

REVIEW SYMPOSIUM

Education, Globalization and the Nation State

ANDY GREEN, 1997

London, Macmillan

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As a range of commentators from across the academic spectrum and the political community have argued, global economic and cultural relations have inextricably shifted over the past 20 years, leading to massive reverberations in and across a number of hitherto stable institutional contexts (Harvey, 1989; Rifkin, 1995). Education has proven to be a particularly salient site for interrogation here for, as Bruner (1996) notes, controversies around education—what it is and how it should be organized—provide particularly good barometers of broader cultural forces and tensions. The current ‘global landscape’ within which these debates are occurring is highly unpredictable and often intensely paradoxical (Appadurai, 1996). Ideologies, technologies, media images, identities, and financial interests are increasingly spreading across the globe in often contradictory ways, intractably complicating educational questions and debates (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 1997). Researchers, theorists, and policy-makers alike are no longer sure exactly what role education should play in preparing young people for the highly volatile and unpredictable world that some now euphemistically call the ‘global community’—a world in which the very notion of the ‘nation state’, traditionally the outer point of reference in the education of young people, has been called into question as a relevant construct (Morley & Robins, 1995). Sadly, however, compelling theoretical, empirical and ethnographic studies of globalization and its multiple and complex effects are exceedingly hard to come by, especially from those working within the postmodern paradigm. Hyperbolic claims as to globalization’s triumph over the state or, on the contrary, pessimistic assertions of the capitalist state’s permanence and indestructibility, occupy a space in the intellectual field that would be better served by more sober and careful scholarship.

In *Education, Globalization and the Nation State*, Andy Green works diligently to prune the excesses of proponents of postmodernism and globalization, those who insist on the end of meta-narratives’ and the demise of totalizing institutions such as the state. Green, in this provocative and compelling text, argues that the modern state formation is not going anywhere, despite coming up against massive pressures towards dissolution. Rather, the new and undeniable global reality of economic and social interdependence and interpenetration has fostered as many new roles for states as it has foreclosed old ones. The state, he notes, is not an anachronistic construct, slowly receding into history, as many would argue. Even as it has taken on new roles and functions, it has remained an entirely relevant and pivotal institutional complex in modern society.

Green’s belief in the durability of the nation state has far reaching implications for education and educational policy. He argues throughout *Education, Globalization and the*

Nation State that the most economically and culturally successful nation states have carefully and strategically deployed centralized state education as an invaluable tool of nation building, and should continue to do so. Following on from his earlier volume, *Nation and State Formation* (Green, 1990), he maintains a strong historical perspective in this text, always pointing to the contingencies of state formation and the historical decisions and accidents that have allowed states to be realized in particular ways and not others.

Green, however, takes a more prescriptive stance in *Education, Globalization and the Nation-State* than in his earlier book, arguing that effective nation-states—especially in fraught historical moments such as the one in which we now live—can strategically plan their educational systems based on the best examples of successful state formations. Here, Green points unequivocally to the emergent nations of South East Asia and the centripetal states of Europe such as France. In such countries, the centralized public organization of education has helped both to cement allegiance to the state and to reproduce highly skilled and literate general populations. These ‘high achieving’ countries are counter-posed with less successful countries—such as the Anglo countries of the West, England and the US especially—that have taken a more laissez-faire stand toward national educational planning with deleterious consequences for large segments of their young people.

The state planning of education systems, Green argues, needs to take place on two fronts, the economic and the cultural, although it has failed more clearly in terms of the latter. This failure to maintain ‘social cohesion’, he notes, threatens to cripple civil democracies. Throughout this text, Green holds tightly to the ideal of ‘public spheres’ and broad-based participatory democracies enabled by feelings of national cohesion. Taking aim at those who would criticize the role of centralized education in forging such a culturally mobilized unity, he writes:

The scope for education to act as a socially integrative force in contemporary society is not necessarily diminished or impeded by the forces of globalization and postmodernity. What has diminished perhaps is the political will of governments, at least in the West, to pursue the goals of social cohesion and social solidarity. (Green, 1997, p. 186)

The stakes, as noted, are very high for Green. Giving up on public education in the service of forging civil, democratic spheres in tantamount to barbarism. He writes, in this most striking passage:

Marx once wrote that ‘socialism or barbarism’ was the choice facing capitalist societies. Most governments in the advanced states today, needless to say, would not agree. However, under the impact of global capitalism, and despite the current neo-liberal vogue, governments may soon find themselves facing another dichotomy more redolent of Hobbes than Marx—between the state or barbarism. Let us hope that by then democracy is still part of the equation.

The cohesive civic nation may still be the best guarantor of this. (*ibid.*, p. 170)

As such, Green argues throughout *Education, Globalization and the Nation State* that current moves on both the right and the left to institute variants of local school control are to be avoided. Such efforts—wherever they get their political impetus—are marked by debilitating market logics. Both positions, he posits, rely on individual ‘choice’ as realized through market imperatives, often eliding the importance of common curricula, standards, and expectations. While the right tends to want some version of ‘school choice’, putting more control into the hands of the consuming individual, those on the

left—Green's 'postmodern neo-libertarians'—tend to advocate localized educational systems serving the wants and needs of small-scale communities. Both are part of the same problem, he stresses; the same failure to realize the necessity of civil democracy in emerging economies and political cultures.

Green thus favours broad-based public education in the service of national imperatives. Contrary to many right-wing theorists and policy-makers, however, he clearly has an inclusive agenda, advocating a kind of Habermasian 'civil society' open to all, inviting a diversity of opinions, but ultimately in service of single national 'publics' and their normative cultural and political agendas. In this regard, Green notes that a central problem for researchers and policy-makers alike will be how to effect such a system of procedural consensus and compromise. He writes, toward the end of the book, that 'competing claims to loyalty of the local community, the region, the nation and the supra-national world' will have to be worked out on multiple levels and education will have a key role to play here. He argues, in conclusion, that education 'must strive to promote civic identity and civic competence and to make possible a democratic and cohesive society' (p. 186).

Education, Globalization and the Nation State, is a compelling and forceful text which attempts to suggest policy based on the best examples of the past and present. As noted, Green's attention to history is remarkable. Yet, Green seems much better at exploring and interrogating these histories than in offering a forward-looking vision for education. At points, Green seems locked into the very history he himself has constructed. For example, Green spends a large part of his book trying to convince the reader that nation states, as well as state education systems, have always responded to changing historical conditions and will continue to do so. As he writes, 'there is no reason to think that modern states will cease to expect states to perform [their] Durkheimian function; and so long as this is the case it is hard to agree with the postmoderns that diversification and fragmentation are the order of the day' (p. 28). The logic here, however, is largely circular. States and the education systems that serve them have the highest motivation in reproducing themselves, often through symbolic and material force (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970; Bernstein, 1977). The more important issue, it seems, is whose interests the project of state-building serves, whose interests it ignores, and whose interests it represses.

Green's efforts to answer such questions are not wholly satisfying. For example, Green speaks of 'high achieving educational systems', such as that of France, without interrogating the implications of terms such as 'achievement' or the multiple forms of inequality such systems typically generate (p. 129). In this case, the work of Bourdieu, particularly *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984), leads us to interrogate a far more complex set of consequences that flow out of the French educational system than those offered by Green. Indeed, while Green provides the reader with a litany of quantitative measurements such as levels of educational achievement and literacy to buttress his claims, he does not entertain alternative—locally and personally validated—sets of evaluation. He does not ask if these systems are meeting multiple other, more egalitarian and humanitarian, goals.

One thus has little sense of what life is like to those individuals and groups, both marginal and central, in the educational systems and nations he valorizes (e.g. France, Germany and Singapore). Green's aggregate measurements capture only a small piece of this much larger picture. Furthermore, his quantitative approach is particularly unhelpful for dealing with questions of identity, questions which lie at the heart of the dynamics of globalization in modern education and society. Green, in fact, does not seriously

entertain the problems of opening up education systems to a more diverse group of voices and agendas. He merely gestures toward them, eclipsing a more serious exploration of the problematics of identity construction in global communities today. To address these issues in more compelling ways, Green would have to step into the messy and multiple fields of popular youth culture. Here, as throughout *Education, Globalization and the Nation State*, however, Green steadfastly avoids the implications of these dynamic arenas of contemporary youth experiences, pleasures and meanings.

Green picks his fights carefully. He collapses many critical approaches under the banner of 'postmodernism' and is particularly critical of tendencies within the postmodernist camp to privilege localized thinking and theorizing. Yet, as critics such as Said (1993) have pointed out, postmodernism does not exhaust all contemporary critical scholarship. Postmodernism, should not, for example, be confused with postcolonialism. Indeed, postcolonial theorists raise very different issues *vis-à-vis* changing global political and economic relations. Most specifically, postcolonialism posits political questions and agendas about self-determination absent in postmodern discourse—questions linked to group and not to individualist concerns with fragmentation and entropy. Hence, while Green sees a potential problem in the right co-opting the left through postmodern discourse, he does not engage those voices that cannot, by definition, be so unproblematically appropriated—voices engaging in the constant collective process of resisting imperialism and racial domination. For example, Green avoids questions about imperial projects and fights over the curriculum, clinging to functional notions of the state and relatively unproblematic notions of the 'public' and the curriculum that might serve 'it' (McCarthy, 1998).

In short, Green sets up a straw figure in postmodernism, avoiding the critical concerns of postcolonial and minority theorists of education, theorists not so easily co-opted by the right. While he argues for a 'public' that serves the interests of all, he does not interrogate in any real way the character of that public and the interests it might or might not serve. Green seems quite oblivious to the possibility of competing or multiple publics (Fraser, 1997). His desire is to cobble together a public sphere that embraces the modern world while pasting over some of its most powerful contradictions—for example, those around gender, class, and race. Green concludes, as noted, that states should have the 'will' to forge 'inclusive' national identities in the service of 'public' participatory democracies. But as a conclusion this is a weak starting point—not an ending point—for a critical discussion of education and globalization.

In summary, Green misses the mark in his critiques of the radical left. He is correct to point out the limits of local thinking, a point not entirely lost on most radical political theorists, including Giroux and Aronowitz. He is correct to challenge the excesses of postmodern and globalization theorists. But Green seems to be ruled by an overmastering wish fulfillment—a dream of an ideal public sphere, with maybe a gesture or two to minority communities. This is a public sphere in which the work of education is to neutralize difference. Green does not seriously question if, and how, we can maintain this sense of a 'public sphere', while keeping it open to multiple and diverse voices, in process and dialogue. These seem, ultimately, to be mutually exclusive goals for Green. He does not question his rigid, functional model of the state, trapped, as he is, in his own positivist logic. He does not question as clearly as he might how his own work might be manipulated by conservative agendas.

This said, Green has written a very important book; one that is welcome for its intellectual rigour as well as its forthrightness and its sobriety toward debates around globalization, postmodernism, the nation state and educational change. For all our

critiques—and in all fairness, they are exceedingly difficult issues to address—we recommend it highly.

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Andy Green's name is synonymous with the thesis proposing that differential educational development in a variety of countries can be explained through a close look at the nature and timing of the process of state formation, rather than through accounts of industrialization or urban development. That thesis was put forward in a masterly analysis in Green's first major publication in 1990, and indeed, *Education and State Formation* has become a standard and oft-quoted text, an essential component of the diet of any education scholar. It must be very difficult for an author whose first publication achieves such critical acclaim to follow the early achievement with anything as substantial and influential.

Education, Globalization and the Nation State takes up several of the themes and methods first announced by Green in 1990. We find the same focus on careful argumentation, the same exercise of the sort of historical and comparative imagination that Wright Mills recommends (and that Hobsbawm—clearly one of Green's intellectual mentors—practices to perfection), the same methodological rigour in appraising views not on the basis of their trendiness, but rather by a careful disentangling of issues, use of country-by-country data, and in-depth knowledge of school systems. Above all, we find the same contention that the nation state is still fundamental to the organization of a variety of key issues in contemporary life, including education. In making this argument, Green refers not only to France, England, Germany and the US, but to Asian countries as well, and

particularly to Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. This reflects Green's new interests and research agendas and provides a salutary broad view, away from the Euro-centric gaze of many scholars.

The book is made up of seven chapters. Most of these have been published as articles in journals or chapters in books, and the author tells us in his Introduction that he hopes 'despite their heteroclitic origins, the chapters in this book form a coherent whole and a sustained argument' (p. 5). As with several publications of this sort, the author's aspirations are fulfilled only in part. While Green's discussions regarding the nation state—and how this influences the past, present and future development of education systems—undoubtedly weaves the narrative together, appearing as it does at several important junctures in each of the different chapters, there are, nevertheless, several repetitious overlaps which keep reminding the reader that what we have here is a collection of articles, rather more than a book where the theme is sustained and developed in an purposefully organized and incremental manner. The focus on 'globalization' announced in the title of the publication, and which therefore leads the reader to expect to encounter frequently in the text, in fact only appears in the final, and to my mind, most engaging chapter. Furthermore, given the fundamental importance that the concept 'nation state' has in most of Green's arguments, one would have expected a thorough and up-front analysis of theories of the state, an area which has been the subject of much scholarship in the last couple of decades. As it is, readers have to piece together Green's underlying perspectives from a number of discussions spread throughout the book, and as applied to such substantive issues as technical and vocational education and training, policy-making, decentralization of state apparatus, and so on.

These criticisms are, however, overcome by the considerable merit of this book; a work which I found to be thoroughly engaging and instructive. Let me highlight what I think are some strengths of this publication, over and above those I have already referred to. First of all, Green has a sure grasp of several inter-related disciplinary fields, and he brings his knowledge to bear on specific issues in a way that does justice to their complexity. History, economics, regional/national/international politics, sociological and philosophical perspectives are all drawn upon holistically in order to illuminate a problematic concern. This is, of course, as it should be, but not many authors writing on education today have the ability to articulate this knowledge in a way that is neither overwhelmingly rhetorical nor superficial. And that brings me to another strength in Green's writing, namely his close attention to detail, his meticulous concern for examining claims in the light of evidence, practicing a Popperian kind of methodology as he sets about considering postmodernist, post-fordist, or globalization theories, or generally falsifying educational canons of the day, such as those which assert the superiority of decentralized systems of education over centralized ones, or the value of supposedly 'child-centred' forms of curricular provision over those which are more performance oriented. A third strength in Green's analysis is his broad purview. The increasing complexity of the contemporary world (and disillusionment with it and with the grand narratives that the last two centuries have generated) has led many education scholars to move away from the macroanalyses that marked the heady 1970s and early 1980s, to a find refuge in a focus on the local, the specific, and the particular. As one expects, comparative educational scholarship without some kind of overarching framework tends to lead to theoretically flaccid, descriptive accounts of different educational practices, often resulting in nothing more than *thesauruses* that are somehow meant to provide insight to policy-makers. In contrast, Green shows himself capable of bridging the gap between the micro and the structural level, given his intimate knowledge of

systems and the contexts in which they work, and the explanatory strength afforded by the concept of 'state formation'. Indeed, it is this generative concept which gives most mileage to Green's research programme, and which leads him to consider educational development and practices across the globe.

In articulating his position, Green rejects both postmodernism and its 'twin'—globalization. The first, he convincingly argues, has 'little of value to offer educational theory but it has many dangers' (p. 20). The second overstates its claims, resting as it does 'on extrapolations from trends that are observable, but local and uneven' (p. 156). In confronting both analytic currents, Green marshals an impressive range of evidence which certainly disrupts any quiescent acceptance of what is dismissively and incisively referred to as an attempt 'to resuscitate a now somewhat moribund libertarian progressivism with the latest theoretical tonic' (p. 18).

What is interesting here is that Green argues his position not only in terms of value commitments, but also in terms of the logic of the claims made by the paradigms he contests. Thus, for instance, his case against voluntarist, neo-liberal policies involving unfettered control by the markets is based on historical and contemporary evidence which suggests that educational achievement—be this in technical and vocational training (see Chapter 4), or in school results more generally (see Chapter 6)—is higher in systems which are based on a relatively high degree of state regulation, 'where government acts in a concerted fashion at different levels to define and operationalize the system, including defining and enabling the roles of the different social partners within it. Although not invariably 'centralized', the most effective systems do indeed all appear to show signs of "tight regulation" in the critical areas, with high levels of policy coherence, institutional systematization and close articulation between levels of the Education and Training system and between the EY system and the labour market. Such systems are clearly not "market" systems or even "quasi-market" systems' (p. 129).

For these reasons and others, Green argues that the state is far from being the most historically recent expression of organized repression. Rather, Green argues that nation states are the only guarantors of social solidarity in a world that has grown increasingly fissiparous and individualistic. Indeed, Green cryptically comments that governments of advanced states today are facing one major choice, not between 'socialism or barbarism', as Marx had stated, but 'between the state or barbarism' (p. 170). Of course, what Green is committed to is not chauvinistic, inward-looking, ethno-centric nationalism but rather to democratic states that generate 'a civic national identity based on common political commitments and understanding, not divisive cultural myths' (p. 5), and that face up to the challenge of finding 'renewed forms of social solidarity commensurate with their new roles in the global order' (p. 2). Such an understanding has important implications for education in the new millennium. Green struggles against the postmodern conceptualization of the educational project as 'a matter of individualized consumption in a market of differentiated educational products' and where 'education as a public, collective and social process disappears'. Quite to the contrary, Green suggests that 'the decline of socially integrating institutions and the consequent atrophy of collective social ties, education may soon again be called upon to stitch together the fraying social fabric' (p. 186). Echoing Durkheim, Green concludes that education has a major role to play in helping the individual construct identities and negotiating loyalties 'within the complex constellation of collectivities defined by geography, ethnicity, age and nationality as well as cultivating the skills and predispositions which enable active and conscious participation in democratic society at community and national levels' (p. 186).

For those of us who still find meaning in the enlightenment project and consider

education vital in the generation of democratic and open public spheres in a so-called global system that so effectively shuts individuals and groups out, Green's book provides valuable insights and powerful arguments that sustain our commitment.

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Andy Green has been well known for debunking long-held beliefs among educational historians. His first book, *Education and State Formation*, a comparative study, was critical in leading to a re-evaluation of the common-sense understanding that industrialization and urbanization provoked the growth of mass education systems in the nineteenth century. In that text, as now in *Education, Globalisation and the Nation State*, he argues 'that it was the nature and timing of the process of state-formation which largely determined the course of development of national education systems ... more than theories of industrialisation or urban development' (p. 135). Green argues that the acceleration of state formation occurs at the moment when there was a 'national crisis in state viability' (p. 34)—whether of territory, of independence, or of national identity. This time, Green has selected what has become the new buzzword of the 1990s—globalization—and scrutinized its largely unproblematized link to educational restructuring and the death of the nation state, and therefore the potential demise of national education systems, in the face of market liberalism. Green cautions us that while nation states may have less control over national economics, education and training are also perceived as critical responses to economic globalization. Hence, the trend has been to increase rather than decrease control over education.

The text, comprising a selection of his recently published work, has the repetitions and gaps one expects from such collections. Despite this, it provides a sophisticated synthesis of a wide-ranging body of empirical historical and contemporary research as it relates to national education systems and globalization. Green, like many historians and social theorists analysing globalization, argues that how globalization is understood and responded to is as much about perceptions, ideology and world views as it is about fundamental shifts in historical and cultural conditions. His analysis is important because it indicates how the nature of the state with respect to education has altered over time in different societies depending upon a range of factors ranging from internal governmental arrangements (federal/state/local relations) and social pressures (demographics), to external economic pressures, as well as cultural attitudes to education and social inequality. Furthermore, he counters post-Fordist claims of social progressivism, by suggesting that they are premised upon local and uneven trends rather than historical evidence. Thus

recent trends are correctly identified, but tendencies are derived without consideration of likely counter-changes; the dialectic of history is missing ... like *laissez-faire* liberalism, globalisation theory has a strong tendency towards economics, reading the political off unproblematically from what it takes to be inevitable economic trends (p. 157).

His text refutes any reductionist or deterministic readings of the relations between globalization, nation-state formation and education.

The text is not the usual Western-oriented analysis, in that it draws valuable

comparisons between East Asian, European and North American educational histories. First, the comparison of how the so-called successful Asian Tiger states have responded differently to the forces of globalization, effectively counters Western contemporary economic orthodoxies which assume that economic growth or international competitiveness require a non-interventionist small state and weak domestic policy. Second, the contrast highlights education's role in non-economic aspects of state-formation. The role of education in the nineteenth century was to provide trained administrators, engineers and military personnel, spread dominant cultures, inculcate popular ideologies of nationhood for the political and cultural unity of new nation states, cement ideological hegemony of dominant classes, and promote popular literacy and generalize dominant language to foster national identity and assimilate immigrant cultures (p. 35). War as well as the drive for economic growth stimulated moves towards centralization, spurred on by 'popular nationalisms' to harness the collective energy of the state. The US, land of democratic localism, thus stands out as underplaying and masking the presence of the state, yet one which uses nationalism powerfully to build the republic. It is this sense of tension and sensitivity to contradiction, both within and between particular state formations, that Green deals with so well.

Green's analysis appeals to an Australian educator who has experienced various phases of educational restructuring in the past decade undertaken by a nation state striving to compete in global markets by reinventing education as an 'arm of economic policy' (Taylor *et al.*, 1997). It also resonates with many historians' nervousness, if not defensiveness, about postmodernist claims that the text is everything, and history is dead. His arguments point to the complexity and continuities of modernist forms of governmentality and the intransigence of educational institutions in the face of radical change, reminding us that what we think of as radical may not be so radical; an indictment of the superficiality of many postmodernist analyses of the late twentieth century. Green's capacity to bring together an empirically strong comparative perspective across a range of education systems keeps postmodernists honest because it foregrounds the differential ways in which seemingly similar structural reforms are reshaped by different contexts and cultural value systems which counter the popular storylines of post-Fordism. While his emphasis on continuity counters postmodernist arguments about disaggregation, chaos and fragmentation. This text puts the current frenzy over globalization into perspective, indicating that a global or world view is not just a 1990s phenomenon.

The text opens with a critical review of the various strands of postmodernist social theory, in particular post-Fordism, its origins and current articulations around notions of flexibility, niche markets and 'flat hierarchies'. Green argues that such literature has 'exaggerated the tendency of new technologies and labour processes to generate high-skill workhorses' (p. 13). This supports feminist labour process theorists' (for example, Walby, 1996) contentions that the dominant labour market trend is more of polarization between a core of highly skilled flexible and well-paid workers and a periphery of casualized low-skill low-pay workers who are flexible across a range of unskilled jobs, a polarity which 'reinforces existing gender divisions' (p. 13). But social theory, more generally, he suggests, has become intellectually marginalized because 'rather than pursue the more rigorous part of critical rationalism many have lapsed into an easy oppositionalism which they justify through a confused moral and cultural relativism' (p. 17). To him, the recent 'linguistic turn' is more the result of the increased competitiveness of academic life requiring new ideas and paradigms for academic recognition, together with the American enthusiasm for postmodernism, which is a shock reaction to threats to cultural and economic hegemony. While this is undoubtedly one aspect of postmodernism's popularity, he tends to ignore the centrality of poststructuralist

theory; for example, in the new policy sociology (for example, Ball, 1994) which has offered alternative ways of theorizing educational restructuring and the state.

Instead, Green suggests that postmodernism has more dangerous possibilities, among them its ambivalence towards the market as the mechanism of educational distribution. He soundly criticizes those who imply that self-managing autonomous schools will either provide parents with greater choice or improve educational outcomes, a view with which I have much sympathy. Cultural diversity, he suggests, does not get recognised through diversity of educational provision. Indeed, he concludes that:

Regulation by the market is likely to create education systems which are less democratic than those that are regulated by public authorities where overall standards are no better, and where inequalities of provision and outcomes are more accentuated. (p. 20)

Green, throughout the text, is an advocate of strong government and public education. He cites the high-achieving educational systems of Germany, France and Japan, as being those with 'strong public regulation and consistency in practice, whether these are in relation to the curriculum, assessment, teaching methods or learning materials' (p. 25) and classifies the shift to self-management and education markets as 'blind dogma'.

He backs up this last point in his chapter on educational achievement, which investigates, through a complex-comparative statistically based analysis, whether centralization or decentralization in educational governance are adequate explanations for cross-national differences between educational outcomes. Using national databases of qualification levels and international standardized test scores as indicators of achievement, he concludes that, at least superficially, centralized education systems (Germany, France, Japan, Sweden, Singapore) appear to have higher levels of achievement compared to decentralized systems (UK and US). But he also suggests that the connection is more complex, and that the main correlation between comparable levels of achievement was that of time spent both in education and on tasks in school, rather than school organization, class size and levels of finance. These are contentious conclusions, given contemporary debates around school effectiveness about the significance of school leadership, self-management, class size and funding for improving student outcomes. The danger here is of oversimplification when gross aggregate figures about certification and assessment as measures of achievement are linked to education systems. They dispute bottom-up evidence gained from working in the messy local terrain of the school and the classroom, which indicate that interaction between students and teachers and parental support are critical to student learning outcomes and educational and occupational aspirations, and that such interactions are effected by class size and resources. Certainly, his analysis highlights the need to explore the disparity between these different methodological approaches.

As an Antipodean, I find that Green's historical analysis reminds me of Australia's English political cultural and educational heritage. His comparison of the UK education policy formation with continental European states, particularly with respect to technical education, highlights how the relatively *laissez-faire* English society, with its emphasis on voluntarism, explains the late development of English state systems of education in the nineteenth century and the particularly retarded development of technical education and coordinated training in the early twentieth century, which has set up less than conducive conditions for skill formation in the late twentieth century, due to cultural attitudes and lack of institutional infrastructure. One can see the same attitudes to technical education surfacing in the Australian context as those which framed English education: the emphasis on part-time training on the job which valued experience over educational credentials; the lack of investment in technical education by industry; the absence of

technical secondary schools equivalent to the continental trade schools in the nineteenth century; the privileging of pure science over the applied sciences in universities; the liberal/vocational and theory/practice divide—all of which have shaped contemporary responses to globalization in the face of trends to vocationalize liberal education.

Green's analysis signifies how the curriculum and assessment shift to competency and outcomes-based education should be viewed as a radically fundamental shift signifying a victory for the vocationalists (Broadfoot, 1996). While the new vocationalism of the late twentieth century is the result of strong state action, just as it was a century earlier, the difference now is that we see a more selective form of state intervention—with the simultaneous reassertion of *laissez-faire* principles of the market with regard to the distribution of educational opportunities embodied in discourses of parental choice, but strong central intervention in matters of curriculum with the reassertion of monocultural nationalism (Ball, 1994; Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995; Whitty *et al.*, 1998). He concludes:

The best alternative to a monocultural, exclusionary, national curriculum is not the abandonment of national curriculum altogether but the development of a more inclusive and more genuinely pluralist forms within a common curriculum framework which is applied consistently to schools (Green, 1997, p. 27)

These are challenging statements, to both the 'radical' left and right.

But I have also read this text as a feminist, one concerned about the equity implications of recent and seemingly quite radical transformations of the relationship between the state, education and the individual. Certainly, Green attends to how education systems have addressed educational and social inequality. His analysis reminds us that the spread of state-funded and highly centralized mass education systems was premised in many instances upon providing a more equitable distribution of educational opportunities to rural and disadvantaged areas in the early twentieth century, as education was linked to economic growth, a worthwhile reminder given the tendencies in the 1990s to disaggregate systems into a collection of self-managing schools in a process of desystemization. In many respects, Green's analysis is one with which feminists would sympathize. Many feminists have been equally suspicious of metanarratives of globalization as inevitable logics (for example, Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Gibson-Graham, 1996). Others have pointed to the continuities of the gendered division of labour between modernist and 'postmodernist' times (Walby, 1996). Most recognize that while there are significant changes occurring in education/state and individual relations, they are both contingent upon particular historical conditions which are highly gendered in terms of ideologies, structures, processes and practices and that the logic of globalization is both constituted by, and in turn reconstitutes, particular sets of gendered relations (Blackmore, 1998). His emphasis on the state gives us a sense of hope, as feminists would agree that a strong state and domestic policies which at least have a sense of 'the public' is necessary to counter the inequitable effects of the market. It also imparts a sense of foreboding, when he depicts how the state is so easily driven by elite class interests, and susceptible to highly technical, economically rationalist and conservative political imperatives.

But it is the absence of a clear theory of the state that is a worry, although many of the themes resonate with feminist concerns. Most feminists would agree with Green that the state is a set of practices, nuances, ideas and structures, not a monolithic institution which is inherently patriarchal, racist and classist (Pringle & Watson, 1992). But they would argue that while the state is a contested domain, a set of processes and practices which work across a range of sites, often in contradictory ways, that in terms of the relations of ruling, the state ultimately privileges white middle-class men in how it works

through both its regulatory and deregulatory tendencies, and that the state could be seen to be masculine, although not always working to benefit individual or all men (Connell, 1995). The assumptions upon which many policies are constructed, and the structures and processes of the state, while diffuse and contradictory, have male biases which can be 'mobilized' from a position of power, particularly at critical moments of restructuring, although, even then, the process is diffuse, uncentred and can have quite unexpected effects. Yet, reading Green's work, one gets the sense of the state as a gender-neutral 'it'.

His analysis also does not go beyond a generalized notion of educational inequality. It is lacking in that it fails to deal with how different modalities of difference (race-, class-, ethnic- and gender-based) interplay with how the state deals with different social groups or specific populations seen to be 'troublesome' or 'at risk' within the wider educational population. Technical education is an excellent example of the differential treatment of target populations. The image of the worker-citizen imagined in the gender-neutral modernist education policy texts, then and even now, is largely that of a white, skilled, able-bodied male. While the technical/vocational debates figured issues of class more overtly, technical education, in most nation states, was largely denied to women. Women tended not to receive on the job training, as their propensity to get pregnant at some stage in their career is seen to be a disincentive to investing in them as long-term workers, and they have largely funded their own vocational education. Yet the state and employers have historically jointly funded male vocational training in the form of apprenticeships (Blackmore, 1997b). This pattern of funding continues in the differential ways employers and education systems treat women in the vocational education sector (Butler, 1997).

Furthermore, the citizen of the era of modern industrialization and state formation in the late nineteenth century was inevitably male, predicated upon the implicit sexual contract underpinning the social contract of the 'liberal' state under the guise of the disembodied neutral, rational, self-maximising individual (Pateman, 1988). One cannot talk about the nation state and how it conceptualizes national and cultural identity, and how the state seeks to engage education in the formation of citizenship identity, without recognizing that women have largely been 'pseudo included' as citizens and workers. This position of women as lesser would be evident if Green had undertaken a gender breakdown of his statistics in the so-called successful states of Germany and Japan, which have historically been less 'women friendly' states and workplaces. Factoring in gender may mean Green would find that the claims he makes about the value of education in terms of skill formation or state formation do not hold for all in quite the same way. While my assertion of such points may be readily dismissed as just another whingeing feminist complaining about being excluded, I would tend to argue that given the import of feminist social theory in the past decade, whether about the state, citizenship, work or indeed postmodernism, it is difficult not to do an analysis about state education systems and globalization which does not make gender, race and class more integral to its analysis. So, while the analysis has considerable breadth, it lacks the depth or focus of analysis which one would have liked.

This raises a second issue. While I would agree that contemporary policy-texts of educational restructuring show convergences while divergences begin to emerge at the structural level, I would also suggest that feminist poststructuralist explorations of what happens at the level of practice indicates that individuals, groups and institutions read and rewrite policy texts quite differently in different structural and discursive contexts, on the one hand, and, on the other, that significantly different structural patterns (centralization and decentralization) can produce similar effects in terms of social inequality. Shifts

in governance or policy texts, while changing work practices, have not produced the same progressive shifts in attitudes nor equalization of power relations, but indeed can often lead to a reconstitution if not solidification of the patterned nature of gender power relations across a variety of educational contexts and sites of practice—whether in classrooms, in schools or school systems. In Australia, feminists have argued that new national systems of vocational certification, competency-based education and training continue to work in a gendered manner, that women continue to fund their own vocational training, that women continue to be largely excluded from corporatist or social partnership models of educational governance, and the national curricula have ignored those tricky feminist issues about how the private domain and personal skills of emotional and home management contribute to national productivity (Butler, 1997). There is also significant continuity across time and across different nation states, in the gender division of labour between management and teaching; the continued discrepancy between occupational rewards of males and females with comparable educational achievement; the ongoing hostile nature of male-dominated environments for women and girls in educational institutions and of the dominant masculinities to mobilize the state to work in their interests (Blackmore, 1997a).

Furthermore, there is a significant silence here about the nature of the state in relation to civil society and the family. Feminist historians have shown how the role education played in the formation of nation states was premised upon a public/private divide which excluded women from full citizenship and participation in work and public life, and down played the role of the family in education; that the growth of state bureaucracies was contingent upon specific conditions of gender relations; and patriarchal forms of family were translated into that of public bureaucracies in the late nineteenth century and construction of the worker-citizen. Contemporary feminist critiques of globalization and education policy also focus upon changing relations between the state, education, family and market (for example, Kenway & Espstein, 1996; Dehli, 1996). For that reason, his conceptualization of the state confined largely to work, technical education and certification tends to be one sided, as though student populations emerge fully grown to be the target of state attention without being nurtured and socialized in the family.

There is also little sense of how social movements and non-governmental organizations have impacted upon education and state relations, or indeed of understanding that there are different types of states when it comes to gender—those which are more maternal and protectionist and those which are not (Unterhalter, 1996; Arnot & Gordon, 1996). That is, there is no recognition of the changing relations between the civic and the civil. So, in a sense, the comparisons tend to be drawn upon grand scale levels, e.g. quantity of flows of capital, institutions, systems and markets rather than at the local interface of markets, cultures, organizations, families and school relations. Certainly, the state has changed 'in form and not function' (p. 161), but there has also been a reprivatization in that the post-welfare states passing what they do not want to do back to women as the guardians of the private (Brodie, 1996). It is therefore a very state-centric and top-down version of how globalization works, rather than one which also recognizes the significance 'bottom-up globalization'. As Rosemary Pringle and Sophie Watson (1992) argue:

To place the state above or outside society is to miss its main significance and to insist on a homogeneity in the operations of power which are simply not there ... What feminists are confronted with is not a state that represents 'men's interests' as against women's, but government conducted as if men's interests are the only ones that exist. (p. 56)

Finally, he treats the market as something which does not impact upon state education relations. While he argues that education markets are not new (they existed in mid-nineteenth century England, Australia and US, for example, prior to the growth of mass bureaucratized state education systems), he fails to provide an analysis of how the modern state framed by globalization has changed from negotiating the claims made upon it by social movements and capital to what some now see as the state becoming just another player in the market, intervening only to modify its excesses (Yeatman, 1992). The market in his writing appears to have emerged out of nowhere—rather than out of the dominance of particular economic ideologies which have gained credibility in a time of uncertainty.

But overall, I think Green has much to offer in contemporary debates about the role of education in a globalized economy. His comments are useful reminders, given the spate of educational restructurings most of us have undergone in the name of globalization, that first, structures are neither good nor bad inherently, and that most systems have different mixes of centralization and decentralization, but with greater emphasis on one or the other. Centralization does not necessarily mean uniformity, although many of the radical right make that claim, no more than markets address diversity, given that market images of success are often very narrow and conforming. Furthermore, highly centralized bureaucratic systems can produce quite equitable educational effects and local governance can encourage exclusionary and discriminatory practices (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995; Menter *et al.*, 1997; Whitty *et al.*, 1998).

Second, there are a range of nation-state responses to globalization, some more interventionist than others, despite the seeming similarities and orthodoxies of many policy texts. His comparative analysis of free-market responses in England to regulated markets in Germany and the European Union indicate that reliance upon voluntarism from the private sector does not produce coordinated training systems or 'collective strategies' in national skill formation (p. 67). Privatized industry-based training is just as ineffective in skill formation in the late twentieth century as it was a 100 years previously, because 'competitive entrepreneurs would not sponsor schools for technical training because they feared for their trade secrets, suspected that others would poach their trainees, and reckoned that the investment was not warranted by its potential return in immediate profit' (p. 67). Feminists would also agree that sound quality educational policies require equal social partnerships between the various education stakeholders whereas individualism, *laissez faire* and voluntarism do not produce productive outcomes in terms of education and training, particularly in those states which lack a culture of investment in training and education. Significant state investment or strong domestic policies of coordination are necessary for a more productive and equitable society in an internationally competitive context. That is, the state should not abrogate its educational responsibilities to the market, the local community or the individual.

Third, his analysis points to how short-term policy responses can exacerbate the very problems they seek to resolve, e.g. VET policies in the UK actively exacerbated the education/training dichotomy rather than rendering it extinct (see Chapter 4). Fourth, he also points to how the states seen to model economic growth such as Germany, Japan and Asian Tigers, are not only interventionist in the economy, but also place an even greater emphasis on the moral and social dimensions of education. Whereas educational planning is being supplanted by market forces in many Western liberal states, East Asian states, as the European Union, retain strong central planning and an integrated approach to national education systems as part of economic planning. 'National curricula in most East Asian states reserve a central place for learning which encourages moral under-

standing and which promotes social cohesion through appreciation of national tradition and goals and the meaning of citizenship' (p. 49). While many Western feminists would be cautious about upholding Germany and Japan, for example, as promoting ideal women-friendly workplaces, the point is well made about education and the demise of the welfare state. In particular for those maternal welfare states with strong centralized industrial relations systems such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada, notions of social citizenship are embedded not only in education policies, but also in industrial relations arrangements, to be neglected by the nation state to its ultimate detriment. The European Union itself offers a model of a corporatist approach which could deliver equity benefits, just as Sweden was the twentieth century model of how equal social partnerships, inclusive of all education stakeholders, could factor in social policies and economic independence for women through education and training.

Andy Green has once again succeeded in highlighting the complexity and contradictions of the relations between the nation state and education, while casting doubt upon popular myths about globalization, by subtly highlighting the educationally wrong-headedness of those pursuing current orthodoxies of market liberalism and the small-state as the response to globalization, which reduce to a low skills rather than high skills path to productivity gains. One can only agree with him that quality education, fair workplaces and social equity requires strong domestic state policies and political will together with sufficient autonomy to address local issues.

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