

Whose schools are these anyway?
Dismantling the 'Commons'=Growing Inequality
-- a Result of Hegemony & Neoliberalism

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Humanist Society of Silicon Valley, September 21, 2014

What are the 'Commons'?

Who is stealing from the 'commons'?

- *The law locks up the man or woman who steals the goose from the common, but leaves the greater villain loose who steals the common from the goose.*
- *The law demands that we atone when we take things we do not own but leaves the lords and ladies fine who take things that are yours and mine.*
- *The law locks up the man or woman who steals the goose from off the common and geese will still a common lack 'til they go and steal it back.*

---Anon. 17th Century England

A brief history-U.S. education

- Horace Mann—advocate of public schools for all
- Public schools for all, not white males, whites,
- Milton Freidman, ‘the Chicago boys’ 1970’s-vouchers, privatizing schools in Chile and repercussions
- Charter schools as a way to undermine public schooling- charters isolate, segregate, stratify, sort and undermine the public school system

Hegemony & the 'Commons'

- Hegemony is the process whereby people in power have persuaded a large % of the population that certain ways of thinking, feeling, believing and acting that support the inequitable and unequal status quo are normal, natural and common sense. Hegemony is therefore a powerful process/a hidden curriculum that 'normalizes' barriers to social equity.
- Hegemony draws on the dominant worldview, including individualism, competition, universalism/standardization, part to whole thinking, bi-polar categorization (good vs. evil; black vs white—what is not presented as 'normal', natural, and common sense is seen as the opposite and 'less than')!
- What are the 'Commons,' one might ask. The 'Commons' are the cultural and natural public resources and spaces accessible for free for all people in a society. The Commons include everything not made by humans. The Commons are not privately owned, but accessible public spaces including public schooling, public parks, social service programs, fire and police protection, the public post office, natural resources such as water, air and a habitable environment, our parks, prisons, public healthcare. These resources should be available and enjoyed by and for all, but now they are being taken away and privatized. They are being stolen from future generations and shifted from public to private property.

Defining Hegemony: The Hegemonic Mainstream



Neoliberalism- Profit before People

- **The rule of the market: international trade and investment unfettered from any regulations,**
- **Government deregulation: thus no health, safety, or environmental protections that would diminish profit,**
- **Privatization: state-owned companies and services such as police, fire protection, schools, hospitals, utilities, and water and garbage collection are sold to private sector investors,**
- **Elimination of the idea of ‘the public good’ and ‘community,’ replaced with the concept of ‘individual responsibility.’ This last tenet is an aspect of deficit ideology called ‘blaming the victim.’**
- **Cutting public expenditures for social services and reducing the social service safety net for poor people, another example of deficit ideology or ‘just pull yourself up by your bootstraps’ mentality (Harvey, 2005; National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, 2008).**

Dismantling the 'Commons'

Who Steals the Common from the Goose?

*The law locks up the man or woman
Who steals the goose from off the common
But leaves the greater villain loose
And geese will still a common lack
Till they go and steal it back.*

—17th century protest against English enclosure

Clark Kerr stated that the goal of the Master Plan was to balance the "competing demands of fostering excellence and guaranteeing educational access for all."

Unraveling the 1960's Master Plan: PRIVATE vs PUBLIC

We Become More Unequal As We Privatize & Corporatize the 'Public Good'

In the 1950s, the state's legislators and academic administrators foresaw an approaching surge in University enrollment, due to the baby boom children coming of age. They needed a plan to maintain educational quality in the face of growing demand.[4]

The underlying principles that they sought were:

- some form of higher education ought to be available to all regardless of their economic means, and that academic progress should be limited only by individual proficiency; and differentiation of function so that each of the three systems would strive for excellence in different areas, so as to not waste public resources on duplicate efforts.[5] Clark Kerr stated that the goal of the Master Plan for higher education was to balance the "competing demands of fostering excellence and guaranteeing educational access for all.
- Assess the importance of the concept, hegemony, to an understanding of why the educational system does not work well for all students and how we can make it more equal; Recognize and begin to re-cognize how and why race and social class inequities are maintained and exacerbated because of neoliberal hegemonic policies; who benefits from dominant narratives about race and social class, and at what cost to those on the downside of power. Develop counter-narratives to seek more equality & social justice.

Here's what was promised in the Master Plan of 1960

According to the Plan, the top one-eighth (12.5%) of graduating high school seniors would be guaranteed a place at a campus of the University of California (Berkeley, Los Angeles, etc.) tuition-free. The top one-third, 33.3%, would be able to enter the Ca State University system (SF State,)

Cal State, Community colleges (Bakersfield College, College of the Canyons, Citrus College, etc.) would accept any students "capable of benefiting from instruction." [5] These percentages are now enforced by sliding scales equating grade point average and scores on the SAT or ACT, which are recalculated every year. No actual rank of the students in high school is used as many schools do not rank students. Graduates of the community colleges would then be guaranteed transfer to the Cal State or UC systems in order to complete Bachelor's degrees. This practice was carried over from previous years before the Plan was enacted, with graduates from the CCC being accepted as third-year students at the Universities by virtue of their prior coursework. Finally, the Plan established that the University of California would be the sole portion of the system charged with performing academic research, and would award master's and doctoral degrees in support of that mission. The Cal State system, in addition to awarding master's degrees, would be able to award joint doctorates with the UC. [5]

What is happening to public schooling in the U.S. & abroad, at all levels:

- The corporatization, standardization, and privatization of the public, including public schools, texts, public universities, is occurring now as a result of neoliberalism. Private testing and educational companies abound.
- The U.S. is the most unequal developed country in the world. The 1% own 38% of all wealth
- We have more people incarcerated than any other country in the world, mostly men of color. It is called the 'school to prison pipeline'. (Alexander, 2010)

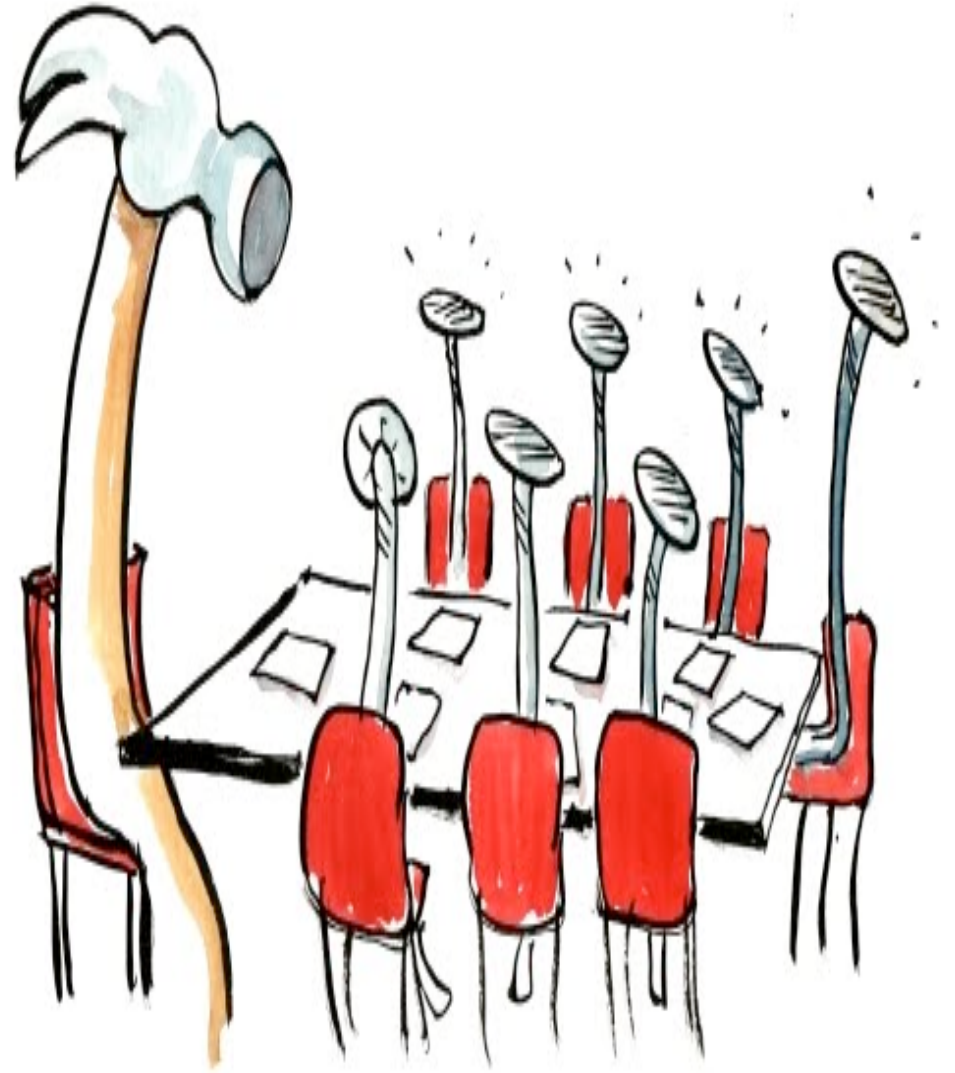
Let's keep the 'public' in public schooling!

Who are the major 'players'?

- In educational reform this is a top-down movement, not by teachers or parents or students, but by business/politicians:
- Venture Philanthropists & Think Tanks: Bill & Melinda Gates, Eli Broad Foundation, Pearson Foundation (testing) Fordham, ALEC-the Koch brothers, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, National Council on Teacher Quality, Studentsfirst (Michelle Rhee), Teach for America, the Business Roundtable, +
- For-profit companies: Education Industry Association, Amplify News Corp, Murdoch and Joel Klein, etc+ Investment Bankers and many more.

Source: Joel Spring, Political Agendas, 5th Edition, Routledge, 2014

Hegemony & Assessment: Standardization



Neoliberalism is related to hegemony

- Powerful forces are dismantling public schooling and replacing it with charters, privatized schools- which isolate students on racial and class lines
- High stakes standardized tests are taking time away from critical thinking, the arts, music, P.E. creativity, imagination.

The Hegemonic “Playing Field”

- In the U.S. today the inequality gap widens: the top 1% owns 38% of our country's financial wealth.
- The bottom 60% owns all of 2.3%.
- In the last several years, 95% of all new income has gone to the top 1%.
- In 2012, the top 40 hedge fund managers in the country earned \$16.7 billion dollars, as much as 300,000 public school teachers combined -- almost a third of all high school teachers in the U.S.

The Educational “Playing Field”

Today many Americans are still struggling to find a way out of poverty, find employment, and gain both health care and education not only for themselves but for their families. Outsourcing of work, union busting, erosion of tenure, more temporary hires, are outcomes.

The number of people in poverty reached its highest level in 51 years in 2014. Four out of five people are living near poverty levels, in California: 1 out of 3 children live in poverty.

- 46.2 million Americans lived in poverty;**
- 76.7 million people lived in families that earned below \$44,000 for a family of four (2 times the federal poverty line);**
- 27.4% of African Americans lived in poverty;**
- 26.6% of Hispanics/Latinos lived in poverty;**
- 9.9% of non-Hispanic whites lived in poverty. (2010 Census)**

Many of these same people also struggle to gain a college degree and move up the economic ladder

In March 2010, roughly

- 14% of Hispanics had at least a bachelors degree;**
- 20.6% of African Americans;**
- 31.9% of whites;**

African Americans with bachelors degrees earned 20% less than whites for the same amount of education;

- 13% of African Americans are getting a higher education;**
- 63% of all jobs that pay a living wage will require at least some postsecondary education.**

Dominant, mainstream, white culture & privilege excludes some = Unequal power relations

23% of Oakland schools are charter schools

How many in San Jose, MV, Palo Alto?

- Recognize and begin to re-cognize how and why race, ethnic, gender, and social class inequities are maintained and exacerbated

In Finland, where student test scores are among the highest in the world, the bottom line is **EQUITY**. They are doing the opposite of what the U.S. reform agenda is doing.

Who has the power? Who benefits?

Unequal Power relations

Who are your founding fathers?

Counter- hegemonic voices!



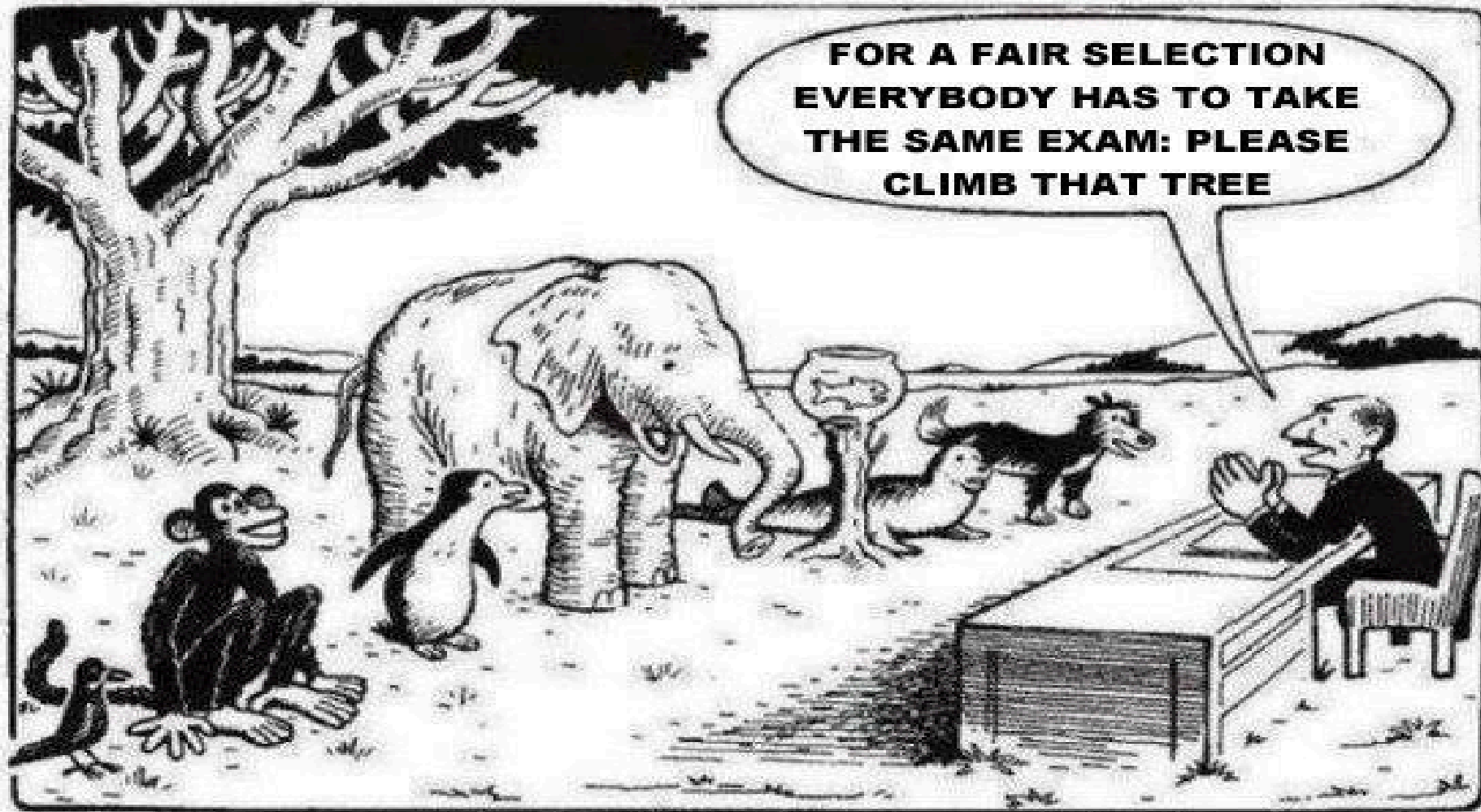
Whiteness as Hegemony

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6NjHOSoh1s

PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS?

Evaluate who benefits from dominant narratives about race, ethnic, gender and social class- Does one size fit all?

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9-96xMLvkc&feature=related



OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM

See *Inequality for All* – film by Robert Reich & *The Finland Phenomenon*, you tube

- We need to support public schools at all levels
- Keep the ‘public’ in public schooling—In California we have a strong public university system which is 10x less expensive than many private universities.
- <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/news/2012/01/13/10961/inequality-in-2012-by-the-numbers/>



I am a Danish schoolteacher, making about \$61,000 a year. We get free education, you don't have to pay for going to the doctor, the hospital, and also keep paying our students for getting the education they want.

We can afford to have our own house, a car, we all get 6 weeks' vacation a year, and women get 1-year maternity leave when she has a baby,

every time... fathers get maternity leave too, just not that long. everybody gets a pension from the age of 65.

I have lived in the USA, but I prefer the Danish way of taking care of everyone. Some may say we pay high taxes, maybe, but we get so much more than you get in the USA.

You pay an average of \$8,500 per year in deductibles and many fees for healthcare. Your high education is over \$21,000 a year. We pay our students to learn. You have no job security, vacations, or any other benefits that we do.

Everyone in the world wants the American dream. Every Dane has that opportunity!

Storm is Coming

What can we do to save the 'Commons'?

Questions and Ideas from the audience:

Research on Inequality and Hegemony

- See Tim Wise, *Ideology of Privilege*, you tube
- *Inequality for All*, Robert Reich
- Literature on racism and whiteness. Henry Louis Gates on 12 years a slave: dual consciousness
- See *The Finland Phenomenon*- you tube- Finland is doing the opposite of what the U.S. is doing re. public schooling, high stakes testing, etc. The bottom line For Finland schools is EQUITY
- *Assault on Kids: Hyper-accountability, corporatization, deficit ideologies and R Payne are destroying our schools.* (2011) Ahlquist, R, Gorski, P. and Montano, T. (Eds). New York: Peter Lang.
- One counter-hegemonic program to look at: <http://rosesinconcrete.org/>

Assault on Kids: Hyper-accountability, privatization, deficit ideologies & R. Payne are Destroying our Schools

R. Ahlquist, R. Gorski, P. & Montano, T. (Eds) 2011

"Finally a book that eschews the timid talk and middle class politeness that typically characterizes academic education analyses. If the other side can be 'mad as hell and not want to take it anymore,' imagine how mad the people who are demonized and victimized by draconian and regressive policies are. Bravo to the editors for assembling such a courageous collection." -Gloria Ladson-Billings, Professor & Chair, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Madison "So-called 'solutions' for improving public education interconnect in troubling ways-as is revealed insightfully and compellingly in this new and timely book. Ahlquist, Gorski, & Montaña have assembled an impressive collection of analyses that help us to unmask what are mere symptoms of broader movements to widen educational disparities, and to imagine alternatives and interventions with insight and conviction. Assault on Kids should cause us to pause, and re-imagine, and should be read immediately." *Peter Lang Publisher*