



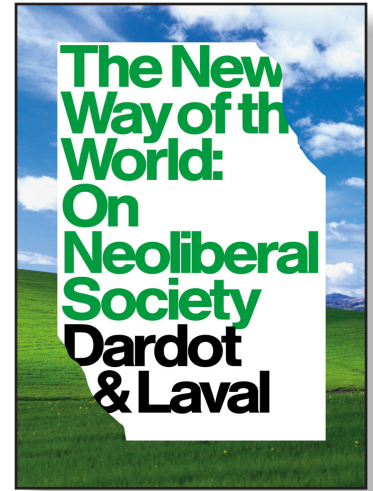
40 years of radical publishing / **Press Release**

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V E R S O / Publication: February 4, 2014 / 978-1-78168-176-3 / \$29.95 / 352 pages / Hardback

The New Way of the World On Neoliberal Society

by PIERRE DARDOT & CHRISTIAN LAVAL



An essential guide to the economic and political realities of neoliberalism

“This monument of scholarship draws on the history of ideas, philosophy and sociology.”
– *Le Monde*

“The best modern realization of Foucault’s pioneering approach to the history of neoliberalism. It warns that unthinking misrepresentations of its political project as espousing ‘*laissez faire*’ has had the effect of allowing the Left to submit to its siren song.”
– Philip Mirowski, author of *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go To Waste*

An urgent reinterpretation of neoliberalism, Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval’s *The New Way of the World* provides a comprehensive account of neoliberal thought and practice, examining its intellectual development and interpreting the imposition of its logic on nearly every facet of life.

Neither merely the return of *laissez-faire* policies nor just new clothing for the old capitalist relations, Dardot and Laval show neoliberalism to be a complex, highly developed political philosophy. Mapping the intellectual currents that have contributed to neoliberal thought, beginning with the Walter Lipmann Colloquium in 1938, the authors take us deep into the debates—between French reformers of classical liberalism, German *ordo-liberals*, and the major figures of the Austro-American economic school, among others—through which a neoliberal agenda was forged.

Thoroughly expanding upon Foucault’s groundbreaking lectures on biopolitics, Dardot and Laval argue that neoliberalism is more than a narrow economic philosophy, showing it to be a totalizing rationality that has made competition the guiding principle not only of the market, but work, education, and many other spheres. This rationality produces its own subjects who see themselves as enterprises in general competition with other human enterprises.

Offering a detailed history of neoliberal thought and clear-eyed analysis of its dubious achievements, *The New Way of the World* takes a hard look at the political and intellectual challenges posed by this latest rationality of capitalism.

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Pierre Dardot is a philosopher and specialist in Hegel and Marx. His previous books include *Sauver Marx?: Empire, multitude, travail immatériel* (with Christian Laval and El Mouhoub Mouhoud) and *Marx, prénom: Karl* (with Christian Laval).

Christian Laval is Professor of Sociology at the Université de Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense. His other books include *L’Ambition sociologique: Saint-Simon, Comte, Tocqueville, Marx, Durkheim, Weber; Jeremy Bentham, les artifices du capitalisme; L’École n’est pas une entreprise: Le néo-libéralisme à l’assaut de l’enseignement public;* and *L’Homme économique: Essai sur les racines du néolibéralisme.*

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From the introduction to *The New Way of the World*:

How is it that, despite the utterly catastrophic consequences in which neo-liberal policies have resulted, they are increasingly operative, to the extent of pushing states and societies into ever graver political crises and social regression? How is it that such policies have been developed and radicalized for more than thirty years without encountering sufficient resistance to check them?

The answer is not, and cannot be, confined to the ‘negative’ aspects of neo-liberal policies – that is, the programmed destruction of regulations and institutions. Neo-liberalism is not merely destructive of rules, institutions and rights. It is also *productive* of certain kinds of social relations, certain ways of living, certain subjectivities. In other words, at stake in neo-liberalism is nothing more, nor less, than the *form of our existence* – the way in which we are led to conduct ourselves, to relate to others and to ourselves. Neo-liberalism defines a certain existential norm in western societies and, far beyond them, in all those societies that follow them on the path of ‘modernity’. This norm enjoins everyone to live in a world of generalized competition; it calls upon wage-earning classes and populations to engage in economic struggle against one another; it aligns social relations with the model of the market; it promotes the justification of ever greater inequalities; it even transforms the individual, now called on to conceive and conduct him- or herself as an enterprise. For more than a third of a century, this existential norm has presided over public policy, governed global economic relations, transformed society, and reshaped subjectivity. The circumstances of its triumph have often been described – in its political aspect (the conquest of power by neo-liberal forces), its economic aspect (the expansion of globalized financial capitalism), its social aspect (the individualization of social relations to the detriment of collective solidarities, the extreme polarization between rich and poor), and its subjective aspect (the emergence of a new subject, the development of new psychic pathologies). These are the complementary dimensions of the *new global rationality*. By this we mean that such a rationality is *global* in the two senses of the term: it is ‘world-wide’ in that it obtains on a world scale; and, far from being confined to the economic sphere, it tends to totalize – that is, create a world in its own image through its power to integrate *all* dimensions of human existence.

The New Way of the World is available for excerpt. Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval are available for interview.

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