

chy, democracy, war and history. While he relates those topics in the *Philosophy of Right* to other texts by Hegel, he hardly contextualises them within history and political theory in general.

Brooks writes clearly, does not confront readers with German and his book does not require advanced familiarity with philosophy. However, there is a downside to his clarity in that the chapters are somewhat repetitive.

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Marx on Gender and the Family: A Critical Study by **Heather A. Brown**. Leiden: Brill, 2012. 232pp., £94.84, ISBN 9789004214286

In *Marx on Gender and the Family*, Heather Brown develops a comprehensive analysis of Marx's entire *oeuvre* in relation to the subjects of gender and the family. Based on a clearly written textual engagement with Marx's work, the book reveals the extent to which gender was an 'essential category' for him, despite the fact that he did not formulate a 'systematic theory of gender' (p. 3).

The book follows a chiefly chronological order with which the impressive breadth of Marx's writings is unpacked and examined with particular reference to gender. Starting with the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Brown retraces the development of Marx's thought on gender in his major and minor publications, including *inter alia*, *The German Ideology*, *The Communist Manifesto*, *Capital* and a selection of *The New York Tribune* articles. Despite the fact that Marx sometimes used the vocabulary of 'Victorian ideology' in his writings, Brown maintains that the dialectical method developed in Marx's corpus is a potent antidote to the essentialist conceptualisations of gender and the family and that Marx's categories 'provide resources for feminist theory' (p. 70). The conceptual discussion is reinforced with examples highlighting Marx's political activities and his direct engagement with the social and economic oppressions faced by women in bourgeois society.

The final two chapters provide highly original examinations of the 'Ethnological Notebooks' in which Marx studied and engaged with the anthropological works of Lewis Henry Morgan, Henry Sumner Maine, Ludwig Lange, John Budd Pear, John Lubbock and Maxim Kovalevsky. Focusing mainly on the sections related to Morgan, Maine and Lange, Brown offers a crucial

reconsideration of the relationship between Marx's own analysis of Morgan's *Ancient Society* and Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. The author convincingly draws a line between Marx's and Engels' discussions of the position of women in historical development and underlines that for Marx, unlike Engels, the introduction of private property and the naturalisation of monogamy did not entail the 'world-historic defeat of the female sex' (pp. 117 and 158). Brown makes a compelling case for revisiting Marx's thought on gender since it is depicted as a productive starting point for conceptualising agency and subjectivity compared to Engels' 'relatively deterministic and unilinear framework' (p. 175).

Brown's book is a laudable heir to Raya Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*.¹ But beyond its immanent value as a powerful contribution to Marxism, the book further speaks to contemporary feminist debates by re-emphasising the significance of the dialectical method in overcoming binary dualisms (e.g. nature/culture, man/woman) and examining the non-static forms of social relations without overlooking 'local and macro power-structures' (p. 209).

Note

- 1 Dunayevskaya, R. (1991) *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

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Dialogues with Contemporary Political Theorists by **Gary Browning, Raia Prokhovnik and Maria Dimova-Cookson (eds)**. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 248pp., £57.50, ISBN 978 0230303058

In this volume, Gary Browning, Maria Dimova-Cookson, Raia Prokhovnik and others interview twelve prominent contemporary thinkers. Benjamin Barber, Jane Bennett, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Jerry Cohen, William E. Connolly, Rainer Forst, Bonnie Honig, Carole Pateman, Philip Pettit, Amartya Sen, Quentin Skinner and R. B. J. Walker provide fascinating insights into their work, discuss their intellectual trajectories, and reflect on politics, ethics and society.

Barber stresses the limitations of representative democracy, and defends a theory of strong democracy