

Simon Critchley. *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance*. Brooklyn NY: Verso, 2008. Pp. 168. \$16.95 (paper). ISBN 978-1844672967

Reviewer: Jason Caro¹

[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: http://www.transformativestudies.org ©2010 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

In the face of the global reach of ‘neo-liberalism’ and Thatcherite economics, it has been said that left-activists lack an effective counter response, preferably a hegemonic response that is convincing and links justice theory with the practice of justice (Fairclough 2003). Enter the much needed prescription of what Critchley, in his latest work, dubs “anarchic meta-politics.” For such a short book, this sincere counter strategy is laid out with surprising force. Critchley gives up on the larger, classic, transformative actors or political “subjectivities” such as the Marxian proletariat as the agent of social justice. The new capitalism has so dislocated populations both domestically and globally that such a liberatory, romantic “multitude” is no longer feasible. But all is not lost since, through a kind of theoretical jiu jitsu, the very diremptions produced by the new and calculating system of exploitation serve as the basis for a counterstrategy. Anarchic meta-politics depends upon micro-political actors taking on immense responsibilities of social justice. Such responsibilities stem from “infinite demands” for justice which compel us to respond even though our response will never be quite enough for resolution.

One might deduce from such a prescription something like a tragic heroine for equitable change who, like Antigone or Erin Brocovich, works diligently despite long odds and without reasonable hope of just resolution. But Critchley explicitly eschews this tragic mantle for his anarchic agents, citing instead, for example, the recent rise of indigenous movements that have emerged in response to the ravages of a new corporatism

¹ **Jason Caro** is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Houston-Downtown. His prior publications address Continental political thinkers including Hegel, Nietzsche, and Levinas. Jason Caro has a book forthcoming on the origins of freedom. His research examines the moral relation between civility and contemporary politics. Address correspondence to: Jason Caro; e-mail: CaroJ@uhd.edu.