



## Democracy in What State? (New Directions in Critical Theory)

*Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, Daniel Bensaïd, Wendy Brown, Jean-Luc Nancy*

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"Is it meaningful, as far as you are concerned, to call oneself a democrat? And if so, how do you interpret the word?" In responding to this question, eight iconoclastic thinkers prove the rich potential of democracy and its critical weaknesses. They also reconceive the practice to accommodate new political and cultural realities. Giorgio Agamben traces the tense history of constitutions and their coexistence with various governments. Alain Badiou contrasts current democratic practice with democratic communism. Daniel Bensaid ponders the institutionalization of democracy, while Wendy Brown discusses the democratization of society under neoliberalism. Jean-Luc Nancy measures the difference between democracy as a form of rule and as a human end, while Jacques Rancière highlights its egalitarian nature. Kristin Ross identifies hierarchical relationships within democratic practice, and Slavoj Žižek complicates the distinction between those who desire to own the state and those who hope to do without it.



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