

Between traditions: Stephen Ball and the critical sociology of education

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Stephen Ball's work has deservedly received a good deal of attention. In this article, I detail a number of tasks in which the critical sociologist of education – as a 'public intellectual' – should engage. I then place Ball's work within these tasks and evaluate his contributions to them. In the process, I show that one of the things that set Stephen Ball apart from many others is his insistence that both structural and poststructural theories and analyses are necessary for 'bearing witness' and for an adequate critical understanding of educational realities. I demonstrate how he creatively employs both sets of traditions. At the same time as I am very positive in my evaluation of his contributions, I suggest a number of issues that Ball and those who are rightly influenced by his work could productively deal with to go further into the complexities of the relationship between education and the politics of redistribution and recognition.

Keywords: public intellectual; critical sociology of education; neoliberalism; post structuralism; Foucault, networks

On the nature of the scholar/activist

I have been reading Stephen Ball's work for a long time and deservedly so. He has consistently caused me to have an internal dialogue with his arguments. Over time, this dialogue has become as much face to face as it is textual. He has become a friend, a valued colleague, a co-editor (see Apple, Ball, and Gandin 2010), and an ally in the never-ending struggle to both better understand and interrupt dominant socio/political relations in education. Even when we may sometimes disagree, the discussions are always fruitful, always substantive, and always done in such a way that masculinist models of 'victory over an opponent' have no place in our ongoing interactions I fear that this is rarer than some critical sociologists would like to admit.

Those who know me may also know that I am not easily convinced by easy or rhetorical arguments. Because of this, I would give Stephen Ball the ultimate compliment. He has influenced my thought in important ways – and he continues to do so. Let me explain my reasons for such a compliment by drawing on Michael Burawoy's call for an 'organic public sociology,' since it provides key elements of how we might think about Ball's place in the critical sociology of education. In Burawoy's words, but partly echoing Gramsci as well, the critical sociologist:

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... works in close connection with a visible, thick, active, local, and often counter-public. [She or he works] with a labor movement, neighborhood association, communities of faith, immigrant rights groups, human rights organizations. Between the public sociologist and a public is a dialogue, a process of mutual education ... The project of such [organic] public sociologies is to make visible the invisible, to make the private public, to validate these organic connections as part of our sociological life. (Burawoy 2005, 265)

What does it mean to engage with Burawoy's vision of the critical sociologist? While I discuss this in much more depth in *Can Education Change Society?* (Apple 2013a), in general, there are nine tasks in which critical analysis (and the critical analyst) in education must engage (Apple 2010, 2013a). Let me list them and at the same time point to people, resources, and organizations that are useful in fulfilling these tasks. I shall then relate Stephen Ball's important ongoing work to these tasks.

- (1) It must 'bear witness to negativity.'¹ That is, one of the primary functions of critical analysis is to illuminate the ways in which educational policy and practice are connected to the relations of exploitation and domination – and to struggles against such relations – in the larger society.²
- (2) In engaging in such critical analyses, it also must point to contradictions and to *spaces of possible action*. Thus, its aim is to critically examine current realities with a conceptual/political framework that emphasizes the spaces in which more progressive and counter-hegemonic actions can, or do, go on. This is an absolutely crucial step, since otherwise our research can simply lead to cynicism or despair.
- (3) At times, this also requires a broadening of what counts as 'research.' Here, I mean acting as critical 'secretaries' to those groups of people and social movements who are now engaged in challenging existing relations of unequal power or in what elsewhere has been called 'nonreformist reforms,' a term that has a long history in critical sociology and critical educational studies and refers to those actions that simultaneously work in progressive ways on more proximate problems *and* open doors to further substantive transformations (Apple 2012). This is exactly the task that was taken on in the thick descriptions of critically democratic school practices in *Democratic Schools* (Apple and Beane 2007) and in the critically supportive descriptions of the transformative reforms such as the Citizen School and participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil (see Apple 2013a; Apple et al. 2003; Gandin and Apple 2012; Wright 2010).³ The same is true for CREA, an interdisciplinary research center at the University of Barcelona that is a model of how to build a research agenda and then create policies and programs that empower those who are economically and culturally marginalized in our societies (Alexiu and Sorde 2011; Aubert 2011; Christou and Puigvert 2011; Flecha 2009, 2011; Gatt, Ojala, and Soler 2011) and for The Centre for Equality Studies at University College, Dublin. It too has been at the center of research and action that stresses not only poverty and inequality, but movements toward equality (Baker et al. 2004; Lynch, Baker, and Lyons 2009).
- (4) When Gramsci (1971) argued that one of the tasks of a truly counter-hegemonic education was not to throw out 'elite knowledge' but to reconstruct its form and content so that it served genuinely progressive social needs (Apple 1996) he provided a key to another role 'organic' and 'public' intellectuals might play. Thus, we should not be engaged in a process of what might be called 'intellectual suicide.' That is, there are serious intellectual (and pedagogic) skills in dealing with the histories and debates surrounding the epistemological, political, and educational issues involved in justifying what counts as important knowledge and what counts as

an effective and socially just educational policy and practice. These are not simple and inconsequential issues and the practical and intellectual/political skills of dealing with them have been well developed. However, they can atrophy if they are not used. We can give back these skills by employing them to assist communities in thinking about this, learning from them, and engaging in the mutually pedagogic dialogues that enable decisions to be made in terms of both the short-term and long-term interests of dispossessed peoples (see Apple, Au, and Gandin 2009; Borg and Mayo 2007; Burawoy 2005; Freire 1970).

- (5) In the process, critical work has the task of keeping traditions of radical and progressive work alive. In the face of organized attacks on the 'collective memories' of difference and critical social movements, attacks that make it increasingly difficult to retain academic and social legitimacy for multiple critical approaches that have proven so valuable in countering dominant narratives and relations, it is absolutely crucial that these traditions be kept alive, renewed, and when necessary criticized for their conceptual, empirical, historical, and political silences or limitations. This involves being cautious of reductionism and essentialism and asks us to pay attention to what Fraser has called both the politics of redistribution and the politics of recognition (Fraser 1997; see also Apple 2013a; Anyon et al. 2009). This includes not only keeping theoretical, empirical, historical, and political traditions alive but, very importantly, extending and (supportively) criticizing them. And it also involves keeping alive the dreams, utopian visions, and 'nonreformist reforms' that are so much a part of these radical traditions (Apple 2012; Apple, Au, and Gandin 2009; Apple, Ball, and Gandin 2010; Jacoby 2005; Teitelbaum 1993).
- (6) Keeping such traditions alive and also supportively criticizing them when they are not adequate to deal with current realities cannot be done unless we ask 'For whom are we keeping them alive?' and 'How and in what form are they to be made available?' All of the things I have mentioned above in this taxonomy of tasks require the relearning or development and use of varied or new skills of working at many levels with multiple groups. Thus, journalistic and media skills, academic and popular skills, and the ability to speak to very different audiences are increasingly crucial (Apple 2006; Bolter 2008). This requires us to learn how to speak in different registers and to say important things in ways that do not require that the audience or reader do all of the work.
- (7) Critical educators must also *act* in concert with the progressive social movements their work supports or in movements against the rightist assumptions and policies they critically analyze. This is another reason that scholarship in critical education implies becoming an 'organic' or 'public' intellectual. One must participate in and give one's expertise to movements involved in transforming both a politics of redistribution and a politics of recognition. It also implies learning from these social movements (Anyon 2005). This means that the role of the 'unattached intelligentsia' (Mannheim 1936; see also Apple 2004), someone who 'lives on the balcony' (Bakhtin 1968), is not an appropriate model. As Bourdieu (2003, 11) reminds us, for example, our intellectual efforts are crucial, but they 'cannot stand aside, neutral and indifferent, from the struggles in which the future of the world is at stake.'
- (8) Building on the points made in the previous paragraph, the critical scholar/activist has another role to play. She or he needs to act as a deeply committed mentor, as someone who demonstrates through her or his life what it means to be *both* an excellent researcher and a committed member of a society that is scarred by persistent inequalities. She or he needs to show how one can blend these two roles

together in ways that may be tense, but still embody the dual commitments to exceptional and socially committed research and participating in movements whose aim is interrupting dominance. It should be obvious that this must be fully integrated into one's teaching as well.

- (9) Finally, participation also means using the privilege one has as a scholar/activist. That is, each of us needs to make use of one's privilege to open the spaces at universities and elsewhere for those who are not there, for those who do not now have a voice in that space and in the 'professional' sites to which, being in a privileged position, you have access. This can be seen, for example, in the history of the 'activist-in-residence' program at the University of Wisconsin Havens Center for Social Structure and Social Change, where committed activists in various areas (the environment, indigenous rights, housing, labor, racial disparities, education, and so on) were brought in to teach and to connect our academic work with organized action against dominant relations. Or it can be seen in a number of women's studies programs and Indigenous, Aboriginal, and First Nation Studies programs that historically have involved activists in these communities as active participants in the governance and educational programs of these areas at universities.

These nine tasks I have discussed above are demanding, and no one person can engage equally well in all of them. These are *collective* responsibilities. But Stephen Ball embodies a number of them in his work.

Between theories

A prime example is the fact that one of the things that set Stephen Ball apart from many others is his insistence that both structural and poststructural theories, and analyses are necessary for 'bearing witness' and for an adequate critical understanding of educational realities. In many ways, he is unparalleled in this regard.

In the process of engaging with these issues, I too have had to engage with debates over postmodern and poststructural theories. As some readers may know, I have been a consistent critic of the over-statements and loss of historical memory found within some postmodern and poststructural writings in education and the larger literature. However, concerns with identity, with the politics of language, with the multiplicity of power relations, with contingency, with power as productive, and with an antireductivist program – all of this did require that I take seriously some of the issues that this literature raised and that I integrate a number of poststructural elements into my conceptual apparatus (see also Youdell 2011). As I have said elsewhere, we are not in a church, so we should not be worried about heresy. But let me be very clear here. Postmodern and poststructural approaches are *not* replacements for more structural understandings. It is where these traditions 'rub against each other' in tense relationship with each other that progress can be made (see Apple 1999; Apple and Whitty 1999). Thus, any analysis that does not deal seriously with exploitation alongside its analysis of domination – what Fraser (1997) calls a politics of redistribution as well as a politics of recognition – is deeply limiting. And here, Stephen Ball is among the very best not only in recognizing this, but in actually doing a critical sociology of education that shows the power of each as they do indeed 'rub against each other.' Let me say more about this here.

In order to fully understand Ball's approach, the reader should not be satisfied with looking at one set of books or his work on one set of issues, although his recent research on education as a site of profit, on privatization and marketization, and on the radically

transformative effects of neoliberalism are crucial to gain access to a considerable part of his agenda and his theoretical/political/educational interests (see, e.g. Ball 2003, 2007, 2008, 2012).

In his recent book, *Foucault, Power, and Education*, Ball says that ‘I do not “do Foucault”, and I am not a Foucauldian.’ He then goes on to say that ‘... I no longer have much interest in being *something* – that is in claiming allegiance to some orthodoxy or community of like-minded scholars committed to a single theoretical position’ (Ball 2013, 1–2). While Ball is not a Foucauldian, he finds much to like in the ‘structures of feeling’ (Williams 1977) that characterize Foucault’s approach to understanding and acting on the world. Foucault ‘regarded his intellectual endeavors as a way of working on himself; he was always a work in progress, always unfinished, restless and angry’ (Ball 2013, 7).

Similar things could be said about Ball himself. Although outwardly he usually does not seem ‘restless and angry,’ from close personal experiences with him I can attest to his intellectual restlessness and his commitment to better understand and hence better interrupt a number of the multiple relations of power that so deeply scar the societies in which we live.

Ball is somewhat less overtly structural than I am. But as I said at the outset of this essay, his work over the years is deeply significant for people such as me. Implicit in a good deal of his analyses is a sense that structures are not just there, reified objects that wear their politics like neon signs glowing for all to see. Rather, they are often best thought of as embodied, as lived out in daily life in the interactions of real (classed, raced, gendered/sexed, nationed) people as they go about the mundane – and sometimes not so mundane – relations that reproduce and produce these structures and their effects.⁴ And all of this occurs in real institutions of education with real policies that have real effects. But of course this is all mediated by the complex interactions of economic, political, and cultural assemblages at specific conjunctures.

This may best be seen in Ball’s discussion of ‘performativity.’ Again, let me use his own words. In describing some of the major interests of genealogists and ethnographers, he states that:

[They] are fascinated by the minutiae of everyday life and the ways in which the sinews of power are embedded in mundane practices and in the social relationships and the haphazard and contingent nature of practices. This was never more clear to me than in the work I have done on ‘performativity,’ in looking at the ways in which lists, forms, grids, and rankings work to change the meaning of educational practice – what it means to teach and learn – and our sense of who we are in terms of these practices – what it means to be an educator, and to be educated. (Ball 2013, 6)

But while Ball’s work does have many of these characteristics, it is also connected to a detailed critical understanding of the ideological and economic dynamics of neoliberalism(s) globally and locally and to the effects of these dynamics and relations both on state policies and on those ‘minutiae of everyday life’ in schools, classrooms, and the large and small struggles over these effects. He is very good at ‘bearing witness.’ But in the process he also demonstrates how one can keep alive, employ, and extend multiple critical traditions in insightful and productive ways.

Again, taking an insight that combines Foucault and critical sociological accounts of how social networks actually get built and function—but again with a keen eye on the neoliberalization of the educational world—Ball sees power as embodied in, produced by, and lived out in ‘shifting and changing interactive networks of social relations among and between individuals, groups, institutions, and structures that are political, economical, and personal’ (Ball 2013, 29–30).

Let me direct our attention to one of the more important of Stephen Ball's recent books for a concrete example of this.⁵ But first I need to say a few words on the current ideological context in which education and so much of the larger society finds itself. Throughout the world, it is clear not only to critical researchers at universities, but just as clear both to activists in social and educational movements and to teachers and administrators in schools what the effects are of the kinds of policies that have been put in place in education and in so much else. The dominance of testing and reductive models of accountability is pronounced. In teacher education, the equivalents of Teach for America, and the attacks on teacher education in general, are growing. The calls for a focus on 'hard' rather than 'soft' subjects and a call to return to 'real curricula' and to rigorously police the teaching of them, are visible both in the government and in the media. Privatization, marketization, competition, choice – these and other similar rhetorical devices are being marshaled to convince the public that what exists in teaching, curricula, evaluation, leadership, and so much else is uniformly 'bad.' They must be replaced with neoliberal and neoconservative policies and reorganized around the technologies and ideologies of audit cultures so that the emphasis is on the constant production of evidence that one is doing 'the right thing.' The state and its forms are being transformed. New arenas for profit-making are being created. Not only are schools and pupils being commodified, but so too are knowledge and policy themselves (Apple 2006, 2012; Ball 2007; Burch 2009).

This did not happen by accident. In both *Educating the 'Right' Way* (Apple 2006) and *Can Education Change Society?* (Apple 2013a), I demonstrate how and why neoliberal, neo-conservative, and new managerial reforms are increasingly powerful in education and the larger society. I show how they are part of a more extensive social/pedagogic project to change the very meaning of the key concepts we employ to think about and judge the ends and means of our fundamental institutions. Words such as 'democracy' and 'freedom' are part of a contested terrain, and dominant groups have engaged creatively in a process that has had some very real success in altering our common sense understanding of these terms so that the 'thin democracy' of markets replaces more participatory 'thick democratic' models.

In its project of instituting 'thin' forms, neoliberalism(s) need to destabilize the opposition to its project. One of the most effective strategies has been a process of disarticulation and rearticulation. Words with what might best be called an *emotional economy* such as 'democracy' and 'justice' are to be taken from their origins in progressive movements, emptied of their previous meanings, and then filled with new meanings, all the while keeping the words themselves in circulation. Thus, through long-term and creative ideological work in the media and elsewhere, 'thick' meanings of democracy grounded in full collective participation are replaced by 'thin' understandings where democracy is reduced to choice on a market and to constantly providing evidence that one has successfully made the right decisions. These are not simply linguistic transformations, although that is important. These new understandings are accompanied by major shifts in identity. Subjectivities are slowly but ultimately radically transformed. What it means to be responsive and effective and the ways in which such things evaluated are rationalized and used to (re)organize the state and to bring the norms of the private into the public. Few people are as good as Stephen Ball in pointing out what this means.

Yet, it is important to remember that this is not a one way process. These changes are resisted and mediated. Indeed, there have been and are times when, and places where, progressive movements and policies can win back these concepts and establish more thickly critically democratic norms and institutional forms. For example, the policies in Porto Alegre, Brazil involving the Citizen School and especially participatory budgeting, provide

ample evidence that progressive alliances can themselves engage in successful disarticulations and rearticulations that are lasting (see Apple 2013a; Apple, Au, and Gandin 2009; Apple, Ball, and Gandin 2010; Gandin and Apple 2003, 2012).

The 'mundane' nature of neoliberal networks

But even with these resistances and mediations, my original point remains. It is increasingly rare to find any space that has not been inflected by neoliberal logics and policies. The fact that similar powerful transformations can be found in so many nations says something of considerable importance. The social and ideological context and content of these emphases are worldwide, often sponsored by a *network* of foundations, think tanks, consultants, entrepreneurs, and corporations. These are often linked to each other in complex and influential ways that may be hidden from public view. In one of his latest –and very important – books, *Global Education, Inc.* (Ball 2012), Stephen Ball details the nature of these interconnected networks in very clear and compelling ways.

When Raymond Williams famously said that 'culture is ordinary' (Williams 1961), he provided an insight that stands near the heart of Ball's efforts here. Ball wants to focus on the daily occurrences of neoliberalism and on the lived connections that make it seem sensible. This requires that he connect it to real people and to intricate and not always totally coherent connections among people and policies. Ball's project here partly echoes his reflections on genealogy and ethnography in his recent book on Foucault to which I pointed earlier. In his words, 'The neo-liberalism I describe is often mundane and not of a piece' (Ball 2012, xiii). It is neoliberalism, that is, 'everyday and ordinary' (Ball 2012, 2).

In the process, Ball situates neoliberal ideological agendas not in the abstractions of, say, Austrian economic theories, but in the lived connections of actors, both individuals and institutions, that form communities of discourse, people, and organizations. In his words, '... the point is to attend to how *actually existing* neoliberalism gets done' (Ball 2012, 93).

The concept of networks has a long history in critical social analysis and in studies of globalization, with Manuel Castells' work being among the most prominent (Castells 2010). Ball's use of the idea of networks may not be exactly what Castells specifically had in mind. But Ball employs it to great effect. In *Global Education, Inc.*, the concept of network is employed in two ways. The first refers to information available – through disciplined digging on websites and other on-line data sources – that illuminates the 'who' that is behind the 'what' of neoliberal policies and their dissemination and influence. Ball's prodigious efforts have paid off in this regard.

The second use of the concept of network is more sociological and refers to the interlocking assemblage of connections, funding, friendships, sponsorships, and ideological affiliations that constitute the main subject of Ball's work. These networks are successful not only because of their connections, money, and ideological sophistication, but also because in many instances existing state-centric policies are *not* successful or have left a vacuum because of their absence. As a prime example, Ball justifiably directs our attention to India, where chains of private schools are making significant inroads in part because state schools are either not there or are all too often so under-resourced and overly bureaucratic that the only seemingly real alternative is a school provided through market initiatives.

It is important to pay attention to this point. Too often critics of neoliberal agendas have an overly romantic vision of the public sphere and of existing state policies. All will be well if we keep the market at bay and if we defend existing policies and practices. This position simply will not do. As I argue at greater length elsewhere (see Apple 2006, 2013a), neoliberalism seems sensible to many people because it connects to the elements of good sense that

people have that something is decidedly wrong with what they are experiencing in education now.

In helping us understand some of this, Stephen Ball once again acts as a bricoleur, drawing theoretical perspectives from both structural and poststructural traditions. In the hands of less talented people, this can risk incoherence. This risk is not present at all in Ball's work. As I have maintained throughout this essay, he is a talented integrator, constantly demonstrating how to blend these theories and their agendas together in ways that complement, not contradict, each other. He once again demonstrates that writing clearly about complex political issues that require equally complex theoretical, historical, empirical, and educational analyses can be done well. In many ways, he can serve as a model of doing this.

This side of Ball's work may be less well known than his more 'academic' analyses, but it needs to be pointed to. A prime example of this commitment is seen in *Hidden Privatization in Public Education*, co-authored with Deborah Youdell (Ball and Youdell 2008) and published by the global union federation, Education International. This widely circulated analysis of 'the growing tendency among governments worldwide to introduce forms of privatization into public education and to move to privatize sections of public education' (9) demonstrates not only Ball's commitment, but also his ability to write in different registers. In this, he takes seriously Bourdieu's injunction that we 'cannot stand aside, neutral and indifferent, from the struggles in which the future of the world is at stake' (see also Bourdieu 1988). Once again, his commitment to many of the tasks I detailed earlier is not rhetorical, but lived.

It is clear from so much of his work on performativity and neoliberalism and on his critical discussions of how state policies are actually enacted that Ball himself has substantive and well-deserved ethical, political, and educational worries about the entire project of neoliberalism. But rather than simply rehearse previous arguments, in books such as *Global Education, Inc.* he devotes most of his discussion to the connections of positions, organizations, and people and to tracing out the intricate web in which all of this operates. Ball is scrupulously fair both to the key figures involved such as James Tooley (see Tooley 2009) and to the complexities of the hybrid politics and allegiances that may stand behind some people's acceptance of his neoliberal agenda. As in so much of Ball's work, the attention to detail lends even more power to his analysis. The focus on the 'mundane' directs our attention to the ways in which rightist commonsense is built, defended, and expanded. By 'following the money' and following the intricate web of interconnections, the ways in which neoliberalism actually works as a *movement* is made much clearer. At the same time, by identifying nodes of influence and the joint workings of social, cultural, and economic capital and the complex exchanges and conversion strategies at work, we are better able to identify where counter-hegemonic work should direct its attention.

Indeed, this is one of the points in his recent book on Foucault. He rightly argues that all too much of Foucauldian inspired work in education focuses so much on 'normalization' and 'governmentalities' that it ignores the important parts of Foucault's corpus that provide key elements of thinking anew about interruptive or transgressive possibilities (Ball 2013, 35). While I do not find Foucault's work as compelling as others, Ball's discussion is a significant reminder to and correction of those who read Foucault as simply a (more elegant) theory of social control. It is also clearly connected to my second task of finding spaces of possible action.

In significant ways, this is a welcome relief from some of the merely rhetorical writings of many people who see themselves as critical researchers. I fear that too many critical scholars on the left are satisfied with aiming rhetorical barbs at people such as Tooley and the entire assemblage of neoliberal movements. The barbs may be deserved – as I think they

are. But let us not treat the neoliberal and neoconservative agendas and the theories and people that stand behind them as if they were mindless and did not have some subtlety. Doing this simply reinstalls concepts such as ‘false consciousness’ to the center of our approaches to understanding the generation of consent. This simply will not do. Gramsci (1971) was wise when he reminded us that dominant groups attach their policies and practices to the elements of good sense, not only the bad sense of real people’s lives. How they do this, the national and international connections they assiduously build, the ways they do attach themselves to people’s understandings of the problems that are real in their communities and schools – all of this is made clearer in Ball’s detailing of the networks of neoliberalism. As I have argued elsewhere (see Apple 2006), we have much to learn from the Right’s social/pedagogic project. Understanding how they were and are able to create new hegemonic blocs and transform commonsense requires that we devote much more attention to the processes and networks that enable the Right to do much of its work. Ball’s contributions to this are crucial (see Sondel, Kretchmar, and Ferrare In press).

Going further

As with all significant authors, there have been some areas that I wish had been discussed somewhat more in Stephen Ball’s work over the years. In the past, I have asked Ball to think more deeply about a number of issues and dynamics. I have urged him to think more about how our prevailing assumptions about ‘rationality’ and the logics that underpin such assumptions are inflected by unconscious visions of the ‘irrational Other.’ As Charles Mills demonstrates in his classic book, *The Racial Contract* (Mills 1997), liberal – and hence neoliberal – understandings of the rational individual are grounded in constitutive outsides. They require for their very meaning the creation and use of an opposite, a group of people who are by their very nature not rational and who need to be reconstructed to bring them under the norms of prevailing definitions of rationality. The history of this is grounded in the history of racialization and has close connections with the construction of the male subject.⁶

While in the past Ball’s analytic project did not allow for these connections to be as fully visible as they might have been, his recent work on ‘race’ and the control of bodies and how this proved to be dialectically connected to the process of state formation is a productive step in this direction (Ball 2013). His is a largely Foucauldian reading of this process, one that at times I wish was grounded in more structural ideas about the racial state and the political economy of empire (see also Gillborn 2008). But there can be no doubt that he is indeed in process and is making crucial gains that can help all of us. Once again, let us remember that this is a *collective* responsibility. Linkages both to the issues involved in fully understanding the neoliberal agenda and the hidden logics of race and gender that undergird it need to be pursued in greater depth by all of us. The fact that many of the networks that Ball has so clearly documented in *Global Education Inc* include foundations and interest groups that are deeply conservative in issues not only involving the economy, but in for example Biblical understandings of women’s roles, in anti-evolutionary and creationist theories, and in eugenical views of human intelligence provides some further hints of these interconnections.

There is much more that can and should be said about Stephen Ball’s continuing contributions. Having seen him teach, observed his dedicated mentorship of postgraduate students, and been present in the United Kingdom and many other nations when in seminars and before large academic *and* nonacademic audiences – including his influential lectures at the Havens Center at the University of Wisconsin—he has challenged dominant interpreta-

tions of educational realities and challenged his audiences to act against them, I also know the flame that burns underneath his usual calm exterior. This talented bricoleur deserves his place in the very top rank of critical sociologists of education. And, like many other critical scholar/activists, I shall certainly continue to learn from him.

Notes

1. I am aware that the idea of 'bearing witness' has religious connotations, ones that are powerful in the West, but may be seen as a form of religious imperialism in other religious traditions. I still prefer to use it because of its powerful resonances with ethical discourses. But I welcome suggestions from, say, Muslim critical educators and researchers for alternative concepts that can call forth similar responses. I want to thank Amy Stambach for this point.
2. Here, exploitation and domination are technical not rhetorical terms. The first refers to economic relations, the structures of inequality, the control of labor, and the distribution of resources in a society. The latter refers to the processes of representation and respect and to the ways in which people have identities imposed on them. These are analytic categories, of course, and are ideal types. Most oppressive conditions are partly a combination of the two. These map on to what Fraser (1997) calls the politics of redistribution and the politics of recognition. See also Davis (2006).
3. Luis Armando Gandin's close connections to and analyses of the critically democratic policies and practices in education in Porto Alegre provide outstanding examples of such efforts. See also Wright (2010).
4. This of course was one of the insights that gave Bourdieu's work in for example *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984) much of its power.
5. Parts of what follows are based on Apple (2013b).
6. By mandating audit cultures and infusing as many institutions as possible with neo-liberal policies surrounding the production of entrepreneurial identities, the norms of love, care, and solidarity that are constitutive structures of thick democratic institutions and societies are made considerably less powerful. Indeed, they are seen as fundamentally irrational under the logics of cost-benefit analysis. See Lynch, Baker, and Lyons (2009) for a powerful discussion of the crucial role that these norms play in the struggle for equality. On the racializing effects of all of this, see also Lipman (2011).

Notes on contributor

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