

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I would like to offer a word or two in response to Elizabeth Vallance's review of my book, *Radical Curriculum Theory Reconsidered*, which appeared in the 1994 Winter issue of *History of Education Quarterly*.

Ms. Vallance evidently does not like the tone of my book or think that my arguments are supported by evidence, but is apparently untroubled by her own ad hominem attack against me and my work. In the space of about 500 words, Vallance managed to refer to my book as strident, polemical, shrill and cursory. She accused me of engaging in denunciations, bashings, stereotyping and misrepresentations. The problem is that there is no argument in any of these slaps. They are just slaps, offered not as persuasion but as pain.

I won't try to even the scales, but I would like to at least advise your readers what my book is about. Vallance was so busy mangling me that she forgot to review the content of the book. Despite Vallance's allegation that I engage in wholesale categorical treatments of the radical curriculum community, I believe that readers will find the arguments in my book to be qualified and specifically directed. In the first chapter, I provided an overview of some of the thinking on the Left, accompanied with cautions about the difficulties of making generalizations, but the remainder of the book takes on a specific flavor that, for instance, defends the Tyler Rationale against the argument of social efficiency, that renegotiates the interpretation of social control in history of the curriculum, that reinterprets the role of the hidden curriculum in the school, that reconsiders popular historical treatments of the Cardinal Principles Report and other turning points in the school curriculum, that discusses an interesting convergence between certain radical and conservative forces on the point of school choice, and many other *specific* interpretations. The book is a critique of various interpretations of curriculum history, curriculum theory and curriculum practice that emanate from the academic Left.

Ms. Vallance does not even know me, but feels that it is within her right to call me an angry and threatened person. I can take it, but I would very much like to encourage readers to look at this review and to ask themselves just who is angry and just who is engaging in lurid and irresponsible claims.

Ms. Vallance has earned a solid reputation as a thoughtful scholar in the field of curriculum studies. I really wish that she might have given my work more a chance and responded in a way that might have offered us an opportunity to engage in a discussion and that might have offered the readers an opportunity to better understand the nature of my book.

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