



# The Excessive Subject: A New Theory of Social Change

*Molly Anne Rothenberg*

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In *The Excessive Subject: A New Theory of Social Change*, Molly Anne Rothenberg uncovers an innovative theory of social change implicit in the writings of radical social theorists, such as Pierre Bourdieu, Michel de Certeau, Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek. Through case studies of these writers' work, Rothenberg illuminates how this new theory calls into question currently accepted views of social practices, subject formation, democratic interaction, hegemony, political solidarity, revolutionary acts, and the ethics of alterity.

Finding a common dissatisfaction with the dominant paradigms of social structures in the authors she discusses, Rothenberg goes on to show that each of these thinkers makes use of Lacan's investigations of the causality of subjectivity in an effort to find an alternative paradigm. Labeling this paradigm 'extimate causality', Rothenberg demonstrates how it produces a nondeterminacy, so that every subject bears some excess; paradoxically, this excess is what structures the social field itself. Whilst other theories of social change, subject formation, and political alliance invariably conceive of the elimination of this excess as necessary to their projects, the theory of extimate causality makes clear that it is ineradicable. To imagine otherwise is to be held hostage to a politics of fantasy. As she examines the importance as well as the limitations of theories that put extimate causality to work, Rothenberg reveals how the excess of the subject promises a new theory of social change.

By bringing these prominent thinkers together for the first time in one volume, this landmark text will be sure to ignite debate among scholars in the field, as well as being an indispensable tool for students.

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