

Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History

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An Introduction

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An introduction to my forthcoming book, this essay takes a broad, sweeping look at second-wave feminism, situating the movement's unfolding in relation to three moments in the history of capitalism. In the first moment, feminism posed a radical challenge to the pervasive androcentrism of "state-organized capitalism". In the second, the movement unwittingly supplied a key ingredient of what Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello call the "new spirit" of neoliberal capitalism. In the third (present) moment, of capitalist crisis, feminists have the chance to reactivate the movement's emancipatory promise.



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An Introduction

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The text

This essay is the introduction to the forthcoming book under the direction of Nancy Fraser, entitled *Le féminisme en mouvements : De l'insurrection des années 60 au néolibéralisme*, to be published in French in October 2012 by La Découverte (Paris).

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Abstract

An introduction to my forthcoming book, this essay takes a broad, sweeping look at second-wave feminism, situating the movement's unfolding in relation to three moments in the history of capitalism. In the first moment, feminism posed a radical challenge to the pervasive androcentrism of "state-organized capitalism". In the second, the movement unwittingly supplied a key ingredient of what Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello call the "new spirit" of neoliberal capitalism. In the third (present) moment, of capitalist crisis, feminists have the chance to reactivate the movement's emancipatory promise.

Keywords

feminism, capitalism, neoliberalism

Le féminisme en mouvements : De l'insurrection des années 60 au néolibéralisme. Une introduction

Résumé

Une introduction au livre à paraître sous la direction de l'auteur, cet essai offre un large balayage de la seconde vague du féminisme, et situe l'éclosion de ce mouvement en relation avec trois moments de l'histoire du capitalisme. Dans un premier moment, le féminisme pose un défi radical à l'androcentrisme du « capitalisme stato-organisé ». Dans un second moment, le mouvement fournit à son insu un ingrédient indispensable à ce que Luc Boltanski et Eve Chiapello appellent le « nouvel esprit du capitalisme ». Dans un troisième moment - actuel - de crise du capitalisme, les féministes ont une opportunité de réactiver la promesse émancipatrice du mouvement.

Mots-clés

féminisme, capitalisme, néolibéralisme

From today's vantage point, the history of second-wave feminism appears as a drama in three acts. Emerging from the ferment surrounding the New Left, the "movement for women's liberation" began life as an insurrectionary force, which challenged male domination in state-organized capitalist societies of the post-War era. In Act One, accordingly, feminists joined with other currents of radicalism to explode a social-democratic imaginary that had occulted gender injustice and technicized politics. Insisting that "the personal is political," it exposed capitalism's deep androcentrism and sought to transform society root and branch. Later, however, as utopian energies began to decline, second-wave feminism was drawn into the orbit of identity politics. In Act Two, accordingly, 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 was declaring war on social equality. More recently, however, as neoliberalism has entered its current crisis, the urge to reinvent feminist radicalism may be reviving. 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 could retrieve its insurrectionary spirit, while deepening its signature insights: its structural critique of capitalism's androcentrism, its systemic analysis of male domination, and its gender-sensitive revisions of democracy and justice.

Historians will eventually explain how neoliberalizing forces succeeded, for a time, at least, in defusing the more radical currents of second-wave feminism–and how (so one hopes) a new insurrectionary upsurge managed to reanimate them. For critical theorists, however, there remains a prior task: to analyze alternative grammars of the feminist imaginary in order to assess their emancipatory potentials. Here the goal is to ascertain which understandings of androcentrism and male domination, which interpretations of gender justice and sexual democracy, which conceptions of equality and difference, are likely to be most fruitful for future engagements. Above all, which modes of feminist theorizing should be incorporated into the new political imaginaries now being invented by new generations for Act Three?

Though not written with this aim in mind, the essays collected here can nevertheless be read today as preliminary attempts at such a reckoning. Composed over the past twenty-five-plus years as interventions in theoretical debates, they document major shifts in the feminist imaginary since the 1970s. For this volume, I have grouped them in three parts, which correspond to the three acts of the drama I have just sketched. In Part I, I have included pieces that seek to marry a feminist sensibility to a New Left critique of the welfare state. Targeting not only the latter's androcentrism, but also its bureaucratic organization and near-exclusive focus on distribution, these essays situate second-wave feminism in a broader field of democratizing, anti-capitalist struggles. Reflecting the historical shift from mainstream social democracy to the new social movements, they defend the latter's expanded understanding of politics, even as they also criticize some influential ways of theorizing it. Part II charts subsequent alterations in the feminist imaginary. Noting the broader cultural shift from the politics of equality to the politics of identity, these chapters diagnose dilemmas facing feminist movements in a period of ascending neoliberalism. Troubled by the relative neglect of political economy at the *fin de siècle*, they criticize the eclipse of "struggles for redistribution" by "struggles for recognition," even as they also defend a non-identitarian version of latter. Part III contemplates prospects for a revival of feminist radicalism in a time of neoliberal crisis. Advocating a "post-Westphalian" turn, the essays comprising this Part situate struggles for women's emancipation in relation to two other sets of social forces: those bent on extending the sway of markets, on the one hand, and those seeking to "defend society" from them, on the other. Diagnosing a "dangerous liaison" between feminism and marketization, these essays urge feminists to break off that unholy alliance and forge a principled new one, between "emancipation" and "social protection."

In general, then, the concerns shaping the volume's organization are both systematic and historical. A record of one theorist's ongoing efforts to track the movement's trajectory, the book assesses feminism's current prospects and future possibilities. Let me elaborate.

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When second-wave feminism first erupted on the world stage, the advanced capitalist states of Western Europe and North America were still enjoying the unprecedented wave of prosperity that followed World War II. Utilizing new tools of Keynesian economic steering, they had apparently learned to counteract business downturns and to guide national economic development so as to secure near full employment for men. Incorporating once unruly labor movements, they had built more or less extensive welfare states and institutionalized national cross-class solidarity. To be sure, this historic class compromise rested on a series of gender and racial-ethnic exclusions, not to mention external neocolonial exploitation. But those potential faultlines tended in the main to remain latent in a social-democratic imaginary that foregrounded class redistribution. The result was a prosperous North Atlantic belt of mass-consumption societies, which had apparently tamed social conflict.

In the 1960s, however, the relative calm of this "Golden Age of capitalism" was suddenly shattered.[1] In an extraordinary international explosion, radical youth took to the streets–at first to oppose racial segregation in the U.S. and the Vietnam War. Soon thereafter they began to question core features of capitalist modernity that social democracy had heretofore naturalized: materialism, consumerism, and "the achievement ethic"; bureaucracy, corporate culture, and "social control"; sexual repression, sexism, and heteronormativity. Breaking through the normalized political routines of the previous era, new social actors formed new social movements, with second-wave feminism among the most visionary.

Along with their comrades in other movements, the feminists of this era recast the radical imaginary. Transgressing a political culture that had privileged actors who cast themselves as nationally bounded and politically tamed classes, they challenged the gender exclusions of social democracy. Problematizing welfare paternalism and the bourgeois family, they exposed the deep androcentrism of capitalist society. Politicizing "the personal," they expanded the boundaries of contestation beyond socioeconomic distribution–to include housework, sexuality, and reproduction.

In fact, the initial wave of postwar feminism stood in an ambivalent relation to social democracy. On the one hand, much of the early second wave rejected the latter's *étatism* and its tendency to marginalize social divisions other than class and social injustices other than "maldistribution." On the other hand, many feminists presupposed key features of the socialist imaginary as a basis for more radical designs. Taking for granted the welfare state's solidaristic ethos and prosperity-securing steering capacities, they, too, were committed to taming markets and promoting equality. Acting from a critique that was at once radical and immanent, early second-wave feminists sought less to dismantle the welfare state than to transform it into a force that could help to overcome male domination.

By the 1980s, however, history seemed to have bypassed that political project. A decade of Conservative rule in much of Western Europe and North America, capped by the fall of Communism in the East, miraculously breathed new life into free-market ideologies previously given up for dead. Resurrected from the historical dustbin, "neoliberalism" authorized a sustained assault on the very idea of egalitarian redistribution. The effect, amplified by accelerating globalization, was to cast doubt on the legitimacy and viability of the use of public power to tame market forces. With social democracy on the defensive, efforts to broaden and deepen its promise naturally fell by the wayside. Feminist movements that had earlier taken the welfare state as their point of departure, seeking to extend its egalitarian ethos from class to gender, now found the ground cut out from under their feet. No longer able to assume a social-democratic baseline for radicalization, they gravitated to newer grammars of political claimsmaking, more attuned to the "postsocialist" *Zeitgeist.*

Enter the politics of recognition. If the initial thrust of postwar feminism was to "engender" the socialist imaginary, the later tendency was to redefine gender justice as a project aimed at "recognizing difference." "Recognition," accordingly, became the chief grammar of feminist claimsmaking at the *fin de siècle*. A venerable category of Hegelian philosophy, resuscitated by political theorists, this notion captured the distinctive character of "postsocialist" struggles, which often took the form of identity politics, aimed more at valorizing cultural difference than at promoting

1. The phrase "golden age of capitalism comes from Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991*(New York: Vintage: 1996).

economic equality. Whether the question was care work, sexual violence, or gender disparities in political representation, feminists increasingly resorted to the grammar of recognition to press their claims. Unable to transform the deep gender structures of the capitalist economy, they preferred to target harms rooted in androcentric patterns of cultural value or status hierarchies. The result was a major shift in the feminist imaginary: whereas the previous generation had sought to remake political economy, this one focused more on transforming culture.

The results were decidedly mixed. On the one hand, the new feminist struggles for recognition continued the earlier project of expanding the political agenda beyond the confines of class redistribution. In principle, accordingly, they served to broaden, and to radicalize, the concept of justice. On the other hand, however, the figure of the struggle for recognition so thoroughly captured the feminist imagination that it served more to displace than to deepen the socialist imaginary. The effect was to subordinate social struggles to cultural struggles, the politics of redistribution to the politics of recognition. That was not, to be sure, the original intention. It was assumed, rather, by proponents of the cultural turn that a feminist politics of identity and difference would synergize with struggles for gender equality. But that assumption fell prey to the larger *Zeitgeist*. In the *fin de siècle* context, the turn to recognition dovetailed all too neatly with a rising neoliberalism that wanted nothing more than to repress all memory of social egalitarianism. The result was a tragic historical irony. Instead of arriving at a broader, richer paradigm that could encompass both redistribution and recognition, feminists effectively traded one truncated paradigm for another–a truncated economism for a truncated culturalism.

Today, however, perspectives centered on recognition alone lack all credibility. In the context of escalating capitalist crisis, the critique of political economy is regaining its central place in theory and practice. No serious social movement, least of all feminism, can ignore the evisceration of democracy and assault on social reproduction now being waged by finance capital. Under these conditions, a feminist theory worth its salt must revive the "economic" concerns of Act One–without, however, neglecting the "cultural" insights of Act Two. But that is not all. It must integrate these not only with one another but also with a new set of "political" concerns made by salient by globalization: How might emancipatory struggles serve to secure democratic legitimacy and political voice in a time when the powers that govern our lives increasingly overrun the borders of territorial states? How might feminist movements foster equal participation transnationally, across entrenched power asymmetries and divergent worldviews? Struggling simultaneously on three fronts–call them redistribution, recognition, and representation, the feminism of Act Three must join with other anti-capitalist forces, even while exposing their continued failure to absorb the insights of decades of feminist activism.

Today's feminism must, moreover, be sensitive to the historical context in which we operate. Situating ourselves vis-à-vis the broader constellation of political forces, we need to take our distance both from market-besotted neoliberals, on the one hand, and from those who seek to "defend society" (replete with hierarchy and exclusion) from the market, on the other. Charting a third path between that Scylla and Charybdis, a feminism worthy of Act Three must join other emancipatory movements in integrating our fundamental interest in non-domination with protectionists' legitimate concerns for social security, without neglecting the importance of negative liberty, usually associated with liberalism.

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Such, at least, is the reading of recent history that emerges from the essays collected here. The chapters comprising Part I document the shift from postwar social democracy to early second-wave feminism, seen as a current of New Left radicalism. Exuding the heady spirit of the 1960s and 70s, these essays reflect the successes of the new social movements in breaking through the confines of welfare-state politics as usual. Expanding the political meant exposing neglected axes of domination other than class– above all, but not only, gender. Equally important, it meant exposing illegitimate power beyond the usual precincts of the state and economy–in sexuality and subjectivity, in domesticity and social services, in academia and commodified leisure, in the social practices of everyday life.

No one better captured these "postmarxian" impulses than Jürgen Habermas, the subject of

chapter one. A radical critic of postwar social democracy, Habermas sought to scrutinize aspects of the Keynesian welfare state that escaped standard liberal analyses. Eschewing the "labor monism" of his Frankfurt School predecessors, while seeking to continue the critique of reification by other means, he proposed a "communications-theoretic" reconstruction of Critical Theory. The upshot was a new diagnosis of late-capitalist ills: the "internal colonization of the lifeworld by systems." Endemic to postwar social-democracy, colonization occurred when "systems rationality" was illegitimately extended beyond its proper purview, the market economy and state administration, to the "core domains of the lifeworld," the family and political public sphere. In that case, as administrative coordination replaced communicative interaction in domains that required the latter, the welfare state spawned "social pathologies." Equally important, this development sparked new forms of social conflict, centered less on distribution than on the "grammar of forms of life."[2] Resonating with New Left antipathy to bureaucratic paternalism, Habermas's diagnosis validated the "post-materialist" concerns of the new social movements. Exceeding liberal criticisms of distributive injustice, it promised to broaden our sense of what could be subject to political challenge–and emancipatory change.

Nevertheless, as I argue in "What's Critical about Critical Theory?" (1985), Habermas failed to actualize the full radical potential of his own critique. Substantializing analytical distinctions between public and private, symbolic reproduction and material reproduction, system integration and social integration, he missed their gender subtext and naturalized androcentic features of the social order. Lacking the resources adequately to conceptualize male domination, he ended up suggesting that "juridification" in familial matters led necessarily to colonization–hence that feminist struggles to expand women's and children's rights were problematic. The effect was to jeopardize the analytical insights and practical gains of second-wave feminism.

In general, then, this volume's first chapter critiques an important leftwing critic of social democracy. Chapter two, in contrast, marks a shift to constructive feminist theorizing. Aiming to put to work the lessons of the previous chapter, I sketch a gender-sensitive critique of the structural dynamics and conflict tendencies of late-capitalist societies. "Struggle over Needs" (1989) reconceptualizes the welfare state by resituating distribution within discourse. Building on Habermas's insights, it employs a version of the linguistic turn to underwrite the expanded understanding of politics associated with second-wave feminism. The key move here is a shift from the usual social-democratic focus on conflicts over need satisfaction to a new, democratic-feminist focus on the "politics of need interpretation." The effect is to replace the distributive paradigm, which posits a monological objectivism of basic needs, with a gender-sensitive communicative paradigm, which construes the interpretation of needs as a political stake. This approach differs from Habermas's in a crucial respect. Instead of naturalizing hegemonic notions of public and private, I treat those categories, too, as discursively constructed, gender- and power-saturated objects of political struggle; and I link the politicization of needs to feminist struggles over where and how to draw the boundaries between "the political," "the economic" and "the domestic." The effect is to repoliticize a range of gender issues that Habermas unwittingly took off the table.

"Struggle over Needs" also borrows from, and revises, another great New Left-inspired critic of the democratic welfare state, Michel Foucault. Like Foucault, I maintain that needs politics is implicated in the constitution of subject positions, on the one hand, and of new bodies of disciplinary expertise, on the other. But unlike him, I do not assume that welfare professionals monopolize the interpretation of needs. Rather, situating "expert discourses" alongside the "oppositional discourses" of democratizing movements, on the one hand, and the "reprivatization discourses" of neoconservatives, on the other, I map conflicts among those three types of "needs-talk." Thus, where Foucault assumed a single, disciplinary, logic, my approach discerns a plurality of competing logics—including some with emancipatory potential, capable of challenging male domination. Drawing not only on empirical insights, but also on normative distinctions, it aims to guide feminist activism that would transform social reality.

2. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, especially chapter VIII, "Marx and the Thesis of Internal Colonization," in Volume Two: *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, English translation by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).

If "Struggle over Needs" maps the contours of welfare-state discourse in the 1980s, the next chapter examines a term that became central in the 1990s. Co-authored with the feminist historian Linda Gordon, "A Genealogy of 'Dependency'" (1994) reads the changing vicissitudes of that "keyword of the welfare state" as a barometer of shifting political winds. Written at the height of the "welfare reform" frenzy in the United States, when attacks on "welfare dependency" dominated policy debates, this essay charts the process by which that characteristic neoliberal preoccupation came to supplant the longstanding social-democratic focus on combating poverty.

"A Genealogy of 'Dependency'" excavates buried layers of discursive history that continue to weigh on the present. Mapping changing configurations of political economy and gender dynamics, this chapter analyzes two epochal historical shifts in the meanings of "dependency": the shift, first, from a preindustrial patriarchal usage, in which "dependency" was a nonstigmatized majority condition, to a modern industrial male-supremacist usage, which constructed a specifically feminine and highly stigmatized sense of "dependency"; and then, second, to a postindustrial usage, in which growing numbers of relatively prosperous women claim the same kind of "independence" that men do, while a more stigmatized but still feminized sense of "dependency" attaches to "deviant" groups who are considered "superfluous." Along the way, Gordon and I demonstrate that racializing practices play a major role in historical reconstructions of "dependency," as do changes in the organization and meaning of labor. Questioning current assumptions about the meaning and desirability of "independence," we conclude by sketching a "transvaluative" feminist critique aimed at overcoming the dependence/independence dichotomy.

If the dependency essay provides a feminist critique of post-war welfare states, the following chapter seeks to envision a feminist alternative. The key, I claim in "After the Family Wage" (1994), is to modernize the obsolete underpinnings of current arrangements–especially the presupposition of long lasting male-headed nuclear families, in which well paid, securely employed husbands support non-employed or low-earning wives. This assumption, which descends from industrial capitalism and still undergirds social policy, is wildly askew of postindustrial realities: the coexistence of diverse family forms, increased divorce and non-marriage, widespread female participation in waged work, and more precarious employment for all. It must give way, in the welfare states of the future, to arrangements that can institutionalize gender justice.

What, accordingly, should a postindustrial welfare state look like? "After the Family Wage" evaluates two alternative scenarios, each of which qualifies as feminist. In the first, the age of the family wage would give way to the age of the "Universal Breadwinner." Presupposed by liberals and "equality feminists," this approach would guarantee social security chiefly by facilitating women's wage-earning–above all, by reforming labor markets and providing employment-enabling services such as day care and elder care. In a second vision of postindustrial society, the era of the family wage would give way to the era of "Caregiver Parity." Favored by conservatives and "difference feminists," this approach would support informal carework in families–especially through caregiver allowances. These approaches assume divergent conceptions of gender justice: whereas the first aims to conform women's lives to the way men's are supposed to be now, the second would elevate caregiving to parity with breadwinning in order to "make difference costless." Yet neither approach, I argue here, is wholly satisfactory. Whereas Universal Breadwinner penalizes women for not being like men, Caregiver Parity relegates them to an inferior "mommy track." I conclude, accordingly, that feminists should develop a third, "Universal Caregiver" model, which would induce men to become more like women are now: people who combine employment with responsibilities for primary caregiving. Treating women's current life patterns as the norm, this model would aim to overcome the separation of breadwinning and carework. Avoiding both the workerism of Universal Breadwinner and the domestic privatism of Caregiver Parity, it aims to provide gender justice and security for all.

In general, then, the chapters comprising Part I advance a radical critique of the welfare state from a feminist perspective. Exuding an optimistic sense of expansive possibility, they assume that feminist movements could help to remake the world, dissolving male-supremacist structures and overturning gender hierarchies. Simultaneously presupposing and radicalizing the socialist imaginary, they validate the efforts of second-wave

feminists to expand the political agenda beyond the confines of social democracy. Repudiating welfare paternalism, they shift the focus of critical scrutiny from class distribution to gender injustice, broadly conceived. Whether critical or constructive, these chapters seek to render visible, and criticizable, the entire panoply of structures and practices that prevent women from participating on a par with men in social life.

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Part II, in contrast, evinces a more sober mood. Written during a period of waning leftwing energies, the chapters included here map the shift from early second-wave feminism to identity politics. Interrogating various currents of feminist theorizing, they document the process by which the cultural turn seemed to swallow up political economy, even as it should have enriched the latter. In addition, these essays track the growing centrality of claims for recognition within feminist activism. Situating those claims in historical context, they probe the fateful coincidence of the rise of identity politics with the revival of free-market fundamentalism; and they analyze the dilemmas feminists faced as a result. More generally, Part II diagnoses the shrinking of emancipatory vision at the *fin de siècle*. Seeking to dispel the mystique of cultural feminism, these chapters aim to retrieve the best insights of socialist-feminism and to combine them with a non-identitarian version of the politics of recognition. Only such an approach, I maintain, can meet the intellectual and political challenges facing feminist movements in a period of neoliberal hegemony.

"Against Symbolicism" (1990) scrutinizes one influential current of theorizing that unwittingly helped to divert the feminist imagination into culturalist channels. On its face, of course, nothing could be more opposed to identity politics than Lacanian psychoanalysis, which associates the wish for a stable identity with a devalorized "imaginary register." Nevertheless, as I argue here, feminist efforts to appropriate that theoretical paradigm inadvertently undermined their own professed anti-essentialism by failing to challenge some basic assumptions of Lacanian thought. Moreover, and equally unfortunate, by slighting political economy and avoiding institutional analysis, they ended up colluding with cultural feminists in making language and subjectivity the privileged foci of feminist critique.

"Against Symbolicism" discloses the self-defeating character of Lacanian feminism. Building on my earlier efforts to theorize the discursive dimension of women's subordination, this chapter assesses the relative merits of two ideal-typical approaches to signification: a structuralist approach, which analyzes symbolic systems or codes, and a pragmatics approach, which studies speech as a social practice. If one's goal is to analyze the workings of gender domination in capitalist societies, and to clarify the prospects for overcoming it, then the pragmatics approach has more to offer, I argue here.

"Against Symbolicism" elaborates this claim via critical discussions of Jacques Lacan (as read by feminists) and Julia Kristeva. Although both thinkers are widely viewed as poststructuralists, I contend that both continue the structuralist legacy in important respects. Thus, feminist efforts to appropriate Lacan have foundered on what I call "symbolicism": the homogenizing reification of diverse signifying practices into a monolithic, all pervasive, and all-determining symbolic order. In Kristeva's case, this problem is complicated but not overcome by the incorporation of an anti-structuralist, "semiotic," moment, intended to historicize "the symbolic." The effect is to establish an unending oscillation between two equally unsatisfactory alternatives: in one moment, Kristeva naturalizes a reified maternal identity; in another, she nullifies women's identities altogether.

The feminist quarrel over essentialism is broached more directly in chapter seven. Diagnosing the shriveling of the feminist imagination, "Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition" (2001) charts the progressive uncoupling of recognition from redistribution in feminist theorizing and feminist politics. Troubled by the prevalence of one-sided, culturalist feminisms, this essay proposes to marry the best insights of the cultural turn to the nearly forgotten but still indispensable insights of socialist-feminism. Rejecting sectarian constructions that cast those perspectives as mutually incompatible, I analyze sexism as a two-dimensional mode of subordination, rooted simultaneously in the political economy and status order of capitalist society. Overcoming gender subordination, I argue, requires combining a feminist politics of recognition with a feminist politics of redistribution.

Developing such a politics is not easy, however, as gender cuts across other axes of subordination; and claims for gender justice can conflict with other seemingly legitimate claims, such as claims for minority cultural recognition. It follows that feminists should eschew "single-variable" perspectives, which focus on gender alone, in favor of approaches that can handle hard cases, where injustices intersect and claims collide. To adjudicate such cases, such as the "headscarf affair" in France, I introduce two conceptual innovations. First, at the normative-philosophical level, I introduce the view of justice as *parity of participation*. Designed to identify two different kinds of obstacles (economic and cultural) that prevent some people from participating as peers in social interaction, the principle of participatory parity overarches both dimensions of (in)justice–(mal) distribution *and* (mis)recognition–and allows us to bring them together in a common framework. Second, at the social-theoretical level, I propose to replace the standard "identity" model of recognition with a *status model.* Aimed at avoiding the former's tendency to reify identity and displace struggles for redistribution, the status model posits that what deserves recognition is not group-specific identities or cultural contents, but the equal standing of partners in interaction. Applying these two concepts, the chapter offers a novel reading of the headscarf affair and a sympathetic critique of French feminist understandings of *parité*. More fundamentally, it proposes a way of repositioning feminist politics in the "age of recognition."

Chapter seven defends this approach against the objections of Judith Butler. In a 1997 essay, "Merely Cultural," Butler sought to defend "the cultural Left" against criticisms by me and others, whom she called "neoconservative Marxists."[3] Insisting that heteronormativity is just as fundamental to capitalism as class exploitation, she rejected theorizations that treat sexuality as superstructural. From there, Butler might have gone on to endorse a model that construes "distribution" and "recognition" as two co-fundamental dimensions of capitalist society, corresponding respectively to class and status, and that analyzes heterosexism as a deep-seated form of misrecognition or status subordination. Instead, however, she rejected the very distinction between cultural and economic injustices as a tactic aimed at trivializing heterosexism. Claiming to deconstruct my distinction between maldistribution and misrecognition, she went on to argue that heterosexism is so essential to capitalism that LGBT struggles threaten the latter's existence.

"Heterosexism, Misrecognition, and Capitalism" (1997) rebuts Butler's arguments. Defending my quasi-Weberian dualism of status and class, I maintain that heterosexism can be every bit as serious and material as other harms and yet still be an injustice of misrecognition, grounded in the status order of society, as opposed to the political economy. Tracing the economic/cultural differentiation to the rise of capitalism, I contend that, far from deconstructing that distinction, feminist theorists should rather historicize it. Mapping recent shifts in the institutionalization of economy and culture, I conclude that late-capitalist forms of sexual regulation are only indirectly tied to mechanisms for the accumulation of surplus value, hence that struggles against heterosexist misrecognition do not automatically threaten capitalism, but must be articulated to other (anti-capitalist) struggles. The resulting approach discloses gaps in the current order that open space for emancipatory practice. Unlike Butler's framework, mine makes visible the non-isomorphisms of status and class, the multiple contradictory interpellations of social subjects, and the multiple complex moral imperatives that motivate struggles for social justice in the present era.

In general, then, Part II assesses the state of the feminist imagination in a time of ascending neoliberalism. Analyzing the shift from early second-wave feminism, which sought to engender the socialist imaginary, to identity politics, which jettisoned the latter in favor of one centered on recognition, these essays provide a sober accounting of the losses and gains. Leery of identity politics in a period of neoliberal hegemony, they aim to revive the project of egalitarian gender redistribution in combination with a de-reified politics of recognition. The goal throughout is to develop new conceptual and practical strategies for combating gender injustices of economy and culture simultaneously. Only a perspective that encompasses both of those dimensions of gender justice can adequately inform feminist theory in a capitalist society.

3. Judith Butler, "Merely Cultural," *Social Text*, 52–53 (Fall/Winter 1997), pp. 265–277.

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Part III shifts the scene to the present. Today, when neoliberalism is everywhere in crisis, reductive culturalism is widely discredited, and feminist interest in political economy is fast reviving. What is needed now, accordingly, is a gender-sensitive framework that can grasp the fundamental character of the crisis–as well as the prospects for an emancipatory resolution. One imperative is to conceptualize the multi-layered nature of the current crisis, which encompasses simultaneous destabilizations of finance, ecology and social reproduction. Another is to map the grammar of the social struggles that are responding to the crisis and reshaping the political terrain on which feminists operate. Crucial to both enterprises is the new salience of transnationalizing forces, which are problematizing "the Westphalian frame": that is, the previously unquestioned idea that the bounded territorial state is the appropriate unit for reflecting on, and struggling for, justice. As that doxa recedes in the face of intensified experiences of transnational power, feminist struggles are transnationalizing too. Thus, many of the assumptions that undergirded earlier feminist projects are being called into question–revealed to be indefensible expressions of what Ulrich Beck calls "methodological nationalism."[4]

The chapters comprising Part III aim to develop models of feminist theorizing that can clarify this situation. "Reframing Justice in a Global World" (2005) observes that so-called "globalization" is changing the grammar of political claims-making. Contests that used to focus chiefly on the question of *what* is owed as a matter of justice to members of political communities now turn quickly into disputes about *who* should count as a member and *which* is the relevant community. Not only the substance of justice but also the *frame* is in dispute. The result is a major challenge to received understandings, which fail to ponder *who should count* in matters of justice. To meet the challenge, I argue, the theory of justice must become three-dimensional, incorporating the political dimension of *representation*, alongside the economic dimension of distribution and the cultural dimension of recognition.

"Reframing Justice" constitutes a major revision to the model developed in the previous chapters. Adapting Weber's triad of class, status, and party, it identifies not two, but three analytically distinct kinds of obstacles to parity of participation in capitalist societies. Whereas distribution foregrounds impediments rooted in political economy, and recognition discloses obstacles grounded in the status order, representation conceptualizes barriers to participatory parity that are entrenched in the political constitution of society. What are at issue here are the procedures for staging and resolving conflicts over injustice: how are claims for redistribution and recognition to be adjudicated? And who belongs to the circle of those who are entitled to raise them?

Directed at clarifying struggles over globalization, this third, "political" dimension of justice operates at two different levels. On the one hand, I theorize "ordinary-political injustices," which arise internally, *within* a bounded political community, when skewed decision rules entrench disparities of political voice among fellow citizens. Feminist struggles for gender quotas on electoral lists are a response to this sort of ordinary-political misrepresentation. But that is not all. Equally important, if less familiar, are "meta-political injustices," which arise when the division of political space *into* bounded polities miscasts what are actually transnational injustices as national matters. In that case, affected non-citizens are wrongly excluded from consideration–as, for example, when the claims of the global poor are shunted into the domestic political arenas of weak or failed states and diverted from the offshore causes of their dispossession. Naming this second, meta-political injustice *misframing*, I argue for a post-Westphalian theory of democratic justice, which problematizes unjust frames. The result is a major revision of my theory, aimed at addressing trans-border inequities in a globalizing world.

The following chapter applies this revised, three-dimensional framework to revisit the historical trajectory of second-wave feminism. Effectively recapitulating the overall argument of this book, "Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History" (2009) situates the movement's unfolding in relation to three different moments in the history of capitalism. First, I locate the movement's beginnings in the context of "state-organized capitalism." Here I chart the emergence of second-wave feminism from out of the anti-imperialist New Left as a radical challenge to the pervasive androcentrism of state-led capitalist societies in the postwar era. And I identify

4. Ulrich Beck, "Toward a New Critical Theory with a Cosmopolitan Intent," *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory*, vol. 10, no. 4 (2003): 453-468.

the movement's fundamental emancipatory promise with its expanded sense of injustice and its structural critique of capitalist society. Second, I consider the process of feminism's evolution in the dramatically changed social context of rising neoliberalism. Here, I chart not only the movement's extraordinary successes but also the disturbing convergence of some of its ideals with the demands of an emerging new form of capitalism–postfordist, "disorganized," transnational. And I suggest that second-wave feminism has unwittingly supplied a key ingredient of what Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello call "the new spirit of capitalism."[5] Finally, I contemplate prospects for reorienting feminism in the present context of capitalist crisis, which could mark the beginnings of a shift to a new, post-neoliberal form of social organization. Here, I examine the prospects for reactivating feminism's emancipatory promise in a world that has been rocked by financial crisis and the surrounding political fallout.

"Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History" constitutes a provocation of sorts. Contending that feminism has entered a dangerous liaison with neoliberalism, this chapter identifies four major historical ironies. First, the feminist critique of social-democratic economism, undeniably emancipatory in the era of state-organized capitalism, has assumed a different, more sinister valence in the subsequent period, as it dovetailed with neoliberalism's interest in diverting political-economic struggles into culturalist channels. Second, the feminist critique of the "family wage," once the centerpiece of a radical analysis of capitalism's androcentrism, increasingly serves today to legitimate a new mode of capital accumulation, heavily dependent on women's waged labor, as idealized in the "two-earner family." Third, the feminist critique of welfare-state paternalism has converged unwittingly, first, with neoliberalism's critique of the nanny state, and then, with its increasingly cynical embrace of microcredit and NGOs. Finally, efforts to expand the scope of gender justice beyond the nation-state are increasingly resignified to cohere with neoliberalism's global governance needs, as "femocrats" have entered the policy apparatuses of the United Nations, the European Union, and the "international community." In every case, an idea that served emancipatory ends in one context became ambiguous, if not worse, in another era.

Where does this argument leave feminism today? In the final chapter, I propose a framework aimed at disrupting our dangerous liaison with neoliberalism and liberating our radical energies. Revisiting a landmark study of capitalist crisis, "Between Marketization and Social Protection" (2010) offers a feminist reading of Karl Polanyi's 1944 classic, *The Great Transformation*.[6] Eschewing economism, that book analyzed a previous crisis of capitalism as a crisis of social reproduction, as earlier efforts to create a "free market society" undermined the shared understandings and solidary relations that underpin social life. In Polanyi's view, such efforts proved so destructive of livelihoods, communities, and habitats as to trigger a century-long struggle between free-marketeers and proponents of "social protection," who sought to defend "society" from the ravages of the market. The end result of this struggle, which he called a "double movement," was fascism and the Second World War.

Without question, Polanyi's diagnosis is relevant today. Our crisis, too, can be fruitfully analyzed as a "great transformation," in which a new round of efforts to free markets from political regulation is threatening social reproduction and sparking a new wave of protectionist protest. Nevertheless, I argue here, Polanyi's framework harbors a major blindspot. Focused single-mindedly on harms emanating from marketization, his account overlooks harms originating elsewhere, in the surrounding "society." As a result, it neglects the fact that social protections are often vehicles of domination, aimed at entrenching hierarchies and at excluding "outsiders." Preoccupied overwhelmingly with struggles over marketization, Polanyi occults struggles over injustices rooted in "society" and encoded in social protections.

"Between Marketization and Social Protection" aims to correct this blindspot. Seeking to develop a broader critique, I propose to transform Polanyi's double movement into a *triple movement*. The key move here is to introduce a third pole of social struggle, which I call "emancipation." Crosscutting his central conflict between marketization and social protection, emancipation aims to overcome forms of domination rooted

5. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, tr. Geoffrey Elliott (London: Verso Books, 2005).

6. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944 [2001]).

in "society," as well as those based in "economy." Opposing oppressive protections without thereby becoming free-marketeers, emancipation's ranks have included feminists as well as the billions of people–peasants, serfs and slaves; racialized, colonized and indigenous peoples–for whom access to a wage promised liberation from traditional authority. By thematizing emancipation, along with marketization and social protection, indeed as colliding with them, the triple movement clarifies the political terrain on which feminism operates today. On the one hand, contra Polanyi, this figure discloses the ambivalence of social protection, which often entrenches domination even while counteracting the disintegrative effects of marketization. On the other hand, however, contra mainstream liberal feminism, the triple movement reveals the ambivalence of emancipation, which may dissolve the solidary ethical basis of social protection and can thereby foster marketization, even as it dismantles domination. Probing these ambivalences, I conclude that feminists should end our dangerous liaison with marketization and forge a principled new alliance with social protection. In so doing, we could reactivate and extend the insurrectionary, anti-capitalist spirit of the Second Wave.

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A compilation of essays written over a period of more than twenty-five years, this volume's orientation is at once retrospective and prospective. Charting shifts in the feminist imaginary since the 1970s, it offers an interpretation of the recent history of feminist thought. At the same time, however, it looks forward, to the feminism of future, now being invented by new generations of female activists. Schooled in digital media and at home in transnational space, yet formed in the crucible of capitalist crisis, this generation promises to reinvent the feminist imagination yet again. Already coming out of the long slog through identity politics, the young feminists of this generation seem poised to conjure up a new synthesis of radical democracy and social justice. Combining redistribution, recognition, and representation, they are seeking to transform a world that no longer resembles the Westphalian international system of sovereign states. Faced with the gravest crisis of capitalism since the 1930s, they have every incentive to devise new, systematic critiques that combine the enduring insights of socialist-feminism with those of newer paradigms, such as postcolonialism and ecology. Whatever helpful lessons they can glean from this volume will pale in comparison with those its author expects to learn from them.

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