EDITED BY BANU BARGU AND CHIARA BOTTICI

FEMINISM, CAPITALISM, AND CRITIQUE

ESSAYS IN HONOR OF NANCY FRASER

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Banu Bargu • Chiara Bottici
Editors

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Editors
Banu Bargu
Department of Politics
New School for Social Research
New York, USA

Chiara Bottici
Department of Philosophy
New School for Social Research
New York, USA

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Acknowledgments

This book was born as a surprise. The original idea came from Eli Zaretsky, who proposed that we edit a book to celebrate the seventieth birthday of our New School colleague and friend Nancy Fraser. As we gladly accepted his invitation, it became immediately clear to us that such a *Festschrift* would also be a window to our political present – and not simply the celebration of an illustrious intellectual past. For reasons that we elucidate in the Introduction and that we hope will become clear to any reader of this book, we think that Nancy Fraser's work is today more timely than ever.

We are therefore very grateful to Eli Zaretsky for sparking the initial idea and for helping us keep track of the many scholars who have been in conversation with Nancy Fraser throughout her career and whom we tried to gather for the occasion. His diligent skills as an intellectual historian, along with his privileged position as Nancy Fraser's partner, proved to be particularly helpful to solicit the contributions in this volume. Among his many virtues that we are grateful for, we should also add his impeccable discretion, which was absolutely crucial to maintain the project as a surprise.

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Introduction

Banu Bargu and Chiara Bottici

Since the financial crisis of 2008 and its devastating consequences around the world, interest in capitalism has come back with a vengeance. A palpable need has emerged for a fresh, systematic, and compelling critique of capitalism, one that can offer both explanations of the multiple and complex problems that we face in every sphere and solutions to address these challenges. Scholars from a multitude of disciplines have begun to tackle the reasons behind the crisis, specifically, and to analyze the workings of capitalism, more generally. Philosophers, political theorists, economists, and sociologists have turned their attention back to the economy, inquiring into its relationship with political power, social practices, cultural forms, experiences of domination, and different forms of knowledge. Neoliberalism is now being scrutinized as a historical phase, governmental rationality, ideological form, and a set of institutions and practices that constitute the dominant modality of capitalism in the present. From climate change to violent conflict, from an upsurge in authoritarian tendencies to stagnant economies, from the increasing

B. Bargu (✉)
Department of Politics, New School for Social Research, New York, USA
e-mail: banubargu@newschool.edu

C. Bottici
Department of Philosophy, New School for Social Research, New York, USA
e-mail: botticic@newschool.edu

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gap between the rich and the poor to racism and xenophobia, the diverse array of problems that confront the world has prompted scholars to take up capitalism as their main object of analysis.[1]

What has followed is a veritable revival of research on different aspects of capitalism (see, for example, Piketty 2013; Stiglitz 2013). While the movement away from the predominantly culturalist perspectives toward the register of materiality has been welcomed by many, this turn to the material sphere has not exactly been a return to classical Marxism, whose orthodox frame for the study and critique of capitalism is now largely considered inadequate. Rather than a purely economic or economistic analysis, novel perspectives today stand out for their incorporation of feminist, anti-racist, and ecological perspectives. It has become crucial to understand how capitalism is linked not only with forms of economic exploitation but also with forms of gender domination (for example, see Arruzza 2013; Cudd and Holmstrom 2010; Federici 2012; Floyd 2009; Mojab 2015; Vogel 2014; Weeks 2011), racial and ethnic discrimination, as well as the increasingly irreversible destruction of the environment (for recent examples, see Harvey 2014; Moore 2015). Current scholarship is now much more attentive to the complex and multifaceted interaction between economic and non-economic spheres, resulting in rich analyses that tackle the nexus between various forms of economic inequality and social and political domination.[2]

On the one hand, our goal is to speak to this revival by re-examining the relationship between three terms that we consider to be highly significant for grasping our present situation: capitalism, feminism, and critique. On the other hand, our goal is also to celebrate the work and life of a thinker, activist, scholar, and critic who has done the most to address this nexus: Nancy Fraser. Her innovative scholarship, original perspective, clarity of thought, erudition, and remarkable systematicity all distinguish her as one of the most prominent thinkers of our time. In honor of her seventieth birthday, this collection brings together scholars from different disciplines and theoretical approaches, both to address the current crisis of capitalism and to evaluate Fraser's lifelong contributions to theorizing it. This collection echoes what we consider to be the spirit of Fraser's work; namely, the weaving together of a strong commitment to feminism with an equally strong commitment to the critique of capitalism and an egalitarian politics. We could not think of a better way to honor her than by continuing her legacy of critique while also reflecting on her path-breaking contributions to the tradition of critical theory.

Feminism as Critique

Inspired by Fraser's insights and the interdisciplinary attitude of critical theory, this book creates a space of dialogue for scholars of diverse disciplines to explore the numerous ways in which a feminist perspective can be mobilized to understand capitalism, to subject it to a thorough critique that has as its aim the goal of advancing social justice, and to study what political implications may follow from this critique. Scholars from philosophy, political science, sociology, history, and gender studies, each representing a wide range of competencies and expertise, are assembled here to shed light on how feminism allows for an updated and extended critique of capitalism. Going beyond disciplinary distinctions, all the contributors to this project share a deep commitment to understand *critically* the connection between capitalism and a transformative politics attentive to sex and gender.

There are two principal reasons why exploring this connection is crucial today, both for academics and for a more general public debate. First, there is the role that capitalism plays in the context of the globalizing world. There is a destructive side to this role, one that the experience of "crisis" most painfully reveals, linking different countries and regions around the world by production chains and infrastructures as well as financial markets and speculative movements, wreaking havoc on the daily lives of ordinary citizens, with market fluctuations, plant relocations, cheapening labor prices, and worsening living and working conditions. The rapid destruction of the environment and climate change have brought about a further level of public awareness of the fragility of our situation. But there also exists a countervailing aspect to this situation, one that brings to light the deep, hitherto unprecedented interconnectedness of the world, tying the east to the west and the north to the south in mutually constitutive ways. Hence, any critique of capitalism today cannot afford to be Eurocentric but must instead address the planetary nature of the system. Similarly, the Westphalian framework, which allowed for the study of the operation of largely bounded national economies and their corresponding institutions, is no longer adequate to understand either the complex interrelations between these economies that are irreducible to histories of colonialism and imperialism alone or the generation and reproduction of injustices that spread across national borders. A global perspective is necessary in order to measure up to the challenge of capitalism itself. This collection recognizes the necessity of such a widened perspective in critical theory and is

inspired by Nancy Fraser's work toward theorizing the post-Westphalian framework of analysis and the role of feminism within it (Fraser 2005).

Second, the experiences of the twentieth century and the theoretical shortcomings of dominant forms of critique have by now revealed that a purely economic perspective is far from sufficient for meeting the challenges of conceptualizing capitalism as a system or for developing alternative economic forms of social organization commensurate to its complexity. Such a perspective limits our theoretical attention to the distribution of goods and welfare and constrains the practical energies of struggles against capitalism to a class-based politics (Fraser 2009). Nevertheless, the social problems and injustices experienced, even within Westphalian frameworks but also beyond them, are hardly limited to class inequality, nor can they simply be reduced to different cultural expressions of class inequality. This is where the perspective of feminism offers a crucial contribution, resisting the "androcentrism" both of capitalism and of its dominant critiques. As Fraser has argued, the construction of the "ideal-typical citizen as an ethnic-majority male worker—a breadwinner and a family man" (2009, p.100)—has been an important focus of feminist struggles in tackling the particular injustices faced by women. Feminist critiques have also been crucial for problematizing the sexism and gender discrimination that have permeated the class-based politics of the Left, where the dominant tendency was to relegate sex and gender issues to secondary or derivative status, when they were not altogether ignored.

For the feminist critique of capitalism advanced in this collection, the question, therefore, is not limited to mapping the specific ways in which women are exploited in capitalism—especially by way of their unpaid carework that is crucial for the reproduction of labor-power and through their participation in production processes where their labor is often differentially valued and whose differences are often exacerbated along a north-south divide. A whole generation of socialist feminist scholars has cogently argued these points, showing how capitalist exploitation is crucially dependent on the unpaid or underpaid labor of women or gendered bodies in general. The question of an anti-capitalist feminism today is to move further in the inquiry of why gender roles are pivotal in sustaining capitalism's subordination of social reproduction to the production process and to examine how specific forms of sexual difference and gender domination are predicated on the social organization of capitalism and in turn perpetuate and reproduce its functioning, both on a global scale and, at the same

time, most intimately, within the realm of social relationships. It is to confront the imbrication of gender with sexuality, race, ethnicity, religious, and class identities, and to note the complexity of its lived experience in domains largely invisible to purely economistic analyses and yet crucial for everyday life (Fraser 2009, p.103). The recognition of this entanglement between capitalism and patriarchy, between exploitation and non-economic forms of domination, then, is what this collection aims to register and unpack.

When we look at Nancy Fraser's work longitudinally, we see a progressive widening of its horizons, particularly in these two directions. Setting out in the field of Western socialist feminism (Fraser 1989, 1990), Fraser's work has fruitfully expanded toward a broader critique of capitalism, which has moved beyond a Westphalian framework, on the one hand, and complicated its focus on gender domination by an attentiveness to capitalism's structural dependence on racism, imperialism, and an exploitative relationship with nature, on the other (Fraser 2014, 2016). This movement of her thought, guided by her unwavering commitment to social justice, has led her to be a vocal critic not only of state-organized capitalism and its class and gender injustices but also of second-wave feminism and its reconfiguration with the rise of neoliberalism (Fraser 2009, p.110).

We believe that this intellectual trajectory is not accidental. In contrast to a tendency among some social theorists to treat gender as an appendix or afterthought, Fraser has never entertained the possibility of formulating a general social theory "supplemented" by an analysis of gender. Rather, since the very beginning of her scholarship, a feminist perspective has figured prominently in her challenge to dominant frameworks. From her critique of Habermas's theory of the public sphere (Fraser 1991) to her critique of the additive model (Fraser 2013), Fraser has always been at the forefront of showing how the critique of gender domination entails the critique of an entire social order, and vice versa. In this sense, the most important lesson of her intellectual trajectory consists precisely in showing that the oppression of women, and thus the cause of feminism that opposes it, is not simply a woman's question, but rather an inevitable step in any form of social critique. "Feminism as critique" is thus not just the title of the collection edited by Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell to which Fraser has also contributed (Benhabib and Cornell 1987). Rather, it may aptly be used as the catchphrase for any form of critical theory that sees in the subjection of women more than just another problem to be

fixed in capitalist societies, but instead sees it as one of the very cornerstones of such societies.

At the same time, Fraser's rooting in a robust yet nuanced Marxist theoretical framework has also enabled her to keep distance from a feminism that has largely been limited to claims of inclusion and recognition, catapulting identity to a prominence that occludes any attention to class and the struggles over redistribution. This framework has also informed and guided her critique of feminist currents that have focused women's energies on achieving upward mobility, greater economic security, and social status within the opportunities afforded by the spirit of neoliberalism and, in fact, in an uncomfortable complicity with it (Fraser 2009, pp. 107–13). Fraser has thus remarkably held onto both gender and class, without ever giving up on their mutual irreducibility or falling into the temptation of reductionism.

If capitalism essentially relies on both the separation between the sphere of production and the sphere of reproduction and the subordination of the latter to the former, then feminism must confront the gender injustices that arise from the continuous and systemically necessary undervaluation of the work of women and gendered bodies in the sphere of reproduction. To this effect, Fraser insists on the need to supplement the analysis of production with a focus on social reproduction:

> Social-reproductive activity is absolutely necessary to the existence of waged work, the accumulation of surplus value and the functioning of capitalism as such. Wage labor could not exist in the absence of housework, child-raising, schooling, affective care and a host of other activities which help to produce new generations of workers and replenish existing ones, as well as to maintain social bonds and shared understanding. Much like "original accumulation," therefore, social reproduction is an indispensable background condition for the possibility of capitalist production. (Fraser 2014, p. 62)

This is not only meant to register the fact that capitalism has historically been accompanied by a division between the spheres of production and reproduction. Much more insightfully, Fraser argues that such a distinction is a product of capitalism itself and, moreover, that it is structurally, rather than contingently, gendered. In this way, Fraser recovers a whole tradition of Marxist feminists who have been problematizing the traditional association of production with men and reproduction with women,

thereby assuring domination of the latter by the former, given that, in a system where money is the primary medium of power, those who do unpaid work in the domestic sphere are inevitably subordinate to those who earn wages outside this sphere (Fraser 2014, p. 62). Yet, Fraser's work has also been able to go beyond the simple binary division of men and women, thereby making space for the possibility of accounting for a multiplicity of gender identities. Although the latter may vary, according to specific contexts and historical phases, the central idea is that a capitalist mode of production cannot exist without a gendered organization of social reproduction.

But a feminism that is truly critical of capitalism must also confront a feminism that focuses solely on personalized subjection to male domination and fuels the desire for advancement within neoliberal capitalism. Fraser's critique of microcredit is instructive in this regard. As is well-known, the discourse around microcredit was built on the narrative of "empowerment," "self-help," and "participation from below," and it often juxtaposed these values against state-directed programs to reduce poverty, programs criticized for high levels of bureaucratic management. The personal narratives of success have supported microcredit practices as policies effective in addressing women's welfare and emancipation. "What has been concealed, however," Fraser writes, "in the feminist hoopla surrounding these projects, is a disturbing coincidence: microcredit has burgeoned just as states have abandoned macro-structural efforts to fight poverty, efforts that small-scale lending cannot possibly replace" (Fraser 2009, p.112).

Fraser's worry that the important demands of second-wave feminism have been incorporated and reconfigured by neoliberalism in the service of justifying further marketization and the delimiting of the role of public power in addressing inequality thus complements her critique of capitalism. We therefore find the force of Fraser's critique in her call for feminists to "think big," (Fraser 2009, p.117), consistently pointing out the crucially gendered dimension of the division of labor, the organization of the economy, and the maintenance of social hierarchies, on the one hand, and insisting on the inadequacy of a solely gender-based perspective in reckoning with the transformation from state-organized capitalism to its current neoliberal configuration (Fraser 2013).

We also note that a critical feminist perspective focusing on addressing the role of gender as an integral ingredient of a capitalist social order would be remiss if it focused only on sex and gender, without noting how this order is also deeply imbricated with a system of differences and

dependencies among which race occupies a prominent place. Here, Fraser's most recent interventions in rethinking capitalism are particularly important, as they attend specifically to these imbrications. Moving toward theorizing race as a form of continued expropriation, Fraser's current work addresses how capitalism creates political subjectivities that are racialized by means of enslavement, dispossession, and myriad forms of coercion, and further, how these subjectivities are incorporated in processes of labor exploitation in ways that are both a precondition and, simultaneously, a consequence of capitalism as a social system (Fraser 2016). Critical theory has not done enough to address the manifestations of racialization, as well as the perpetuation of inequality, domination, and discrimination related to race, not only historically but also in the present.

By complementing a critique of the *exploitation* of free wage-labor with a critique of the *expropriation* of dependent labor and material resources, Fraser has been able to show how racism and the depletion of natural resources are structurally necessary to capitalism in all its different phases (Fraser 2016). As an economic system based on limitless expansion and extraction of surplus value, capitalism gives to the owners of capital a structural interest in acquiring labor and means of production below cost and even gratis (Fraser 2016, p. 167). From the originary moment of "primitive" accumulation to the recurrent problem of crises generated by the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, capitalism needs to supplant the *exploitation* of free labor with the *expropriation* of unfree labor, a confiscatory move that has all too often converged with the "color line" of race. As Fraser put it,

> The link is clear in practices widely associated with capitalism's early history but still ongoing, such as territorial conquest, land annexation, enslavement, coerced labor, child labor, child abduction, and rape. But expropriation also assumes more "modern" forms—such as prison labor, transnational sex trafficking, corporate land grabs, and foreclosures on predatory debt, which are also linked with racial oppression—and [. . .] with contemporary imperialism. Finally expropriation plays a role in the construction of distinctive, explicitly racialized forms of exploitation—as, for example, when a prior history of enslavement casts its shadow on the wage contract, segmenting labor markets and levying a confiscatory premium on exploited proletarians who carry the mark of "race" long after their "emancipation." In that last case, expropriation combines with exploitation, whereas in the others, it appears to stand alone. But in all the cases, it correlates with racial oppression—and for reasons that are nonaccidental. (Fraser 2016, p. 167)

We find this new direction in Fraser's research trajectory extremely promising, not only due to its turn to attend to the specific forms of racial oppression brought forth by capitalism but also because it can put forth novel ways of conceiving the relation between racial subjection and gender subjection as forms of dependent subjectivities produced in and through processes of domination, exploitation, and expropriation. We think that it allows her work to speak more forcefully and broadly to third world, black, and anarcho-feminisms that have been crucial for the problematization of race in recent feminist discussions. This also constitutes a venue in which Fraser's critique of second-wave feminism's integration with neoliberalism merges with the critiques of second-wave feminism advanced by black and brown feminisms for being symptomatic of a kind of "white privilege." We would like to point out how these feminisms (south/black/anarchist, on the one hand, and Marxist/socialist, on the other) have more in common than is often acknowledged in advancing a systematic critique of capitalism and how Fraser's recent work could point to such a convergence.

Overview of the Collection

To reflect both the evolution of Fraser's work and our belief that feminism must be understood as a form of critique of an entire social order, we have ordered the essays according to the triad that constitutes the title of this book, tracing a movement from feminism to capitalism through and as critique. In doing so, we hope to illuminate not only Fraser's intellectual path from her early militancy within socialist feminism to her current global critique of capitalism but also the intrinsic reasons why the former should entail and lead to the latter.

In the opening chapter, Richard Bernstein explores the trajectory of Nancy Fraser's development from socialist feminism to the critique of global capitalism by focusing on five closely related themes: (1) the critique of the public sphere and feminist concerns; (2) justice, redistribution, and recognition; (3) rethinking Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*; (4) prospects for a radical feminism; and (5) emancipation and the critique of neoliberal capitalism.

Focusing on Fraser's recent work on race, Robin Blackburn discusses the role of slavery and emancipation, race, and capitalism in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western world. He argues that the enslaving

and racializing dynamic of capitalism was located in civil society while abolitionism sought to challenge the expansion of "slave power." However, it was the actuality or threat of revolutionary ruptures at the level of the state as well as slave resistance that gave abolitionism a chance to suppress slavery. Yet, the emancipatory project was fatally weakened by the success of armed white vigilantes in terrorizing blacks and denying them political rights. In his analysis, Blackburn puts Fraser's work in dialogue with authors such as David Brion Davis, Thomas Haskell, Eric Williams, W. E.B. Dubois, Michael Dawson, and Frank Wilderson.

While continuing the exploration of the nexus of feminism and the critique of capitalism, Johanna Oksala focuses on the role of sexuality. She begins by explicating three different feminist formulations of the relationship between capitalism and sexual regulation: those of Alexandra Kollontai, Catherine MacKinnon, and Judith Butler. Subsequently, Oksala turns to Nancy Fraser's thought and shows how Fraser can be read as providing a fourth alternative, one that avoids the problems of economic monism as well as reductive heterosexist conceptions of gender and sexual oppression.

On a similar path, Cinzia Arruzza offers a critical assessment of liberal feminism and its cooptation by capitalism, deconstructing the teleological narrative of progressive emancipation. Her work speaks to Fraser's insistence on the necessity of resisting the neoliberal cooptation of feminist discourse and on combining the critique of gender inequality with the critique of capitalism. Arruzza accepts Fraser's invitation to think again about the structural connection between gender and sexual oppression and capitalist social relations. She critically discusses the liberal feminist notion that capitalism has led, and can still lead, to greater emancipation from gender and sexual oppression and that the oppression of women and of sexuality is only a vestige of a pre-capitalist past. Because capitalism generates gender and sexual oppression in various ways and through new forms, these kinds of oppression cannot be considered simply as remnants from a pre-capitalist past, but instead must be seen as built into capitalism itself. Instead, Arruzza points to the benefits of rethinking feminism in light of possible post-capitalist futures.

Turning to examine the impact of Fraser's work on theories of the public sphere, Jane Mansbridge offers an assessment of the long life of Fraser's seminal essay "Rethinking the Public Sphere," which brought the term "subaltern counterpublics" into critical theoretical discourse (Fraser 1991). Evaluating Fraser's feminist rethinking of the public sphere,

Mansbridge points to how it provided an important corrective to Habermas and also enriched the tradition of deliberative democracy by drawing attention to how different subaltern groups can participate in a multiplicity of public spheres. Three particular themes developed in Fraser's essay, Mansbridge argues, have now become established in the discourse of deliberative democracy: (1) developments in the conceptual apparatus of deliberative democracy, including the shift from "reasons" to "considerations" (including emotional considerations) and from the common interest alone to the inclusion of self-interest when constrained by fairness; (2) developments in the meaning of the public sphere, from Habermas's unitary understanding to Fraser's plurality of contesting publics and later the inclusion of everyday talk; and (3) developments in understanding the relation between talk and power, including subtle forms of control and mechanisms, old and new, to combat such control. As this chapter shows, Fraser's early insights continue to illuminate each development in the theory of deliberative democracy, thus attesting to the vitality of her contributions.

Exploring the richness of Fraser's feminism, María Pía Lara considers how her work informs a general critique of capitalism and our responsibility vis-à-vis the current ecological crisis. In particular, this chapter deals with questions about responsibility, agency, and world-framing settings. First, it considers Iris Young's conception of collective responsibility in the face of capitalism and the environment and critically examines the shortcomings of Young's argument. Second, Lara discusses Joaquín Valdivielso's conception of collective responsibility toward ecology while pointing toward both the advantages and the disadvantages of his position. Finally, Lara argues that Nancy Fraser's approach represents a third model that helps overcome the shortcomings of the two previous models. In particular, Fraser is able to articulate a paradigm of agency and collective responsibility with a feminist approach that is strongly connected with her critique of capitalism. In this way, Lara argues that Fraser's project offers a new way of looking at certain problems related to agency and responsibility, or what she calls "critique as disclosure."

In the following chapter, William E. Scheuerman assesses Fraser's contribution to the field of legal theory. Critical theory, Fraser has recently claimed, is jettisoning its strengths for a narrow "legalism." Scheuerman wonders whether Fraser's worry may be overstated. In his view, critical theory needs to provide a nuanced account of law and rights as part of both its normative and socio-theoretical endeavors. Scheuerman argues

that Fraser implicitly recognizes this point in her powerful rejoinder to Axel Honneth. Yet, this chapter raises the question of whether Fraser's remarks provide an adequate basis for formulating a critical theory of law.

Further exploring the debate between Fraser and Honneth, Hartmut Rosa asks whether social critique should focus on the resources for a good life (redistribution) or on the quality of social relationships (recognition)—or on both. In particular, he argues that social criticism should focus on relationships, but not just on social relationships. As Fraser suggests, *parity of participation* is a useful tool for scrutinizing the nature and state of our relationships in and with the world. If the process of appropriation (through participation) fails, we end up in states of alienation. Once more, under capitalist and patriarchal conditions, there is high risk of such an outcome as a result of social acceleration, competition, and inequality.

Combining a legal perspective with an attempt to curb the absolute power of disembedded financial markets, Alessandro Ferrara investigates the role of the Polanyian narrative in Fraser's grammar of social resistance. Engaging Fraser's elaboration of Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*, Ferrara argues that the current preponderance of finance over the "real economy," the resurgence of rent, and the virtualization of the economy lead to a new kind of "absolute power" exerted by disembedded financial markets, against which the remedies that once curbed absolute power prove ineffective. The prospect for resistance against neoliberal hegemony is discussed with reference to Fraser's views on social movements that are difficult to place within the Polanyian "double movement." Ferrara examines Fraser's articulation of a "triple movement" that combines elements of non-domination, negative liberty, and solidarity in new constellations. Attention is focused on the subjects of counterhegemonic resistance and the novel entwinement of the legal and the political as terrains of resistance.

The following chapters turn to the very notion of critique. Axel Honneth's contribution returns to the alternative between Hegel and Marx, while offering a reassessment of their respective social theories. In recent decades, a number of reinterpretations of Hegel's social philosophy and Marx's social theory have been carried out, enabling us to examine the relationship between the two thinkers within a perspective of fruitful complementarity. Honneth begins with a comparison of their respective philosophies of history, subsequently moving on to explore the advantages of Hegel's social theory vis-à-vis that of Marx. In a third step, however,

Honneth reverses the perspective and considers the merits of Marx's analysis of capitalism, before concluding with an analysis of the conditions under which the two approaches can be put into a relationship of productive complementarity.

Rahel Jaeggi also investigates the contribution of Marx's theory to the formulation of a contemporary critical theory project, this time, by focusing on the connections between critique, conflict, and crisis. This move is indicative of a methodological shift within contemporary critical theory, where the focus on crises supplements the focus on social struggles. The extent to which critical theory should be interested in the struggles and desires of the age can then be qualified as follows: critical theory is part of those struggles that are capable of thematizing and addressing the inherent crises of an age in an emancipatory way. In other words, through criticism and analysis, critical theory contributes to addressing these crises (which also give rise to regressive and non-emancipatory responses) in an emancipatory way.

In his investigation of the task of critical theory today, Rainer Forst raises the question, "What is critical about a critical theory of justice?" Forst analyzes the connection among philosophy, social theory, and social criticism through a reflection on the concept of justification as a theoretical device and as a social practice. In his view, getting this connection right enables us to de-reify various concepts of political and social philosophy, such as justice, democracy, and alienation. Forst importantly relates his argument for a critical theory of justice to Fraser's account of critical social theory.

In her contribution to rethinking critique, Amy Allen proposes a move beyond the current alternative between Kant and Hegel. Whereas much work in contemporary critical theory turns on the question of how to ground the normativity of critique, Allen builds an alternative strategy for grounding such normativity. Many critical theorists have followed Jürgen Habermas's lead and assumed that the available strategies for grounding critique are either Kantian or Hegelian or some combination of the two. By drawing inspiration from Fraser's early conception of "social criticism without philosophy," Allen develops an alternative approach to the normativity question, one that can take critical theory beyond Kant versus Hegel.

In conclusion, Eli Zaretsky proposes finding the red thread of Nancy Fraser's work in her search for a viable idea of equality. As Zaretsky argues, all of Fraser's work can be seen as a response to the crisis of the Left, which

emerged in the 1960s and climaxed after 1989. In this article, he situates Fraser's work in relation to the Left and to the evolution of critical theory, by combining his expertise as historian of the Left with his privileged position of observation as Nancy Fraser's partner.

As a collection of essays, we believe that this book is a testament to the actuality and pertinence of Nancy Fraser's ideas, her invaluable contributions to critical theory, and her inspiring example. By engaging with her work, we not only celebrate the accomplishments of an incredibly prolific, resourceful, and erudite scholar, but we also acknowledge and honor her role in inspiring each of us toward attaining a more sophisticated understanding of capitalism and a renewed commitment to struggle for justice.

Notes

1. Nancy Fraser's discussion of these themes in her instantly classical "Behind Marx's Hidden Abode" (2014) speaks volumes about both the need for systematic analyses and her crucial role in advancing the critique of capitalism in the critical theory tradition.
2. Critical theory, too, has had its share of this revival. Not only is there a resurgence of interest in thinkers such as Karl Polanyi and Karl Marx but there is an increasing attempt to develop new concepts and categories adequate for the analysis of crisis and the possibilities of practical transformation. The recent edited collection on Marx's work, which gathers together intellectuals gravitating around the tradition of the Frankfurt School, is a case in point (Jaeggi and Loick 2014). But it is also significant that prominent figures of that tradition who have been working on alternative forms of critique, such as the Hegelian and the Kantian, are now devoting increasing attention to Marx and the critique of capitalism more generally (see, for instance, Forst 2014; Honneth 2017).

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From Socialist Feminism to the Critique of Global Capitalism

Richard J. Bernstein

> *Even though the construction of the future and its completion for all times is not our task, what we have to accomplish at this time is all the more clear:* relentless criticism of all existing conditions, *relentless in the sense that the criticism is not afraid of its findings and just as little afraid of the conflict with the powers that be.*
>
> – Karl Marx (1967, p.212)

Nancy Fraser's critical project spans forty years and is richly textured with detailed analyses. There is continuity and significant shifts in her thinking. I plan to focus on five closely related and interdependent themes in her work: (1) the public sphere and feminist concerns; (2) justice, redistribution, and recognition; (3) a rethinking of Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (2001[1944]); (4) prospects for a radical feminism; and (5) emancipation and the critique of neoliberal capitalism. Fraser, like Marx, engages in constant self-critique in light of changing historical circumstances. There is, however, one *major* shift that distinguishes her most recent theoretical work from her earlier work. In the period roughly from 1945 to 1970, most theorizing

R.J. Bernstein (✉)
Department of Philosophy, New School for Social Research, New York, USA
e-mail: bernster@newschool.edu

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about democracy and justice (including her own early theorizing) took for granted the Westphalian imaginary – or what she sometimes calls the "Keynesian-Westphalian frame." The critical project must be rethought in our post-Westphalian era.

> The phrase "Keynesian-Westphalian frame" is meant to signal the national-territorial underpinnings of justice disputes in the heyday of the postwar democratic welfare state, roughly 1945 through the 1970s. In this period struggles over distribution in North America and Western Europe were premised on the assumption of state steering of national economies. And national Keynesianism, in turn, was premised on the assumption of an international state system that recognized territorial state sovereignty over domestic affairs, which included responsibility for the citizenry's welfare. Analogous assumptions also governed disputes about recognition during this period. The term "Westphalian" refers to the Treaty of 1648, which established some key features of the international state system in question. However, I am concerned neither with the actual achievements of the Treaty nor with the centuries long process by which the system it inaugurated evolved. Rather, I invoke "Westphalia" as a political imaginary that mapped the world as a system of mutually recognizing sovereign territorial states. My claim is that this imaginary undergirded the postwar framing of debates about justice in the First World. (Fraser 2013a, p.190n1)

This Westphalian imaginary shaped debates about critical theory, the public sphere, and "second-wave feminism." The primary issues concerned what actions are required – and what social movements are needed – in order to bring about emancipatory change *within* territorial states. A major shift occurred in Fraser's thinking when she began to question framing issues in this manner. She argues for the necessity of developing a new post-Westphalian imaginary – a new frame for considering issues of justice. This shift, as we shall see, affects *every* dimension of her critical project. Let us first consider her early as well as her more recent thinking about the public sphere.

The Public Sphere and Feminist Concerns

Feminism has never been an isolated or parochial issue for Fraser. Her concern with feminism pervades her entire critical project, and her understanding of radical critique influences the way she approaches the changing issues that feminists must confront. We witness her shift from a

Westphalian to a post-Westphalian imaginary by comparing her early (1990) landmark article, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" with her 2014 article "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World."[1] "Rethinking the Public Sphere" critically engages Jürgen Habermas's discussion of the public sphere in his 1962 book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Although Fraser objects to Habermas's limited understanding of the public sphere, she claims that the concept of public sphere is *indispensable* for critical theory.

> [The public sphere] designates a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it [is] a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. The public sphere in Habermas's sense is also conceptually distinct from the official-economy; it is not an arena of market relations but one of discursive relations, a theater for debating and deliberating rather than for buying and selling. Thus, the concept of the public sphere permits us to keep in view the distinctions between state apparatuses, economic markets, and democratic associations, distinctions that are essential to democratic theory. (Fraser 1990, p.57)

Fraser sharply criticizes Habermas's limited understanding of the public sphere. Drawing on feminist historians such as Joan Landes, Mary Ryan, and the work of others such as Geoff Eley, Fraser forcefully argues that Habermas fails to take seriously the issue of gender. He fails to emphasize the extent to which masculinist gender constructs were built into the very concept of the bourgeoisie public sphere and how it was based on the exclusion of women, the poor, slaves, and other marginalized groups. Habermas, she argues, fails to consider that there were conflictual *counter publics* (not a single public sphere). The bourgeois public sphere lacked (even in its idealized form) any serious commitment to participatory parity.[2]

We will see how important the principle of "participatory parity" is for Fraser; it is the key term in her understanding of the fundamental norm of justice. Fraser argues that a plurality of competing publics and even subaltern counter publics better promote the idea of participatory parity

in public life. Furthermore, she challenges any fixed reified distinction between the private and public – especially as this distinction has been used to dominate and oppress women. Feminists have insisted on the public discussion of sexism, sexual harassment, and marital rape – matters that once were (and in many places still are) taken to be "strictly" private matters. Fraser also challenges the idea of "weak publics" whose primary function is to *influence* the politics of the state. She advocates the need for "strong publics" that have the power to make political *decisions*.

Now contrast Fraser's approach to the public sphere in her 1990 article with her analysis in "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere." She begins this latter article by criticizing the way in which Habermas (and she) originally framed the issue of the public sphere. Fraser lists six tacit social-political-theoretical presuppositions that Habermas makes, which reveal the extent to which his conception of the public sphere was conditioned by a Westphalian frame of bounded political territories. She places her *own* 1990 critique of Habermas within this same *limited* Westphalian imaginary. "My own earlier effort to 'rethink the public sphere' was no exception [to thinking within the Westphalian frame]" (Fraser et al. 2014c, p.16). Indeed, far from challenging the Westphalian frame, it aimed to enhance the legitimacy of political opinion within it. Fraser remarks that even in her advocacy of "strong publics," she neglected to challenge the Westphalian frame. "The thrust of my argument was, on the contrary, to enhance the efficacy of public opinion vis-à-vis the Westphalian state" (p.17).

Fraser does not abandon her early reflections of the public sphere; she doesn't diminish the significance of the role that it plays *within* territorial states. After all, with all the talk of globalization and transnationalism, we still live and act within territorial states, but nevertheless we need to recognize the blind spot of the original theoretical formulation of public sphere theory – the failure to take account of "the epochal developments" that call into question the Westphalian frame. This raises some really hard issues. What are we talking about when we speak of a public sphere in a post-Westphalian imaginary? What does it mean to transnationalize the public sphere? Fraser is far more effective in pointing out empirical and theoretical limitations of the Westphalian frame – why and how it is breaking down – than in positively developing an alternative. We may agree with her that, "if public-sphere theory is to function today as a *critical* theory, it must revise its account of the normative legitimacy and political efficacy of public opinion" (p. 33). We may endorse her claim that such a critical theory "must envision new transnational public powers, which can be accountable

to new democratic circuits of public opinion" (p.33). But if we ask what precisely does this mean and how is it to be accomplished, Fraser does not provide us with much guidance. How are such transnational democratic publics to be institutionalized? We may be sympathetic with the central idea that inspires public sphere theory – that ordinary people throughout the world are political subjects who "deserve a decisive say in the matters that concern them in common; that they have the capacity to mobilize communicative power both as a means to effect change and as an end in itself" (p.155). But to use a Hegelian turn of phrase, this central idea is rather "abstract" and lacks concrete determination. I want to make it clear that in raising these issues, I am not faulting Fraser for emphasizing the importance of moving beyond a Westphalian frame. I agree that the most difficult and complex challenge that critical theory faces today is how to theorize, imagine, and advance global emancipation. But neither what this concretely means nor how it is to be effectively accomplished is clear.

Justice, Redistribution, and Recognition

In the Prologue to *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis* (2013a), Fraser presents the drama of second-wave feminism in three acts[3]:

> "[T]he movement for women's liberation" began life as an insurrectionary force, which challenged male domination in state-organized capitalist societies in the postwar era. In Act One, feminists joined with other currents of radicalism to explode a social-democratic imaginary that had occulted gender injustice and technicized politics. (Fraser 2013a, p.1)

The height of this movement took place during the 1960s and early 1970s. But during the late 1970s and 1980s, the insurgency energies of Act One began to wane. "In Act Two, its transformative impulses were channeled into a new political imaginary that foregrounded 'difference.' Turning 'from redistribution to recognition,' the movement shifted its attention to cultural politics, just as a rising neoliberalism declared war on social equality" (p.1). More recently, Fraser argues, there are indications of a new development in second-wave feminism:

> In an Act Three that is still unfolding, we *could* see a reinvigorated feminism join other emancipatory forces aiming to subject runaway markets to

> democratic control. In that case, the movement would retrieve its insurrectionary spirit, while deepening its signature insights: its structural critique of capitalism's androcentrism, its systematic analysis of male domination, and its gender-sensitive revisions of democracy and justice. (p.1)

I want to concentrate on the transition from Act One to Act Two. (Later I will discuss Fraser's thoughts about Act Three.) This three-act drama is not only a narrative of the feminist movement but also a schema for understanding Fraser's own political and intellectual development. In an interview that Fraser gave in 2014, she speaks about her "generational experience as a 1968er."

> People like me, who came out of the New Left, inherited a kind of Marxism that we found too restrictive, too orthodox, and we sought to develop alternative Marxisms that could make visible forms of domination and social suffering which orthodox paradigms occluded: issues of gender and sexuality; colonialism and postcolonialism; ecology and political exclusion and marginalisation. It seemed to me then, and still seems to me now, that to take in these matters requires not the rejection, but the reconstruction, of Marxism. (2014b, p.7)

Much of Fraser's early work – including her feminist critique of Habermas's conception of the public sphere – fits within this first act of an insurrectional socialist feminism. She never subscribed to a reductionist and economist version of Marxism. Many of her early writings focused on how state-managed capitalism deeply affects and distorts the lives of women as caretakers, welfare recipients, and poorly paid wage laborers. The negative economic consequences of capitalism on women's lives were at the center of her early feminist writings. Fraser never abandoned her concern with political economy and its deleterious consequences for lives of women. However, as she indicates, during the late 1970s and 1980s insurgency energies began to wane, and there was a shift to a concern with cultural discrimination and differences. During this period, the theme of recognition of differences – multicultural, ethnic, racial, and gender differences – gained a new prominence in Leftist circles. Cultural politics became dominant – a politics focused on fighting for the rights of lesbians, gays, transgenders, racial, and ethnic minorities. There were a variety of social movements demanding full recognition of marginalized and oppressed groups. These cultural movements tended to occlude more

traditional economic concerns about social and economic equality. In part, this was a result of the disillusionment with "really existing communism" and a turning away from the varieties of "orthodox" Marxism. In part, there was a growing awareness that cultural injustices were not simply *reducible* to economic injustice. A comprehensive critique of capitalism requires an analysis of the cultural manifestations of capitalism.

Fraser, of course, was sympathetic with the new types of cultural critique, but she was also wary of the shift away from an emphasis on economic redistribution to recognition. She argues that a robust critical theory must understand these two *inseparable* dimensions of social and political life as being *equiprimordial*. Fraser also felt the need to confront a fundamental issue that, according to her, Marx and the first generation of Frankfurt School thinkers did not adequately thematize. Namely, what is the normative basis for critique? What are the injustices that we need to confront and alleviate? What is to be the standard for justice? The practice of critical theory can never be satisfied exclusively with theoretical reflections on basic moral norms. It must also face the social-theoretical issues of class and status, as well as the political issues of how concretely to institutionalize democratic justice. In classic Marxist terms, theory must be oriented to *praxis*.

What precisely does Fraser mean by "redistribution" and "recognition"? Each of these expressions has a philosophical and a political reference. Philosophically, "redistribution" comes from the liberal tradition and plays a prominent role in such liberal thinkers as John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin. Both developed sophisticated theories of justice. Philosophically, the term "recognition" comes from Hegel and plays a prominent role in the political philosophical theories of Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth. Recognition designates a relation between individuals and groups where each treats the other as an equal peer – where individuals and groups achieve self-respect and self-esteem through mutual, reciprocal, and symmetrical recognition. However, in their more explicit political reference, "the terms 'redistribution' and 'recognition' refer not to philosophical paradigms but rather to *folk paradigms of justice*, which inform present-day struggles in civil society" (Fraser and Honneth 2003, p.11). These folk paradigms are typically associated with different social movements. "Thus, the politics of redistribution is commonly equated with class politics, while the politics of recognition is assimilated to 'identity politics,' which is equated in turn with struggles over gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, and 'race'" (p.11). Although Fraser appropriates the

term "redistribution" from the liberal tradition of political philosophy, this expression is potentially misleading. In liberal theory, distribution – or rather redistribution – presupposes a modified form of capitalism, but it does not call into question the basic structure of a capitalist society. However, given Fraser's own Marxist legacy, she is calling for a much more radical transformation of capitalist societies.

Fraser is critical of how the focus on recognition, difference, and the "politics of identity" tended to neglect issues of social and economic equality. She argues that the opposition between recognition and redistribution is a "false anti-thesis." We need a *unified two-dimensional* critical theory of justice that is oriented to participatory parity – a critical theory that encompasses both redistribution and recognition without reducing one to the other. This is what she calls "perspectival dualism." Fraser clearly recognizes that, in the "real" world, redistribution and recognition are interdependent. Any change in redistribution will have consequences (both intended and unintended consequences) for recognition claims – and vice versa. Even though redistribution and recognition are entangled with each other, it is necessary to distinguish between these two perspectives for analytical purposes. Achieving participatory parity involves *both* overcoming the institutionalized economic inequality as well as overcoming cultural status hierarchies that are embedded in capitalist societies. Fraser, as I have already indicated, resists any suggestion that one of these perspectives is more fundamental than the other. She resists simplistic economistic Marxist theories of base and superstructure, as well as inflated recognition theories that seek to swallow up issues of economic inequality. Redistribution and recognition are both *material* factors in human life.

Fraser also defends the principle of participatory parity as the normative basis for a critical theory of justice; it is the standard to which we appeal when struggling against economic and cultural injustices. We can no longer simply invoke Marx's nineteenth-century critique of capitalism. We must revise Marxism in a way that integrates what we have learned from the Frankfurt theorists – that capitalism involves far more than economic inequality and class differentials; it involves status differentials and cultural exclusions. Furthermore, in the spirit of the critical-theoretical tradition, we must be alert; we must locate and specify the *real potentialities immanent in the current historical reality* – potentialities for fighting injustice and advancing human emancipation.

But there is also a deep problem about the way in which Fraser initially framed her unified theory of redistribution and recognition – a problem