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Knowledge is produced within power relations, therefore power and power dynamics are central to any analysis of education policy. Education policy and practice are similarly interlinked by class, race, disability and blood, relentlessly mutating into different varieties, environments and appearances, and endlessly involving power. This is the essence of Stephen Ball’s (2013), *Foucault, Power and Education*. Drawing mainly from Foucault but referring to other sources, Ball attempts to provide perspective on contemporary education policy and practice, and to explore the evolution of power versus knowledge interactions. He demonstrates that though we cannot avoid power relationships, we can try to modify them.

*Foucault, Power and Education* is therefore about relationships between Foucault's concepts, and methods,

and educational inquiry, examination and strategy. It is an assembly of educational queries and enquiries about education organized around an interplay between problems, periods and a chronology. It delineates the genealogy of education policy and the history of the education present. The history of education is portrayed as being grounded in truth and power. It is moreover a history of “struggles—in relation to class, race, gender, and ability” (p.64). Ball argues that historical conditions of modern education comprised a combination of truth and power in specific political and fiscal demands, and that those circumstances and arrangements still form the foundation of the present day education.

Over time in the educational arena, several dissimilar Foucaults have been construed in different contexts. In this book Ball presents his individual version of Foucault, an “ethno-sociological Foucault" (p.24). Ball however insists that he is not a Foucauldian. Although the book has Foucault in its title, and the author draws extensively from the work of Foucault, this book is not about Foucault per se. It is a book about the works of Foucault, especially genealogy as a practice of illuminating investigation. This book is not about being Foucauldian but about “doing” Foucault, using his work to analyze and understand education policy. Among Foucault's key concepts was the writing of genealogies. Genealogy challenges and frees scholars to explore new horizons and to be resourceful, to refuse to accept the impressions, restrictions and constructions of the normal "social sciences". Foucault's work further provides a set of effective tools for intervening within contemporary discourses of power. He shows that much of what happened in the past wasn't really necessary then and it may still be unnecessary today.

Ball's background as an educational sociologist and renowned scholar is evident as he promulgates a cogent systematic approach. He is part of the history he is reworking and in so doing he reworks himself as well as challenges the reader to rework themselves. This moreover creates credibility because he writes from the heart and from experience. He draws from the "processes, observations, cracks, silent shocks, malfunctionings, etc." gathered from years of interacting and working with different individuals and institutions. He eloquently relates
sociology to policy. He succeeds in presenting an account of contemporary education and reworking the past of education policy which is what he sets out to do. He presents education policy as a series of historical procedures, facts, themes, and of relationships of control and of administration. He analytically connects “policy historiography with the substantive issues of policy at particular hegemonic moments, policy archaeology with conditions that regulate policy formations, and policy genealogy with social actors’ engagement with policy” (Gale, 2001, p.385). Ball therefore successfully transposes the way we conventionally think about and analyze education policy. By addressing the dreadful and debasing history of categorizations and omissions, he applies marginalization and wretchedness to the analysis of policy rather than using policy to consider segregation.

The text follows an arrangement based on Foucault's three major problematizations, that is, a history of problems and practices; an analysis of power and a history of the subject; and a history of the present. These problematizations are distributed between four main sections; 1 – Do we Really Need Another Book about Foucault? 2 – Let’s Rewrite the History of Education Policy 3 – A Thoroughly Modern Education—Blood Flows Through it! and 4 – How Not to be Governed in That Way? The strength of this structural design is its ability to serve readers not very conversant with Foucault’s work but also provide substance for more familiar readers. While the book is not a complete resource on the analysis of education policy and practice, it provides ‘starting points’ – methods of analysis especially archeology and genealogy, and an array of perspectives for others to adopt and develop. Most of the examples Ball uses are from England, but he manages to establish universal educational perspectives that can be applied to other contexts worldwide.

In “Do we Really Need Another Book about Foucault?” Ball denies being Foucauldian but nonetheless explores what can be learnt from Foucault, and how to do Foucault. One is the possibilities of thought, that is, the ability to think differently in new spaces and to avoid contemporary analytic clichés. In refusing to be a "something" Foucault chooses to operate at an archeological rather than epistemological level of knowledge. He considers what
counts as the truth and how it is created instead of connecting objects and subjects to the truth. Ball asserts that Foucault has profoundly influenced him, his work and the way he works. He therefore offers a Foucauldian recipe book with analytical techniques, tests and considerations that can be used as preliminaries in addressing daily educational concerns. For instance, education policy can be seen as having emerged from “a reluctant but necessary state and a set of uneasy relationships between the state, the teacher and the parent” (p. 28). So we indeed need another book on Foucault so that we can “apply his problematizations, the examination of the ways in which things become thinkable and practicable systematically to education policy” (p. 153).

“Let’s Rewrite the History of Education Policy” focuses on the interplay between knowledge and power. Ball encourages a policy analysis approach that focuses on “practices rather than laws, on discourses rather than rhetorics, on techniques and procedures rather than structures” (p. 38). This entails scrutinizing interrelated genealogies and rendering some acceptable forms of power inexcusable. Ball shows how power played a role in education right from the inception of the first schools evidenced by the figures of power (the teachers, head teachers and inspectors) who represent a new state, a new bureaucracy, new knowledge and new skills (p.41). Schooling was used as a form of radical mediation and teachers and learners were placed within systems of performance evaluation and performance rewards. We can identify some of them today, for instance performance based funding, comparisons and categorizations. The history of education and educational policy can therefore be construed as a "set of relations among games of truth and practices of power" (p.44). It is "a history of classification and exclusion and a history of blood" (p.45).

Overtime learners have been divided into pedagogical and psychological categories such as; “feeble minded, backward, at risk, ready to learn, ADHD, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled etc.” (p. 48). This 'making up' of people comprised five interrelated components that is, grouping, subjects, institutions, knowledge and experts. Foucault and Ball seem to be suggesting that historical inequalities were power laden and that they were
perpetuated by rigid interpretations of facts. They challenge educators to contest and discard dualistic groupings that diverge and essentialize categories, and imply a likeness or uniformity among all members of one category (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

“A Thoroughly Modern Education—Blood Flows Through it!” develops the notion of genealogical enquiry and its relationship to blood and racism. Ball relates genealogy to regulation and discipline within education policy. He specifies the historical and relational aspects of the experiences, difficulties, categorizations, omissions and some disregarded ideas that collectively shape education policy and practice. He specifically considers the place of the irregular in education policy because “the irregular are not part of education policy, but nonetheless define, underpin and specify it” (p. 84). Ball recommends a better approach to education policy that explores the origin of labeling and plasma, and all the negativities that exclude some people from education. Ball further challenges educators to rethink the politics of inclusion. For instance, to consider the way students are arranged, discoursed and trained. He draws from Foucault's concepts to suggest fresh ways of thinking and acting as educators. He condemns residualization that divides learners into those who are worth investing in and those who are not.

“How not to be governed in that way” addresses the intertwined subjects of subjectivity, neo-liberalism and ethics. Subjects are produced through modes of inquiry which describe what learners exactly do, for instance linguistics (expression), economics (fabrication), and biology (existing). Dividing practices place subjects into categories and subclasses, and self-subjectivism is the way individuals recognize themselves as subjects. In discussing neo-liberalism, Ball challenges the reader to consider how we are converted by neo-liberalism into varied types of educators and pupils. This explains the commodification and marketization of education. This is what constitutes government. Higher education institutions operate under performativity where productivity is emphasized for instance, "more publications, more research grants, and more students. We must keep up, strive to achieve the new and ever more"(p. 136).
All four sections of the book explore a space that offers academics possibility for new modes of thought and operation, and particular ethics of intellectual work as a practice of self. Like Ball, Scholars who read and understand Foucault will be moved to question the ways in which they might be invalidated, the claims they can make about their scholarship, its functionalities and role in modernist human science. Drawing from Ball and Foucault, scholars should be able to establish means of working in the “tensions between technologies of competency and technologies of the self” (p.3). They could identify an ethical sphere in which they can practice differently, discovering the odds and impossibility of lapse, and estimating the values, dangers and costs of being either ingenuous or deceptive. This could truly disconcerting especially because scholars have to query the deep-rooted social order, relinquish their firmly established truths, and just hold on to the delicate promise of freedom. They may further have to disturb the serenity with which public difficulties have been believed to be normal and acceptable incidences. They may also have to reconsider the author function and the progression of text production, that is, how they write and how they think about writing. In essence by writing this book Ball challenges scholars to rework themselves, rethink education, practically address education problems and explore possibilities.

Ball does not simply point out what might be wrong with contemporary education policy and practice, he identifies the assumptions, and the unconsidered and unchallenged philosophies underlying educational practice. By considering freedom and the dangers of freedom, this work avails instruments for intervening within modern dialogues of power. For instance, it objectively offers another lens through which power can be viewed, that is, power is not always negative and counterproductive it can be constructive.

Power is sometimes an opportunity to be successful, fulfilled or loved. It is not always harmful. We are active within relations of power. Power is not then a structure but rather a complex arrangement of social forces that are exercised; it is a strategy embedded in other kinds of relations. It is calculative but none—subjective. It has
rationality separate from the individuals who enact it (p.30).

Apart from making sense of the past in the present, olden times can also be made unacceptable through questioning the history that envelops us and aggressively thrusts the truth upon us. Tracing the development and synthesis of an interconnected set of educational "fabulations" across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries into the twenty first. Ball challenges the readers especially scholars and educators in the knowledge economy not to remain outside of their own history and outside of themselves but to ethically rework themselves. Ball explains how educators can draw from Foucault to reconsider and rewrite the history of educational practice and policy.

On the whole, not only will reading this book positively disconcert and discomfort scholars, it will empower them to think differently and to consider innovative viewpoints. That's why, Foucault, Power and Education, would be an excellent addition to the library of anyone interested in the philosophies of Foucault, and in a broad overview of the genealogy and archaeology of educational practice and policy. It is a vital starting point in addressing the educational questions and questions about education that plague the academia today.

References


About the Reviewer

Susan Namalefe is a doctoral student in the higher education program at the University of North Texas. Susan possesses graduate degrees from Monash University (Australia) and the Uganda Management Institute, Kampala, and a B.A. from Makerere University (Uganda). Prior to her graduate studies, Susan worked for years as an
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