



## Marxism Against Postmodernism in Educational Theory

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Postmodernism has become the orthodoxy in educational theory. It heralds the end of grand theories like Marxism and liberalism, scorning any notion of a united feminist challenge to patriarchy, of united anti-racist struggle, and of united working-class movements against capitalist exploitation and oppression. For postmodernists, the world is fragmented, history is ended, and all struggles are local and particularistic. Written by internationally renowned British and American educational theorists *Marxism Against Postmodernism in Educational Theory*?a substantially revised edition of the original 1999 work *Postmodernism in Educational Theory*?critically examines the infusion of postmodernism and theories of postmodernity into educational theory, policy, and research. The writers argue that postmodernism provides neither a viable educational politics, nor the foundation for effective radical educational practice and offer an alternative 'politics of human resistance' which puts the challenge to capitalism firmly on the agenda of educational theory, politics, and practice.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

The importance of a work that grounds critical educational theory in its Marxist foundations and that constitutes an uncompromising socialist project dedicated to educating towards a just society, cannot be understated. This book will provocatively engage all scholars who consider the multiple roles of schooling in society. (Jill Pinkey Pastrana, California State University, Long Beach)

The scholarship is impressive. . . . It is a book which will certainly be of interest to any educators who want to build a society where socialism can flourish. (*Journal Of In-Service Education*)

This book is an aid to thought, not just interpretation. Its central theme (that education is of necessity a political activity) is one that needs debate outside the walls of academia. (*Times Educational Supplement*)

The essential message is that Marxism still matters, and this collection highlights the importance of this perspective in educational theory. The postmodern argument that metanarratives are now redundant should be rightly reassessed and this book is a vehicle for that reassessment. (*Educational Research*)

There is undoubtedly a need for a contemporary rigorous Marxist-inspired critique of postmodernism and poststructuralism in educational settings and this book is certainly that. (*British Journal of Educational Studies*)

By engaging rather than rejecting postmodern theory, *Marxism Against Postmodernism* critically assesses the value of recent theoretical production and offers interstices of hope for committed educators and public intellectuals. I applaud the book's timeliness and its authors' courage. (Zeus Leonardo, Editor of Critical Pedagogy and Race, California State University, Long Beach)

Quite simply, this is a brilliant book. In an interesting succession of chapters, the authors of this text show where postmodernism falls short, and they offer the sort of analysis that promises to bring critical education back on track. . . . I urge readers to buy, read, and also use this book as the basis for discussion with students and colleagues. With it there is hope that before long we may be seeing a real turn toward the type of critical educational theorising that is so desperately needed to combat the neo-liberal policy assault that has been regressively transforming state education, on both sides of the Atlantic, for well over a decade. (Paula Allman, University of Nottingham)

*Marxism Against Postmodernism in Educational Theory* is a compelling, insightful, and powerfully provocative book. Dave Hill, Mike Cole, Peter McLaren, and Glenn Rikowski have not only assembled a collection of essays which are theoretically rich, engaging, and committed to the ideals of democracy and social change, but they also clearly articulate the importance and urgency of incorporating a renewed Marxist perspective in the analysis of educational theory. (Gustavo E. Fischman, Charter College of Education, California State University, Los Angeles)

The issues raised by the authors and their eloquent arguments detailing Marxism's enduring relevance will be of interest to activist scholars across the spectrum of academic disciplines. (Valerie Scatamburlo-D'Annibale, University of Windsor)

For those of us who still dare to envision a world liberated from the imperatives of capital and the brutalities of market-discipline, the individual and collective efforts of Glenn Rikowski, Mike Cole, Dave Hill, and Peter McLaren help us all sustain our cautious optimism for the future. Not only do they remind us that history and ideology have NOT come to a close, they also let us see how incredibly premature we would be to discard Marx as a source of insight into our contemporary condition. (David Gabbard, East Carolina University)

For those who have insisted that Marx's work is still relevant in order to understand the problems and possibilities facing societies and schools during this historical period of recurrent 'gales of creative destruction,' this book represents the necessary reinforcements that arrive just in time. *Marxism Against Postmodernism in Educational Theory* can serve also as an introduction and catch-up course for those who have become interested recently in the usefulness of Marxist analyses. This well-argued, succinct, and aggressive work may cause 'lapsed Marxists' to reconsider their decisions; moreover, those who are responsible for the current capitalist 'gales' and their agents will recognize that this book poses serious challenges to their power and plans. (Richard A. Brosio, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee)

A very effective antidote to the excesses of disembodied postmodernist discourse analyses of education. The authors clearly demonstrate the continuing pertinence of class relations for everyday life, political resistance, and a sustainable critical pedagogy against global capitalism. A 'must read' for those truly interested in educational equity. (D W. Livingstone, Centre for the Study of Education and Work, University of Toronto)

Beyond simply resurrecting a modernist Marxism for the new millennium, the authors thoughtfully incorporate lessons we on the educational Left have learned from feminism, anti-racist theory and struggles, indigenous knowledge, and anti-homophobic theory and struggles, in pursuit of a new radicalism for these times of ultra-exploitation. (Marc Pruyn, New Mexico State University)

This book demonstrates that Marxist theorists have indeed been touched by postmodernism. *Marxism against Postmodernism*, therefore, is an appropriate title for it is only through the dialectical process of thesis and antithesis that theory ups its game, and this book does up the game/gain of Marxist theory for contemporary educational problems. (*Gender and Education*, May 2009)

#### About the Author

Dave Hill is Senior Lecturer in Educational Studies at University College Northampton, UK. Peter McLaren is a professor in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA. Mike Cole is Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Brighton, UK. Glenn Rikowski is Senior Research Fellow in Lifelong Learning in the Faculty of Education at the University of Central England.

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