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editorial: the fatigue of critique?

On Education

The ninth issue of on_education addresses an ongoing and lively international and interdisciplinary controversy: Has critique run out of steam? Drawing on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's early critique of "the methodological centrality of suspicion to current critical practice", literature and cultural studies in the English speaking world have been influential in challenging central assumptions of 'critical' philosophies. Having represented one of the most powerful and only seldom questioned styles of thinking in academia for a long time, critical attitudes are now identified as being "ontologically rigid", "paranoid", and primarily negative, attached to affects such as fear, shame, humiliation, anger and rage. In particular, voices from literature theory articulate the need for different approaches to reading texts and dealing with literature. They argue for establishing reading practices that go beyond the "'paranoid' conviction that the meaning of texts is hidden behind its explicit meanings" and the acceptance of previously marginalized positive affects like excitement, joy, and surprise.

Keywords: critique, editorial, post-critique

The ninth issue of on_education addresses an ongoing and lively international and interdisciplinary controversy: Has critique run out of steam? (Latour, 2004) Drawing on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's early critique of "the methodological centrality of suspicion to current critical practice" (Sedgwick, 1997, p. 5; see also Latour, 2004, 2010; Rancière, 2009), literature and cultural studies in the English speaking world have been influential in challenging central assumptions of 'critical' philosophies. Having represented one of the most powerful and only seldom questioned styles of thinking in academia for a long time, critical attitudes are now identified as being "ontologically rigid" (London, 2016, para. 1), "paranoid" (Sessions, 2016, para. 1), and primarily negative, attached to affects such as fear, shame, humiliation, anger and rage. In particular, voices from literature theory articulate the need for different approaches to reading texts and dealing with literature (Marcus & Best, 2007; Felski, 2015; Anker & Felski, 2017). They argue for establishing reading practices that go beyond the "'paranoid' conviction that the meaning of texts is hidden behind its explicit meanings" (Sessions, 2016, para. 1) and the acceptance of previously marginalized positive affects like excitement, joy, and surprise.

Likewise, philosophers of education have successfully stimulated similar discussions with the publication of a *Manifesto for a Post-Critical Pedagogy* (Hodgson et al., 2017). The authors of this internationally much acclaimed contribution strive for a post-critical pedagogy that takes an affirmative approach to existing educational discourses and practices as being valuable in themselves. While they hold that critical approaches understand education as a solutionist practice that is supposed to fix the revealed negative (social) developments in the future, the authors aim to shift the theoretical focus to what is educational in present practices. The major aim of their post-

critical pedagogy is not to "debunk" and "demask" but to protect and care for what "is good in the world that is worth preserving" (Hodgson et al., 2018a, p. 19). Central to their post-critical approach is to induce "hope in the present" and search for other than critical approaches in education (Hodgson et al., 2018a, p. 18). The debate has not subsided since the publication of the Manifesto. On the contrary: An extremely lively discussion is currently developing about post-critique and education, and post-critique in its relationship to critique (see for instance Hodgson et al., 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2020; Oliverio, 2019; Thoilliez, 2019; Una respuesta iberoamericana, 2020; Wortmann, 2019).

This issue of on_education brings together these previously separate disciplinary debates for the first time. With the ninth issue, we aim to provide a forum for some of the most important voices from the various disciplines to discuss the relationship between post-critique and education. How does post-critique affect teaching and learning? How does it impact on arts education, museum experiences, theatre play and performances? How does it shape the relation between education and politics? Is it able to change educational thinking and educational philosophy and offer new pedagogical perspectives that may help us to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic? What does the current lively debate on post-critical thinking say about the state of critique in the educational field? Is critique a tired old man who has run out of breath? In short: Are we, in academia and the educational field, currently witnessing a fatigue of critique?

The Editorial Team

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