Taplin's Zuckerberg is not, like Thiel or Google CEO Larry Page, an avowed libertarian. Yet if Zuckerberg wishes to build "strong and healthy communities," as he has publicly proclaimed, it would indeed seem to be incumbent, as Taplin proposes, for Facebook to take a more forthright stand in monitoring its content (p. 170).

Move Fast and Break Things reads more like a journalistic exposé than an academic monograph and, like most writing in this genre, sometimes oversimplifies to make a point. In particular, Taplin proposes an origin myth for today's commercial digital economy that is excessively one-dimensional while advancing several questionable claims about the U.S. political economy—for example, have Hamiltonian "financial elites" run the show, with the exception of the two Roosevelt presidencies? Yet it is not as a historical primer that its principal value is to be found. Rather, it is a provocative think piece that belongs on the small but growing shelf of insider accounts that diagnose endemic problems with some of today's most powerful corporations. Whether or not Taplin has the right answers, his questions are apt, and all historians interested in the relationship of business, technology, and politics should applaud his attempt to provide us with a "moral framework" for the U.S. political economy in the digital age (p. 31).

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Democracy's Schools: The Rise of Public Education in America. *By Johann N. Neem*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017. xiii + 240 pp. Bibliography, appendix, notes, index. Cloth, $22.95. ISBN: 978-1-4214-2321-0.

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Reviewed by A. J. Angulo

At first blush, public education in America today looks like big business. It is a $630 billion industry that employs more than three million teachers and serves approximately fifty million students. School districts are typically run by boards or committees that set performance targets for building-level administrators. An army of economists, statisticians, and psychometricians assemble accountability measures that analyze

school performance. Much like market analysts, they tell us how well the various sectors of our education economy are doing.

It is no surprise, then, that historians have wanted to learn about where this massive industry came from and how it evolved over time. Those of us familiar with the origin story of public education in the United States consider it to be one of the best studied areas of our educational past. Hundreds of excellent classic and contemporary works shed light on the social, cultural, political, economic, and intellectual forces that gave rise to taxpayer-funded schooling. So why another study on this topic?

The motive for Johann Neem in *Democracy's Schools* is personal in nature. He begins his book with a short biographical statement. Neem recounts his childhood experiences of immigrating to the United States from India and of how well public schools prepared him for citizenship and success. He credits teachers for instilling in him and his peers a deep appreciation for the United States and its democratic institutions. For Neem, schools are more than big business; they provide the fount from which our social and political order flow.

Democracy's Schools serves as Neem's vehicle for exploring the present in the past, or, as he puts it, "why common schools mattered then, and why they matter today" (p. x). He does so by organizing the book's themes into five main chapters.

The first two chapters highlight how Revolutionary War and antebellum-era figures viewed education as vital to the new republic. Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Rush, and William Ellery Channing make standard appearances. Neem has them describe the need for an educated citizenry to provide democratic stability and to achieve the aspirations of a country guided by the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Channing, in particular, serves as the backdrop for how subsequent leaders of the public school movement, like Horace Mann, understood their charge. For them, schools had as much to do with self-culture as with citizenship. To these ends, some of the earliest common school leaders pushed to democratize access to the liberal arts curriculum. They saw academic subjects, the Bible, and McGuffey readers as a means to an end: the production of rational, moral, disciplined, autonomous, imaginative, and self-regulating citizens.

The third and fourth chapters focus on antebellum school politics as well as the in-the-trenches experiences of teachers and students. Neem begins these two chapters by providing readers with a survey of the key political dramas that played out in the North as well as in the South. Wealthy citizens chafed at the idea of how public education might affect their bottom line. Government funding created a mishmash of public, private, and chartered academies and common schools.

Politicians clashed with citizens' groups over localism, centralization, taxation, tuition, governance, and inspections. Teachers and students, meanwhile, faced different pressures. Professionalization movements in such fields as medicine and law inspired reformers to establish normal schools for teacher training. Students came under varying kinds of discipline, ranging from the creative to the corporeal. Experiments with Prussian, Lancastrian, and Pestalozzian models of education made their way into the daily lives of teachers and students as they coped with perennial reform efforts. Their accounts add texture to the feminization of the teaching profession, the division of labor through age-segregated schooling, the extension of the calendar year, and the standardization of student assessments.

The final chapter focuses on how well mid-nineteenth-century public schools fared in their attempts to promote social cohesion. As Neem describes it, reformers wanted to address issues like economic inequality by educating children from different classes. "Horace Mann," he argues, "considered bringing together rich and poor to be one of the most important functions of public schools" (p. 140). In the end, however, schools became another battleground where social and political groups skirmished over issues of race, nativism, immigration, and religious pluralism. Of all these themes, *Democracy's Schools* gives the most attention to religion. The final chapter highlights why violence erupted between Protestants and Catholics and how their conflicts transformed into "Great School Wars" in places like New York City.

Overall, Neem does a commendable job of bringing together a well-established body of literature on the origin of public schools in the United States. Although the core features will be familiar to historians of education, those with less exposure to this episode will appreciate having a one-volume overview. Some specialists, however, might take issue with a few key claims advanced by Neem. Did southern states follow "the same process as in the North," as Neem suggests, even though his examples—South Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi—"made no provision for local taxation" (p. 74)? It turns out that the establishment of statewide systems of education hinged on the taxation issue, and this generated stark regional differences. Others might quibble with the disproportionate emphasis on religion or the lack of attention to arguments made by revisionist scholars. Neem refers readers to Diane Ravitch's work of nearly forty years ago, if they want to know more about revisionism. Engaging more directly with this literature and citing more current research might have appeased the quibblers.

Technical debates aside, this well-written overview of antebellum-era public education would add value to any history of education library. It makes a strong historical case for why public schools should

remain public and why privatization trends that emphasize self-interest too often conflict with the goal of promoting "civic virtue" and threaten the fabric of any democratic society (p. 6).

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A Little History of Economics. *By Niall Kishtainy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017. vi + 249 pp. Index. Cloth, $25.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-20636-4.
doi:10.1017/S0007680518000223

Reviewed by José Luís Cardoso

When I began reading this book, I was a little doubtful about the benefits that I was going to derive from it. Nowadays, there is very little that we can read lightly. It does not matter whether the desire to read a book arises from our sense of duty and the pleasure we may have in our chosen profession or from expectations of possibly achieving some degree of intellectual satisfaction, since the decision to do so implies making choices about something that we end up not being able to either read or do, simply because time is so scarce a commodity. This is what the economists call opportunity cost, and it is in this way, in this light and loose style, that Niall Kishtainy convinces us to embark upon a reading that, at the outset, we would consider subject to the application of the principle of diminishing marginal utility—or, in other words, that each page we read would give rise to less satisfaction than the previous one. Fortunately, the elementary principles of economic science are not always applied without question.

To avoid being convinced that all economists (always) think and write in the same tedious fashion, it is definitely worth reading this book, which contains relevant and entertaining information about the way in which, over the course of history, and particularly in the last 250 years, innovative interpretations have been made about economic problems, about the way in which people use resources to satisfy their needs, and about the means that the state and the public and private institutions have at their disposal to provide incentives and regulate—and, frequently, to impede and upset—the development of economic activity.