



Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution (Zone / Near Futures)

By Wendy Brown

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Neoliberal rationality -- ubiquitous today in statecraft and the workplace, in jurisprudence, education, and culture -- remakes everything and everyone in the image of *homo oeconomicus*. What happens when this rationality transposes the constituent elements of democracy into an economic register? In *Undoing the Demos*, Wendy Brown explains how democracy itself is imperiled. The demos disintegrates into bits of human capital; concerns with justice bow to the mandates of growth rates, credit ratings, and investment climates; liberty submits to the imperative of human capital appreciation; equality dissolves into market competition; and popular sovereignty grows incoherent. Liberal democratic practices may not survive these transformations. Radical democratic dreams may not either.

In an original and compelling argument, Brown explains how and why neoliberal reason undoes the political form and political imaginary it falsely promises to secure and reinvigorate. Through meticulous analyses of neoliberalized law, political practices, governance, and education, she charts the new common sense. *Undoing the Demos* makes clear that for democracy to have a future, it must become an object of struggle and rethinking.

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Editorial Review

Review

Wendy Brown's new book, *Undoing the Demos*, is a clarion call to democratic action. In close conversation with Michel Foucault's 1979 lectures on *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Brown brilliantly explores how the rationality of neoliberalism is hollowing out the modern subject and, with it, our contemporary liberal democracies. Delving deep into the logic of neoliberalism and widely across the spectrum of neoliberal practices, from benchmarking to higher education policy, Brown offers a compelling new dimension to the critical work on neoliberalism. It is necessary reading today -- powerful and haunting.

(Bernard E. Harcourt, Isidor and Seville Sulzbacher Professor of Law, Columbia University and Directeur d'études, École des hautes études en sciences sociales)

With this passionately incisive critique of neoliberal (ir)rationality, Wendy Brown delineates the political stakes of the present. Tracing its antipolitical and antidemocratic impulses, she challenges us to defend and extend the possibilities of a popular politics that makes the promises of democracy come true.

(John Clarke, Professor Emeritus of Social Policy, The Open University)

This is a book for the age of resistance, for the occupiers of the squares, for the generation of Occupy Wall Street. The premier radical political philosopher of our time offers a devastating critique of the way neoliberalism has hollowed out democracy. But the victory of *homo oeconomicus* over *homo politicus* is not irreversible. Wendy Brown has little time for 'left melancholy.' Hers is a call to arms for the defense of the enlightenment principles of freedom, equality, and solidarity and for reimagining and deepening democracy. After reading Brown, only bad faith can justify the toleration of neoliberalism.

(Costas Douzinas, Director of the Birkbeck institute for the Humanities and author of *Philosophy and Resistance in the Crisis*)

Wendy Brown vividly lays bare neoliberalism's perverse rationality, the 'economization of everything,' documenting its corrosive consequences for public institutions, for solidaristic values, and for democracy itself. Essential but unsettling reading, *Undoing the Demos* is analytically acute and deeply disturbing.

(Jamie Peck, author of *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*)

Brown deepens the conceptual analysis and criticism of neoliberal ideology, now on the point of becoming the dominant way people think about themselves, their lives and their social world. In illuminating detail, she also discusses the real and horrifying social changes taking place partly as a result of the way in which this ideology is being implemented. A major contribution, presenting its arguments with power and clarity, this book helps us understand the world we have increasingly been forced to live in, and to begin the process of thinking about what might be done to revitalize our political imagination and practices.

(Raymond Geuss, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, University of Cambridge)

A trenchant critique of the piecemeal neoliberal destruction of democratic politics by one of the most powerful political theorists of our time. *Undoing the Demos* is a much-needed, passionate defense of political autonomy.

(Rainer Forst, Frankfurt University, author of *Justification and Critique*)

Political theorist Wendy Brown opens her brilliant and incisive new book, *Undoing the Demos*, with a clarion call: Western democracy is imperiled. According to Brown, democracy has grown gaunt as a consequence of an ascendant political rationality that, like an ideological autoimmune disorder, has assaulted its very fiber and future...Democracy is the crux of the issue...and by focusing on how it's been diminished Brown has written a book that deserves to be widely read.

(Astra Taylor *Bookforum*)

About the Author

Wendy Brown is Class of 1936 First Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley, and the author of *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (Zone Books).

Users Review

From reader reviews:

David Pell:

The particular book *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Zone / Near Futures) will bring one to the new experience of reading any book. The author style to describe the idea is very unique. If you try to find new book to learn, this book very appropriate to you. The book *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Zone / Near Futures) is much recommended to you to read. You can also get the e-book from the official web site, so you can easier to read the book.

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Laurie Riley:

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