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In 1888, newly elected president of Princeton Francis L. Patton declared in his inaugural address that "college administration is a business in which trustees are partners, professors the salesmen and students the customers" (quoted in Rudolph, 1962, p. 160-61). Patton's statement directly identifies what was at that point in the development of American higher education an already well-established notion; namely, that the university should be structured and managed according to the corporate business model that was emerging along with industrialization and urbanization.

Today, well over a century after the corporatization of higher education had begun, a large body of scholarship attests to the many ways that corporate business ideals have continued to shape the academy and have permeated virtually all aspects of its operation (Aronowitz, 2001; Blackmore, 2001; Donoghue, 2008; Giroux, 2014; Readings, 1996). Indeed, it is argued that corporate, capitalist values have been embraced by political and business elites to such an extent that today is an age of neoliberalism, a political economic theory "that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey, 2005, p. 2).

In such a milieu, higher "education" has been effectively reduced to a corporatized institution of commodified knowledge exchange wherein students purchase credentials and faculty sell their expertise in an economic transaction that undergirds the local, national, and/or global economy. While some faculty and students have embraced these developments as positive or inevitable, scholars and students with a critical perspective have noted the dangerous effects of neoliberal doctrine on the operation of higher education. As Daniels and Porfilio (2013) note, the neoliberal infiltration into the academy "has sapped the critical lifeblood from higher education" (p. vii). Elaborating, they explain that the corporate-driven culture has also been hostile to any scholar who seeks to expose and disrupt the social, economic, and political forces responsible for breeding social inequalities in schools and in the wider society. Transformative academics are often treated as undesirable employees who face the imminent threat of termination... [Further,] the tenure system and collective bargaining rights are under attack, which persistently reminds academics of the tenuous nature of our positions (viii).

Facing these and other dehumanizing and stifling effects on critical scholarship, many students and scholars have wondered what they can do to respond, and how they can persist in the effort to resist the neoliberal takeover of higher education. For those with such an inquiry, Emily Daniels and Brad Porfilio (2013) have provided an
Invaluable resource. In *Dangerous Counterstories in the Corporate Academy: Narrating for Understanding, Solidarity, Resistance, and Community in the Age of Neoliberalism*, Daniels and Porfilio have collected thirteen critical narratives that offer a wide range of experiences, analyses, and ideas for how to work within and resist the corporate academy. The edited volume contains the insightful voices of students, scholars, and activists from multiple disciplines, organizations, and institutions across North America. Explaining the purpose of the volume, Daniels and Porfilio explain that "some scholars have found fissures amid the alienating, often hostile academic world to learn, grow, cope, and create socially generative and transformative communities. Until recently, however, their stories have not been captured" (viii). Thus, by collecting and sharing these narratives, the book acts as a resource for knowledge, encouragement, and hope for other students and scholars who are resisting the anti-critical forces that encroach on their work toward social justice.

*Dangerous Counterstories* is organized into three sections. The first focuses on the experiences of students as they struggle to find a place in the corporate academy, the second addresses classrooms as sites of resistance, and the third explores the varied efforts of radical scholars as they confront the tensions of an academic system that at times only nominally offers faculty academic freedom. For organizational clarity as well as a concern for allowing each narrative's unique voice to be heard, this review will henceforth briefly survey each chapter in succession; following the chapter synopses, a discussion of the book as a whole will conclude the review.

**Part I - Students and the Neoliberal Institution**

Carrie Freie headlines the volume with her essay "Breaking the Bank: Stories of Financial, Cultural, and Academic Struggle from First-Generation College Students." Her chapter is drawn from a larger qualitative study in which interviews were conducted with first-generation college students from working class backgrounds. The interviews, some of which she quotes at length in order to emphasize student voice, reveal that many students' experiences differ significantly from the
dominant "college experience" narrative that coincides with middle- and upper-class students' experiences. Rather than enjoying college as a fun, engaging, exploratory, social, and largely care-free passage into adulthood, students from working-class backgrounds struggle to pay for expenses, lack time and energy to focus on schoolwork, find it difficult to connect with other students, do not have the social and academic support they need, and scramble to navigate the environment pervaded by middle-class cultural capital.

The unfortunate result of these factors is that such students experienced college in a reductionist manner wherein "the focus was on completing the necessary coursework to earn the diploma and the potential for economic gain that the diploma represented" (Freie, p. 13). In effect, college for these students was merely a credentialing institution where they exchanged substantial sums of money and prescribed modes of intellectual work for a degree that was to then be used to (potentially) increase their employment prospects in the larger economy. For them there was little in the way of personal growth, intellectual/academic exploration and discovery, or social and extracurricular involvement. Freie concludes that class-based social stratification and marginalization "needs to be addressed on multiple levels in order to make higher education a more equitable place for students from first-generation and working-class backgrounds" (p. 21).

In chapter two, Tina Wagle presents a series of stories of "Fear in the Academy." She details how corporatization and other systems of oppression generate fear through issues related to gender, sexuality, scholarship, and safety (p. 23). For instance, the insecurity of economic flux and university budgeting issues often drives faculty to work longer before retiring, which limits opportunities for new hires. It also sows seeds of doubt in the minds of newer faculty who are working toward tenure. In short, many professors experience constant fears related to job opportunities and security.

Wagle also talks about the fears that come with being a professor who teaches for social justice and social change. As an example, she describes the experience of a class discussion in which two students were adamantly opposed to the position she was advocating. In a heated exchange
with one of the male students, she feared for her safety and the possibility of physical violence. Related to this, she also feared if her academic position and curriculum were appropriate and right. Further, Wagle was seriously concerned that these students (who strongly opposed what she believed to be a necessary element of social justice) would be going to teach in middle and high school classrooms. Here, the fear was for their potential students and whether she "could ethically support the advancement of these students in a teacher education program" (p. 25).

Throughout her essay, Wagle also discusses fears related to gender-based sexual harassment, hierarchical ranking and power inequalities among staff, faculty, and administrators, and the uncertainty that comes with higher education being in a state of dramatic change. However, she is careful to include reasons to be encouraged and not to succumb to one's fears. For instance, the ethical dilemma mentioned above led to the development and adoption of "a dispositions policy that would enable us to counsel out students who exhibited behaviors not aligned with the ethics of teaching" (p. 26). And by offering her own stories of facing and resisting the sources of fear in her own experiences, Wagle hopes to encourage others who may feel that they are fighting similar forces alone. She urges justice-oriented scholars to maintain their oppositional stance in such situations and to support one another in that endeavor.

In chapter three, "Dangerous White Lady," Shelley Jensen "explores the political, economic, and social factors that have shaped [her] struggle to control the focus" of her PhD research in an educational leadership program (p. 35). Jensen's goal was to conduct qualitative research that aimed at giving voice to teachers who otherwise have been silenced and blamed for schools' issues under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB), standards-based assessment paradigm. The many challenges she faced in proceeding with this plan were rooted in the fact that her department overwhelmingly prized quantitative research and supported student assessment testing.

Jensen's essay traces the various forms of oppression and the politics of knowledge that come with going against the grain of corporate-based education reform and scientistic research. Including extensive excerpts from emails she
exchanged with advisors and members of her dissertation committee, she elucidates how she was oppressed through framing, isolation, funding, guidance, and marginalization. Managing to persist through this harrowing process in which she was routinely ignored, maligned, or otherwise challenged, Jensen concludes that establishing an academic community of like-minded critical and radical scholars (in her case, it was found outside her department) was "the most significant element of any success I have as a resistance scholar" (p. 56). She asserts that the support gained through those connections was crucial and that "friends and allies...can powerfully influence perseverance" (p. 57).

Part II - Surviving the Institution: Classroom Resistance(s)

Richard Mora, Mary Christianakis, and Salvador Fernández launch the second part of the book in chapter four, "College Curriculum as Counter Discourse: The California Immigration Semester at Occidental College." Their story describes an innovative, poly-disciplinary curriculum program for first-year students, what they called the California Immigration Semester (CIS). The curriculum and pedagogy in the program is based on a dialogic and interdisciplinary model where students were challenged to critically engage with dominant discourses around issues of immigration, labor, citizenship, family, and politics in order to create their own narratives, knowledge, and counterstories in response.

One of the primary issues of the corporate academy that Mora, et al address with their program and in their chapter is the rigidity of disciplinary thinking and research. Essentially, they argue, hyperspecialization and disciplinary specificity/narrowness work to reify boundaries and divisions among fields and disciplines, which preempts "the opening of scholarly parameters" (p. 61). Instead, they employ their program "to open 'new, hybrid spaces' in order to critically question the dominant story of American immigration being influenced by the political discourses that have converged around the topic of (im)migration-as-problem" (p. 62).
Chapter five directly addresses the potential of utilizing narrative as a transformative pedagogical device. "A Tale of the Teacher Educator and the Storyteller: Returning Stories to the Social Studies Classroom," told by Sarah Robert, Heather Killelea McEntarfer, and Karima Amin, is a story of a teacher educator who laments that her pre-service teachers in her social studies methods classes were relying on traditional, monological lecturing as their pedagogical method of choice. After a chance encounter with a true storyteller leading a drum circle, the teacher educator invites the storyteller into her methods class to teach the art of storytelling.

(Re)learning about the power of telling stories, listening to stories, and creating narratives, the teacher educator describes how story can construct identity, unite people, teach across diversity, make meaning, and analyze culture in dynamic ways. With these abilities, storytelling can also function to deconstruct and transform those dominant stories that maintain inequitable and unjust social orders; indeed, neoliberalism has its own narrative that valorizes free markets, consumer choice, and the unfettered pursuit of increasing profit. Thus, the authors of this chapter suggest that storytelling can be used as an engaging, culturally and personally relevant, and transformative pedagogical method in social studies classrooms and beyond.

In chapter 6, "Our 'Excellent' Adventures with NCATE: Stories of Struggle, Resistance, and Hope," Leigh O'Brien and Sue Novinger examine in depth some of the many issues with the education "reform" movements based on state and national standards and assessments. The issue here, in sum, is "the top-down dissemination (from the purported experts in the field) of 'recipes' for what teachers need to know in order to be considered effective, [and] the narrow focus on students being prepared to help the U.S. compete successfully in the global economy" (p. 101). Though advertised as the solution to the education system's ills, the actual effect of imposing extensive standards and requiring extensive assessment of students and teachers is a culture of control, regulation, and surveillance that keeps power in the hands of those creating the policy and administering the tests. Simultaneously, educators are denigrated and their autonomy is stunted.
In their discussion of how we can create and maintain hope despite these oppressive and restrictive policies, O'Brien and Novinger start to synthesize a number of the themes from previous chapters. Teachers and students must come together in diverse learning communities and challenge the dominant discourses by imagining new possibilities, telling counterstories, learning from others' narratives, and unmasking the status quo. In short, they emphasize collaboration, collectivism, community, and mutual support as educators and students look for ways to break free from the restraints of the system as it currently exists.

Jeanne Cameron's chapter 7, "Autoethnography and the Emergent Public: Counterstories from a Community College Classroom," explores the book's emerging themes in the context of a sociology course that utilizes democratic engagement and autoethnography to create an educational space that's dynamic and empowering rather than mechanistic and alienating. She contrasts the typical large lecture course, in which students are effectively passive recipients of the expert knowledge meted out by the authoritative professor, with a smaller, collective and participant-based course in which student s bring their own knowledge and experience into dialogue with each other in order to create and direct their own learning through the topics presented.

By setting up her own classes in this latter way, Cameron aims for her students to experience the study of sociology (developing the sociological imagination) as a social activity that ultimately creates within the classroom a public, democratic space. In addition, the final autoethnographic project promotes "idiosyncratic, nonlinear, and open-ended" conversation (p. 132). Sharing excerpts from some of her students' projects, she writes that "these are but a few of the stories of lives lived in the current era of neoliberalism. Heartbreaking? Often. Powerful and hopeful? Always. Dangerous counterstories indeed" (p. 139).
Part III - In the Belly of the Beast: Radical Scholars

P.L. Thomas, who served as a public school teacher for eighteen years and as an education professor for ten years, interrogates some of the paradoxical notions of the dominant academic ideology that make it difficult for radical scholars to conduct their work. In chapter 8, "Radical Scholars as Public Intellectual in a Marketplace of Ideas," Thomas identifies a major issue in the common imperative that educators and scholars must remain objective and dispassionate in their work; they cannot be "political" in their teaching and research, lest they end up indoctrinating or producing biased scholarship.

Thomas rejects the dichotomy that sets objectivity and neutrality against the "political." He argues that all teaching is inherently political, and thus to insist on neutrality is in fact to take a political stance. To help delineate the issue, he distinguishes political from partisan. He claims that being partisan is really the issue people want to avoid, and supports that aim. For Thomas, being apolitical is being antidemocratic, because it is a refusal to open discussion and identify one's unavoidable subjectivity (p. 155-57). He ends by calling radical scholars to reject the objectivity/neutrality/apolitical v. political dichotomy as well as the false binary of the two party political system of the United States. Neoliberalism, he says, permeates our political system such that "at best, we have Corporate Democrats and Corporate Republicans." In short, "Americans are trapped in a one-party Corporate States of America" (p. 163). To create true democracy, Thomas argues, radicalism is required. Scholars must reject the political binaries and dichotomies that maintain the status quo in order to stand as radical and democratic.

Continuing the call for radical educators to take action, Tricia Kress, in chapter 9, "The Skunk in the Yogurt Cup: Postformal Academic Blues as Praxis," integrates postformalism with a blues aesthetic to create a counternarrative out of her experiences as a professor. She explains that a postformal blues "can be productive tools for revealing, countering, and even utilizing the pain that results from our encounters with oppressive forces in the
Replacing the standard linear, progressive arc of Western narrative, the postformal blues combines a kaleidoscopic multiplicity with improvisation to view and react to a text or circumstance in always new and creative ways.

Insisting that awareness is not enough, however, and that active political resistance is required to enact change, Kress explains how her approach sustains such effort. Her praxis of postformal blues asserts, among other things, that "pain is not an end, it is an opportunity to change the world and ourselves for the better; moments of crisis are not tragedies, they are challenges and chances to shape our identities; play and joy must be held sacred because they provide us with the energy, inspiration, and creativity we need to keep going" (p. 181-82).

In chapter 10, "The Personal is Political: Feminist Resistance to Neoliberalism within Academia," Alison Happel suggests that radical scholars can benefit from feminist theories and pedagogies in their resistance to neoliberalism in the academy. She discusses three ways that she has employed feminism toward this end. First, her feminist pedagogy involves "structural critiques of racism, sexism, and classism," which are essential for undergraduates to understand if they are to understand the issues with neoliberalism and education. Second, she uses feminist, queer, qualitative research to "counter the scientism that is currently rampant within educational research" (p. 186). Third, she advocates for an interdisciplinarity among critical scholars that incorporates feminists and their unique contributions to the struggle for social justice. Echoing many of the preceding essays, Happel concludes by urging the importance of multidisciplinary alliances and collaboration for critical scholars.

Chapter 11, "How Do I Keep My Ideals and Still Teach?" by E. Wayne Ross, Rich Gibson, Greg Quee, and Kevin Vinson addresses a wide range of tactics and examples of educational and political resistance/activism. First, on an individual level, they share the story of two preservice teachers to encourage educators not to comply with the status quo in order to survive, but instead to practice "strategic redefinition" as a way to change people's
"interpretation of what is happening in a situation" (p. 206).

Second, the authors describe the history and work of the Rouge Forum, an activist organization that brings together educators, parents, students, and anyone else interested in combating systemic issues such as educational inequality, poverty, racism, sexism, etc. Through conferences, writing and scholarship, community and organizational alliances, and other grassroots organizing efforts, the Rouge Forum has acted as an organizing and connecting community for a vast array of people and causes who are all bonded by the common desire for social justice of all forms.

In chapter 12, "'Won't Back Down:' Counternarratives of Visibility and Vulnerability in a Bleak House," William Reynolds provides a scathing overview of the dire situation of American higher education and public life in general. Detailing the sometimes overwhelming extent to which social injustices and inequalities continue to make their mark around the world, Reynolds admits that it is rather easy to become fatalistic about the whole situation. Providing insight into his own and others' experiences in the corporate academy, though, he offers his stories as suggestions for others to follow if they are seeking ideas for how to respond. In the end, he adamantly urges readers to "fail to quit," to maintain hope despite all critiques of hope being idealistic or naive (p. 238).

The final chapter of the book, "Reflecting on Insider/Outsider Critiques of Teacher Education, or 'Don't Talk About My Momma,'" by Jason Lukasik and Brian Schultz, follows a format of six utterances, "fragments of emergent thought or critique that capture the diverse, contested nature of the educational conversation today" (p. 242). Professors of education, Lukasik and Schultz explain that "Stuart Hall's work has helped [them] to realize that [they] are products of that which we wish to change, serving as a self-reflective challenge to our proclaimed identity as teachers for social justice" (p. 242). In organizing their narrative through various utterances, they hope to better engage the discourse on education reform, a discourse that is often split between the perspectives of those on the "inside" and those on the "outside" of teacher education programs. They conclude by demonstrating and advocating for an open, honest conversation about
education reform that seeks not only answers but insists on asking good questions."There are hopeful alternatives. And hopeful alternatives are best theorized and envisioned through good questions" (p. 259).

Danger and hope: A discussion

Regrettably, the above summaries do not adequately capture the degree of diversity, depth, and uniqueness of the voices that animate the pages of this collection. Thus, readers are urged to locate a copy and closely examine the rich content contained in these essays. However, at least a few central themes and key ideas can now easily be identified. The overall aim of the book is to gather these narratives as a way to provide inspiration, insight, solidarity, and hope for those students and educators who are resisting neoliberalism in the academy just as these authors have. On the whole this aim is met, but two related cautionary critiques might be warranted.

First, it is nothing new for teachers and educators to find themselves oppressed by an extensive techno-bureaucratic machinery that masquerades as an "educational" system; attempts at resisting such forces are also not new. As a relevant example, consider the historical study conducted by Kate Rousmaniere (1997) in which she sheds light on the experiences of teachers who taught in New York City's public schools in the 1920s, a decade of extensive education reform. The reforms then, like now, sought efficiency and control through the extensive implementation of a hierarchical bureaucratic organization. "Here was the epitome of modern scientific rationality and order," claims Rousmaniere (p. 1).

One of the main themes she culled from interviews with dozens of retired teachers involved the various ways in which "teachers responded to their working conditions by alternately accommodating to, adapting to, and resisting certain aspects of their work, surreptitiously claiming some control over their job" (p. 4). Teachers shared stories, ideas for shortcuts, tips to maintain some degree of authority, and otherwise drew from a set of collective resources to make their work lives more manageable.
The issue with these efforts, according to Rousmaniere, is that they were conducted in a largely isolated and inconspicuous way. In these very efforts to adapt and resist, they "accommodated to the structure of the very system that dominated them. ...Teachers' underground work culture, then, actually reinforced the stability of the system" (p. 5).

The second word of caution pertains to the notion of hope. Both in the editorial introduction and many of the essays in the book, the contributors mention the importance of maintaining hope for change. Indeed, a central goal of the volume is to offer these narratives as sources of hope. In explaining the various functions of stories, Daniels and Porfilio simply state that "Stories create hope" (p. ix).

The concern here is not with striving to create hope per se, but for the potential that readers might glean from some of these narratives a false or naive sense of hope. Scholars such as Kathy Hyttten (2010) caution that we must guard against feelings of hope that at bottom contain nothing so much as "vacuous optimism" (p. 160). Instead, she challenges social justice educators to create critical hope, "hope grounded in struggle, action, and certain habits of being in the world, for example, reflexivity, resourcefulness, attentiveness, and experimentalism" (p. 159).

The possibilities of ineffectually accommodating or adapting to the system and adopting a false sense of hope, however, are just that; they are merely possibilities. I should stress that Dangerous Counterstories does not read in such a way as to foster these possibilities. In fact, the preceding cautions can be tempered by simply taking seriously all that the contributors in this volume have to say. Taken together and deeply reflected upon, the authors' insights, encouragements, theories, and warnings provide a balanced, diverse, and accurate portrayal of the situation facing critical academics today.

Indeed, in reflecting on the book as a unified whole rather than individual essays, the work succeeds in embodying and doing all of the difficult things its pages advocate and prescribe. For instance, the essays stress the importance of collaboration, collective effort, cooperation, solidarity, mutual support, and community. At the same time, the
book does not aim to present a homogenously unified theory or singular solution; rather, the authors maintain that truly democratic effort and community entails diversity, multiplicity, idiosyncrasy (O'Brien & Novinger, p. 113) and the tensions that come with such an array of voices (Thomas, p. 161).

*Dangerous Counterstories* does indeed present a diverse, multifaceted, multilayered collection of voices and stories that collectively stand as a robust resource for understanding and resisting neoliberalism in the corporate academy. While some narratives are deeply personal and might more readily inspire hope, other narratives bluntly acknowledge the grave reality that the situation requires not only critical awareness but active resistance. Further, these stories make plain that such resistance often entails danger, sacrifice, pain, and ongoing struggle. Yet despite these stark accounts, other narratives still further provide encouragement and blueprints for collective, organized action that seeks systemic, structural change and avoids merely accommodating to the status quo. Putting all these pieces together, readers should be well equipped to take truly radical and revolutionary action, undergirded by a sense of critical hope that will sustain their oppositional position in the face of a multitude of potential challenges.

The editors and contributors to this volume should be commended and appreciated for their work and for sharing their stories as resources for those who struggle with them for a more just and equitable world. I recommend that students, teachers, scholars, and researchers critically engage *Dangerous Counterstories* as they continually work to dismantle the corporate takeover of higher education.

**References**


About the Reviewer

Dave Wolken is a PhD student in the Cultural Foundations of Education department in the School of Education at Syracuse University in Syracuse, NY. He specializes in the Philosophy of Education with particular interests in higher education, social justice pedagogy, ethics and ideology in liberal education, the philosophy of educational research, and epistemology and the politics of knowledge.