INTRODUCTION

Neoliberalizing Undergraduate Experience

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Once upon a time, the U.S. college experience was simply what a student experienced when attending college, and was heavily associated with elite institutions and liberal arts education. That notion certainly lingers. But in contemporary higher education, the idea of experience has also become a property of specifically defined and administratively structured activities that students *do*: first-year experience, study abroad, internship, and service-learning, much of it under the rubric of experiential learning. All these experiences are assigned value comparable and complementary to academics, and are treated as assessable in parallel ways, perhaps even on extracurricular "transcripts." Administrative structures and even ancillary industries have arisen to manage them, and they have become an important element of college marketing.

The idea that education could be grounded in an organic, subjectively distinct experience and at the same time reified and marketed as a product has its origins in two distinct developments in the history of U.S. higher education: the philosophy of educational experience proposed by John Dewey, and the relation between educational administrations and business interests critiqued by Thorstein Veblen. These developments emerged in the very early twentieth century and remain intertwined; indeed, since the 1990s, the second has taken on new life, enfolding the first into an education product. Strong (this volume) lays out Dewey's belief in a mutually integrative and informative relation between education and experience, with practical activity leading to reflection and enhanced understanding. Contemporaneously, as Handler (this volume) points out, Veblen warned about the emergence of, as he put it, "captains of erudition" heading universities while working in tandem with the profit-oriented businessmen (and they were in fact all men) who dominated boards of trustees, undercutting what Veblen saw

as the primary academic functions of higher education. Dewey's philosophy and Veblen's critique, considered together, account for much of contemporary higher education, its origins having been in place since the growth of U.S. universities concomitant with late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century corporate expansions (see, e.g., Barrow 1990). There never was a simple, pure college experience, nor has whatever constitutes undergraduate education or the college experience ever been monolithic or static. Higher education institutions have always been deeply imbricated with general social and economic conditions, not to mention contemporaneously valued notions of personhood, and they have always had different meanings for different participants. So in many ways the history of higher education is *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. But not completely *la même chose*: What changed was the course of capitalism over the twentieth century, and the emergence of a neoliberal ethos since around 1980, as Shumar (this volume) maps out. The segmentation, commodification, and neoliberalizing processes that affect higher education have come to operate across institutions in globally linked processes.

The chapters in this volume present an ethnography-based analysis of the ways in which commodified experiences have constrained the value of classroom education based on academic disciplines. They constitute an auto-ethnographic critique of higher education (Meneley and Young 2005) that examines marketed forms of experience and the reconfiguring of enduring forms of inequality in what seem to be egalitarian entrepreneurial student practices. These chapters also examine the elements of experience through which service-learning becomes commodifiable, the establishment of expertise in administering first-year experience, the professionalization of undergraduate identity through experiences of technical education, and the neoliberal discourses of self-marketing and accountability that sustain the place of experience in the academic marketplace. Interspersed are student reflections on their own neoliberalized experiences.

I use the term "neoliberalism" in the sense that the governing social principle is or should be the maximizing of market potential, making any practice or form of knowledge (or, as in this volume, any form of experience) valuable to the extent that it has market value (see, e.g., Harvey 2005; Rossiter 2003). Like the first volume in this Berghahn series (Hyatt, Shear, and Wright 2015), this one proceeds from the assumption that neoliberal principles are variously manifested across higher education, with no single model of a neoliberal university or college. These specifics can most effectively be demonstrated ethnographi-

cally, as Greenhouse (2010) argues. Shear and Hyatt (2015: 5) stress the existence of multiple neoliberalisms and the importance of understanding "neoliberalism as a relatively open signifier that can help us think about governance and social reproduction across scale and space" (7).

The Various Meanings of the Term "College Experience"

This volume focuses on the idea of college experience in the United States. This term tends to evoke an iconic notion of four years of liberal arts (nonprofessional, nontechnical) education at an elite university or four-year undergraduate-only college, exemplifying Bourdieu's (1986 and elsewhere) concept of symbolic capital—in other words, class-based prestige reflecting elite connections (social capital). College imagined as experience can presuppose those elite associations without specifying what they might actually consist of, which means that, in turn, college experience at less-elite institutions can carry a cachet borrowed from more-elite institutions. Thus, referring to college in terms of experience can effectively evoke symbolic capital affiliated with a general notion of college. At the same time, college provides cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986), which includes both learning to conduct oneself in advantageous ways (learning to talk, dress, and otherwise conduct oneself to one's social advantage) and acquiring specific forms of knowledge convertible to market advantage. Both forms of knowledge can reinforce symbolic capital but lean in somewhat different directions, with the former focused on the projection of class-based personal imagery and the latter on one's capacity for employment mobility.

How can such a notion of college experience be commodified? A contradiction arises here, from the nature of liberal arts education. Historically, the function of elite higher education has been the reproduction of a class system through the unequal redistribution of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). The very nebulousness of liberal arts academic content, organized by disciplinary criteria rarely oriented toward specific applications, has been to *not* be practical (i.e., vocational) but to graduate someone who exemplifies the institution's prestige. This makes liberal arts education a tricky item to market in an era in which the content of one's education is supposed to show return on investment by maximizing employability and future income. So reimagining the experience of liberal arts as somehow practical means rethinking its affiliated cultural capital while keeping the evocation of symbolic capital. One way to do this is to cast the whole notion of a liberal arts experience as a form of cultural capital that gives a mar-

ketplace edge to the whole person. This can distance the discourse about college experience from institutional inequalities because it can be done at any liberal arts institution, prestigious or not, by emphasizing liberal arts as a curriculum over liberal arts as an elite institution. At the same time, college marketers routinely create website visuals and texts that borrow elements from prestige institutions, such that any undergraduate college or university program, however nonelite, can be marketed in ways that evoke Ivy League images of student life.

Nor is commodifying the experience of liberal arts limited to casting the whole as a market edge. Those four undergraduate years can be variously segmented into specific elements, each with a distinct value. Nor is this process limited to liberal arts education, as Posecznick (this volume) shows. Elements of experience in liberal arts or technical education can be shaped to fit patterns of neoliberal self-management, particularly through what Handler (2008) calls paracurricular activities, developed to reside outside and parallel to the regular curriculum. Such activities are designed to demonstrate a specifically neoliberal subjectivity, often by student life professionals and administrators. Service-learning, whereby students engage in college- or university-sponsored extracurricular activities addressing community needs, has become especially paradigmatic of the paracurriculum, but paracurricular principles also structure student research, entrepreneurial activities, and first-year programs.

When higher education administrators (and marketers) use the term “experience,” the term’s semantic content (denotata) is secondary to its capacity to connect its user(s) strategically with a particular perspective or set of interests. In such discourse, experience functions as what I have described elsewhere as a strategically deployable shifter or SDS (Urciuoli 2008): a semantically indeterminate term whose primary function is its capacity to align and contrast the user’s perspective—that is, to operate as a shifter, as with terms like “here/there” or “now/then” or “us/them.” This commonly happens in political speech: when terms like “freedom” or “growth” or “security” or “the American people” are used, their semantic vagueness facilitates their capacity to index political alliances. Neoliberal discourse is strongly characterized by SDS usage, much of which has moved from corporate into academic language. Strategically used, the term “experience” can present and justify specific notions about higher education to interlocutors oriented to think of education in terms of return on investment, highlighting elements of education that can be segmented and (up to a point) assessed under regimes of audit (Shore and Wright 2000). In this way it function-

ally parallels another neoliberal SDS, skills. Skills and experience take on complementary value in marketing regimes. Skills, particularly soft skills based on social behaviors (e.g., teamwork, time management), are constituted as nameable entities whose value can be recognized by potential employers. They can be acquired, possessed, and numbered. Experience is about a student's character, and suggests a sense of moral improvement. Experience provides a way to talk about students "doing good" in the world in ways that increase the goodness of the doers.

Despite the continuity between corporate and academic discourse, there are differences in how students and workers are neoliberally imagined. Student experience and worker skills are both subject to audit, but in different ways. Skills are imagined as constitutive features of contemporary workers, segmentable elements (forms of knowledge and social behaviors) that can be named and assessed. There is a flourishing industry in skills assessment that employers are urged to use on their workforce. While college juniors and seniors are routinely urged to visit their career centers for skills audits to list on their résumés and to think of themselves as skills bundles (Urciuoli 2008), they are not yet workers. Student experiences are subject to some degree of audit, as Bodinger and Jacobson (this volume) show, but the difference is largely in the consequences. For workers whose skills assessments come up short, there could be immediate material consequences in terms of limited raises or promotion. There are fewer comparable material consequences for students. Indeed, as Posecznick (this volume) shows, the presentation of skills in student capstone experiences is largely part of a general demonstration of student subjectivity rather than a specific assessment of those skills. To that extent, the presentation of student engineering skills—a type of skill with material consequences for people who depend on them for wages—is a form of experience in that it is a performance of subjectivity. Thus, how skills are commodified depends on whose skills are commodified. Student skills and worker skills are both imagined as things students or workers know or do that make them productive, but where worker skills are themselves the commodities, the products sold to workers or employers to make workers more productive (and thus subject to direct assessment), student skills are part of a larger commodification process. They are part of how an institution presents itself and its students as its product, to what are now routinely termed "stakeholders" (which is another neoliberal SDS), so as to convince parents, trustees, donor organizations, potential employers and students themselves that they are getting a product both viable and worth the price tag. In this way, skills parallel experience. The

difference is that worker skills are defined in relation to specific jobs; there are no specific jobs against which student skills are defined while students are still students.

Experience packaged in undergraduate education also parallels skills in that what count as experiences depend less on their somewhat underspecified content and more on how they can be segmented into somewhat standardized formats and brought into regimes of commodification based on promised outcomes. Especially notable about the formatting and commodification of experience is that discipline-based content is moved away from faculty control into administrative control, thus substantially disconnecting the content of experience from any particular academic disciplines. This allows them to be fungible as well as standardized. Even faculty-supervised activity can be subject to this repackaging. Handler (this volume) describes a shift from a research paper model, integral to a particular course and focused on student engagement with a particular subject as part of learning a discipline, to doing research, focused on the student as a performer of research, with the subject matter secondary and fungible, and perhaps not even integral to coursework (see also Baldrige, this volume). Service-learning, probably the commonest form of experiential learning, covers a wide range of possible engagements that are all equally segmentable into and countable as hours (Bodinger and Jacobson, this volume; and Bergbauer, this volume), entailing bureaucratic structures to maintain and monitor these forms.

The packaging criteria reflect an institution's reputation, the commodity's intended consumer, and what those consumers perceive as use value. For students, research and experiential learning generally constitute résumé items. Using Bakhtin's concept of voice (1981), LaDousa (this volume) shows how service-learning and social innovation are differently constituted and packaged as experiential learning. First-year experience might be less targeted to students than to parents who value reassurance that students will be safe, or to donor organizations (at least at liberal arts colleges without real retention problems) who want to be assured that students are being socialized as productive citizens (Urciuoli, this volume).

The Semiotics and Pragmatics of Commodification and Branding

Through what processes does experience become packaged as a commodity? Agha (2011) argues that commodities are best understood not

as themselves things with inherent properties, but rather as emergent formulations that things pass in and out of, with the term "thing" including not only physical objects but also various intangible constructions: "From the standpoint of registers, commodities mediate social life not through the "circulation of things" but through the recycling of commodity formulations and their fractions . . . across diverse activity frames that recontextualize and transform them" (Agha 2011: 25). Agha further notes that commodification discourses index social roles and relationships (including voice). This is a central point when we consider which aspects of higher education take on value as commodities: Do those aspects correspond to what Bourdieu (1986) casts as institutional or social affiliations (social capital), associated prestige (symbolic capital), credentials or some form of embodied knowledge or practice (cultural capital), or some combination of the foregoing, all of which are perceived variously by, for example, students, prospective students, alumni, parents, faculty, administrators, trustees, donors, or prospective employers? What count as useful or desirable affiliations, credentials, and knowledge are all contingent, as Agha points out, on their use value, a semiotic property of the discursive conditions in which they are formulated as commodities (a point already touched on).

Commodifying higher education represents education through the process of branding, particularly as embodied in its students. Using Peircian (Peirce 1955) terms, Moore (2003: 342–43) breaks the branding process into firstness, the construction of "the sensuous qualities of the brand"; secondness, the identification of "source identifying indexicalities of the brand"; and thirdness, the "ensuring of consistency of the brand's qualisign characteristics and indexical associations across all channels and media." As I have noted elsewhere (Urciuoli 2014), this branding process can be seen in the striking use of visual qualities in well-composed campus photography, particularly in the casting of student images in outdoor shots (firstness); linked to the college's name, location, and other source identifiers (secondness); all carefully monitored for consistency of message (thirdness). Examples can be seen on the home page of any undergraduate institution that has an office of institutional advancement to take the pictures, provide the text, formulate rules for its consistent production, and get all that out to the public.

Student experience is worked into the brand in various ways. Images of student life provide a recurring visual backdrop on college websites. Details of student life are a central draw for visiting prospective applicants, though as student tour guides point out, those details sometimes have to be edited for what parents will hear as safe (Urciuoli 2014:

74–77). Framing those images and details according to the principles and themes covered in this volume reinforces the message that student experience carries neoliberal value. Thus, images of students on college websites stress engagement in productive activities in the classroom, on the sports field, in performance, and doing volunteer work and research presentations, and tour guide descriptions of campus life include such productive opportunities.

How Is Experience Neoliberalized?

The neoliberal regimes that order institutions structure the imagining of what it means to be a student or, for that matter, faculty or administrator. Addressing the ways in which neoliberal regimes reconfigure people's relation to each other, their sense of membership in a public, and the conditions of their self-knowledge, Greenhouse (2010: 2) points out that "neoliberal reform . . . has restructured the most prominent public relationships that constitute belonging: politics, market, works, and self-identity." Greenwood (2015: 202–3) further notes that the primary goal of current neoliberal policy advocates, as for Taylorists of a century ago, is to create a system maximally rational in the Weberian sense, despite little real evidence that their policies actually produce better education.

Neoliberal ideologies also set parameters on how people are supposed to view themselves, a point that Gershon (2011) takes up in her discussion of neoliberal agency, whereby one reflexively manages oneself as a set of useful traits or skills, as if one were a business. The notion of skills is not the only constituting aspect of a neoliberal self: one must also have a brand. In her research on people attending personal branding workshops, Gershon (2016) finds personal brand characterized not as transferable skills, but rather as an authentic quality that keeps a worker consistent across contexts, an authentic and unique quality arrived at, paradoxically, "through standardized and regimented techniques" (229). In so doing, and through use of key words, one signals one's capacity to be a cohesive and unique self, predictable and stable across contexts, and at the same time able to deploy one's skills to show needed flexibility. In short, the deployment of skills is running oneself like a business, and the defining personal quality is the brand of that business. Gershon's concept of personal branding is particularly pertinent to the most explicitly neoliberalized modes of experiential learning, in other words the social innovation programs examined by LaDousa (this volume) in which students are urged to present them-

selves as change-makers. (Not that they are expected to work from any theory of social change; rather, and in accordance with Moore's principle of thirdness, whatever they present as change should fit an institutional template.) Such neoliberal shaping of how one ideally imagines oneself and others of similar subjectivity also governs one's relation to the institutions within which one operates. In these ways, student imagery linked to specific institutions can become central to institutional branding. Not only do students and their experiences become part of an institution's brand, but also students are encouraged to define themselves in ways that function much as worker self-branding should.

We thus see the emergence of forms of student interpellation—being "hailed" as a particular kind of subject (Althusser 1971)—in ways that highlight students' relation to an institution imagined as maximally rational and staffed by meritocratic actors who define themselves in relation to the interests of their institution (Greenwood 2015: 210). One would think that in such a neoliberalized ideal, student experience would be subject to audit logic, and to a point it is, insofar as student experience is packaged and treated as commensurable units. But, as noted earlier, while some aspects of student experience are so packaged and measured, it is not often clear what kinds of outcomes are being sought. When it is clear what kinds of outcomes are sought, and thus possible to see how student performance might fall short of hoped-for outcomes, students face few if any serious consequences. In this sense students are not really the objects of audit. Instead, the presentation of audit seems to be part of the performance of producing studenthood, and the packaging and counting of outcomes part of the branding process. Working students into the brand connects a projection of student subjectivity to a market-friendly image of the school. Whereas students appear to be interpellated as part of the branding process, their subjectivities might not actually be all that appropriated because what matters is transferring the student performance to the appropriate media rather than students actually becoming transformed. Nor, frankly, are students interpellated all that easily (see Cai and Majumdar, and LaViolette, this volume). But performance is labor, and students do perform a lot of identity work for their colleges and universities that is, in effect, appropriated labor. At a historical moment in which students are pressured to plan every move with an eye to return on investment, such interpellation might have a crucial, if hard to measure, effect on student subjectivity.

Packaging undergraduate education as individual cultural capital conveys the illusion that student-consumers are in control, masking the inequalities of social and symbolic capital. While all these "experiences"

are cast as if they provide all students with the same cultural capital, Bourdieu's fundamentally Marxian principle is still operative: what counts most as cultural capital is the capacity to act in ways that reflect a privileged background (see Khan 2011), in other words that also pack symbolic capital. This resonates with an older model of the "college experience." Students thus advantaged least require the neoliberal cultural capital that packaged, paracurricular "experience" is designed to offer. There is an inverse correlation between the structural advantages with which students enter undergraduate education and their likely susceptibility to or need for neoliberal interpellation, especially in elite institutions (Urciuoli 2016).

Neoliberal regimes depend on social actors taking for granted the principle of (allegedly) rational meritocracy ordering all social institutions while systematic inequities remain cloaked. For students, that means an "experience" of education that slides them as seamlessly as possible into the new work order. Showing how that operates is the point to this volume.

What These Chapters Are About

This volume consists of eleven chapters, ordered to show the volume's connecting threads. The seven chapters by Strong, Handler, Bodinger and Jacobson, LaDousa, Urciuoli, Posecznick, and Shumar analyze neoliberal constructions of undergraduate experience. The four chapters by Bergbauer, Baldrige, Cai and Majumdar, and LaViolette (recent college graduates known to one or another of the first seven authors) were invited as critical reflections on participation in experiential learning. Bergbauer and Baldrige participated in projects mentioned in the chapters by Bodinger and Jacobson, and by LaDousa. Certain themes recur throughout all eleven chapters, including the administrative imposition of commensurateness, the privileging of performance of experience over substance of experience, and the fungible nature of the content of experience, all framed by the volume's two key principles: the role of experience in higher education, and the relation of higher education to capitalism.

The origins of the role of experience in higher education are explored by Pauline Turner Strong in "John Dewey's Philosophy of Education in the Neoliberal Age." Dewey argued that quality education must be grounded in quality experience generating growth and creativity, in turn creating contexts for future learning. When such processes are direct, active, and concrete, students can integrate successive experience into

previous experience, forming a continually modified conceptual frame. But in the face of pressure within and across institutions, as Strong shows in her examination of humanities education courses for adult learners and for first-year students, such an organic process becomes subject to the imposition of achievement metrics based on measurable goals setting up each experience as commensurate with the next, regardless of what the actual program is meant to do.

The origins of the relation of higher education to capitalism are explored by Richard Handler in “Undergraduate Research in Veblen’s Vision: Idle Curiosity, Bureaucratic Accountancy, and Pecuniary Emulation in Contemporary Higher Education.” Handler recounts Veblen’s critique of the rise of “captains of erudition,” demonstrating the centrality of capitalism to the organization and administration of higher education right from the emergence of new academic bureaucracies circa 1900. He shows current marketing developments in higher education growing out of, as Veblen saw it, the bureaucratic management of a mass clientele that Veblen thought likely to undermine the academic enterprise. A recurrent theme in this volume is the structural replacement of faculty expertise with administrative authority, concomitant with expanding nonacademic bureaucratic structures, creating a product that can be marketed by yet more nonacademic bureaucracy. Handler shows this in the movement of student research out of the classroom and into new bureaucratic structures, in which research as integral to learning a discipline is displaced by the act of doing research, with the research content becoming fungible.

Major universities have considerable resources at their disposal to set up service projects, and the emphasis on individual student performance of service provision might obscure the structural inequalities generating the conditions that service is designed to address. Or it might not. In “Empathy as Industry: An Undergraduate Perspective on Neoliberalism and Community Engagement at the University of Pennsylvania,” Jack LaViolette examines the university’s role in the creation of a poor urban neighborhood—the context in which student tutors pursue the kinds of good works that schools like to display their students doing. LaViolette’s chapter makes clear how much institutional histories (this is but one case) rest on race/class advantage at the same time that volunteer tutoring programs like this shift attention away from those conditions. It also makes clear, as do several other chapters, how little the perception of those served are ever addressed.

Themes of commensurateness and fungibility are central to John J. Bodinger and Shari Jacobson’s “Dirty Work: The Carnival of Service.”

Bodinger and Jacobson examine service-learning as a reverse take on Bakhtinian carnivalesque inversion. The reverse lies in the imagining of manual labor, signified as such by its performers getting dirty (planting, painting, cleaning), not as disorder, but rather as the signification of value in service, the reconstitution of order. Voluntarily crossing the dirt line signifies the server's performance of merit, highlighting the disordered situation of the served and showing what they should be grateful for. This contrast frames the server's autonomy, moral agency, and individual merit, all elements constituting the role of the neoliberal volunteer service provider who, in getting dirty, puts dirt back into its place. All this is assessed as countable hours that are themselves the outcome. Performance of service is assigned value in increments of hours: the content of service is fungible, nor do the perception of those served or the unequal nature of the serving relations figure into the accounting.

Based on her own experience counting hours in one of the service-learning programs analyzed by Bodinger and Jacobson, Sarah Bergbauer's "No Good Deed Goes Uncounted: A Reflection on College Volunteerism" demonstrates the fungibility of the accounting process. Bergbauer compares her experience of the same job as a paid employee and as a volunteer, showing how the difference lies in the framing. Volunteer service is framed as self-enriching and transformative, with the role of the server as the bureaucratic focus, making student labor available for appropriation to someone else's marketing script.

The principle of fungibility also features in Chaise LaDousa's "From Service Learning to Social Innovation: The Development of the Neoliberal in Experiential Learning," which connects the bureaucratized commensurateness imposed on experience to shifting conditions of neoliberal subjectivity. Using Bakhtin's notion of voice, LaDousa contrasts an older experiential learning model, service-learning, to a newer and explicitly entrepreneurial model, social innovation. Both models presuppose the college as a sphere from which students operate apart from an elsewhere-existing "real world," and both promise transformations, but the transformations have opposite orientations. Service-learning discourses stress movement away from (bursting) the college "bubble" (as such discourses routinely put it), whereas social innovation discourses stress activity (referred to as "bringing change") within the bubble. And in both, the content is fungible, the performance format demonstrating the worth of the (service-providing or change-making) experience more than do the specific courses of action.

Based on a service-learning project overseen by LaDousa and funded by an internal grant center at her college, Anastassia Baldrige's "High

Hopes and Low Impact: Obstacles in Student Research" also addresses the institutional marketing value placed on the performance of volunteerism regardless of substance. Working in a literacy program in a nearby city and about to help tutor adults for their General Equivalency Diploma (GED), the volunteers were asked instead to help implement a federally funded digital literacy program in the literacy center's classrooms and spent several weeks trying to cope with the indeterminacy of the program's design and audience. None of this detail mattered to the sponsoring grant center, though they did make sure the student poster session was presented as student research on the college website.

Orienting student subjectivity is central to the design of experience. In "The Experience Experts," Bonnie Urciuoli examines the social engineering of student subjectivity in first-year experience (FYE) programs. First emerging around 1970 and financed from available internal budget resources, these programs were designed to build student retention at large public universities. Forty-five years later, they are routinely found in schools without retention problems and with dedicated staffing funded by external donor organizations. Framed by the notion that learning is not confined to classrooms, and beginning with highly structured orientation activities followed by first-year seminars, cocurricular, and extracurricular activities, FYE programs seek to produce an ideal student who embodies productive behaviors, constructive social relations, and a neoliberal subjectivity that can be marketed as an institutional product.

But student subjectivity does not always go where it is pointed. In "Moral Entanglements in Service Learning," Christopher Cai and Usnish Majumdar take up the question of students' actual responses to neoliberal interpellation. As Cai and Majumdar show from their own service-learning experience, students sometimes face, as these authors put it, "ethically ambiguous entanglements." However neoliberally framed their actions might appear, are actions with non-neoliberal motives, actions coherent with one's family's interests, neoliberal in the same way as actions theorized as those of institutional avatars maintaining an institutional status quo?

Another take on student subjectivity, in a very different context, is provided by Alex Posecznick's "Engineering Success: Performing Neoliberal Subjectivity through Pouring a Bottle of Water." Unlike the previous chapters, this is set in a for-profit technical institute primarily serving demographically underrepresented students training for technical jobs. Posecznick examines its Senior Capstone Project (SCP) experience, a competition among student teams, in which students demonstrate

their medium-level hard (technical) skills, and perform their soft skills: teamwork, their capacity for innovation and entrepreneurial spirit, their investment in their project, and their customer service skills. Such performance of subjectivity in a paracurricular activity—essentially a neoliberal performance of investment in an experience defined by the institution to promote its interests—cuts across liberal arts and technology, and nonprofit and for-profit institutions. And, as Posecznick suggests, the neoliberal logic in higher education generally could well have been inspired by technical education in particular.

The final chapter, Wesley Shumar's "Caught between Commodification and Audit: Contradictions in U.S. Higher Education," locates the processes addressed in this volume in what Shumar terms the third of three phases of commodification in U.S. higher education. This third phase is characterized by the rise of accountability and audit cultures, by shrinking private state resources, and by the rise of a new neoliberalism manifested by the cannibalizing of existing resources. In this new neoliberalism, all problems are rationalized as technical problems, their solutions measurable as outcomes, with those measurable outcomes folded back into higher education as commodity. Shumar's arguments outline the context in which student experience becomes commodified.

Throughout these chapters, we see Dewey's insight recast and bureaucratized by concerns foreshadowed by Veblen's century-old insight about the entanglement of higher education and big business. In that recasting, student reflection is no longer central to experience. The emphasis is on student performance of investment in forms of experience ordered by institutional concerns, structures, and schedules, as described in these chapters. All this undercuts what Dewey valued about experience. What Dewey theorized as an individual and deeply organic process is replaced by standardized performances of subjectivity, valued in terms of their appeal to parents, donors, and employers, while encouraging students to imagine themselves as future workers. Neoliberal regimes might realize themselves in different ways but one critical element remains constant: Do they give students market value?

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Relevant publications include “The Semiotic Production of the Good Student” in *Signs and Society* (2014), and “Neoliberal Markedness: The Interpellation of ‘Diverse’ College Students” in *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* (2016).

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