

Lines in class

The ongoing attack on mass education in England

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Andrew McGettigan's analysis of the financial transformations of higher education ('Who Let the Dogs Out? The Privatization of Higher Education', *RP* 174) is important for comprehending the complexity of the changes universities are undergoing and their implications. As he argues, 'it is *mass* higher education in England' that is now under attack and adequately responding to this requires the development of new habits and new forms of thought.¹ It is also necessary to contextualize this attack in relation to comparable changes occurring in other educational sectors in England, not least because it is through control of the points of *intersection* between primary, secondary, and tertiary education that the government's political intent is being most effectively realized. An analysis of these changes reveals the broader nature of the attack on the idea and practice of mass education itself.

Rolling out and back

McGettigan makes it clear that any starting point for our resistance to the attack on mass education must begin by recognizing the inadequacy of speaking of a simple process of 'privatization'. The situation is more complex, first, because institutions that we currently conceive as 'public' are already semi-privatized to the extent their corporate structures are those of private charities. The policies now being pursued by the government are intended to ease their further transformation from charities to for-profit companies, as well as encouraging current institutions to outsource further services to commercial providers. Second, a countervailing movement of existing independent educational institutions will bring them into the orbit of regulation by government-funded bodies such as the Student Loans Company (SLC) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in order to gain competitive advantages, such as access to

student loans and eventually degree-awarding powers (there has been a 77 per cent increase this year in private college courses approved by the SLC).²

As McGettigan notes, we lack a distinct term to capture the former process and the latter might be better characterized as a 'counter-tendency to privatization'.³ In *Networks, New Governance and Education*, Stephen J. Ball and Carolina Junemann borrow Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell's formulation of 'roll out and roll back' neoliberalism to characterize this process in English education.⁴ But however we describe this double movement of the state-enforced marketization of private charities and a market-driven governance of businesses its outcome will most likely be a broader horizontal merging of distinct kinds of educational providers into a subtly different type of institution. As Ball and Junemann describe, the destabilization of state education permits an increasingly 'mixed economy' of provision to emerge, whose blurring of the boundaries between the public, private and philanthropic enables the imposition of an 'enterprise narrative' of competition and entrepreneurialism through distinct and more diverse and flexible networks of governance.⁵

Far from unifying or expanding provision, however, this state-regulated market for higher education will better permit existing divisions to be exacerbated, splitting the merged sector into two tiers along a fault line that will follow more closely the contours of social class that were partially blurred by the recent expansion of higher education. In contrast to any simplistic model of neoliberal marketization, this is achieved by retaining regulated restrictions on student fees and numbers *in order to permit strategic exceptions to these regulations*. McGettigan discusses one example of this core/margin model, whereby institutions charging below the lower fee cap are given access to additional student places above the cap on 'core'

numbers. This should be understood in relation to another sanctioned exception, which currently permits institutions to recruit students achieving at least two As and one B in their A-levels (and from 2013, it is proposed, ABB) above and beyond the numbers cap.

In the sealed environment enforced by the current upper fees cap, these exceptions are intended to separate two distinct markets. Stripped of funding, non-elite and largely metropolitan universities serving lower-middle and working-class students will compete with other education providers in a 'race to the bottom' in terms of the price, length and quality of educational provision. The Russell Group institutions that are prestigious and rich enough to attract the most successful students through scholarships and expensive marketing campaigns will compete in the opposite direction. Ultimately, this is intended to concentrate and narrow academic research and funding within a smaller monopoly of globally elite institutions, with a merging of higher and further education as the rest become increasingly teaching-based, qualification-supplying institutions.⁶

Interestingly, in practice a drop in the number of AAB-achieving students this year has led to the converse situation in which a third of Russell Group universities have been required to enter into the Clearing system to fill empty places, some for the first time. This drop has been linked partly to increasing governmental pressure on exam boards to resist so-called 'grade inflation' and partly to broader issues around the number and type of student taking A-levels this year, as well as the unpredictable impact of the new funding structure on students' decisions to decline places offered or defer applying at all.⁷ But the situation was reportedly manufactured in the first instance by a miscalculated increase in the number of offers made (not merely at elite universities and often also for insurance places) that were conditional on achieving results of AAB or above, as universities sought to give themselves the greatest flexibility to manipulate their intake once A-level results were published.⁸

Given that university applications continue to outnumber places, the 'shock' entry of elite universities into a Clearing market long frequented by less prestigious institutions should be read merely as symptomatic of the general conditions of state marketization itself. In this instance, the 'educational kettling' has been almost too quick and effective, as fractures have started to appear within the Russell Group itself. In the longer term, however, the attempt to differentiate students through the manipulation of both the type and toughness of examinations and the core/margin model

should relieve pressure at the top and produce a clearer separation from the bottom. In the short term, however, the losers have been those students who have narrowly missed out on their predicted results but have been stuck in Clearing whilst their first-choice universities cherry-pick the most successful students. This will ultimately work to *decrease* choice for a majority of students if predictions and conditional offers continue to exceed the government's downward pressure on grades: an outcome of the pincer movement between marketization and governance.

At the other end of the spectrum, around 2,600 students at London Metropolitan currently face deportation following the UK Border Agency's decision to revoke its licence to sponsor non-EU student visas. As a result, the university has taken what HEFCE euphemistically describes as the 'pragmatic decision' to limit the number of institutions involved in a 'mini-Clearing' set up for affected students.⁹ But, as McGettigan reports, six of the fifteen involved are 'private providers', once again manipulating the system in favour of the government's political agenda and against student choice.¹⁰ The effectiveness of the government's educational agenda is perhaps clearest, however, in anecdotal reports of the shortfalls in recruitment to MA level. Here, the talking-down of academic learning in England would seem to have been an effective deterrent to potential postgraduates both home and overseas, despite wider variations in tuition fees.

Academies

This kind of transformation is not restricted to higher education, however. A brief consideration of the changes being wrought in other sectors is instructive to the extent that it reinforces the systematic nature of the overall attack on mass education, but also because it reinforces how controlling the intersections *between* primary, secondary and tertiary education remains crucial for this government. As with the assault on the universities, it is notable how effectively the Conservatives have been able to extend Labour's existing policies on education and redirect them 'to the advantage of the already advantaged'.¹¹

Whilst much attention has been given to the Conservatives' introduction of free schools, it was Labour's expansion of the academies programme that proved most significant for Tory attempts to create a state-regulated market in primary and secondary education that mirrors the movement discussed above.¹² Labour's academies were introduced in 2000 as a way of injecting private sponsorship and governance into underachieving schools by removing them from local

authority control (themselves a modification of the Conservatives' ill-fated City Technology Colleges). They differ from the plethora of 'maintained' schools in being independent of direct control by local authorities, and from fee-charging and independent private schools in having a model funding agreement direct with central government.¹³ Like universities and private schools, academies are typically private charities with a corporate structure limited by guarantee rather than shares (hence not-for-profit). Initially the remaining capital and governance were to be supplied through sponsorship by a not-for-profit educational company, although this investment is no longer a condition of such companies running academies (thus erasing one important distinction between academies and free schools).

In contrast to Labour's focus on struggling schools, however, the Conservatives have encouraged schools rated as 'outstanding' or 'good' to convert to academy status, and it is these better-performing institutions that are therefore the principal beneficiaries of the financial resources being ploughed into the programme.¹⁴ Although academy sponsors are currently not commercial ventures, there is a clear incentive to privatization taking place here as the 'best' schools, including those in the primary sector, are transformed into private charities.¹⁵ This is also accompanied by the outsourcing of services to a burgeoning market in for-profit service providers. The rapid expansion of academies and free schools legislated by the Academies Act of 2010 therefore 'blur[s] the divide between the independent and state sectors'.¹⁶

As with higher education, one notable aspect of this process is a counter-movement of existing private independents to take on closer government and financial regulation by either converting to academy status themselves or becoming sponsors for new academies. Last year the *Guardian* claimed that private schools were 'lining up' to become free schools, and although the defeat of a backbench revision to the Academies Act that would have permitted them to select intake has perhaps dampened enthusiasm, for fee-paying schools floundering financially during the recession the temptation to take on state funding whilst keeping their independent status remains strong.¹⁷

The government has also been pushing for closer collaboration between private schools and academies/free schools, encouraging the former to provide educational leadership and financial sponsorship for the state sector.¹⁸ Many may dismiss such moves as mere posturing by the private sector, a cynical concession for self-preservation (particularly with regard to their VAT exemption).¹⁹ But, as McGettigan reports, the

Coalition is currently set on *extending* VAT exemption to all providers of education, including commercial enterprises, and there has been little or no political will to meddle with the private sector by either the current government or the last Labour one.²⁰

For the most academically successful 'maintained' schools and for the poorer private schools, conversion to academy status will ensure a clear allocation of central funding during times of severe cuts in both public and private spending on education. This merging of distinct sectors under the institutional umbrella of the academy reiterates two issues in relation to McGettigan's observations on higher education: the complexity of referring to this general trend in education in terms of 'privatization' and the way in which this merging of sectors permits a more insidious attack on mass education.

'Publicization' and the riots

The confusing designation of traditional fee-paying schools as 'public' points to the complexity of this situation, and to the way in which these broader issues in education must be contextualized historically, not merely in relation to increasingly globalized capital but also to shifting ideological relations between nation, church and state in England.²¹ The appellation 'public school' came to indicate institutions independent of both residential restrictions imposed on endowments by local philanthropists and religious restrictions imposed by church schools.

A trend for private schools to convert to academies – with legal contracts established with the state, a governing body and curriculum negotiated with their charitable sponsors, and the ability to draw their own catchment areas for local selection – might, in this specific sense, be confusingly said to represent a 'privatization' of public schools. Conversely, the shift of 'maintained' schools away from local authority control could be said to involve a political 'publicization'. This reiterates McGettigan's claims concerning the complexity of a process that belies the simplicity of the term 'privatization', as well as the need to scrutinize more carefully the ideological limitations of the concepts of 'public' and 'private' being invoked in such claims (particularly with regard to philanthropic sponsorship; see my discussion of a 'return to the public' in 'Philosophy for Children' in *RP* 170).

In the context of secondary education in particular, the possibility of closer involvement of sponsors and providers opened up by the legal structure of academies is ideally suited for pushing the government's Big Society agenda (a political policy that, having been

quietly dropped after much lampooning in the early years of the Coalition, seems prepared for a comeback after the vast softening-up exercise of the London 2012 Olympics and its ‘Games Makers’). Here, the findings of the government-appointed Riots Communities and Victims Panel are instructive for anticipating a future role for academies in the most deprived areas.²² In the Panel’s interim and final reports, the phantasmagoric substitution of objective socioeconomic conditions (rising unemployment, growing inequality, cuts in investment and welfare, evidence of police, media, and government corruption) for subjective feelings of hopelessness and disenfranchisement permit nearly all of the piecemeal policy recommendations to fall within the sphere of educational reform (a lack of jobs, for example, is to be resolved by better vocational training, and a lack of personal resilience by education into optimism, self-sufficiency and entrepreneurialism). By the final report these differences coagulate into a precise policy suggestion of the need for schools to instil ‘strength of character’, to be thematically reviewed by Ofsted and assessed on a regular basis.

One unlikely outlet for such rhetoric was the media discussion surrounding the success of the British team in the London 2012 Olympics, where – according to a report from the Sutton Trust – 36 per cent of British medal winners were privately educated from a sector which educates only 7 per cent of the student population.²³ Comparable figures from Beijing 2008 had prompted the chairman of the British Olympic Association to declare this ‘one of the worst statistics in British sport’ and to demand a more ‘comprehensive engagement’ from independent schools prepared to share their sporting facilities with their state-sector neighbours.²⁴ The Right, in contrast, saw this as an opportunity to attack state education itself and the teaching unions in particular. David Cameron claimed the problem was not merely one of resources but of ‘too many schools not wanting to have competitive sport’ and accused ‘some teachers not wanting to join in and play their part’: ‘we have got to have an answer that brings the whole of society together to crack this, more competition, more competitiveness, more getting rid of the idea all-must-win-prizes and you can’t have competitive sports days.’²⁵ Similarly, Rupert Murdoch speculated on twitter that China’s position at the top of the Olympic medal table was because the ‘US and UK mainly teach competitive sport a bad thing. How many champions state school background?’²⁶ When Tory mayor of London Boris Johnson subsequently called for pupils to emulate the two hours of sport a day he enjoyed at Eton, Cameron

riposted that such a target (introduced under Labour but scrapped by the government) had only been met by doing uncompetitive activities such as ‘things like Indian dance or whatever’.²⁷ Much of this rhetoric of character-building and civic education clearly chimes with that being promoted in the idea of educational leadership by independent schools, with their traditions of competitive sports and cadet training, and is saturated with the Arnoldian ethos encapsulated in the apocryphal ‘playing fields of Eton’.²⁸ Michael Gove’s description of rioters as an ‘educational underclass’ takes strength from such a belief.

Also significant in this context are the Riot Panel report’s promotion of ‘responsible capitalism’, encouraging local businesses to become more closely involved in education by sponsoring youth programmes and apprenticeship schemes. For example, two specific policy recommendations are that ‘businesses become part of the solution acting as Business Ambassadors for local schools’ and that

all [public service] contracts over a significant value (£50,000) make transparent how the successful contractor benefits the local community, for example by publishing details of the number of local jobs and apprenticeships they create, work experience offered and links to schools, colleges and wider youth provisions.²⁹

The use of the academy model funding agreement to introduce two new types of colleges for 14–19-year-olds indicate how easily this might be done. University Technical Colleges have a technical orientation and are sponsored by local universities. The first, the JBC Academy in Staffordshire, was opened in 2010 and there are currently thirteen academies approved with plans to establish twenty-four by 2014. An extra £150 million in funding has been set aside for such academies, with commercial partnerships including Procter & Gamble, Rolls-Royce, and BlackBerry.³⁰ Studio Schools are smaller, sponsored by local employers, such as Hilton Hotels, Michelin, Ikea, and various football clubs, with a more vocational focus on work placements.³¹ It is indicative of this growing involvement of corporations in the educational sector that last year Barclays Bank also announced its intention to fund groups setting up new academies and free schools, along with £15 million worth of money-management courses and 3,000 work experience places for their pupils. At the time Gove described the bank, which has since been fined £290 million for attempting to fix the London inter-bank lending rate (Libor), as one of ‘Britain’s most impressive and responsible companies’.³²

Social engineering

As with the blurring between universities and private providers, the growth of academies involves a complex enmeshment but also confusion of public and private interests. Although this appears to break down the divide between the local authority ‘maintained’ and private sectors, in reality it increases the gap in provision not only between independents and those schools that remain cash-strapped comprehensives, but also between academies serving different communities.³³ As the National Audit Office remarked, ‘Sponsors have strong influence on the running of academies, which brings both benefits and risks to value for money.’³⁴ Independence from local authority entails an increasing dependence on the nature of the sponsoring partner for determining the identity and ethos of each academy. Ball and Junemann encapsulate such a process in terms of ‘network governance’, a ‘new form of state’ that achieves its political ends through mediated and indirect network of actors, whilst marginalizing ‘local government, professional organizations and trade unions’.³⁵ This is, they further note, being increasingly achieved through philanthropic activity, which ‘has provided a “Trojan horse” for modernizing moves that opened the “policy door” to new actors and new ideas and sensibilities’.³⁶

The process by which grammar, faith and increasingly private schools have over the last quarter of a century become middle-class enclaves through either academic, financial or soft selection results in what Melissa Benn describes as a virtuous circle, whose corollary effect on provision elsewhere is a vicious one.³⁷ The flexible structure of sponsored academies presages the emerging kinds of universities discussed earlier in permitting both to happen simultaneously: educational benefits for the best, educational risks for the worst. The way in which the current government has rapidly expanded the academy programme entails that the best academies and free schools (whether nominally grammar, ex-maintained or ex-private) will likely end up expanding provision for middle-class and the academically brightest working-class students, responding to middle-class anxieties over competition for secondary and university places and fostering Michael Gove’s own obsession with defining social mobility in terms of access to Oxbridge.³⁸

Gove’s retro-tinkering with the exam system is similarly intended to more clearly differentiate between the best and worst performing students and schools, facilitating a two-tier education system, with one eye on simplifying further and higher education admissions.³⁹ This year the number of A*–C grades fell

marginally for the first time in the history of GCSEs, amid accusations that the government had exerted political pressure on the exam boards. The most significant drop, in GCSE English, has provoked the Association of School and College Leaders to consider a legal challenge against the exam boards on the basis of current equal opportunities legislation.⁴⁰ From 2015, Gove’s English Baccalaureate is to replace the GCSE altogether, with its Maths, English and (from 2016) History components to be assessed entirely through final examinations, to be held for the first time in 2017.⁴¹ A larger differentiation of grades is likely to be reflected in the awarding of numeric or percentage scores, with a greater proportion of school students expected to leave school without any qualifications.⁴²

Currently, increases in funding and soft selection entail that the existence of the newest, academically advantaged academies already disadvantage their locally maintained competitors in the state sector. In 2012–13, for example, local authorities will lose a total of £265 million from their general grant to help central government funding of the academies programme.⁴³ Further financial problems have been generated for the most deprived students by cuts to the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA). This will eventually increase the number of poorly performing schools being forced to convert to academy status.

Poorly performing schools will likely be tendered to large academy chains: the fate of Haringey’s ‘failing’ Downhills Primary School, which despite spirited local resistance to the plans suffered the resignation of its head teacher, the dismissal of its board of governors, and forced conversion to academy status under the sponsorship of the Harris Federation (a rapidly expanding chain of academies owned by the multimillionaire Tory donor and life peer Baron Harris). In the short term, the success of such academies depends on quickly raising academic standards in Ofsted reports (in the absence of fuller exam data for cohorts and of contextualizing results from any other kinds of ‘new’ schools, these remain controversial). In the longer term budgetary considerations will require the lowering of running costs as justification for such external management. Initial efficiency savings will be possible through the pooling of non-academic services, although it is predictable that eventually such savings will encroach into the teaching budget as well (teaching staff are already exempt from nationally agreed pay deals).

This is the aim of the educational division of Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation, headed up by Joel Klein, former chancellor of the New York City Schools and US Charter School reformer. Murdoch regards schools

as the ‘last holdout from the digital revolution’ and is willing to invest significant capital in his educational business in the hope of making it ‘revolutionary, and profitable’. News Corporation-owned Collins Education already sells print-based teaching resources to UK schools; the aim being piloted in the USA is to eventually supply digital content and software direct to classroom tablets. News Corp currently sponsors several schools in New York and in 2010–11 began plans to sponsor a ‘News International Academy’ in East London. The project ran into difficulties when it failed to secure government funding for its new buildings and the plans seem to have been put on hold around the time the phone-hacking scandal broke in the spring of 2011.⁴⁴

In *School Wars*, Benn predicts that

the fast pace of technology, and the temptation for private providers to cut costs, will increase standardized, centralized learning methods. It will not be unusual in the future for one talented lecturer to record a standard lesson on a key section of the syllabus, a lesson that will then be screened in all the other schools in the chain.⁴⁵

The revelation of a shared interest in ‘educational reform’ discussed in meetings between Gove, Murdoch and Klein, which have come to light following the Leveson Inquiry, make these predictions all the more suggestive.⁴⁶ As Murdoch’s own remarks on the teaching profession make clear, such reforms would first require breaking the power of the teaching unions, and the Tories’ academy programme has a clear part to play in such an attack.⁴⁷

As with higher education, two distinct markets are therefore opened up through the academies. Many at the extremes of wealth and poverty may be unaffected by such changes as they continue to follow the well-defined routes of local and public schooling. For institutions serving working-class areas with low levels of educational attainment and a high level of unemployment, an increase in specialized academies for excluded pupils and vocational training championed by businesses will serve the government’s interests in giving this ‘educational underclass’ a stake in their local communities in order to avoid further disorder, with the rise of a new breed of teaching-focused universities able to supply cheaper and quicker qualifications.

For the middle-class electorate the Tories must win over, education – as with Labour before them – has become the central political battleground, and the protection of middle-class advantage in securing their favoured secondary school and university would seem

to be a key strategy in this contest. A corollary of this attack on mass education in the interest of the middle and upper classes is the media’s talking down of comprehensive education itself. As Benn writes, ‘Now, more than ever, we are subject to relentless coverage of our allegedly “dumbed-down” state schools and the “curdling” of the comprehensive experiment’, whose purpose ‘is to soften up the public and justify further unhelpful reforms’.⁴⁸ The same is true of the popular denigration of so-called ‘Mickey Mouse’ degrees at post-1992 universities, all of which – despite being voiced in the sceptical vernacular of the working classes – more accurately reflect middle-class anxiety over a social preserve only recently snatched from the clutches of the upper classes.

In this context, the defence of ‘mass education’ demands the transformation not only of our intellectual habits and practices, as McGettigan quite rightly points out, but also, where necessary, our own bourgeois habits of thinking about the purpose and practice of education itself.

Notes

1. Andrew McGettigan, ‘Who Let the Dogs Out? The Privatization of Higher Education’, *Radical Philosophy* 174, July/August 2012, pp. 23, 27. Thanks to Andrew for his comments on an earlier version of this response.
2. John Morgan, ‘Private Bodies Saddle up for State Subsidies’, *THE*, 12 July 2012, www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=420545.
3. McGettigan, ‘Who Let the Dogs Out?’, p. 23.
4. Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, ‘Neoliberalizing Space’, *Antipode*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2002, pp. 380–404; Stephen J. Ball and Carolina Junemann, *Networks, New Governance and Education*, Policy Press, Bristol, 2012, pp. 31, 8.
5. See Ball and Junemann, *Networks, New Governance and Education*, pp. 3–37.
6. Howard Stevenson and Les Bell, ‘Introduction – Universities in Transition: Themes in Higher Education Policy’, in M. Neary, H. Stevenson and L. Bell, eds., *The Future of Higher Education*, Continuum, London and New York, 2009, pp. 11–12.
7. John Morgan and Jack Grove, ‘Elite Feel Pinch of AAB Shortfall’, *THE*, 13 November 2012, www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?c=1§ioncode=26&storycode=421124.
8. Kim Catheside, ‘Clearing 2012: Universities Need a Better Message than “Keep Calm”’, *Guardian*, 13 August 2012, www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/blog/2012/aug/13/clearing-2012-crisis-university-response.
9. ‘London Metropolitan University Licence Revocation: Third Meeting of the Task Force’, HEFCE News Archive, www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2012/name,75360,en.html.
10. Andrew McGettigan, ‘London Met Update – “Clearing” Begins on Monday’, 16 September 2012, <http://andrewmcgettigan.org/2012/09/16/london-met-update-clearing-begins-on-monday/>.
11. Melissa Benn, *School Wars: The Battle for Britain’s*

- Education*, Verso, London and New York, 2011, p. 4.
12. Free schools have the same legal status as academies, and even their distinguishing feature of being established by parents and teachers – rather than existing education charities – looks set to be phased out; see Toby Young: ‘Free School Movement Should Be All About Mavericks Like Me’, *Independent*, 7 September 2011, www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/toby-young-free-school-movement-should-be-all-about-mavericks-like-me-2350355.html.
 13. This agreement grants them independence from national pay and conditions for teachers and support staff, and from local authority admissions and financial arrangements, with only the secretary of state having direct power to close unsatisfactory academies down (see Benn, *School Wars*, pp. 109–10).
 14. Local authorities now suffer a ‘top-slice’ from their general grant for ‘maintained’ schools to help fund the government’s academies programme, whilst schools converting to academy status have found themselves better off to the net sum of between £150,000 and £570,000 (see Benn, *School Wars*, pp. 29–30).
 15. From July 2012, primary schools are being encouraged with a £25,000 grant from the Department for Education if they convert to academy status en masse as trusts of three or more schools. Of the 102 newest free schools recently approved to open in 2013, 40 are primaries.
 16. Sutton Trust, ‘Open Access: Democratising Entry to Independent Day Schools’, March 2012, www.sutton-trust.com/public/documents/lopen-access-report-march-2012-final.pdf.
 17. Sara Gaines, ‘Private Schools Line up to Become Free’, *Guardian*, 12 April 2011, www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/apr/12/private-schools-conversion.
 18. Anthony Seldon, whose own fee-paying Wellington College sponsors the new Wellington Academy, has spoken of the need for such ties in order to create ‘one big happy family’. Anthony Seldon, ‘Public Schools Can’t Go On in Splendid Isolation’, *Guardian*, 30 June 2012, www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jun/30/public-schools-anthony-seldon; ‘Why Can’t We Be One Big Happy Family?’, *TES*, 17 March 2012, www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6194085; ‘Britain’s Private Schools Have Lost Their Moral Purpose’, *Guardian*, 30 June 2012, www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/jun/30/britain-private-schools.
 19. This is how Toby Young attempted to persuade such alliances in an article addressed to private schools. Toby Young, ‘Independent Schools Are Becoming Increasingly Enthusiastic about Setting up Free Schools and Academies’, *Telegraph*, 7 October 2011, <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/tobyyoung/100109526/independent-schools-are-becoming-increasingly-enthusiastic-about-setting-up-free-schools-and-academies>.
 20. McGettigan, ‘Who Let the Dogs Out?’, p. 25. See also his ‘VAT Exemption for For-profit HE Providers – Consultation’, 15 September 2012, <http://andrewmcgettigan.org/2012/09/15/vat-exemption-for-for-profit-he-providers-consultation>.
 21. Understanding the significance education has assumed for successive British governments over the last quarter of a century requires recognizing the peculiarity of church and educational institutions following the English Reformation and, in particular and over a longer period, their historical belatedness. The relationship between church and state in England has largely inured the educational apparatus to popular critique, such that it has only more recently emerged, under the contradictions of globalized capitalism, as the fetishized locus of English ideology.
 22. See Riots Communities and Victims Panel, *5 Days in August: An Interim Report on the 2011 English Riots and After the Riots: Final Report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel*.
 23. ‘Over a Third of British Olympic Winners Were Privately Educated’, Sutton Trust, www.suttontrust.com/news/news/over-a-third-of-british-olympic-winners-were-privately-educated.
 24. ‘Private Schools Must Share Sport Facilities – BOA Chief’, BBC News online, 20 August 2012, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-19315418. In response, Labour drew attention to the thirty-one school playing fields sold off under the approval of the Coalition government (wrongly declared initially as twenty-one under an earlier Freedom of Information request) and their withdrawal of specific rules stipulating minimum pitch sizes for different-size schools. In truth, however, whilst Labour had itself sold off 200 playing fields during its thirteen years in power, the activities of both the current and previous governments pale into insignificance compared to the 10,000 pitches that were sold off by the previous Conservative government.
 25. ‘Olympics: Cameron Urges School Sport “Cultural Change”’, BBC News online, 8 August 2012, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-19174757; ‘Teachers Criticise Cameron’s Olympic School-sport Remarks’, BBC News online, 9 August 2012, www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-19181990.
 26. <https://twitter.com/rupertmurdoch/status/230930292326674432>.
 27. ‘David Cameron: I cut school sports target because pupils were learning Indian dancing’, *Telegraph*, 10 August 2012, www.telegraph.co.uk/education/keep-the-flame-alive/9466379/David-Cameron-I-cut-school-sports-target-because-pupils-were-learning-Indian-dancing.html.
 28. See Matthew Charles, ‘Philosophy for Children’, *Radical Philosophy* 170, November/December 2011, p. 45.
 29. Riots Communities and Victims Panel, *After the Riots: Final Report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel.*, pp. 66, 81.
 30. Department for Education, ‘79 New Schools Now Approved to Open from 2012 Onwards’, 10 October 2011, www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00199061/79-new-schools-now-approved-to-open-from-2012-onwards; ‘What Are UTCs?’, 26 April 2012, www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/technical/a00198954/utcs.
 31. Angela Harrison, ‘More Work-based “Studio Schools” Announced’, BBC News online, 19 July 2012, www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-18892984. See also Studio Schools Trust, www.studioschoolstrust.org/node/3.
 32. Angela Harrison, ‘Barclays to Support New Free Schools and Academies’, BBC News online, 18 January 2012, www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-16610988.
 33. ‘Under proposals published in late May 2011, successful schools were to be allowed to expand ... and so-called “poor” schools were to be allowed to wither and die. In July, the *Guardian* confirmed that civil servants privately advised ministers that schools should be allowed to fail, if government was serious about reform’ (Benn, *School Wars*, p. 32).
 34. National Audit Office, *The Academies Programme:*

- Department for Education*, p. 39.
35. Ball and Junemann, *Networks, New Governance and Education*, pp. 134–5, 4 (quoting Peter Triantafyllou, ‘Addressing Network Governance through the Concepts of Governmentality and Normalization’, *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, vol. 26, no. 4, 2004), p. 489).
 36. Ball and Junemann, *Networks, New Governance and Education*, p. 32.
 37. Benn, *School Wars*, p. 76. As with exceptions to regulation in the higher sector, independence increases the ability to ‘soft select’ the brightest students; see *ibid.*, p. 92.
 38. Michael Gove’s ‘mission on education has seemed largely focused on getting more people like himself – the naturally brilliant who were not born to rule – to an elite university: the classic grammar-school narrative that still obsesses our nation’ (Benn, *School Wars*, p. 7). His definition of social mobility involves the number of children on free school meals who make it to Oxbridge (see *ibid.*, p. 19).
 39. Gove first introduced his idea for an English Baccalaureate part of the way through the academic year, and then leaked plans to reintroduce older and tougher O-level-type exams for the academically brightest, with ‘more straightforward’ CSE-like exams for the rest. The latter has now been replaced with the possibility of a deferred EBacc at FE level. www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2162369/Michael-Gove-plans-scrap-dumbed-GCSEs-bring-O-Levels.html.
 40. ‘GCSE Grade Changes May Face Legal Challenge’, BBC News online, 25 August 2012, www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-19378586.
 41. James Meikle, ‘GCSEs Are Dead: The EBacc is the Future, Says Michael Gove’, BBC News online, 17 November 2012, www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/sep/17/gcse-ebacc-michael-gove?newsfeed=true.
 42. Nicholas Watt, ‘GCSE Exams to Be Replaced by EBacc’, *Guardian*, 17 September 2012, www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/sep/17/gcse-exams-replaced-ebacc-michael-gove.
 43. Benn, *School Wars*, p. 29.
 44. David Leigh, ‘The Schools Crusade that Links Michael Gove to Rupert Murdoch’, *Guardian*, 27 February 2012, www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/feb/26/schools-crusade-gove-murdoch; Leveson Inquiry, *Witness Statement of Keith Rupert Murdoch*, www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Witness-Statement-of-Keith-Rupert-Murdoch2.pdf.
 45. Benn, *School Wars*, p. 170. Similarly, Harvard’s and MIT’s edX platform permits courses to be taught and assessed online, whilst Edinburgh University is the first UK institution to sign up to Stanford’s alternative platform, Coursera.
 46. See evidence supplied by Murdoch and Gove to the Leveson Inquiry, www.levesoninquiry.org.uk.
 47. ‘We [Murdoch and Klein] believe that it’s an absolute disgrace, the standard of public education here and in America ... there are being efforts in different states to try and tackle this, but it’s very difficult. Not for lack of money, but for lack of teacher co-operation...’, transcript from the Leveson Inquiry, www.levesoninquiry.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Transcript-of-Morning-Hearing-26-April-2012.txt.
 48. Benn, *School Wars*, p. xxi.

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