

Nancy Fraser's work occupies a preeminent and peculiar place in contemporary debates in political theory. Together with a few other scholars, she managed the very difficult task of resisting the largely dominant trend of normative and analytic political theory, which gained a mainstream position in the Anglo-American world and beyond. Fraser's reflection on social theory and political philosophy is rooted in the theoretical vocabularies and problems of critical theory, feminism, and Marxism. Her work in the last decades did not limit itself to keeping these philosophical traditions alive, but she is working at expanding them through a confrontation with the challenges of our present time. In her last book, *Cannibal Capitalism*, published in Italian by Laterza, Fraser pushes the boundaries of Marx's definition and analysis of capitalism incorporating the philosophical and historical critiques within and from the margins of the critiques of capitalism. Fraser's reading of Marx's thought incorporates W.E.B. Du Bois' critique of the black condition. Fraser's philosophical gesture goes back to the roots of critical theory, linking conceptual innovation with the diagnosis of the present condition of politics and society. This is a demanding task since it involves elaborating the philosophical categories of political and social grammar through a reflexive understanding of their embeddedness in social praxis. It is not by accident that Fraser is Professor in Philosophy and Politics at the New School.

This approach to social and political theory is essential in the present conjuncture, a situation that Etienne Balibar named "absolute capitalism", expressing with that term the need, as Fraser herself does, to analyze contemporary capitalism not only as a system of production and accumulation but as a social system. This capitalism is, and I quote Balibar, "'post-historical'" because it is post-colonial and post-socialist, and it may appear as unsurpassable and invincible, because it has dissolved the forms and classical representations of the class struggle around which such themes as "expropriation of expropriators" were built and which served to imagine a revolutionary social transformation". In the crisis-ridden system in which we are living, we need a political grammar that is capable at first to map the ideological, normative and theoretical categories that sustain the current system of exploitation and accumulation. This dimension of diagnosis cannot be escaped by critical theorists if we want to elaborate a critical vocabulary for rethinking adequate and effective categories of emancipation. It is not anymore the time, if it has ever been, for a political theory that elaborates detached norms for a liberal society that does not interrogate its articulation with capitalism as a social and normative system itself.

I would like to ask Fraser one question: to what extent is your reflection on feminism as a labor movement an elaboration of a new subject of politics? It seems to me that the reference

to Du Bois complicates the figure not only of the liberal citizen-subject but, to some extent, it also allows her to expand upon Marx's critique of the citizen and his understanding of the subject. The reference to Du Bois reframes domination as a condition of vulnerability that has always been there in liberal and democratic modernity. What does that change for the understanding of the citizen-subject of a contemporary critical theory of democracy?