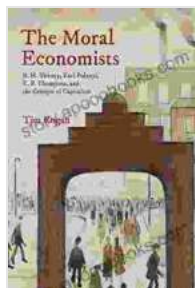


# Tawney, Karl Polanyi, Thompson: Radical Critics of Capitalism



## The Moral Economists: R. H. Tawney, Karl Polanyi, E. P. Thompson, and the Critique of Capitalism

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 4506 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 270 pages



R.H. Tawney, Karl Polanyi, and E.P. Thompson were three influential scholars who shared a deep concern about the negative consequences of capitalism. Tawney was a British economic historian and Christian socialist, Polanyi was a Hungarian economic anthropologist, and Thompson was a British social historian and Marxist. Though their backgrounds and approaches differed, they arrived at remarkably similar conclusions about the nature and effects of capitalism.

## Tawney's Critique of Capitalism

Tawney's critique of capitalism focused on its tendency to create inequality and exploitation. He argued that capitalism is based on the principle of "acquisitiveness," the desire for ever-increasing wealth and possessions. This principle, he believed, leads to a "ruthless struggle for survival" in which the wealthy and powerful exploit the poor and powerless.

Tawney's work was particularly influential in the development of the welfare state in Britain. He argued that the state has a responsibility to protect the poor and vulnerable from the harsh effects of capitalism. He also advocated for a more equitable distribution of wealth and income.

### **Polanyi's Critique of Capitalism**

Polanyi's critique of capitalism focused on its tendency to "commodify" everything in society, including land, labor, and money. He argued that capitalism destroys traditional social and economic relationships and creates a society that is based on greed and individualism.

Polanyi's work was particularly influential in the development of economic anthropology. He argued that capitalism is not a natural or inevitable economic system, but rather a historically specific phenomenon that has only existed for a few centuries. He also argued that capitalism is not sustainable in the long run, and that it will eventually be replaced by a more humane and sustainable economic system.

### **Thompson's Critique of Capitalism**

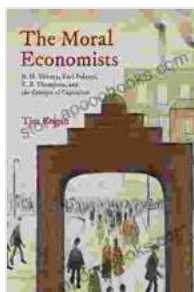
Thompson's critique of capitalism focused on its tendency to alienate workers from their labor and from each other. He argued that capitalism creates a system of "wage slavery" in which workers are forced to sell their labor for a wage that is barely enough to survive. This system, he believed, leads to a sense of alienation and powerlessness among workers.

Thompson's work was particularly influential in the development of labor history. He argued that workers are not simply passive victims of capitalism, but rather that they have the power to resist and challenge the

system. He also argued that the working class has a rich history of struggle and resistance.

Tawney, Polanyi, and Thompson were three of the most influential critics of capitalism in the 20th century. Their work has helped us to understand the negative consequences of capitalism and has inspired us to work for a more just and equitable world.

Their work remains relevant today, as capitalism continues to wreak havoc on our societies and our planet. Their ideas can help us to build a better future, a future that is free from the exploitation, inequality, and alienation that are inherent in capitalism.



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