



effectively repulsing an attempted eviction by force, without drawing consequences from this. And in another, he admits that statists think communities should not insist on tolerance of certain illegalities (pp. 125–126). But Chatterjee does not draw conclusions from this. The political implication of the state's resort to violence is that the gains of negotiation are unstable and need to be backed up by a serious threat of resistance to avoid being overridden by the statists and neoliberals. In other words, pointing social movements towards negotiation and compromise with an adversary which may not be open to dialogue could lead to political impotence. The constraint of the state by society is undeniably necessary but is consistently resisted by the state. Only if social movements have the capacity to be radically outside, to oppose and defeat the state should it ignore them or try to suppress them, can they operate also in the way Chatterjee hopes.

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### **Critical and Post-Critical Political Economy**

Gary Browning and Andrew Kilmister

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In this well-crafted text Browning and Kilmister present a sophisticated defence of the critical political economy approach developed by Hegel and Marx. They accomplish this first, by analysing the distinctiveness of critical political economy and what it brings to social theory, and second, by analysing the work of six social theorists who have looked at the 'economic' in a radically different way dubbed 'post-critical political economy'. The six theorists concerned are Michel Foucault, André Gorz, Jean Baudrillard, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Nancy Fraser and Tony Negri (in his recent work with Michael Hardt). The authors argue that whereas political economy situates the economy in a broader context, thereby encouraging a broader social theory, the approach adopted by Hegel and Marx demands a radical revision of conventional economic concepts in order to transform the way in which we look at the major issues of social and political life. For the post-critical political economy theorists, however, the sphere of the economic should not be given a 'privileged' place as the principal conditioning factor when trying to understand and transform social life.



Browning and Kilmister make the case for the distinctiveness of critical political economy in two excellent essays on the contributions of Hegel and Marx. But is political economy so important for Hegel's social theory? The authors argue persuasively that political economy does play an integral role in Hegel's analysis of social relations. Influenced by Adam Smith and James Steuart, Hegel recognized even in early writings such as the *System of Ethical Life* the constitutive effects of market relations on social life as well as their contradictory impact. The developmental and socializing aspects of modern economic activity are accompanied by discordant tendencies such as self-interested acquisitiveness and widespread inequality. In *The Philosophy of Right* he again sees a contradiction between the development of freedom through modern economic activity and the damage to the social fabric wrought by the individualism that drives it. For Hegel, the role of the state in resolving this contradiction is vital, and this is precisely the point at which Marx makes his critical entry. The Marx presented here is first and foremost a dialectical thinker whose Hegelian heritage is central to the development of his critical political economy. Although it is acknowledged that the complexity of Marx's work allows for a variety of plausible readings, the authors suggest that his political economy is best understood as comprising four distinct forms, viz., solving inherited problems, uncovering hidden derivations, developing new concepts, and exposing the hidden ideology of political economy. This is beautifully argued and neatly furnished with examples, and it constitutes a strong defence of Marx's deployment of political economy in his social science.

Post-critical economy objects to the centrality accorded by Marx to political economy, rejecting what it perceives to be a tendency in Marxism to reduce the complexity of key elements in the social process to the struggle for economic power. Of the selected writers, Gorz, Fraser, and Hardt and Negri are closer to the Marxist tradition than Foucault, Lyotard and Baudrillard, all of whom have serious objections to Marx's method of critical analysis. In general, Browning and Kilmister make a spirited defence of the capacity of Marx's theoretical framework to cope with the various objections, but this is not simply an exercise in reminding readers of the richness of the Marxian analytical framework. By focusing the discussion of the post-critical theorists on their interpretations and use of political economy, they throw new light on a variety of imaginative responses to social developments that were either unknown or suppressed in the 19th century, and this opens the way for fruitful reconnection with the critical political economy approach. This is particularly evident in the discussion of Nancy Fraser's bivalent approach to struggles for recognition and redistribution, and also in their questioning of the disappearance of the dialectic in Hardt and Negri's recent work.

As the theorists in question offer disparate approaches, it is important that some commonalities are drawn together in the conclusion in order to make a



meaningful comparison with the critical political economy tradition, and this is accomplished in style. Needless to say the process of selection invariably raises issues of who should or should not be included. I was doubtful about Foucault's inclusion in a book focusing on political economy, but the authors' concentration on *The Order of Things* and *Power/Knowledge* fully justifies his place here. On the other hand, despite the explanation for the exclusion of Habermas in the introduction, his theoretical relegation of the sphere of production has been such a significant step in leftist social theory that it surely warrants a chapter. The inclusion of Gorz is undisputed, as he is a writer who could be located in the critical political economy position, despite his best efforts to distance himself from Marx's dialectical philosophy. However, the failure to discuss Gorz's last two major works is regrettable. The thrust of their criticism that Gorz underestimates the scope for struggles for autonomy within the sphere of imposed work (heteronomy) would have carried greater weight if *Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology* had been compared with *Reclaiming Work*. The shift in position revealed in the latter work can be read as an admission that the boundaries between autonomy and heteronomy had been drawn too rigidly in his earlier texts.

Overall, the standard of critical discussion is extremely high and the central theme is robustly developed, resulting in a very fine book. It has two distinctive appeals: first, for those in the field of political economy who wish to connect their work with critical currents in modern social theory, and second, for modern social theorists who feel the need to connect more seriously with critical political economy.

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