defence of law against those communitarians and others who would let shame and disgust play a role therein, but also for its positive thesis. This has two aspects. Firstly, she shows what the law should positively do to protect people from the negative effects of shame. Here, she is very suggestive when looking at ways of helping the physically and mentally disabled. Secondly, she points the way to the proper institutionalization of emotions in a civilized society. Communitarianism and contractarian liberalism leave deep issues about humans unresolved. The former think of people as either normal or not and the latter sees people as autonomous and independent. But we are all interrelated and vulnerable and indeed equal in our vulnerability. We must design institutions that realize that insight if we are to develop our society into a truly civilized one. What is important is that we are imperfect and fragile beings and it is in that that our beauty and humanity lie. As well as protecting ourselves from some emotions we need also to inculcate others such as love and compassion. This is an important and timely book, written with insight and passion.

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The Postmodern Prince: Critical Theory, Left Strategy and the Making of a New Political Subject
John Sanbonmatsu
Monthly Review Press, New York, 2004, 272pp.
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Taking inspiration from Antonio Gramsci's image of the communist party as a 'modern Prince', John Sanbonmatsu clarifies what he regards as some key intellectual preconditions for a contemporary radical left political strategy. The 'postmodern Prince' names the movement he encourages his audience — presumably the American left — to understand as a long-overdue point of intellectual and organizational unity to an otherwise disparate collection of social movements, trade unions and radical oppositional groups. Too often in the past, he argues with great effect, these movements have succumbed to an 'expressivist' politics that prioritizes 'authentic self-expression' over discipline and long-term strategic unification. Thus, they have lost any sense of a common language of opposition and organizational coherence and, as a consequence, they have succumbed to the stronger will of neo-liberal capitalism and conservative reaction.

Likewise, continues the author, contemporary theory, particularly the postmodernist/poststructuralist variety led by various French philosophers, has been complicit in the disagreggation of the left's intellectual focus, robbing it of any serious grasp of social 'totality': that is, an awareness of the 'real' relations of exploitation and inequality underlying 'identity politics' and the surface play of 'discourses'. These continental thinkers — whose work Sanbonmatsu dismisses as 'Baroque theory' — have, he claims, mirrored contemporary neo-liberalism's logic of commodification by their obsession with 'difference' and particularity. As a result, potential agreement on the objective coordinates of left strategy has given way to the distracting trivia of cultural consumption. In place of postmodernism the author advises a return to Gramsci's strategically oriented theory with its simultaneous effort to grasp the totality and see the world from the 'phenomenological' viewpoints of those who live and suffer in it. Gramsci, we are reminded in a chapter rather crudely comparing him ('the Prince') to Foucault ('the Archaeologist'), was a man of principle who refused to let personal and political defeat undermine his own sense of 'the whole' and the need to master it in both thought and practice.

Sanbonmatu's book is a comprehensive, polemical analysis that is likely to provoke a heated discussion on the left in the US. But considered outside of that context, it comes across as being very much in the left-wing tradition of a sweeping denunciation of the usual suspects: postmodernists and poststructuralists are all lumped together as 'idealists' obsessed with micropolitics, unwittingly acting out a market ideology of commodified difference, blind to the reality of relations of production that structure social inequalities, and so on. These claims would seem less tiresome if they were at least weighed up with some evidence rather than asserted: that is, if the author engaged the thinkers he denounces instead of simply redescribing their work as evidence of so much left-wing *traison des clercs*. At no point does he devote any effort to questioning his own, highly disputable, claims, but rather bandies around terms such as 'real relations of production' and 'totality' as if these were self-evident and incontestable objects. Consequently, no possibility is broached of any theoretical *rapprochement* between the Marxist-inspired analysis of capitalism the author deems as indispensable and the more complex analyses of power and hegemony offered by recent theorists.

This failure to invest in any positive engagement with postmodernism underscores wider tensions in the idea of a unified left strategy, which he conceives as a wholesale civilizational project akin to Gramsci's conception of proletarian hegemony as a kind of modern Reformation. In Sanbonmatsu's view, the postmodern Prince ought to give form to a multiplicity of social movements and working class opposition. Its 'organic' unity, he claims, does not diminish difference and particularity but presupposes them. Yet asserting

the desire for unity does not itself create it: surely there will be contest, perhaps debilitating disagreement, over what constitutes the nature of the 'totality', or the relative significance of production relations to the many varieties of human oppression? Invoking Gramsci hardly resolves the issue. Sanbonmatsu proceeds as if the debates over hegemony in the 1970s and 80s, particularly on the European left (and in Italy in particular), had never occurred. Then, at very least, the tensions between Marxist analyses and democratic politics, the view of totality and the need to crystallize a multiplicity of radical aspirations were laid bare.

Sanbonmatsu tries to end his analysis on a positive note, sketching a 'normative ontology' he calls 'metahumanism': a secular framework that incorporates moral regard for nonhuman animals, too, designed to serve as an ethical foundation to his project of civilizational struggle. But this ambitious picture of unification based on inclusive values of love and empathy, and a striving for a deep 'fullness of being', begins to sound less like the sharpened political mindset of the left activist and more the mystical nonsense that the author began by critiquing so effectively. Paradoxically, in the 'Epilogue' Sanbonmatsu retreats from his quest for totality, accepting that 'the desire to know the whole is an insatiable and destructive desire' (p. 225), and he claims to recognize the inevitably 'imperfect unity' a left strategy will forge. But his needless hostility to contemporary continental theory and his grandiose conception of radical politics as a quest for total spiritual transformation suggest the postmodern Prince will struggle to win his crown.

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Wayward Reproductions: Genealogies of Race and Nation in Transatlantic Modern Thought
Alys Eve Weinbaum
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Wayward Reproductions sets out to treat reproduction as a keyword, and to explore how it gets caught up with race, nation and genealogy in the discourses of modernity. Weinbaum prioritizes reproduction as a political concern, and argues for the centrality of what she terms the 'race/reproduction bind' (p. 5) to the modern episteme, and to understanding nationalism, imperialism and racism. This is an ambitious task, and Weinbaum embraces its complexity by