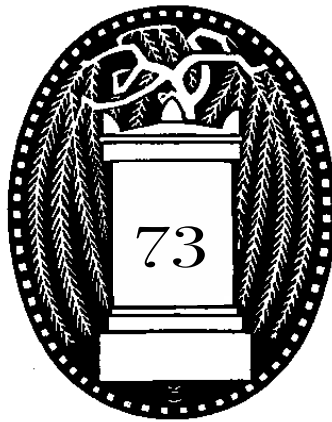


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The 2022 SoPHE Presidential Address

The End of Education and the Existential Grand Canyon

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Introduction

Good afternoon, my friends and colleagues. I attended my first SoPHE conference in, I believe, 2001 at the Sooner Hotel in Norman. When I moved to Oklahoma in 1999, my OVPES friend, Deron Boyles, highly recommended I check out SoPHE and he insisted that I must meet David Snelgrove and Doug Davis, who I remember was at Georgia State at the time. So I did. I have fond memories of these conferences: the generosity of spirit, the supportive colleagues, the stimulating conversations, and a freedom to experiment that I have found to be unique in my professional experience. It is an honor to give this address.

“To put it simply, there is no surer way to bring an end to schooling than for it to have no end.” So wrote Neil Postman (1931–2003) in 1995’s *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of Schooling*.¹ Postman plays with the ambiguity of the word ‘end,’ which can refer to cessation and termination, “this is the end,” “game over,” “that’s all folks.” It can also refer to a goal, an end-in-view, a *telos*. Postman’s thesis is that unless we can find a meaningful and purposeful end for schooling, it will spell the end of schooling as we know it. I will compare Postman’s book with another work, also from 1995, that features this end/purpose ambiguity: Henry J. Perkinson (1930–2012), *The Imperfect Panacea: American Faith in Education*,² and I conclude with the story of the existential Grand Canyon.

We will consider questions of identity, place, and purpose in their public, professional, and personal dimensions: my experience of teaching Neil Postman online during the pandemic, and some history and mythology of public schooling and teacher education. This will be an exercise in time binding, individually and collectively: What will we do? What are we doing? What have we done? The last, a question of legacy, is fitting, given that I retired on July 1, after 23 years at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. A thread that runs through this presentation is the use and power of metaphor, narrative, and myth.

Neil Postman and “The End of Education”

Toward the end of finding a meaningful purpose for schooling, Postman proposes several narratives, which he refers to as gods with a small “g”:

A god, in the sense I am using the word, is the name of a great narrative, one that has sufficient credibility, complexity, and symbolic power to enable one to organize one’s life around it. Call them what you will, we are unceasing in creating histories and futures for ourselves through the medium of narrative. Without a narrative, life has no meaning. Without meaning, learning has no purpose. Without a purpose, schools are houses of detention, not attention.³

The narratives include “The Spaceship Earth,” an ecological narrative, stressing our interdependence and collective responsibility to maintain and sustain our planet. “The Fallen Angel,” a parable of humans’ penchant for fallibility and a cautionary tale of the dangers of hubris and the need for epistemic humility. “The American Experiment,” which portrays our nation’s development as a series of arguments and debates that function dialectically to forge compromise and consensus, to cull unsound ideas and practices, and to build new ideas and practices to address new problems. And my favorite: “*The Word Weavers/The World Makers*.” I have used it for years in my classes. Postman was first and foremost a word man. Our engagement with language has strong social, moral, and epistemological dimensions. Our concepts and metaphors function as organs of perception and as guides to action. To promote a facility with language, Postman recommends that educators in any subject (or grade level) focus on three tools of language: definitions, metaphors, and questions. Postman also exposes and debunks several reigning narratives which he labels as “failed gods,” including Economic Utility, Consumerism, and Technology.

Neil Postman and Technology

For over 40 years, Neil Postman was a professor at New York University. In 1971 he founded its graduate program in Media Ecology. The definition of *media ecology* and its accompanying theory build on the work of Canadian communication theorist Marshall McLuhan, who famously stated, “We shape our tools and thereafter our tools shape us.”⁴ Postman explains, “Technological change is neither additive nor subtractive. It is ecological. I mean ‘ecological’ in the same sense as the word is used by environmental scientists.” “A new technology does not add or subtract something. It changes everything. In the year 1500, fifty years after the printing press was invented, we did not have old Europe plus the printing press. We had a different Europe.”⁵ The same dynamic played out in the U.S. with television, and again with the computer. And, as we can now add, with the internet and social media.

Cusp of the Internet Boom and Online Education

1995 was on the cusp of the internet boom and online education was primarily in the conceptual and speculative stage. For a little context, consider: At the start of 1993 the web had only 130 sites. In 1994, “Jerry’s Guide to the World Wide Web” was founded to keep track of websites and was soon renamed Yahoo. Amazon and eBay were launched in 1995, and in 1996 Jones International University became the first fully accredited, fully web-based university.⁶

Postman has a field day with the claims of early online education enthusiasts, whom he calls “hyperactive fantasies of cheerleaders” predicting the educational wonders that await us with the internet. He notes that these claims do not come from marketers, but from scholars.

Example: *If Little Eva cannot sleep, she can learn algebra instead, at her home learning station.*

Example: *Young John may decide that he wants to learn the history of modern Japan, which he can do by dialing up the greatest experts on the subject.*⁷

Postman skewers these visions of “confident unreality”:

Little Eva can’t sleep, so she decides to learn a little algebra? Where did Little Eva come from, Mars? [He later refers to her as Little Eva, the Martian insomniac.] Young John decides that he wants to learn the history of modern Japan? How did young John come to this point? How is it that he never visited a library up to now?⁸

This is not a new type of education, Postman claims, it is a “new breed of children.” These technophiles seek a technological solution to a psychological problem: “a student who is bored with the real world.”⁹ Postman cites an adage from Lenny Kaye of Apple Computer, “Any problems the schools cannot solve without computers, they cannot solve with them.”¹⁰

Teaching Postman Online

Since 2017, I have taught a master’s-level, accelerated (7-week), online History & Philosophy of Education course using Postman’s *End* as a text, including a class that began in March of 2020, coinciding with the pandemic’s beginning and the national lockdown. In that class I had students in 19 states, and students in the Philippines, China, and Mali. In addition to our weekly virtual meetings, I added an additional half-hour virtual discussion session. Between 15 and 25 students (most of whom were practicing teachers) attended the sessions and shared their work and their hearts, and tales of how they were navigating technology, distance, and the virus.

Most of my students agreed with Postman, that online K–12 schooling is a poor substitute for in-person schooling, and much of the students’ work

demonstrated a recognition of the usefulness of applying Postman's tools and concepts to evaluate the ways they are using instructional technology. Here's one of the short essay questions I use for the final exam:

What would Neil Postman think of this online class? Present your inferences and informed speculations based on specific points on technology and education that Postman makes in *The End*.

I like this question, and there are students who recognize and have some fun with the paradox. And I realize that I have spent a little too much time contemplating Postman's never-to-come approval. I am reminded of Ed Bradley's *60 Minutes II* interview with famed British actor Peter O'Toole. "It seems you don't care if I like you," Bradley commented. O'Toole replied, "You are right. I am much more interested in discovering if I like you."¹¹ In that spirit, all props to Dr. Postman. Thank you for your work. It was timely, applicable, and it worked like a charm in this accelerated online class.

Accelerated Online Classes at Southeastern

I started work at Southeastern (SE) in 1999. I am the only Foundations scholar in their history. I first taught online courses in 2003. To be honest, I was not very good at it, but I have gotten a lot better. In 2016, when we were in a time of financial crisis and enduring years of declining enrollment, SE struck a deal with Academic Partnerships of Dallas, Texas, to market our graduate programs in an accelerated online format. First were the MBA programs, followed by Master of Education (MEd) and School Counseling programs in 2017. At its inception, with fewer than 300 graduate students, SE President Sean Burrage set a goal of 1,000 online graduate students by 2021. By the fall of 2018 we were at 1,287! In the fall of 2019 we had record enrollment of 4,848 students, with over 1,800 online graduate students. I reported on these developments in my 2019 SoPHE presentation on distance and education.¹² At the time Linda Morice noted my presentation was the only instance where she had heard of increases in Foundations classes. Indeed. Graduate enrollment continued to increase and is now approaching 50% of our students.

Our nautical metaphors moved from *shuffling the deck chairs*, to *let's row together*, to *we're going to need a bigger boat*. Our major challenge became how to handle the numbers. It raises some important questions and some vexing problems for the quality of instruction and the wellbeing of faculty. I recognize that the myth of the Faustian bargain pervades this entire project. At the same time, with a nod to Charlie Daniels, I was playing with the intent of maintaining my academic integrity and preserving my pedagogical soul. Fortunately, I was able to do so, by teleworking these last two years.

For your consideration: In AY 2015–2016 Southeastern had an enrollment of 3,500 with 130 full time faculty. In 2021–2022 we had an enrollment of 5,400 with 120 full time faculty, and for good measure, a drop of 50 part-time faculty over that time period.¹³

Henry Perkinson, *The Imperfect Panacea*

Anyone who can read—or anyone who watches television—knows that public schools have become battlegrounds for serious social conflict in matters like sex education, multicultural education, affirmative action, Afrocentrism, tracking, and creationism. These conflicts are politically undecidable, because they stem from strongly held values that many are unwilling to compromise. So any solution proposed to satisfy one group inevitably harms, or threatens, the values of some other politically conscious group.¹⁴

This list of irresolvable, incommensurate, and interminable conflicts comes from the final chapter of *The Imperfect Panacea*. Perkinson concludes the chapter by saying: “[I]n the twenty-first century, perhaps the only way Americans can shore up their lagging faith in education is to move beyond the public schools.”¹⁵

Comparing Perkinson and Postman on Television and Narratives

I chose to compare Postman with Perkinson for several reasons: both books were published in 1995, both deal with questions of the end/termination of schooling vs. the end/purpose of schooling, and they were contemporary colleagues at New York University who occasionally cited each other’s work.¹⁶ An additional point of comparison is their focus on the effects of television on social consciousness and schooling. Postman’s best-known work, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (1985) is a powerful critique of the societal and educational effects of television and, in Postman’s view, the effects are not good. He compares the classic dystopian novels *1984* and *Brave New World* and concludes that our television culture more resembles *Brave New World*, wherein people are controlled by inflicting pleasure.¹⁷

Perkinson, on the other hand, argues against what he calls the “technological determinism” of television because it removes human agency and reduces humans to passive receptors of messages that shape and mold them. Rather, Perkinson claims, the focus or bias of television is on interpersonal relationships. Television in the ’60s and ’70s brought to light “the traditional American way of dealing with social problems—through education, that is, by changing people so that they would fit into the existing arrangements—was the heart of the problem itself. Through television, many people became critical of the existing social, political, and economic arrangements. They now perceived them as unfair and unjust.”¹⁸ And this raising of consciousness led to the quest for more equal treatment of Black people, women, non-English speakers, and the disabled. This rise of egalitarianism, according to Perkinson, also debilitated the quality of education in public schools and created more social conflict.

Here is Perkinson’s thesis: from pre-Colonial times, Americans have held a great deal of faith in the power of schools to address and potentially solve a wide range of social, political, economic, and environmental

problems through the process of what Perkinson calls “socialization,” i.e., molding people to fit existing social arrangements. Schools have never been able to solve these problems and are therefore an *imperfect panacea*. While Postman believes that meaningful narratives could rescue schools, Perkinson believes public schools are beyond saving. In fact, Perkinson holds that competing administrative interests, bureaucracy, and political constraints preclude the possibility of a guiding narrative for schools. “In this situation, no local school administrator can impose a single-minded, agreed-upon purpose. Local schools can have no direction or goal. The only task is to stay afloat.”¹⁹ The time has come for public schools to close up shop, and Perkinson seems to delight in the prospect. In place of public schools, Perkinson proposes something he claims **will** solve most of the problems of schooling, a real panacea if you will: drumroll please—the market.²⁰

Narrative of Horace Mann and the Common School

As the beneficiary of a public-school education, a first-generation college graduate from a public state university, and a professor of teacher education at a regional state university, I am a supporter and beneficiary of public schooling. Undergraduate students in my Foundations of Education classes deserve a narrative about how public schooling came to be. And for that, I turn to a narrative about Horace Mann, the Father of the Common School.²¹ According to Mann’s model, schools would be publicly funded and publicly accountable through popularly elected school boards. Normatively, the schools would be non-partisan, non-sectarian, and socially integrative, with no privilege or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, or on account of family income. To *sell* his idea of the common school, Mann crafted a messaging campaign that resembles what we would today call *niche marketing*. With a keen rhetorical understanding of audience and purpose, Mann appealed to the business community (common schooling will lead to more informed, reliable, and productive workers), to the churches and clergy (schooling will foster values and literacy to make better Christians), and to the masses (schooling is the great *equalizer* and *democratizer* providing your children a ticket to a prosperous future). You don’t need money. You don’t need fame. Don’t need a credit card to ride this train. It’s the power of public schooling. Get on board!

As we know, in almost every regard public schooling fell short of these normative ideals. For example, the claim of non-sectarianism is belied by the largely unspoken, yet pervasive, Protestant bias that infuses public schooling. In my course I take this as an opportunity to point students to a larger historical understanding by asking the basic question, “what is a Protestant?” This leads to a discussion of Martin Luther and John Calvin’s theological and philosophical insights that fueled a drive for mass literacy. Fast forward to Massachusetts’ Bay Colony and the *Old Deluder Satan Law* (they just don’t name laws like that anymore). On occasion, this can be

augmented with an introduction to the Marxian concept of superstructure and an explanation of how schooling functions to transmit and shape culture. The story of the common school provides a model, a template, a normative foundation, if you will, for understanding, for exploring, and for critiquing schooling. Mann's work in standardizing teacher education provides a similar historical template. Typically, Normal Schools became Teachers Colleges, which then became Schools of Education in universities. This is the exact evolutionary—sorry, scratch that—developmental course taken by SE.²² Introducing students to this historical account of their field/profession can serve to foster a sense of being a part of history and hopefully spur active and informed participation in the work of molding and improving schooling. It lays a foundation, and the work continues.

To close this section of the address, I borrow the late Christopher Hitchens' *party* metaphor to describe death—and I apply it to retirement.²³ The party is not over. The party continues, but I will no longer be in attendance. I have shown myself to the door!

The Existential Grand Canyon

Questions of identity, meaning, and purpose: What do I want to do? What do I want to be? What do I want? Thoreau was of the opinion that few people took these questions or their pursuit very seriously and that most lived lives of quiet desperation. In his poem *The Voiceless*, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. laments:

A few can pluck the magic string,
And Noisy Fame is proud to win them,
Alas for those who never sing,
But die with their music in them.²⁴

Consider one of the saddest lines in American literature, found in the last paragraph of Sinclair Lewis' novel *Babbitt*. Set in the early 1920s in the fictive town of Zenith, Ohio, George Babbitt is the prototypical conformist: a well-respected civic paragon and model of conventional propriety. He is vice president of the First National Bank, a deacon in the Presbyterian Church, a member of the Booster Club, has a dutiful wife and two-and-a-half children (not two and a half men—it's a statistical thing), and lives in a beautiful two-story house with a white picket fence. One night, while having drinks and conversation with one of his buddies, Babbitt confesses: "I've never done a single thing I've wanted to in my whole life! I don't know's I've accomplished anything except just get along."²⁵

Compare this with a story Bruce Springsteen would often enact in his 1970s concerts. Seeking career guidance, Bruce and bandmate Clarence Clemons travelled to the darkness on the edge of town to obtain counsel from God. "I need some direction, God, on what to do with my life. My mom wants me to be an author and write the great American novel. And my old man wants me to be a lawyer, to represent people." God: "And what

do you want, Bruce?” “I want to rock and roll!”²⁶ I’ve always admired (and envied) those who knew early on what they wanted to do with their lives and pursued their career path with enthusiasm and focused purpose. Most of us are not so blessed (I raise my hand in solidarity with those to whom vocational direction comes late—if at all).

Doctoral Work at Ohio State and No Clear Path

“Congratulations, Dr. Fridley.” When E. Gordon Gee, president of The Ohio State University (I genuflect at the first mention of my alma mater as required by the alumni agreement) handed me my diploma, it was one of the saddest days of my life, because I had no immediate academic career prospects. I had ticked off some people, burned a bridge or two, and, frankly, I had not given the vocational dimensions of the doctoral program the attention they deserved. That is not to say that I was not working.

Doctoral candidates in The Ohio State’s Foundations programs could serve as T.A.s (teaching associates) and would teach two undergraduate sections of Foundations courses each quarter for a tuition waiver and a monthly stipend. It was a great setup. I taught Philosophy of Education and had complete control of the classes I taught. I soon found that I could teach a third section at any of the remote sites, which included Marion, Mansfield, Newark, and Lima, where instructors were flown out weekly in a twelve-seat jet! Teaching these classes was a remarkable experience. Seventeen straight quarters of teaching, however, were all the university would support. I was faced with the prospect of finishing my dissertation and, as one of my advisors encouraged me, *getting out of here and getting a job*.

For the next six months, while finishing my dissertation and in the year following graduation, I did get a job—sometimes two or three at a time. I unloaded trucks for Roadway Package Services (RPS), and I loaded trucks for United Parcel Services (UPS). I was a Ph.D. GSR (guest service representative) at Fuddruckers. Technically, I was not a waiter because diners served themselves. Rather, the GSR’s job was to greet diners, refill drinks, thank diners, and leave complimentary mints on the table. I was doing flips for dollar tips. For several months I manned a phone in the bowels of the historic Ohio Theater, fundraising and selling tickets for the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. I also did phone sales for the fabled publication *Highlights for Children*, with its classic Hidden Pictures feature and its winning slogan: “Fun with a Purpose.” For a year I served as a “super sub” for Columbus Public Schools (CPS). My assignments included every subject and grade level. As an alum of CPS I met several former teachers, some of whom were administrators, and discovered many students who were children of my old classmates. A perk of being a *super sub* was the \$100 a day pay. A downside was the requirement to take the given teaching assignment, sometimes with only an hour’s notice. For the last month of the school year I received a long-term assignment to teach a kindergarten class. It was an unexpectedly delightful experience. We joined the school’s

other kindergarten class to make masks and costumes, and stage a small production of Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*.

The Trip, the Interpretation, and the Myth

About a year after my doctoral graduation, I received a tip from a fellow OSU doctoral student that there was a Foundations instructor position open at Ball State University. I applied and was hired for the one-year position of Adjunct Assistant Professor. My foot was in the academic door. One person I wanted to share my good fortune with was my Grandma Shriner who lived in Grand Island, Nebraska. Before I was able to call her—in fact, the day after taking the job offer—I received news that Grandma Shriner had died at 86 years old. I drove, alone in my dark green Ford Escort, for the funeral.

I had visited my mother's home of Grand Island three times over the years, and that was the farthest west I had ever been. With a job awaiting me in the fall, I decided this was the time to venture west finally to see the Rocky Mountains and the Grand Canyon. I proceeded west on I-70. The vast expanses reminded me of the line from Clint Eastwood's classic western, *Unforgiven*, "I even thought I was dead, 'til I found out we was just in Nebraska."²⁷ Westward I drove, through the Eisenhower Tunnel, around Denver, and over the Rocky Mountains. As the sun set, I got a room in Grand Junction, Colorado and had a couple drinks at the hotel bar called The Pour House.

Early the next morning I crossed into Utah which, in my uninformed and unexperienced imagination, I anticipated would resemble a giant salt flat. *Au contraire*. The landscape was exotic, surreal, otherworldly. I arrived at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon in late afternoon, at a jutting portion called Angel's Point. As much as I tried, I could not get too close to the edge. Hugging a nearby sapling, then grasping a picnic table, and other attempts to summon resolve were to no avail. I was afraid to get too close. On to Ball State.

With a full-time job came health insurance, and the ability to afford therapy. My first therapist had the coolest name: Dr. Wayne Miracle. *Right on*. As a new hire, I also took up writing some op-ed pieces that were published in the *Ball State Daily News* and in the *Muncie Star Press*. Topics included street preachers on campus and multicultural education, lamenting the moralistic conservative commentaries on the death of Princess Diana, the Ken Starr investigation of Bill Clinton through the lenses of *The Merchant of Venice* and Jesus and the woman taken in adultery (John 8), and a travelogue of sorts on my trip to the Grand Canyon.

It was only after writing the piece that I noticed a pattern; a thread, if you will, of *Grands*: Grandmother, Grand Island, Grand Junction, and the Grand Canyon. I tend to think in mythic terms, and I was determined to make sense of this. Following the clues and tools from Hebrew scripture,

American Indian folklore, and Joseph Campbell, I began my interpretive quest. Grandmother was easy—the source of all life. Grand Island represents the familial and familiar enclave/island that we must leave to make our mark in the world. With a bit of thought, I came to a psychologically satisfying identification of Grand Junction as representing marriage. I was single at the time, and I imagined marriage as being a metaphorical barren salt flat, much like I had mis-imagined the terrain of Utah. As I would find out, some marriages do resemble this section of Utah: strange, surreal, and otherworldly. I was flummoxed at the prospect of identifying the symbolic import of the Grand Canyon and was without explanation for why I was afraid to get too close. This was a job for Dr. Miracle.

At my next therapy session I took a copy of the article and explained my interpretation. Wayne was a student of myth and psychotherapy and he had reignited my interest in Joseph Campbell and validated the therapeutic value of myth. He concurred with my interpretation, and welcomed my question: what does the Grand Canyon represent? “That’s easy,” he said. Do tell, Dr. Miracle. “The Grand Canyon represents the question, *who am I?*”

My lip trembled and I was filled with a feeling of a clear, distinct, and undoubtable confirmation that this was the case. Yes. That is it. As has been said of the Grand Canyon, so it is with the question of “who am I?”: It is deep. It is scary. It is beautiful. And it is one of the few things in life that doesn’t disappoint. Who am I? I am a retired professor, and a grateful soul.

Endnotes

- ¹ Neil Postman, *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).
- ² Henry J. Perkinson, *The Imperfect Panacea: American Faith in Education*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995).
- ³ Postman, *End*, 7.
- ⁴ For an overview of Postman’s work in the field of media ecology and an appraisal of the respective contributions of Postman and McLuhan to the field, see Lance Strate, *Amazing Ourselves to Death: Neil Postman’s Brave New World Revisited (A Critical Introduction to Media and Communication Theory)* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014).
- ⁵ Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 18.
- ⁶ Corbin Ball, “1962–2022: A 60-Year Timeline of Events Technology Innovation,” *Corbin Ball & Co.: The Meetings Technology Professionals* (2019), <https://www.corbinball.com/article/29-futurism/263-60yeareventtechtimeline>

- ⁷ Postman, *End*, 39. The Eva and Johnny examples come from Diane Ravitch.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid., 41.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ *60 Minutes II*, “A Lion in Winter,” December 19, 2000, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/archives-2000/>
- ¹² William Lloyd Fridley, “Close to You?: Distance and Education,” presented at the 2018 Society of Philosophy and History of Education Annual Meeting in St. Louis, MO.
- ¹³ Enrollment numbers are drawn from the Common Data Set files on the Southeastern (SE) website, <https://www.se.edu/academic-affairs/common-data-set/>. For a discussion about the effects of SE’s accelerated online programs on faculty, see the Faculty Senate Archives of a Shared Governance Forum, “Growing Pains: Stories from the Trenches,” presented by the Faculty Senate on November 16, 2021 (Presentation slideshow, <https://www.se.edu/faculty-senate/wp-content/uploads/sites/65/2021/11/FS-SGF-Presentation-11-16-2021.pdf>). Also see the Faculty Senate Minutes of November 17, 2021, 3–4, <https://www.se.edu/faculty-senate/wp-content/uploads/sites/65/2022/01/FS-Minutes-11-17-2021-approved.pdf>
- ¹⁴ Perkinson, *Panacea*, 195.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 198.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., “About the Author,” v. Henry J. Perkinson was Professor of Educational History at New York University and author of 16 books including *Teachers without Goals/Students without Purposes*; *Learning from Our Mistakes: A Reinterpretation of 20th Century Educational Theories*; and *Getting Better: Television and Moral Progress*.
- ¹⁷ Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985).
- ¹⁸ Perkinson, *Panacea*, 155.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 194.
- ²⁰ Perkinson’s claims for the curative powers of the market include listing eight examples (ripped from the headlines) of problems plaguing public schools “that would be readily resolved or disappear in a market system of education” (196): “in an open market, new schools would appear to supply the kinds of education consumers demand” (197); grievances about standardized testing could be quelled because “In a market system of education, there would be no statewide examinations” (197); and debates and complaints about students’ assessment would be resolved because “In a market system

of education, where parents pay the school tuition, they would be likely to demand an honest and objective assessment of their children's academic progress" (198).

- 21 The sketch of Mann and common schooling draws primarily (and heavily!) from Gerald L. Gutek, *Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education: A Biographical Introduction*, 3rd ed. (New York: Pearson, 2000).
- 22 *Wikipedia*, "Southeastern Oklahoma State University," last modified December 12, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southeastern_Oklahoma_State_University
- 23 *Christopher Hitchens—The Never-Ending Party*, directed and animated by Frasier Davidson (Brighton, UK; Cub Studio, 2013), <https://youtu.be/rREjrG6L5o>
- 24 Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., "The Voiceless," *Songs in Many Keys*, 5th ed. (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1862), 248–249, [originally published 1858], <https://www.bartleby.com/library/poem/2638.html>
- 25 Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922), 401; The Project Gutenberg eBook of *Babbitt*, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1156/1156-h/1156-h.htm>
- 26 It appears that the "bootleg" videos of various versions of this concert story have been purged from YouTube.
- 27 *Unforgiven*, directed by Clint Eastwood (Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers, 1992).