

capable of both providing security and protecting their liberties. This they achieved in the state constitution of 1776, famous for its unicameral legislature, and the subsequent and more conventionally configured constitution of 1790. Arguably more important for Pennsylvanians than the divisions between mechanics and merchants was a drive to create a government that truly worked. Pearl's study helps us better understand early American debates over state power and federalism. Avoiding facile comparisons to contemporary political controversies, he convincingly proves that for the founding generation, good government was a blessing.

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The Education Trap: Schools and the Remaking of Inequality in Boston

Cristina Viviana Groeger. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021.

Readers interested in education reform will find little hope in this book. Instead, they will find a carefully documented case study of how education reform has repeatedly broken its promise of an equitable society. Cristina Viviana Groeger's *The Education Trap: Schools and the Remaking of Inequality in Boston* warns that education policies, for more than a hundred years, have been exacerbating cultural inequities and locking them into place. Groeger takes aim at the fallacy of "the American faith in education as *the* panacea for social inequality" (16). Through 250 pages of hard facts about a century of job training in the workplace shifting to "school-based [job] training," the book challenges any belief in education as "an unqualified good . . . open to all" (249). The reason: educational changes in schools have aligned with "the inequalities of our modern corporate economy" (250).

Groeger suggests that the local history of education in Boston provides us with insight into a widespread dominance of "professional elites with ties to leading universities" whose progressive attempts to liberate education from "the exclusive domain of a wealthy elite" have failed (249, 251). Politicians from Horace Mann to Barack Obama have promoted education as an anti-poverty program, but have managed to offer

little more than an appeal to the ingenuous. Groeger's admirably exhaustive history of Boston education, therefore, provides us with a rich sense of a problem with no apparent remedy.

Citing French economist Thomas Piketty, Groeger begins with the premise that social equity is not solely determined by education, but can be achieved only through a broader cultural and economic design (1). She then examines the longstanding Boston caste system of livelihoods that has withstood every supposed effort through schools to establish a more egalitarian society. Inevitable resistance to these efforts was embedded in the nineteenth-century working class hierarchy of labor factions: discrete networks of male, female, immigrant, and family trades and services that were self-trained and -regulated. To confront this stratified society, the 1830s "common school movement" developed free public schools for low-wage workers to match the educational benefits of Catholic schools in 1855, Massachusetts became the first state to prohibit school segregation. Although these laudable advances led the nation, they did not facilitate social mobility. At best, they provided fundamental literacy—for immigrants attempting to assimilate, and for children of laborers and servants to maintain for themselves the same professional standard as their parents, as industry and white-collar work evolved through the late 1800s.

Through the twentieth century, commercial training in schools became more extensive and served to disable craft- and trade-union control of the workforce. Vocational schools also answered a growing demand for qualified workers in the low white-collar and "pink-collar"—or social and domestic service—professions. Such educational programs could first select students to be channeled into jobs and then define the merits upon which they were evaluated in positions that were in service to higher echelons of corporate management. Meanwhile, high management positions remained open only to the privileged graduates of elite universities that applied their own standards of merit. Groeger points out that the Harvard placement office correspondence between the 1920s and 1940s encouraged employers to base their decisions on a nebulous "mix of technical knowledge, social and cultural skills, personal characteristics, and assumptions about what particular activities and pursuits revealed about college graduates" (229–30). In other words, exclusive institutions of education produced an oligarchy of high society professionals. Like

the philanthropists of the 1800s and the elite graduates of the 1940s, today's uber-wealthy entrepreneurs still manage our economy—and our schools. Their notions of how education can enable the underserved predominantly serve themselves.

Is there a solution? Groeger suggests “redirecting attention away from a narrow focus on education to broader labor and political solutions” and “expand [ing] access to academic governance” (257). But the general logic of these suggestions is not enough. While refocusing education may have limited effects, refocusing labor practices or political priorities may also be ineffective if the root causes of inequity are still ignored. Broadening participation in academic governance may also be meaningless without a more informed definition of expertise. Groeger's solutions, therefore, may be just as problematic as the education reforms she criticizes.

The purpose of this book, however, is less concerned with developing solutions than with providing a comprehensive history of what went wrong. To wit, the wealthy elite, rather than create universal access to the exclusive liberal education that they themselves have enjoyed, focus their support on vocational alternatives. Does the emphasis on job training lead low-wage workers to a better quality of life? Or does it merely enable the working poor to maintain their circumstances? It doesn't matter because the real purpose of such schools is to preserve efficient service professions through the growing technical demands of a changing world. Whether we are to consider this systemic devotion to corporate values as part of an oppressive agenda or as a casualty of good intentions that have missed the mark, the claim of providing equal opportunity is false. Groeger has sounded an alarm that educators, who are called upon to provide the semblance of equity, should hear.

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Deconstructing Dr. Strangelove: The Secret History of Nuclear War Films

Sean M. Maloney. Potomac Books, 2020.

At 2019's Woolf Conference, I presented a paper on *Orlando* as an *ur*-text for trans narratives cheekily

titled “*Orlando's Blooms*.” One attendee asked if the paper had anything to do with flowers. When I answered “No,” she haughtily exited. In that same vein, I must spare anyone hoping for a discussion on Derrida and “deviated *preverts*.” Rather, Maloney seeks to course correct the tendency where “art takes over from [. . .] reality” due to time's passage, and to show why the doomsday scenarios of the period's films never happened (2).

Chapter One discusses the literary roots of the genre. While post-apocalyptic works existed previously (11), the specific genre proliferated in the 1950s after bomb detonations like Castle Bravo. 1957's *On the Beach* was to Kennedy what *The Day After* was to Reagan (12). Authors profiled such as Eugene Burdick and Peter George had military backgrounds, serving during World War II. George became so horrified by the prospect of nuclear annihilation that he took his own life (21).

Maloney shifts focus to military leaders. The already-present distrust, typified by Mailer and Heller, *escalated* after “The Bomb” (49). Using Kubrick's Jack D. Ripper as a springboard, Maloney breaks down his composite nature, focusing on Curtis LeMay and Thomas Power (55). History reduced both to caricatures, the former cast as a cigar-chomping madman threatening to bomb the North Vietnamese “into the stone age” and Power as an impotent psychopath (54, 57). Maloney demonstrates both men were actually *human!* LeMay's policies on gender, sexuality, and race were firmly liberal (77–79). His cigar masked a bout with Bell's palsy (75). Power, a devout Catholic, set himself up for failure due to holding himself, and his subordinates, to impossibly high standards (91–92). Maloney closes with Power's illustrative quote that “Any fool can get into a war, but it takes a smart man to keep out of it” (98).

Why did the myths persist? Maloney sees a correlation between LeMay and Power's study of judo, given its focus on definition of victory in the opponent being “on the ground” and “helpless” (104). Their use of mass media and popular culture's intent was to scare the enemy, *any* enemy, into submission (116). This stance of mass retaliation would clash with the introduction of “mutually assured destruction” and “flexible response” in the 1960s by RAND, an organization LeMay helped create, that attacked him like Frankenstein's creature (99). Maloney shows the method to Power's “madness,” citing four key instances