



# On the Political

*Chantal Mouffe*

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## **On the Political** Chantal Mouffe

Since September 11th, we frequently hear that political differences should be put aside: the real struggle is between good and evil. What does this mean for political and social life? Is there a 'Third Way' beyond left and right, and if so, should we fear or welcome it?

This thought-provoking book by Chantal Mouffe, a globally recognized political author, presents a timely account of the current state of democracy, affording readers the most relevant and up-to-date information.

Arguing that liberal 'third way thinking' ignores fundamental, conflicting aspects of human nature, Mouffe states that, far from expanding democracy, globalization is undermining the combative and radical heart of democratic life.

Going back first to Aristotle, she identifies the historical origins of the political and reflects on the Enlightenment, and the social contract, arguing that in spite of its good intentions, it levelled the radical core of political life.

Contemporary examples, including the Iraq war, racism and the rise of the far right, are used to illustrate and support her theory that far from combating extremism, the quest for consensus politics undermines the ability to challenge it. These case studies are also highly effective points of reference for student revision.

*On the Political* is a stimulating argument about the future of politics and addresses the most fundamental aspects of democracy that will aid further study.

## **On the Political Details**

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# From Reader Review On the Political for online ebook

## Diego says

continua con su desarrollo respecto el "agonismo" como una forma de confrontación política que garantiza la existencia de una democracia pluralista, principalmente trata asuntos del orden mundial, como la multipolaridad y la unipolaridad, una parte importante del libro esta dedicada a la experiencia europea

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## Ganna says

an orderly and broad overview of the latest definitions of the political in a post-political world, simple as that.

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## Christiaan says

Having read 'the Return of the Political' and a bunch of other articles by Mouffe this book somehow came about as a bit of a repetition. On the other side the main these is still interesting for those who have not yet read Mouffe. Also this book is more coherent, not a mere collection of articles put together, than some of her older work and has some interesting 'updates' (a discussion of Negri and Hardt's Empire, ...). So I can recommend this book for those not familiar with Mouffe, while those who already read her will not find much new here.

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## Carson Teitler says

A very prescient book that is really coming into its stride now. A timely read, and considering how prescient this book is I am definitely going to read more by the author.

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## Antje Schrupp says

<http://antjeschrupp.com/2014/01/02/ge...>

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## Szymon Szymczyk says

Gdyby tylko t? ksi??k? napisano w bardziej przyst?pny sposób...

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## Alexis says

Mouffe is brilliant. If this book doesn't inspire you to incite revolution, I do not know what will.

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## Mikael Hall says

Bra redogörelse av det postpolitiska tillståndet. Och en utmärkt definition av det politiska, grupper oförsonliga konflikter och nödvändiga antagonismer. Intressanta lösningar på liberalismens problem. En aning hög grad av akademisk mumbojumbo men fortfarande inte obfiskuratism. En måste läsa för alla radikaler eller intresserade av politik genrellt.

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## Angel ??? says

"On the Political", by Chantal Mouffe, is an interesting enough book that falls short of really bringing anything new to the table.

Agonistic dialogue and the need for recognizing that consensus is impossible (who thinks you can get 7 billion people to agree on everything?) are interesting enough ideas. That you need a space for having people with different views and that may have radical disagreements, seems more than ok. That you need 137 pages to get that idea through is the first shortcoming of the book, and one many non-fiction books suffer from: repetition. If the author made it interesting, you could forgive their mistake, but Mouffe just goes on and on on the same idea.

If that was not enough, our friend here falls in some shortcomings: the left has become center-left to bring consensus in the world, but the right keeps being right (showing where Mouffe comes from). The left has left (cough cough) its position to keep money and power and play to the status quo, while the right... keeps being the right. Ok, we got it. The problem with this is that it believes 1) that the left was ever the left we want to believe it was, 2) that that world is similar to the one we live in now, 3) that that left changed doesn't mean you don't have other groups that have kept more "radical left" ideas (Mouffe only talks about the "radical right", and 4) Mouffe seems to believe that we need some kind of democracy (when we have never had any democracy, just oligarchy; and really, what is the right kind of democracy?); she forgets that our beloved system seems prone to mistakes. That in peace transformation or liberal peace democracy seems to be the objective, without taking into account what, when, where or how, just shows that we still have a long way to know and lots to learn.

It is an interesting book, because it recognizes that we need to recognize that consensus is impossible without creating "spoilers", but it fails as it still believes that agonism is some kind of consensus (in not being in consensus).

## **Orde says**

I think she didn't really understand Carl Schmitt or she referred to his concept of the political rather as something you put in the window to lure the suckers in.

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## **Thomas Davis says**

I read this on the plane home primarily with the idea that it might be a good text to use in an undergrad class. If you've read Mouffe's work with Laclau or any of her other books, you certainly won't find anything new here: adversary over enemy, agonism over antagonism, democratic conflict over lazy Habermasian consensual discussion, and so on. She takes on the cosmopolites here and makes good arguments. This part of the book suffers because she chooses rather weak opponents. Someone like Pheng Cheah would have been more formidable. What is really interesting is her assertion that Hardt and Negri's "Empire" is also part of larger liberal, cosmopolitan visions of a post-political world. That should raise some eyebrows.

Pedagogically, Mouffe would be useful because she so clearly stakes out her arguments and oppositions. It is hard to imagine that an undergrad incapable of reconstructing her arguments and her political investments.

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