



The Postmodern Prince: Critical Theory, Left Strategy, And The Making Of A New Political Subject

John Sanbonmatsu

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John Sanbonmatsu's **Postmodern Prince** is a work of political theory with a focus on questions of strategy. At the same time it provides an original and illuminating intellectual history of the Left from the 1960s to the present. It examines the politics of the New Left in the 1960s, showing how its expressivism led to political division and also prepared the ground for postmodernism. It shows also how the political economy of academic life in an increasingly commodified society strengthened the basis of postmodernism.

The Postmodern Prince provides a historically grounded critique of postmodernism, and a history of how the socialist Left has helped to create its ideas. In the course of this two-sided critique, it develops a brilliant account of a Marxism that sets itself the task of building a collective political subject—a successor to Machiavelli's *Prince* and Gramsci's *Modern Prince*—capable of challenging capitalism in its moment of global crisis.

Sanbonmatsu demonstrates the limitations of the work of Foucault, and more recently, Hardt and Negri's much-acclaimed *Empire*. In the process he validates for Marxism the classical idea of politics as hegemonic in scope, revolutionary in aspiration, and dependent on the capacity of leadership to rise to unforeseen challenges. He draws on an extraordinary range of historical, political, and philosophical analyses to set out the preconditions for a renewal of strategic and theoretical vision for the Left.

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