

Matthew Clarke, *Lacan and Education Policy: The Other Side of Education*, London: Bloomsbury, 2019, 192 p.

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Education draws upon the intersection of several disciplines such as philosophy, politics, economy, sociology, and psychology. As understood by Clarke's analysis, the matter of education is concomitantly interrelated to Lacanian psychoanalysis. This particular volume offers a critical monograph provoking the audience to ponder the effects of neoliberal policies in the educational sphere through the theory of four discourses publicized by Lacan: the master, the university, the hysteric, and the analyst. Suggesting education policy to be viewed awry, the author thus intends for the audience to notice and remember the presence of an alternative idea to the neoliberal educationalism currently dominant throughout the world.

Matthew Clarke, the book's author, is the Chair Professor in Education at York St John University. He has had experience as a lecturer and researcher in various countries such as China, United Arab Emirates, and Australia. His research on educational policy has contributed to a new interdisciplinary field that brings together political and psychoanalytic theory to provide novel and significant critical insights into global policy issues regarding education and teacher education.

The opening chapter in this volume lays the groundwork for his questioning of educational policy. The author claims a multitude of inconsistencies and paradoxes to exist in education and culture, such as individuality vs. conformity, exclusivity vs. inclusivity, and individual excellence vs. group cohesion, which can be described as a crisis/impasse. On one hand, this crisis/impasse has generated performative terrors (Ball, 2003) that constantly measure schools' progress and teachers' effi-

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ciency using many externally imposed metrics. On the other hand, the recurrent crises/impasses in education challenge the imperatives of marketing and competitiveness in education reform (i.e., charter schools, incentives, and value-added teacher appraisal). Accordingly, the author suggests the Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to be influential in paradoxical deliberations on education and policy with the intention of concurrently discussing these dilemmas.

Chapter 2 presents the core principles of Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, including the central position of desire and capitalism, and explains the theory of the four discourses elaborated on in Lacan's (2007) *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*. Each of the following four chapters utilizes one of Lacan's four discourses as the point of reference for being able to conceive in different ways other educational aspects. The first is the discourse of the master and relates to establishing hegemony. It is positioned as the place of agency or dominance from which the discourse originates. The second is the discourse of the university and corresponds to teaching and interpellation. It is positioned as the addressee, the other to whom the discourse addresses. The third is the discourse of the hysteric and refers to protesting or resisting. It is positioned as the place of production, representing the by-product (i.e., loss) resulting from the interchange between master and university. The fourth and final is the discourse of the analyst and concerns revolution and change. It is positioned as the underlying truth that is still suppressed by agency and dominance. While the discourses of master and university are described as authoritarian discourses, the hysteric and analyst discourses are considered to be more democratic and egalitarian and to stand in counterpoint to repression and hegemony.

This chapter also highlights how neo-liberalism has recently become the dominant shaping force of the global political economy and explores its justification for educational reform and policymaking. Furthermore, the author explains in this chapter the rationale for using Lacanian psychoanalysis, stating that it explores the complexities of power and authority in society and their impact on subjectivity as well as how policy constraints affect our identities and our actions economically and psychologically. Clarke (2019) also warns the audience, mentioning, "Psychoanalytic thought does not provide all the answers or represent a pure good in contrast to neo-liberalism's bad but merely offers an alternative framework for conceptualizing education" (p. 12). In the chapters that follow, however, he seems to fall into this rigid dichotomy himself.

In particular, based on education and educational policy only being able to be grasped in light of political trends, Chapter 3 provides a critical genealogy of ne-

oliberal politics interpreted in the context of Lacan's discourse of the master and the supremacy of specific economic master signifiers: capital and market. Chapter 4 explores the implications of neoliberal politics' dominance in the context of education policy. The author examines these implications in the context of Lacan's university discourse. Accordingly, he also explores how education has become entangled in highly regulatory and punitive modes of bureaucratic governance and how selective modes of expertise are essentially based on specific legitimate policies in the process of refusing the inevitably political existence of education. In the context of Lacan's discourse of the hysteric concerning protesting and resisting, Chapter 5 describes the unceasing critiques of education, schools, and teachers by education policymakers and the media. It also explores the manifestation of the invasion of education and schooling reflected in the re-emergence of older school models from the 19th century. Chapter 6 presumes the discourse of the analyst, which is associated with change and revolutionization, as an opportunity to think about the possibilities for resisting violence and cancelling contemporary education policies by instead viewing education as a means of permanent revolution.

All in all, the four proposals can be seen as alternative epistemologies on education policy that challenge the current subjectivity, reality, information regime, and social practice in regard to education policy. In this volume, the discourse of the master and the university are implied as oppressive discourses governed by the technocratic interests of education. The author stresses these two kinds of discourses to have been continuously inscribed by various stakeholders in the official and non-official documents of educational reform. To overcome the technocratic discourse, he alternatively uses the discourse of the hysteric, which involves opposition and protest, and the discourse of the analyst, which involves analysis and change, for consideration, also identifying these as signifying other aspects of education. Therefore, while the discourse of the hysteric is able to strengthen oppressed communities by justifying their knowledge and identities, the discourse of the analyst as a counterpart to the repression from the master and university discourses is able to effectively and internally readjust the object of education. Chapter 7 presents a brief conclusion that discusses the trajectory of the book and addresses the consequences for policymakers and educators of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory regarding thinking about and understanding the other aspects of education beyond the 21<sup>st</sup>-century discourses of crisis and impasse.

Finally, this volume's claim to counterpose the neoliberal hegemony in education appears to fail at recognizing education as an important part of the hegemony

it aims to criticize. The earlier chapters indicated that schooling has somehow been hijacked with its implicit essence remaining as an alternative; however, education is ready for serving a modality that could seriously deliver a counter-movement. Yet the author in the later chapters meticulously analyzes the dynamics of the educational discourses and the dimension that is an essential component of their authority. The hegemonic account on which the author partly relies being that education policy is stuck in the neoliberal mode is certainly crucial. Yet this fails to give importance to the governmental genealogy of modern education. Apart from the neoliberal mode, essential modes of functioning remain intact according to the Foucauldian account (2008) that are part of the nature of education as a modern institution. Modernization has involved replacing the master discourse with the university discourse. To exemplify, schools as modern micro-institution have imposed upon students their need for teachers and upon teachers their need for standardized curricula in order to eliminate illiteracy and poverty since the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Controlling the masses through education itself is not a novel issue, nor is it peculiar to neoliberalism. Additionally, Lacan's ideas could be beneficial in studying education policy differently; however, making a strict distinction between the bad (neoliberal forces) aspect and the good ('true' educators) aspect runs the risk of promoting its non-Lacanian analysis, as Lacan has echoed a different possibility for structuring social relations in society where no discourse is positioned in superiority to another. But then again, this unconventional volume sheds light on how the discursive implications brought on by the new neoliberal educational agenda may be best understood and even opposed by educational scholars, practitioners, and policymakers.

## Kaynakça | References

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