to the ejection of emotional pain as “dispensing in action,” which reduces the impact of negative external events by psychosomatic release or engagement in addictive behavior. As McDougal notes, “the defensive screens against the awareness of affect or its rapid discharge in action might often pass unnoticed for many long years or months,” but eventually the body’s warning signal – anxiety – will begin to slowly envelop the individual’s awareness (p. 96). This can set the stage for alcohol or drug addiction as a mind-numbing alternative to the hypervigilant tedium associated with free-floating anxiety. Alcoholism and drug addiction are effective – albeit dysfunctional - tools for the remediation of psychic pain. The active addict is a proficient opponent of affective discharge and ultimately develops into an empty shell of “psychic deadness” (Eigen, 2004). For this reason, a particularly difficult component of recovery is to become reacquainted with the emotions - to learn how to feel again. The initial stages of recovery are characterized by the emergence of certain negative emotions, such as guilt and anger, resulting from the devastating effects of unremorseful behavior while under the influence of drugs and alcohol. In addition to alcohol and drug dependence, the psyche has developed a vast array of defenses to prevent itself from the onslaught of negative material associated with the instinctual drive to destroy oneself. As Eigen (2001) notes, “our psyche cannot handle its own aliveness – nor can we handle each others aliveness...we shrink in the face of immensity, but we thrive on it too” (p. 42). The oscillation between sanity and insanity relates to the individual’s ability to feel, the

capacity to actively engage in life by testing the bounds of madness, or to regress into a state of intransigent submission by living just above the surface of deadness. Anticipatory anxiety is worse than the anxiety itself, but the victim circuitously engages in a self-defeating battle against stimulation overload, resulting in the bitter acquisition of a lifeless comfort zone. For Melanie Klein, the “anxiety underlies deadness” and signifies the presence of the “destructive force within,” which elicits a multitude of ego reactions including “anxiety, splitting, projective-introjective identification, denial, and dispersal” (Eigen, 2004, p. 33). The ego struggles to survive by deflecting the forces of annihilation, engaging in a relentless attempt to avoid death. In this scenario, the realization of death is devoid of existential meaning. Conversely, the realization of deadness can be a catalyst for the emergence of life forces, to avoid deadness by engaging in a maddening array of unintegrated aliveness. As Eigen (2004) notes, Winnicott valued “creative experiencing, newness, freshness, aliveness...he dreaded becoming addicted to some official version of himself, let alone to someone else’s version of selfhood” (p. 76). The false self – formed by a splitting mechanism in the psyche – serves as the protector of the true self and may in fact contribute to deadening the psyche if its’ influence is too strong. The false self is a defense mechanism for the true self, which is the “active center of the personality...it is allied with undefensive being, out of which creative doing grows” (Eigen, 2004, p. 101). When creativity is stifled, aliveness is diminished and the true self may experience frustration and anger, contributing to the destructive impulses that threaten annihilation of both the true and false selves. The interplay of various defenses and the constant threat of the “destructive force within” contribute to the myriad of conditions for which people seek psychotherapy or psychoanalysis. Each component of the psyche, the instinctual drives, and the varying degrees of neurotic tendencies contribute to the possible outcomes of analysis. For some patients the degree of madness may contribute to their

sense of aliveness, while other patients – like Schreber – experience a sense of aliveness that unceasingly bombards the psyche with stimulation such that the patient becomes immobilized to the point of catatonia – a lifeless shell. Even the normotic is not immune to states of deadness, and may in fact benefit from the creativity of madness. In view of the analysand's various states of existence, the analyst must clearly operate by the utilization of precise communicative skills and a plethora of therapeutic approaches. This will be explored in the next session, along with a more definitive understanding of the boundaries of madness.

Insight

Insight – the painstaking, often elusive goal of analysis that embarks upon a relentless search for the incomparable, unguarded, incomplete, and incongruent self. The precursor to this terrific journey lies in the acceptance of an unconscious world and the implicit understanding that the analyst will serve as the trusted guide. Additionally, “the wish for further insight in order to discover the unconscious meaning of unsatisfactory life situations or incomprehensible symptoms implies acceptance of the fact that ultimately causes of psychological symptoms (McDougal, 1989, p. 8). In referring to the pathological aspects of consumer society, I will compare the initiation of insight through the eyes of an individual seeking analysis (analysand) and the possibilities that occur when awareness and a sense of *aliveness* begin to permeate the core of being. While this is certainly not suggesting that everyone go through the process of psychoanalysis, it *is* helpful in understanding the pathology of postmodern society and pathways to success. In this respect, the analysand is compared to a consumer, ultimately enveloped by the grips of unconscious forces.

The analysand may tenaciously grasp unconscious defenses in a desperate attempt to avoid the painful reality of repressed events, but the analytic method requires the toleration of pain as a necessary component of successful analysis. As Eigen (1999) notes, “individuals seek

psychotherapy when cumulative toxins threaten to overwhelm their sense of life's goodness" (p. xiii). Many patients view neurotic symptoms as a familiar friend that alleviates mental anguish and prolongs psychic survival. As McDougal (1989) notes, there exists "a strong internal force that fears the loss of symptoms in spite of the suffering they cause; this will tend to create considerable resistance to the analytic process" (p. 8). Although the symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder may severely disrupt daily functioning, as with chronic hand-washing, this daily ritual effectively disarms the underlying pathology that seeks to destroy the wall of defensibility and ultimately the essence of self. When the defenses are compromised, the fragmented psyche leaves the patient in a depersonalized state of uncontrollable terror – a situation ripe for the onset of psychosis. As McDougal notes, patients are notoriously "terrified of the psychic change they seek and desire...this is understandable in that symptoms are techniques for psychic survival [and] it is not easy to let go of one's survival line when one has no confidence in the capacity for psychic change or a fear that all change will be for the worse" (p. 8). One fears aliveness when deadness has become a comfortable disposition.

To avoid the stifling lack of movement, Eigen (2004) prescribes the need for intensity, a state of being which provides nourishment to the soul, "to go through something intensely and enjoy the afterglow is akin to or better than an infant's food feeding and sleep" (p. 10). A particularly simplistic prescription for positive mental health is to avoid "getting stuck," to find solace in the pendulum of extremes without flying too high or sinking too low. To alternate between extremes is not to helplessly founder between depression and mania, but is akin to finding a simplistic space that entertains appreciation for life's passions – the unavoidable lows become a necessary ingredient for psychic survival. To live intensely is to live passionately. Without the ability to experience sadness or grief, the ability to dwell in the intensity of joy is lost forever. As Eigen

(1993) notes, Winnicott has greatly amplified our sense of the invisibility and ineffability of experiencing by elaborating on the dimension of between,” a fathomless depth that offers possibility for psychic survival (p. 255). Furthermore, “the basic invisibility of experiencing contributes to a sense of boundlessness that tinges our existence,” a diversified state that can function for “good or ill” (Eigen, 1993, p. 255).

The boundlessness of existence is an interesting concept that prevents the analyst from committing psychoanalytic terrorism by claiming to have complete knowledge. This can be an exhilarating notion for the analysand who must inevitably develop the capacity for self-discovery, to engage in the diligent pursuit of infinite alternatives – spaces for growth. Eigen (1993) warns against the terrorism of omniscience, “the between is petrified, dissolved, and/or demonized...thought is taken as an invasive, alien power emanating from a foreign controlling mind” (p. 256) or the injection of ideological fundamentalism, which has been thoroughly outlined in this study. As Eigen (1993) states, “omniscience is rooted in an invisible sense of boundlessness and draws on the intangible to befuddle embodied souls” (p. 256). The assertion of complete knowledge erects growth-prohibitive boundaries and places the analyst in an untenable and unethical position– the analysand will always be reliant upon the master. An alternative possibility lies in the exploration of the infinite spaces “in-between” the extremes, to explore the unanticipated intrusions of psychic life. As Eigen (1993) notes, “our journey in the sense of the infinite is, ironically, limited not by realistic finitude (which is its raw material), but by our discovery of alternate infinities, infinite pretensions” (p. 256). The particularly expedient method for the exploration of alternate infinities occurs in the analysis of dreams, a roadmap of the unconscious that offers a unique glimpse into the inordinately complicated human psyche.

According to Freud (1966), “it is quite possible, and highly probable indeed, that the dreamer does know what his dream means: only he does not know that he knows it and for that reason he thinks he does not know it” (p. 124). Dreamwork is a fascinating glimpse into the “unthought known,” a term that delineates the existence of repressed material that awaits discovery – known but not yet thought (Bollas, 1987). Freud’s “royal road to the unconscious” is paved with the symbolism of dream elements that constitute the formation of a whole dream, “the dream as a whole is a distorted substitute for something else, something unconscious, and the task of interpreting a dream is to discover this unconscious material” (Freud, 1966, p. 139). The complexity of dreamwork resides in the interpretation of both manifest and latent content, resistance, and symbolic translation. As Freud (1966) explains, “we will describe what the dream actually tells us as the manifest dream-content, and the concealed material, which we hope to reach by pursuing the ideas that occur to the dreamer, as the latent dream-thoughts” (p. 147). In essence, what you see is not what you get. The manifest content serves as a symbolic representation of concealed material, but paradoxically, the latent content can also reveal the true meaning of surface material. According to Freud (1966), “the former is not so much a distortion of the latter as a representation of it, a plastic, concrete, portrayal of it, taking its start from the wording” (p. 149). In this respect, the interpretive process becomes a confluent manifestation of the actual dream (manifest content), the unconscious meaning of the dream (latent content), and dream-work – the transformation of latent content into manifest content to obtain the symbolic meaning of the dream element. Dream-work can be a laborious process but may offer a momentous opportunity to reach the unexplored areas of psychically fortified material, to uncover unconscious desire and discover unknown wishes. As Freud (1966) notes, “what instigates a dream is a wish, and the fulfillment of that wish is the content of the dream – this is one of the chief characteristics of the dream” (p. 158).

The interpretative process analyzes the content of the dream and attempts to disentangle the complex web of wishes and desires – however dysfunctional – that motivate an individual to act. Unfortunately, the dreamer has an unusual relation to his wishes, “he repudiates them and censors them – he has no liking for them – in short...so that their fulfillment will give him no pleasure, but just the opposite; and experience shows that this opposite appears in the form of anxiety” (Bollas, 1987, p. 66). Bollas (1987) suggests that the subject is the ego’s object in the dream setting, “the subject is the object of the ego’s representational formation of needs, memories, desires, and daily experiences, and, for this reason, we may say that as the subject is the object of the ego’s transformation into play of memory and desire, the ego sponsors a character who plays the self in the recurrent theater of the dream” (p. 65). In this respect, dreams can have an anxiety-provoking quality as the self is not in control, rather, the manipulation of self is controlled by the ego’s “formation of needs,” a confusing scenario that may indeed leave the analysand in a state of perplexity regarding the fulfillment of the Other’s wishes. This is comparable to the formation of needs produced in a consumerist society, as the self does not have control. Of course, the Other and the self are one in the same, but according to Bollas (1987), “what Freud discovered and then neglected was the notion of the dream space as a night theatre involving the subject in a vivid re-acquaintance with the Other,” the dream exists as a place for the “interplay for self and Other” (p. 68). In Kleinian terms, could dream-work be a productive venue for the identification and amelioration of the splitting mechanism? Would the infinite possibilities of projection/introjection and splitting be amenable to unconscious spectatorship? In terms of Bollas’ conception of ego/object identification, dream-work may also be a distinct possibility in the identification of good or bad parts of self and various splitting mechanisms. As Eigen (2004) notes, “a powerful array of psychic possibilities emerges from Klein’s meditations on connections between identificatory

projection-introjection and splitting” (p. 31) – the clinical possibilities are endless. Participation in analysis can be an exciting adventure into the unknown depths of the psyche or a tenuous swim into the shark-infested waters of the unconscious. The analyst (consumer) must be willing to engage in a transference relationship that emboldens the capacity for growth, an analytical voyage that begins with the undeniable acceptance of psychological suffering. Unfortunately, the consumer mindset paradoxically conceals the suffering as the individual experiences psychological pain not as a manifestation of insight, but by anything that prohibits the need to shop.

Pathologically Normal

The loss of creative expression has become an overriding feature in a predominately normotic society, deadened by the demands of consumerism and oblivious to the flux and flow of heightened affectivity. These individuals have never developed the capacity for reflexive thought as they have found an interminable comfort zone that effectively neutralizes any trace of psychic activity. This is a pathological form of self-preservation “where all movement seems to be aimed at taking one further and further outside existence...the ability to move here and there, to zigzag, to correct one’s position is lost” (Eigen, 2004, p. 14). The final section of this study will explore the conditions that lead to this loss of movement, to the insidious slide beyond the active currents into a veritable morass of mind-numbing polytechnical posturizing. More specifically, how does the standardization of curriculum contribute to the death of the subject?

“Schooling” has become an exercise in rigid compliance, ultimately losing sight of the individual as federal mandates and corporate control engender a sense of training, as opposed to learning, in the field of education. The corporatization of academia invites an unalterable sense of deadness into the lives of unsuspecting schoolchildren, who are unscrupulously subjected to the assigned moralities of character education and the robotic influx of pre-determined subject matter.

There is no outlet for the creativity that thrives on the intensity of boundless exploration and the sense of aliveness gained when one operates with internal locus of control – a sign of psychological well-being. Conversely, the standardization of education teaches the value of externality, the notion that all things meaningful are found outside the subjective realm of existence, leading to the loss of creativity and the propensity for normotic illness. In response to decades of “anti-intellectual” conservative reform, Pinar (2004) urges educators to “depart those positions of gracious submission,” to “perform the inner work psychoanalysis suggests, not in the name of personal therapy, but in the cause of social reconstruction...the latter cannot occur without the former: the subjective and the social are inextricable interwoven with each other” (p. 201). The anti-intellectuality that compromises psychological stability must be approached not from an individual standpoint, but from a sustained intersubjective movement that rises above the pervasive deadness that characterizes objective discourse. As Pinar (2004) notes, “we must face our internalized anti-intellectualism as well as “talk back” to those whose modes of address positions as bureaucrats and technicians doing others dirty work” (p. 201). Pinar (2004) further notes that “after self-understanding, comes self-mobilization in the service of social reconstruction,” a formidable undertaking that can only be accomplished by a stalwart retreat from the pull of free-market subjugation and the promulgation of institutionalized psychological dependence (p. 201). The psyche is under constant attack to comply – the innate longing for free-will cannot possible flourish amidst an endless barrage of authoritarian messages that give predominance to the Other. Education has become an exercise of submission that slowly diminishes reflexivity and discourages the exploration of the spaces “in-between” the extremes of existence. The authoritarian curriculum demands unadulterated attachment to senseless rules, objective forms of knowledge, and material objects – a scenario that increasingly fragments the self as outside objects are viewed as the only

means of attaining psychological health. The self is stuck in an untenable predicament. As Morris (2004) notes, “one must continually struggle to extricate one’s soul from marshiness...one foot must remain worldly [but] what is bad is attachment to worldly things” (p. 91). “Like the Buddha, Freud did not want to yield to either of the two alternatives of attachment or aversion...he was seeking a third option but had trouble finding words to describe what it could be” (Epstein, 1998, p. 62). The third option could possibly be the ability to evade the materialistic attraction that obscures the sound of the soul. As Epstein (1998) notes, “like a Japanese Zen master whose full attention is focused on the sound of the crickets or the taste of a strawberry, Freud sought to return his friend to a more intimate and immediate experience of the moment,” a detachment from worldly interference (p. 62). Attachment to outside objects may serve as a defense against intolerable psychic material, but ultimately the need to operate free from outside influence will signal the acquisition of internal locus of control. Furthermore, the individual may succumb to the notion of self as object, “and valuing the self is determined only by the external functioning of the self, as it appears to the norm: the person’s treatment of self as an object has a quality similar to a quality control department’s concern with the functioning quality of a product” (Bollas, 1987, p. 155). And isn’t that the emphasis in education – the production of a quality product? The assembly-line mentality of corporatized academia creates an undeniable vacuum that slowly voids creativity and expels subjectivity, and as Morris (2004) notes, “lines of thought are not born in a vacuum” (p. 86). Standardization thrives on the creation of norms, “the power of normalization imposes homogeneity” in the systematic subjugation of heterogeneous commodities (students) by the imposition of impersonal rules and equalized standards (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). Furthermore, “it is easy to see how the power of the norm functions within a system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of

measurement, all the shading of individual differences,” effectively inhibiting creative “lines of flight” (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). The lines of flight are contained by complete immersion in the system, knowledge is measured by a series of objective tests that reflect the subject’s ability to conform to existing hegemony. “The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgment...it is normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish” (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). The unconstrained adherence to testing leaves a merciless void in the individual’s ability to discover self, to find a growth-enhancing space that develops from unrestricted airways. A curriculum should be a growth-enhancing process that allows for teacher-student interaction that goes beyond the treatment of individuals as objects designed to receive and regurgitate information. The manipulation of human-beings reduces the willpower to engage in the intensity required for a fulfilling life – objects are void of feelings. Furthermore, a sense of deadness envelops the human psyche as the object loses transformational ability, a primary reason for the initiation of analytic work – the individual is stuck without recourse for action. Self and object are permanently severed. The incessant focus on authoritarianism in the educational arena has lasting psychological effects for the students who refuse to play the game – those who resist are forced out of the system. Those who resist are searching for alternative lines of flight, a distinct impossibility in a terroristic curriculum. For Daignault, dialogue is a possibility but “it must avoid the trap of terrorism or nihilism...if dialogue is reduced to knowledge, then terrorism results” (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995, p. 482). A curriculum must be able to engage in a dialogue of possibility that resists the urge to totalize knowledge (terrorism) or allow an “anything goes” (nihilism) approach. Daignault prefers to phrase curriculum as “thinking,” which “implies his opposition to any reification or belief in representational thought, for curriculum as thinking is always moving, diversifying, or to use

Deleuzian terms, is nomadic” (Pinar et al, 1995, p. 483). The present state of curriculum squashes the opportunity for critical thought by the subtle promulgation of dependence, a necessary component for authoritarian rule that nicely extends into the capitalistic framework, which relies on mass consumerization, normotic existence, and immobility of class structure.

The increase in normotic individuals may be a primary result of the dependency created by the corporate/conservative educational agenda, as the ability to experience the aliveness of emotional sway sinks under the increasing pressure of capitalistic chaos and the inevitable reduction of internal locus of control. The psyche’s defense becomes an unmitigated resistance to affect – neither pain nor pleasure is allowed to emerge. The state of education contributes to this pervasive deadness, a protective mechanism that eventually succumbs to increasing amounts of anxiety and neurotic behavior. Too much anxiety and one is also dead – the goal of analysis is to find a space “in-between.” As Eigen (2004) notes, “there are two tendencies – toward maximum aliveness and toward maximum deadness, toward building up and toward tearing down, toward increasing tolerance of energy and complexity, toward a zero point of sensitivity and stimulation” (p. 8). In-between deadness and aliveness a new field emerges, full of possibilities for instantaneous flight and brief moments of uninhibited vision. To flirt with madness can be a necessary line of flight – a unique opportunity to engage in aliveness. This is the type of curriculum we need – a curriculum of aliveness. Difference is a characteristic of aliveness, and our current curriculum thrives on the denial of difference. As Phillips (1995), “denial of difference is always a refusal of ignorance” (p. 91).

Playfulness – a spontaneous reaction to the influx of positive penetrations and a sign of soulful solitude. The ability to play is not a given, as many individuals seek psychoanalysis due to a distinct feeling of deadness. Relatedness is a key ingredient for positive mental health – the ability

to form a bond with a fellow human being gives substance to existence. But, as Eigen (2001) notes, “we are damaged by bonds that give us life, disabled by connections that help us grow, but we play down the role of violence and loss in forging links” (p. 1). This paper has explored the links for survival, the bonds that nurture life and instigate an intensity that belies definition. Psychoanalysis is not a method for curing madness, rather, it is a method for coming to grips with madness, an exploration of the extremes between deadness and aliveness. Insanity may consist of living in the extreme – deadness may be sanity, or insanity. “Emptying out feeling, emptying out thought, emptying out energy versus hyperfeeling, hyperthinking, hyperenergy: going through extremes is an important part of life” (Eigen, 2004, p. 11). In essence, immobility may be a defining factor of deadness, but madness may be a sign of positive psychological health. It is certainly a prerequisite for feeling, as affective states such as depression intensify happiness – deadness makes aliveness more intense. To feel intensely may be a goal of therapy, as the passionate human being is more alive, full of exuberance and positive energy. Damage may be a part of the bonding process, “yet discussion in detail of the ways we damage each other by the bonds we need adds to our appreciation of life’s textures, limits, and possibilities” (Eigen, 2004). The normotic views life without possibilities, and like the normotic, curriculum mandates reject the possibility that each individual has the ability to engage in creative acts of interpretation that defy the negation of critical thought.

In good health, individuals have the ability to live in between extremes, to have an openness that allows for a range of choices and creative possibilities in the decisions we make. In the same manner, extremes can also initiate contact with an undiscovered aspect of self, as a touch of madness is good for the soul. We must move away from the authoritarian dictates that define public education and embrace a pedagogy of possibility, free from zero-tolerance policies,

unbridled accountability, and rampant inequality. For example, “what message is being sent to youth when, as federal deficits are soaring, the Bush administration provides tax cuts for the rich – in one instance \$114 billion in corporate tax concessions – while at the same time other children face drastic cuts in domestic programs such as job training” (Giroux, 2004, p. 93)? Curriculum has taken a “back-seat” to market manipulation, a situation that has lasting effects on children whose future depends on the ability to engage in critical thought. And isn’t that what analysis attempts to instill – the development of the capacity to analyze oneself, to tear down the psychic defenses that restrict growth and perpetuate the tyranny of neurotic symptoms. Is it meaning we are after, or just the unrestricted movement indicative of children’s play? Play is exploration without the enigma of meaning. Play is synonymous with aliveness, and isn’t this the goal of therapy – to relearn play? This is a simplistic notion, but the ability to feel happiness creates the intensity needed to effectively engage life – to live creatively. In the interim, a curriculum of possibility remains dormant, hopelessly subjected to methods, procedures, and objectified knowledge that inevitably contributes to stagnation of body and mind. As for the curriculum theorist, she must keep searching for spaces “in-between,” to “think the gap that is curriculum,” and to keep operating “in the space between practice and theory” (Pinar et al, 1995, p. 483).

Reparation

This study ends with a brief synopsis of the reparative capacities found in each individual, which has been thoroughly outlined through the use of object-relations theory. The work of Klein, Bollas, Eigen, Winnicott, and other prominent theorists have been examined as a basis for faulty relations to external objects that inundate postmodern society with the emptiness of perpetual desire. Klein and Riviere (1964) outline the fine line between love and hate, beginning with an analysis of the infant’s relation to part-objects, the aggression toward the breast combined with the realization of

dependency through desire, an interplay of emotional intensity that last throughout life. The identification of destruction and nurturance is a necessary component of growth, dependent on the understanding that anger and aggression, to a certain degree, are life preserving qualities regarding the need to assert or protect oneself in the face of danger (Klein and Riviere, 1964). According to Klein and Riviere (1964), “in the fields of all work, and pleasure too, we recognize that people who have not enough aggression, who cannot assert themselves enough against obstacles, are deficient in a valuable quality (p. 5). This has important implication for society as a whole, as the tendency to project aggressive impulses onto the ‘Other’ occludes the ability to act assertively against the harbingers of control, the corporations that incessantly permeate society with the glow of external objects, ultimately causing the individual to unconsciously emote hate toward anything that impedes momentary satisfaction. As Klein and Riviere (1964) point out, “we can say that both the self-preservative and ‘love’ instincts need a certain admixture of aggression if they are to attain satisfaction, that is, an aggressive element is an essential part of both these instincts in actual functioning” (p. 5). In essence, the projective mechanism obscures our ability to act assertively, to identify the ideological basis for control and to retreat from the most fundamental aspect of human growth – dependence on each other.

An understanding of faulty object relations engenders possibilities for becoming, to escape from an unfulfilling, empty, and infinite desire by owning parts of oneself in a congruent, productive, and empowering conviction. Through this process, aliveness is a possibility that retracts the obliquity of existence by reinforcing the value of human relations. Hostility, left unchecked, devours the soul with an unrequited angst that fails to understand the link between empty desire and misdirected anger. According to Klein and Riviere (1964):

Once explanation for hostile emotions is evident, at least in many cases, namely,

that the people feeling them are disconnected and dissatisfied with their lot or conditions, whether it is some necessary of life or pleasure they cannot obtain, they have a sense of loss. It is self-evident that an attack, or attempt to rob or hurt and so cause him (sic) a loss, will arouse aggression in an ordinary person and in most animals. (pp. 7)

In consumerism, the sense of loss is not apparent, the attack comes from without as the aggression is devoid of a target – aggression comes from dependency on external objects as opposed to dependency on others. Unconscious aggression is directed at a self that acts without regard to preservation, a self that thrives on envy and greed. As Klein and Riviere (1964) note, “an *unfulfilled desire* within us can, if intense enough, create a similar sense of loss and pain, and so rouse aggression in exactly the same way as an attack” (pp. 6). This not only has important implications for understanding societal behavior, but also invokes a sense of power on an individual level when the obliquity of the false self becomes a clear picture of unmediated control. The defenses are lifted and the object of desire can also be recognized as potentially harmful – destruction is integrated into the whole, along with illumination of dependence as a source of *becoming*, a possibility for nurturance.

Possibility

This dissertation has shown the decline of a civil democracy that was envisioned by the founding fathers of our government, a representative democracy meant to elicit the will of the people, but also based on the equalization of power among the three branches of government. The government proposed by John Adams counteracted the imposition of authoritarian rule by ensuring that the will of the people was carried forth by their elected representatives. The notion of a “true democracy” was viewed as a catalyst for decline similar to that of the Roman Empire, as those in power would

seize control, construct laws to induce hegemony, and exert undue control over the minority classes. As discussed throughout this paper, we now have a form of governance – a corporate ideology – that has become a catalyst for a true democracy guided by strict adherence to a market-based existence. This study has shown the precipitous effects of an ideology that places “profits over people” (Chomsky, 1998) by reckless disregard for the environment, the standardization of education as a mechanism of control, economic racism, the marketing of medicine, and the corporatization of higher education. In essence, we have become the pure democracy that Adams warned against: “While it lasts is more bloody than either aristocracy or monarchy. Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself... There is never a democracy that did not commit suicide” (quoted in McCullough, 2001). The free-market *is* the democracy that will inevitably succumb to suicide.

While our current condition is a bleak reminder of Adams’ warning, there are possibilities for change through the initiation of societal awareness that must begin on an individual level. Change begins with awareness not only of the unconscious forces that drive consumerism, but the inevitable consequences of material existence, such as the existence of a false self, the deterioration of meaningful relationships, the loss of public space, and the inevitable emptiness that follows each successive attempt to achieve instant gratification. Throughout this study, the decline of a civil democracy is shown to be a direct effect of corporate ideology brought about by Friedman’s introduction of an unrestricted and unregulated free-market, which has eroded the foundation of societal cohesion by the methodical privatization of the government, education, medicine, and universities. According to Giroux (2004), “the ascendancy of neoliberal corporate culture into every aspect of American life both consolidates economic power in the hands of the few and aggressively attempts to break the power of unions, decouple income from productivity,

subordinate the needs of society to the market, and deem public services and goods and unconscionable” (p. 105). There is no longer a representative democracy, but a seething cauldron of phony politicians that spew obligatory campaign slogans promising a utopian-like change, while in reality they answer to special interest groups and the allure of financial incentives. Meanwhile, the postmodern mind reacts to the allure of brand-name existence by infinitely attempting to consume their way into happiness.

Through the use of object-relations theory and strands of post-structural thought, I have put forth a mode of *becoming*, a possibility for transformation that occurs when the individual awareness of emptiness begins to surface and the defenses of the false self are revealed. An understanding of this process transfigures the importance of an intimate connection with another human being, not on a tangential level, but a bond that explodes ideological boundaries by touching the inner-core of self through the collective realization of interdependency – we cannot survive unless the emptiness of consumerism is replaced by the possibility of change. The ability to identify both the good and the bad in objects is the first step in this process and an integral part of growth that begins in infancy. It also means the ability to experience another human being not as an object available for self-gratification, but as the key to survival. According to Klein and Riviere (1964), the ability to experience “some degree of waiting, some degree of sharing, of giving up something for others, is necessary in life” (p. 8). In their description of the undifferentiated mind of the infant, Klein and Riviere (1964) note:

In a certain degree the baby becomes aware of his dependence; he (sic) discovers that he cannot supply all his wants – and he cries and screams. He becomes aggressive. He automatically explodes, as it were, with hate and aggressive craving. If he feels emptiness and loneliness, an automatic reaction sets in, which may soon become a

measure of compulsion and dependence. (pp. 8)

Society's present condition is filled with an aggressive craving not unlike that of an infant, but differs in the drive for dependence, the realization that love and hate are catalysts for emotional growth. Conversely, an apt description of consumer behavior is found in Klein and Riviere's (1964) observation about certain youth in their era, as "one type of the present younger generation will not acknowledge any feelings of love, even for a sexual partner or a child, trying to base every human tie on reason alone, so greatly is dependence feared by them" (p. 8). In all areas of life, beginning with the education of our young, impressionable children, the drive for independence, reason, and conformity are the hallmarks of good citizenship, a good consumer. This process not only counteracts the necessary and nurturing relationship that begins with the mother, but also dissolves the capacity for imagination and creativity, necessary components of the ability to think critically about the world in which we live. Reason is hailed as the progenitor of rational behavior when, in fact, reason is the killer of creativity – the definitive end to multiplicity.

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