



Neoliberal Identity

Walter Benn Michaels (University of Illinois, Chicago)

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“The differentiation between left and right neoliberalism doesn't really undermine the way it which it is deeply unified in its commitment to competitive markets and to the state's role in maintaining competitive markets. For me the distinction is that 'left neoliberals' are people who don't understand themselves as neoliberals. They think that their commitments to anti-racism, to anti-sexism, to anti-homophobia constitute a critique of neoliberalism. But if you

look at the history of the idea of neoliberalism you can see fairly quickly that neoliberalism arises as a kind of commitment precisely to those things.”

Walter Benn Michaels is a Professor of American Literature and Literary Theory at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Michaels's work has generated a set of arguments and questions around a host of issues that are central to literary studies: problems of culture and race, identities national and personal, the difference between memory and history, disagreement and difference, and meaning and intention in interpretation. He earned his Ph.D. in 1975 from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Michaels also taught at Johns Hopkins University and the University of California, Berkeley.