**DRAFT**

FIVE

Democracy both Radical and Liberal

Political Agency in Dewey and in Laclau and Mouffe

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In a condensed moment quite typical of the overstated bombast appropriate to a philosopher who was in his heart very much a metaphysician, Alfred North Whitehead once wrote that, "The creation of the world . . . is the victory of persuasion over force" (1933, 90). The metaphysics of Whitehead was a metaphysics of process, one variant of what I have called elsewhere a philosophy of transitions.[1] If we can pay attention to Whitehead's transitionalism long enough to ignore his metaphysical bombast, then we can perhaps bring into focus his emphasis on creation as a process. Focused in that way, what we have in this little sentence is a conception of the distinction between persuasion and force as processes, perhaps as kinds of doing or making. This raises immediately the question of what kinds of entities do the deeds of persuading or compelling. Seen in terms of actions of creation of political worlds, persuading and compelling are what we do to one another, or rather two distinct ways of politically interacting with one another. But *who* is the "we" here and *how* do "we" so act on, that is with or against, one another? Whitehead's process-centered distinction between persuasion and force invites us to think about the locus of action in politics—that is, the sites and agencies through and in which processes of persuasion and compulsion are alternately played out. An exploration of this issue of the locus of politics raises crucial questions central for contemporary debates in democratic theory concerning the relative utility, and possible compatibility, of democratic *radicalism* and democratic *liberalism*.
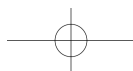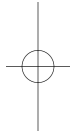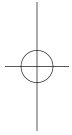
A historical point of view would suggest, at least as a starting point, that there are a range of conceptual instrumentalities developed in the context of liberal democratic institutions and practices that have proven useful for the development and deployment of the distinction between persuasion and force. We might even say that this distinction, in concert with a range of other liberalism distinctions such as that between individuality and sociality, is central to all actually existing liberal societies, and as such constitutes a "basic insight" of the liberal tradition. In calling this insight "basic," I do not mean to suggest that it is sufficient for either liberal protections or for democratic energies, nor do I mean to imply that the distinction is often easy to make when confronted with difficult border cases. My claim is just that being able to hold some line, however tenuous and imperfect, between a politics that proceeds by deliberation and collaboration on the one hand and a politics that proceeds by compulsion on the other, is a necessary condition for democracy itself. It is the strength of liberalism to recognize and affirm this.

While some form of distinction between persuasion and force is operatively basic for every actually existing liberal democratic society, many contemporary theorists have sought to push democracy as a normative ideal well beyond the confines that liberal democratic theory would allow. One branch of development in that direction is a loosely related family of political theories which for the past few decades has proceeded under the banner of radical democracy. The "basic insight" of radical democratic theory, especially as a critical normative program, is that many of the core ideals of democracy have yet to be realized in any actually existing liberal democratic societies. Hence we need a radical critique of extant social forms in the name of a fuller and wider democratic achievement. Among these theories, a number of prominent offerings have sought to push democratic theory beyond the borders of liberalism by drawing on counter-liberal elements in other traditions of political theory. These counter-liberal elements often serve to functionally rub out the meaningfulness of a normative distinction between individuality and sociality, and thus by association the distinction between persuasion and force, as well as a range of other distinctions that are quilted through one another. The hope is that abandoning the family of quintessential liberal distinctions provides a radical reorientation for realizing political justice anew.

Few theorists agree with every aspect of the liberal and radical programs just glossed. But many theorists are impressed at the least by what I have attributed to both as their "basic" insights. This sets a challenge for contemporary democratic theory. If the above-featured basic insights of *both* liberal democratic theory and radical democratic theory are to be preserved, then contemporary democratic theorists need to develop versions of radical democracy that are consistent with some version of liberal democracy, and vice versa. One way to conceive of this challenge is to

ask the following line of questions. Can we keep radical democratic theories liberal? Can radical democratic practices be developed in directions consonant with the best insights of liberal democratic practices? Can we have a democratic theory that is *both* radical *and* liberal?

To bring these questions into more precise focus, I shall here consider the compatibility of liberal democracy and radical democracy in terms of the more narrow issue of the conception of the political subject. Looking through the optic of the subject enables me to refocus the previous questions as follows. Is the liberal democratic subject of politics compatible with demands on social practice set in motion by radical democratic theory? Can the liberal democratic emphasis on an irreducible individuality be squared with the irreducible social plurality central to radical democracy? Can we have *both* the irreducible social antagonism of radical democratic theory *and* the initiative of individuality cherished by liberal democratic theory? I should hope so, but this is so is not easy to show. Indeed a fully affirmative response will be well beyond my scope here such that I shall confine myself to advancing the mere beginnings of *an outline of a radical liberal democratic conception of the subject*. To develop this idea, I shall proceed in two steps, taking up in turn the radical democratic theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and then the liberal democratic theory of John Dewey.

I choose Laclau and Mouffe on the one hand and Dewey on the other as my test cases because of the way in which these particular statements of radical democratic and liberal democratic theory resonate, both philosophically and politically. Philosophically, these perspectives share a whole constellation of anti-foundationalist or post-foundationalist commitments. Politically, they share an abiding and unrelenting commitment to pluralism as the terrain of politics. I see the latter in particular as a crucial space of agreement that separates both theoretical paradigms from those contemporary political theories that fail to fully confront the depth of conflict that pervades modern politics. Despite these crucial agreements, I shall be arguing, the full range of philosophical and political frames common to pragmatist democratic theory and neo-Marxist hegemony theory do not yet constitute answers to all of our most important political questions. The version of hegemony theory articulated by Laclau and Mouffe contrasts with pragmatist conceptions of radical democracy with respect to crucial questions over agency and purposiveness. Whereas pragmatist statements of political radicalism often involve a liberalism that seeks to affirm individuality, Laclau and Mouffe's radicalism would seek to evacuate individuality from the work of politics. The effect in the latter case, I shall argue, is a reduction of political action to a kind of passive retreat before the negativity of an unanticipatable horizon. By offering a criticism of this particular aspect of this particular brand of radical democracy, my hope is to motivate a return to more pragmatic articulations of radical democratic politics that seek to make

explicit room for political action and interaction at sites where both so-
ciality and individuality matter most. This could lead, I hope, to more
liberal inflections of ideas of democracy's radicality. It is in this spirit that
I offer my second, and more positive, step, involving a pragmatist con-
ception of a democracy that is both radical and liberal. Here I focus on the
contributions of Dewey, though in the background of my discussion shall
also be the work of William James. I shall be using Dewey to help show
that the radical quality of democratic ideals should not be separated from
a certain liberal ideal of individuality, which of course should not be
confused with a misguided substantive theory of human nature that is
often referred to (somewhat misleadingly I think) as liberal individual-
ism. Dewey, in other words, helps us see the ineliminable role of individ-
uality in a theory of radical democracy that is fully serious about the
ineradicable social antagonism that is constitute of a deeply pluralistic
politics.

I do not here aim to mount a complete argument against one brand of
democratic theory and in favor of another. The theoretical impasses in-
volved are too deep to be resolvable in any straightforward sense. And
indeed part of my point is that a straightforward resolution is likely
undesirable. My aim in what follows is only to illuminate some impor-
tant resonances and dissonances between two contemporary approaches
to democracy, so that liberal pragmatist theorists and neo-Marxist radical
theorists may better understand the other view, and thereby better grip
what is at stake in liberalism, in radicalism, and in democracy itself.

THE SHADOW OF THE SOCIAL IN LACLAU AND MOUFFE'S RADICAL DEMOCRACY

The starting point for Laclau and Mouffe's reflections on the political is
an uncompromising respect for the irreducible antagonism of social plu-
rality. Their view is that conflict is an irreducible feature of each and
every social formation. This represents an important point of contact be-
tween their theory of political hegemony and pragmatist theories of polit-
ical pluralism. Indeed the work of Laclau and Mouffe is instructive in the
context of my present comparison for the reason that it exhibits numer-
ous affinities with pragmatist approaches to political philosophy. Laclau
himself has remarked on this resonance.[2] At a minimum, a number of
resonances with pragmatism are audible in many of the centermost
themes of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*: anti-foundationalism, anti-apri-
orism, radical contingency, and the just-mentioned conception of politics
as constituted on the basis of pluralistic dissensus.[3]

These points of contact notwithstanding, I shall be arguing that there
is a grating dissonance between pragmatist theory and hegemony theory
with respect to the competing accounts of the political subject offered by

these two theoretical contexts. Insofar as their conception of the subject in Laclau and Mouffe's has in recent years been increasingly informed by psychoanalytic notions, my primary negative contention in this section concerns the role of psychoanalysis with respect to theorizing the subject of a pluralist polity divided against itself. Whereas Laclau and Mouffe think that something like the psychoanalytic theory of the subject is entailed by their affirmation of political pluralism, it is pragmatism's gambit to deny this contention. In order to make this argument, it first needs to be clarified why Laclau and Mouffe would decenter the political subject as they do. I proceed as follows. I begin with a discussion of their conception of social dislocation. This background notion will then be used to illuminate their well-known idea of political hegemony. I shall then move to a discussion of their conception of the vanished subject of political hegemonization.

For Laclau and Mouffe, the acknowledgment of pluralism is evinced in terms of an idea of the social as a register that can never be fully coherent with itself. That is to say, the social is a failed totality or a failed attempt to achieve unity. This failed totality is not just accidental, however. It is crucially constitutive of the social as such. Society, for constitutive reasons, can never be *fully* fixed by any utopian, or any totalitarian, political order. Society is, therefore, necessarily a terrain of *partial* fixity, unfixity, and failure at fixedness.[4]

Laclau and Mouffe's arguments for the dislocatedness of the social can be reconstructed as proceeding according to the following three steps. First, society is marked by a constitutive exclusion. Second, society is therefore always confronted with that which it must exclude. Third, society therefore can never be fully fixed nor fully unfixed. (For the pragmatist transitionalist, the obvious corollary of all this is that the social is a constant moving target for those political acts seeking to either fix or unfix extant social formations.) Allow me to consider each step in turn.

The first step concerns the exclusions constitutive of the political. The relations constitutive of every social identity can only be constitutive if the entire relational (or social) space is closed—that is, if it has limits which are in principle identifiable. If this were not the case, we would define ourselves in terms of relations that are not a part of the social space, but this is impossible since those relations would become part of the social space as soon as they were symbolized. The general claim here is the non-controversial one that any system of relations presumes the limits of this system. A system can have limits only if it excludes what is on the outside of those limits.[5] This implies a certain relation to that outside, namely a relation of necessary exclusion. But this raises a question: is that which is constitutively excluded an element within the social space or not? If it is not, then there can be no proper relation to the social system. If it is, then the relation is no longer exclusionary. The social

space is therefore always related to a constitutive outside which fixes the limits of society at the same time that it constantly unfixes them.

The second step involves recognizing society's dislocatedness as the very possibility of the formation of any social system. The social space is fundamentally situated in relation to a negative or empty space outside of itself.[6] Thus every social location is at the same time dislocated. The exclusion that makes the social space intelligible also constantly undermines the identity of that space itself. Thus, the conditions of the possibility of society as constituted by a fullness are the conditions of the necessity of society as constituted by an emptiness. This is the idea, to put it in terms with an undeniably Derridean resonance, that the conditions of the possibility of society are also simultaneously the conditions of its impossibility.[7] Or, to put the point in terms that are perhaps more Lacanian, and to which I shall return below, there is a structural condition of negativity that is integral to any and every social positivity and which cannot but be experienced as a violent exclusion capable of radically tearing the entire fabric of social positivity by quietly unraveling its very core.[8]

This brings us to the crucial third step. Since the social is marked by a constitutive exclusion, society can neither be fully fixed nor fully unfixed. This is a formal point. Consider if the social were fully fixed—were this so then the excluded elements constitutive of its limits of fixity would be nothing more than positive relations included within the larger social system that contains the fixed social system and its fixed elements of exclusion, and thus there could be no exclusion, and thus no limits or boundary to the social, and thus no coherence to the concept itself. We could run the same argument for a fully unfixed society. The inference is that society is always partially fixed as a system of difference. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* this point is stated in terms of the book's crucial thesis that "the social itself has no essence" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 96). This is to say that the idea of society itself has no positive meaning but can only be a general field of difference. It follows that every social category is defined purely in terms of its social relations.[9] But we should not move too quickly here or we may begin to redescribe society as a different form of positivity: as a synchronic totality in which a given system of differences is logically reconciled vis-à-vis a transcendental unity that is incarnate in the empirical set of differences (this is the defect of the socialized political economy of classical Marxism). Thus, every social category is defined purely relationally within a system of differences, but this system itself cannot be a logical totality in which each of these terms is reconciled with some term that stands above this system. The result is the rather brilliant insight that society is always being constructed by, but also, and this is the crucial point, *as*, the process of the negotiation of that which it constitutively excludes.

This crucial thesis concerning the impossibility of society, or failed social unicity, leads Laclau and Mouffe to draw the following conclusion

regarding political processes in which the social is constructed: "If the social does not manage to fix itself in the intelligible and instituted forms of a *society*, the social only exists, however, as an attempt to construct that impossible object" (1985, 112).[10] Politics is the name of the never-ending attempts to (re)construct the mobile forms of sociality by way of new articulations of the essential center to which every social category refers. Political action always attempts to arrest the drift of society by universalizing a particular political value throughout society, and it does this by articulating particular values as nodal points to which the remainder of society is related. This, exactly, is the process of hegemonization.[11] It is to be understood, crucially, as a process. That it is a process endears it to the pragmatist transitionalist.

Another Lacano-Marxist, albeit of a decidedly different stripe, helpfully explains the decisive contribution of Laclau and Mouffe. Slavoj Žižek writes:

> What creates and sustains the *identity* of a given ideological field beyond all possible variations of its positive content? *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* delineates what is probably the definitive answer to this crucial question of the theory of ideology: the multitude of "floating signifiers," of proto-ideological elements, is structured into a unified field through the intervention of a certain "nodal point" (the Lacanian *point de capiton*) which "quilts" them, stops their sliding and fixes their meaning. (1989, 87)

The antagonism characteristic of hegemonic politics is possible just to the extent that the social terrain in which it occurs is dislocated—that is, just to the extent that the nodal point fails to quilt the entirety of the social terrain (thus, a society can be more or less dislocated just like antagonism can be more or less prevalent). While antagonism is a political challenge to particular social representations, dislocation is the ontological social condition within which such a challenge is intelligible.[12] To the extent that society is dislocated, it is always being politically reconstituted by being relocated around new axes, nodes, or quilting points. This, exactly, is the transitional process that Laclau and Mouffe bring into focus with their notion of hegemony, or what I think is better thought of in transitional terms as a process of hegemonization.

Žižek's apt characterization of the core contribution of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* in psychoanalytic terms provides a warrant for bringing into clearer view the conception of the subject on which Laclau and Mouffe's claims for social dislocation and political hegemonization would appear to rely. The key insight shared by Laclau and Mouffe's hegemony theory and the Lacanian psychoanalysis upon which they have both increasingly come to rely concerns the role of negativity in the relation between the inside and the outside.[13] In Laclau and Mouffe's work, this relation figures as that between a constituted social positivity

and that which it constitutively excludes. In the Lacanian psychoanalytic theory of the subject, this figures as the relation between the registers of the symbolic and the Real. Both views hold that the socio-symbolic can never fully constitute itself as a unity. The socio-symbolic always exceeds itself because it is always constituted on the basis of a certain remainder that is a necessary effect of the production of any and every socio-symbolic unity. This remainder or excess of the symbolic is what Lacan refers to as "the Real": the Real is the very limit of the symbolic (not "is *at* the limit" but "*is* the limit"). The Real is therefore, as Žižek wryly observes, the Lacanian correlate to hegemony theory's conception of that which is constitutively excluded by society. The Real is just like the excluded Other in that it does not precede the socio-symbolic itself as its origin or condition of possibility, but is the oppositional remainder necessarily effected by the ongoing production of any socio-symbolic system.

According to Lacanian psychoanalysis, every constituted subject must negotiate, in a fully oppositional sense, the Real excess of its symbolic constitution. Such negotiation, however, cannot be mediated symbolically. For that would amount to including the Real within the symbolic. And this is precisely the function that the Real refuses. The Real is the negative or empty of the symbolic. Its negotiation on the basis of symbolic acts would involve the symbolic comprehension of the Real and so its dissipation *qua* Real. Constituted on the basis of a symbolic order that implies the presence of the Real, the subject is in a position of freedom, but only insofar as the subject must make a free decision in the face of the undecidability of the Real. In Lacan's terminology, the subject thus emerges as the "subject of enunciation," in contrast to the everyday socially mediated "subject of the statement."[14] The free subject of enunciation can emerge only as a lack that rips through the subject of the statement—the subject is constituted by the tearing of the Real in the extant positivity of the symbolic order. As I understand it, the central meaning of the Lacanian formulations of the subject as a lack is that the free subject always and only exists as an emptiness, or negativity, at the heart of the normal conscious subject. In a way that obviously resembles Freud's idea of unconscious activity, this lack and this negativity occasionally emerges when the normal symbolic order is unexpectedly, and often traumatically, interrupted.[15]

For Laclau and Mouffe, the Lacanian conception of the socio-symbolic is formally analogous to their own conception of social dislocation. Laclau, in his later work, deftly appropriates the Lacanian subject along exactly these lines: "Subject equals the pure form of the structure's dislocation" (1990b, 60). This is, to be sure, and this is indeed my point, a negative definition of the subject. The subject's subjectivity consists in its negativity, in its being constituted by social dislocation, which psychoanalytically figures as the possibility of the irruption of the Real into the socio-symbolic order of subjectivity itself. Here we come into contact

with a conception of a subject that cannot act and a conception of an individuality that has no agency. The site that was the subject or the individual is now made to appear only wherever the Real unexpectedly and traumatically interrupts. Thus Laclau can assert the following:
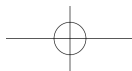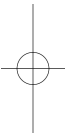
> The question of *who* or *what* transforms social relations is not pertinent. It's not a question of "someone" or "something" producing an effect of transformation or articulation, as if its identity was somehow previous to this effect. . . . One cannot ask *who* the agent of hegemony is, but *how* someone becomes the subject through hegemonic articulation instead. (1990b, 210)

Lacanian psychoanalysis exposes the essentially fragmented nature of each and every social and cultural formation, but it does so only at the expense of also fracturing, and thereby disabling, the very possibility of subjective agency.[16] What all of this results in is the idea that there is a lack of a place for individual agency in the hegemonic theory of political antagonism amidst social dislocation. This, of course, is no cause for great concern from the perspective of Laclau and Mouffe, insofar as the primary focus of their work concerns what we might call the ontological conditions of political transformation. But a concern with political ontology can easily overshadow other important concerns, for example, the role of individualizing agency in political transformation. And these other concerns are indeed all too often neglected by Laclau and Mouffe.

If my reading above is correct, then radical democratic hegemony theory clearly does not square well with liberal theories of democracy that seek to create sites for instrumentalities of individual agency amidst political transition. Thinking back to the two basic insights with which I began, we face at this juncture a decisive choice. We can either divest ourselves of liberalism (as too many radical theorists explicitly seek to do) or distract ourselves from radical political critique (as too many liberal theorists blithely do). But I wonder if there may yet be a third option. Perhaps at this point we come face to face with a crucial question that spurs us to develop a *radical and liberal democratic politics*. Can we affirm, without compromise, the full depth of political and social pluralism (in such forms as antagonism and dislocation) without thereby sacrificing the possibility of individual agency amidst political and social conflict?

THE LIGHT OF INDIVIDUALITY IN DEWEY'S VISION OF RADICAL DEMOCRACY

In shifting focus now from the neo-Marxist radical democratic theory of Laclau and Mouffe to Dewey's pragmatist and liberal brand of democratic theory, I locate a precedent for my comparison in Cornel West's suggestion that "[t]he emancipatory social experimentalism that sits at the center of prophetic pragmatic politics closely resembles the radical demo-

cratic elements of Marxist theory" (1989, 214).[17] I have suggested above that the most important point of connection between pragmatist liberal democracy and neo-Marxist radical democracy concerns their shared emphasis on social and political pluralism or antagonism. Both view the terrain of the social and the corollary activity of the political as irreducibly, and deeply, divided against itself. Dewey, like Laclau and Mouffe, refused the essentialism inherent in any theory of democracy reliant upon social fixity. As such, both positions brook no compromise with the starting points of those versions of contemporary liberal political theory that posit consensus and agreement as the transcendental horizon of social forms that would countenance only restricted forms of pluralism, such as for instance reasonable pluralism. Sharing this much, pragmatist and hegemony approaches tend to emphasize radical contingency in politics and thus seek to avoid both resolutely foundationalist and covertly foundationalist perspectives. This is their most crucial point of radical contact. There are, as well, other crucial points of philosophical contact, including the abiding attention to contingency in each tradition.[18]

But an unwavering respect for pluralism does not yet settle how we are to understand the political process of democratically negotiating the clash of opposed practices that is surely to erupt in any modern polity. Laclau and Mouffe's radical democratic theory too often neglects important senses in which democracy relies upon individuality as a site of agency for freedom. In other words, from a pragmatist perspective Laclau and Mouffe go too far in their critique of the subject. In order to throw out the subject-centered individualism that would establish a point of social fixity beyond all political conflict, they throw out the subject itself and hence also any possibility for purposive political agency. What this move ignores is the possibility for an alternative framework through which we can better understand individuality without individualism, subjectivity as other than substance, and agency as not dependent upon a robust notion of autonomy.

For the pragmatist, uncompromising plurality need not obviate confident agency. The pragmatist's wager is that we can preserve individuality, subjectivity, and agency as adverbial activities without reifying them in substantive entities that would seek to arrest the inevitable mobility of social conflicts. Or, to put the point differently, the acknowledgment of social dislocatedness and political antagonism need not entail the evacuation of individualizing agency as a site of the political mobilization of social difference. I shall argue that a philosophical reorientation of our conception of the subject in decidedly transitionalist terms is the crucial move for affirming the compatibility of the subject of purposive political agency and the ineliminable conflictuality of political antagonism.

I shall develop this positive side of my argument with reference to the radical democratic theory of the pragmatist philosopher John Dewey, though I believe one could also do much the same with William James's

pragmatism.[19] Dewey is perhaps the more convenient handle just insofar as the radicalism of his conception of democracy has been widely noted before. For instance, this has been recently discussed with particular acuteness by Richard J. Bernstein, for whom the radicalism of Deweyan democracy is to be located in its emphasis on the reciprocity, or interdigitation, of democratic ends and means:

> [Dewey] strongly objected to the idea that democratic ends can be achieved by nondemocratic means. . . . "Democratic ends" are never fixed or static; they are dynamic and integral to democratic processes. Democratic means are *constitutive* of democratic ends-in-view. . . . [A] democratic *ethos* demands flexibility and the acknowledgment of our fallibility about both means and ends. (2010, 79)[20]

Bernstein is here right to characterize Dewey's view of democracy as one in which the ends of self-governance are never fixed. Democratic processes of managing power are always in motion because they are also always up for grabs and always under contestation.[21]

One way to characterize Dewey's political radicalism would be to say that he out-radicalized Laclau and Mouffe *avant la lettre*, specifically in terms of his claim, central to Bernstein's interpretation, that democratic ends and means are coproductive of one another. Both the pragmatist theory and the hegemony theory approaches can be seen as in agreement with respect to the inherent conflictuality and transitionality of democracy's ends, but Dewey theorizes something that goes missing in Laclau and Mouffe, namely the ways in which democratic ends might be brought about by democratic means. The interdependence of means and ends that is so central to Dewey's philosophical pragmatism figures in his pragmatist democratic theory in terms of, among other senses, an interdependence of individuality and sociality. Dewey, in other words, saves space for the political subject as the agential means of democratic politics in motion. Let us see how.

Bernstein unambiguously declares Dewey's radicalism with his chapter's title "John Dewey's Vision of Radical Democracy." There is solid precedent for this claim for Dewey's radicalism in the fact that Dewey himself emphasized time and time again that the idea of democracy is itself a radically subversive idea amidst contemporary political realities. In a late essay titled "Democracy is Radical" Dewey forwarded the following strong claim on behalf of radicalism's positive need for liberalism:

> There is no opposition in standing for liberal democratic means combined with ends that are socially radical. There is not only no contradiction, but neither history nor human nature gives any reason for supposing that socially radical ends can be attained by any other than liberal democratic means. . . . *The end of democracy is a radical end.* . . . It is radical because it requires great change in existing social institutions, economic, legal, and cultural. A democratic liberalism that does not

> recognize these things in thought and action is not awake to its own
> meaning and to what that meaning demands. (1937, 298–89)[22]

How exactly should we understand Dewey's radicalism? What is radical
about this understanding of liberal democracy beyond the insistence on
the need for deep change? Bernstein quotes to excellent effect the follow-
ing key italicized sentence from Dewey's essay: "*The fundamental principle
of democracy is that the ends of freedom and individuality for all can be attained
only by the means that accord with those ends*" (1937, 299). This passage
points us toward the central aspect of the radicalism in Dewey's concep-
tion of democracy, namely its critique of defunct *individualism* in the
name of heightened *individuality*. Dewey helps us see how liberal individ-
ual*ity* need not rely upon liberal individual*ism*. Critiques of the classical
liberal fixation on the individual as an enclosed subject of agency and
intelligence are by now well known. Dewey was himself instrumental in
centering these critiques. But unlike many critics of the individualism at
the heart of classical versions of liberalism, Dewey himself was explicit in
retaining a strong emphasis on individuality as the heart of his radical
democratic vision.

In draft notes for a late book manuscript, supposedly lost in 1947 but
recently reassembled by Phillip Deen and republished by Southern Illi-
nois University Press in 2012 under Dewey's originally planned title *Un-
modern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy*, we find an especially illustrative
statement of the distinction operative here: "'Individual,' like 'racial' and
'generic,' is an adjective. And the adjectival force is itself derived from an
adverbial force and function" (1947, 187). While Dewey's specific concern
here is with individuality, he describes in a footnote the more general
philosophic tendency that finds expression throughout his treatment of a
range of political, social, epistemic, aesthetic, and ethical concepts: "A
surprisingly large number of fallacious philosophical views originate
through conversion of qualities of activities (expressed linguistically by
adverbs) into adjectives and then hypostatizing adjectival functions into
nouns, the latter being then taken to stand for sheer entities. The 'concept'
of 'the individual' constitutes one of the most harmful of these philosoph-
ic errors" (1947, 187n2). Dewey's general point can be described under
the rubric of the philosophy of transitions I referred to at the outset.
Whereas thinkers like Whitehead, and also Dewey himself often enough,
were wont to describe pragmatism's transitionalism in terms of a meta-
physics of process, it is also possible to cast this philosophical tidal shift
in terms of a more modest methodology of process. According to this
view, the Deweyan tendency to verb nouns (rendering the nominal into
the adverbial and verbal) is not a claim about the real and true nature of
things, but is rather a methodological move that amounts to an experi-
mental hypothesis for looking at things in terms of time, event, activity,
process, and transition. This methodological shift of emphasis enables

Dewey to elaborate, and then put to work, a distinction between individuality as a quality of process and individualism as a substantive form.

One useful index of Dewey's use of this contrast is offered by his short 1930 book *Individualism Old and New*. Written as a kind of cultural critical tract for the times when yet another golden age of accumulation was approaching its fateful nadir, Dewey's arguments are prescient concerning the dangers of unbridled individualism. What is wrong with the old-fashioned classical individualism according to Dewey? The problem, according to Dewey, concerns not just ethical isolation, economic destabilization, and other familiar ills. Dewey went more radically to the root of the difficulties he was hoping to diagnose, and he located there an outworn philosophical picture of human nature according to which human action, reason, and emotion are conceptually cloistered within monadic subjects. Dewey wrote at the front end of the twentieth-century tidal shift in our conceptions of our selves. Now that the tide has fully washed in we are in a good position to appreciate that the subject is always already an inter-subject, that humans are always already social, and that individuality and sociality are always already interdigitated. Taking these insights on board has encouraged us to understand action, reason, and emotion as not only the products of developmental processes that are inherently social but also as processes that are practically meaningful only within contexts that are always fully social. There is no such thing as reason apart from a community of rationality, no such thing as emotion apart from a community of sympathy, and no such thing as action apart from a social context of practice. But this now-familiar account of the social self counterposed to the individualistic self is only part of Dewey's story.

Equally forceful in Dewey's account, and too often absent from trendy contemporary critiques of individualism, is a plea on behalf of a reconstruction of liberalism that acknowledges the full moral and political import of liberal individuality. Thinking of Dewey's book, indeed all of his political books from the 1920s and 1930s, as efforts in timely (but also untimely) cultural critique, we are in a position to understand that the point for Dewey was not just to criticize outmoded philosophical ideas but more centrally to develop concepts and practices adequate to our own age. Dewey was always in the first place a positive, or in his terminology a "reconstructive," thinker who sought melioration. In this vein, Dewey wrote in *Individualism Old and New* that, "The problem of constructing a new individuality consonant with the objective conditions under which we live is the deepest problem of our times" (1930, 56). Living under the spell of old and broken ideas of individuality, it was Dewey's claim that we need a new individuality. We need new concepts for new times: "There is no word which adequately expresses what is taking place" (1930, 58). Dewey's proposal is a new conception of individuality in keeping with the times. It was Dewey's claim that this con-

ception, and the practices invoking it, will need to take their lead from the best cultural developments of the day. These include the new psychology according to which selves are inherently individual *and* social (1930, 81ff.), the development of modern science according to the familiar Deweyan story (1930, 86ff.), an emphasis on more socialistic forms of political and economic organization (1930, 90ff.), an embrace of regulated forms of corporate-consumer capitalism that would be surprising to many readers today (65ff.), and finally a reconceptualization of the role of philosophers as cultural critics engaged in the crucial issues raised by times of transition (1930, 107ff.).

Dewey expresses in these pages an unambiguous commitment to individuality as a process through which we can implement a range of political values crucially instrumental for political transition: these include creativity, initiative, energy, differentiation, transformation, and the very practice of freedom itself. The pragmatist idea is that without a conception of individuality, it remains difficult for us to understand how we can play a role in engaging the kinds of political transitions we find ourselves in the midst of, perhaps the radical transitions most of all. To be sure, we can offer abstract accounts of how transitions are effected and take place. But the point concerns understanding in a self-conscious sense how we might assume forms of freedom along those sites of individuality we occasionally effect. Understanding freedom in this sense of individuality need not involve a substantive concept of originary and substantial individualism. We can instead get by with merely pragmatic notions of individuality as processes of individuation, and accordingly of those processes as facilitating the sorts of political values named above. In a 1940 address titled "Time and Individuality" Dewey captures all this very well in a phrase that proponents of radical hegemony theory cannot but hear as an invitation: "Individuality is the source of whatever is unpredictable in the world" (1940, 111). The crucial difference is that Dewey embraced the radical novelty that individuality can facilitate without falling into the trap of thinking that individuality itself must thereby be unpredictable, without purpose, and only a lack.

What Dewey helps us recognize is that a democratic conception of individuality as a vector of political transformation need not be restricted in its application to a substantive subject, such as the human individual. What is important for individuality on a pragmatist view is the *process* of individuation and the energetic agency involved therein (think, again, of pragmatism as a philosophical methodology of transitions). It is crucial to recognize that such processes of individuation can of course take place at the site of separate persons, but they can also take place at sites of interacting social groups and networked alliances of movement. What matters in emphasizing individuality is the active process of differentiation. This process is not as easily brought into focus when social theory takes as its scale of focus an idea of social totalities, be these closed totalities as in

classical social theory (of both liberal and socialist varieties) or failed totalities (as is the case with the neo-Marxist theory canvassed above).

His reconstruction of individuality was just one of the many ways in which Dewey's conception of democracy is radically subversive of the received tradition. What my argument is meant to suggest, then, is just that theories of radical democracy could stand to benefit from the kind of emphasis on individuality that is central to the liberal democratic visions of the classical pragmatists. If contemporary radical democratic theory is a theory of our sociality without any counterweight emphasis on our individuality, then these theories are lacking with respect to their articulation of the *processes* by which we might attain radical democratic ends. A crucial aspect of pragmatism's radicalism is recognition that means and ends are interwoven—it's all in the transitions. Contemporary theories of democracy that emphasize social ends without marking out a space for the transformative agency of individuality are therefore not nearly radical enough.

CONCLUSION: THE PLACE OF INDIVIDUALITY IN A RADICAL LIBERAL POLITICS

The explicit celebration of the lack of the political subject in various iterations of Lacano-Marxism is undeniable. Its contrast with the importance of individuality in Deweyan-Jamesian pragmatist theories of democracy could not be plainer. To be sure, these contrasting emphases are articulated on theoretical planes that are not always identical. Laclau and Mouffe write of the subject, Dewey and James of the individual and the personal. Thus it may be thought that there are important philosophical gaps between a theory of the subject and an account of individuality in virtue of which the separations I have identified are not so much substantive disagreements as they are instances of working through deeply divergent paradigms. For instance, perhaps the theory of the subject is more of an attempt to work out an account of the structure of desire in the political subject and the other an attempt to develop a normative conception of the conditions of political agency. If so, it might be thought, these two projects do not bear out disagreements of substance with one another so much as divergence of interest. Certainly this is true with respect to many aspects of each program. But with respect to the shared focus on political transition and transformation, certainly a central emphasis for both, there is enough of a shared terrain to positively identify the disagreements I have sought to draw attention to. The theory of the subject of political desire and an account of agency as individuality intersect wherever politics is in process. That may not be everywhere, but it is somewhere enough to locate disagreements among competing theoretical paradigms. To put the disagreement briefly, the psychoanalytic thematics that inform
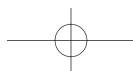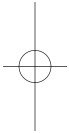
Laclau and Mouffe's conception of the political subject is at odds with the pragmatist core of Dewey's and James's conceptions of political individuality, for the former reduces the subject with respect to its actions and the latter takes individuality as the crucial site of innovative and novel agency.

What are we to make of this theoretical impasse? There is no reason to deny that theoretical claims for the dissipation of the subject are in a certain sense irresistible in times like ours—that is, times in which agency is often all too ethereal. And yet resisting these political conclusions may be important just insofar as it does matter very much how political change is effected and by whom. It matters especially, I should think, if it is we who are involved. Regarding the subject as reducible leavens us for the sort of complacent resignation that inevitably undermines the hopes we can otherwise invest in radical democratic practices of freedom. And that is a perspective which, were we to self-consciously adopt it for ourselves, would lead us to demoralized forms of nihilism and cynicism.

Allow me to briefly frame the crucial disagreement I have identified in light of broader agreements, so that we may finally see it in its fullest luster. It is my hunch that the gap between radical democratic hegemony theory and radical pragmatist democracy is most usefully seen as a function of perspective. Both are visions, albeit from different angles, of democratic political processes amidst deeply pluralistic conditions. While Laclau and Mouffe believe that antagonism is the form of politics appropriate to an unfixed society, the pragmatist would tend to want to argue this point from the other side by claiming that only insofar as our practices are antagonistic can society remain dislocated and open to destabilization. In one sense, then, all the pragmatist need advocate is looking at Laclau and Mouffe's theoretical edifice from the opposite perspective: while the hegemony theorist looks at subjects as effects of social differentiation, the pragmatist theorist would suggest that we should also take seriously those perspectives according to which we can look at social differentiation as the product of the process of interactive individualities. Given these considerations, it appears as though one could articulate many of the pragmatist conceptions I am here invoking within a framework that would remain by and large consistent with that adopted by Laclau and Mouffe. Certainly such an articulation gains much from the conception of political pluralism developed in the context of hegemony theory, since that conception is clearly more sophisticated than the early and admittedly sometimes benign statements of social conflict offered by classical pragmatism. The acceptance of the inevitability of conflict, even when framed in the more sophisticated vocabulary of hegemony theory, does not entail the reduction of the political subject as a site for the agency of the democratization of political hegemonies. The political theory of hegemony needs this pragmatist insight just as pragmatist political

theory gains much from the articulation of pluralism featured by hegemony theory.

So I hope it is clear that it is not my contention that the appraisals I have offered here can be expected to definitively settle a debate that remains far more generative when left open than when closed down. All I have sought to do here is to bring into focus some of the sharper disagreements among competing visions of radical democracy on offer today. Both approaches I have considered focus on the pragmatic construction of connections between a plurality of disparately organized social practices quilted through an evolving set of rallying points. Both approaches can agree that democracy depends upon an array of articulations through which democracy is practiced. But there is far less agreement concerning the specifics of how these radical democratic ends-in-view might be brought into being. I have argued that what goes missing in the work of contemporary radical democrats are those sites of individual initiative that are front and center in the pragmatist vision of radical liberal democracy. In concluding my discussion with the suggestion that the differences at issue here may merely be the results of taking two different perspectives on radical democratic processes, namely a perspective that foregrounds general considerations of social ontology versus a perspective that foregrounds the particular practices of individual initiative, it appears as if the contrasts I have been laboring over largely come down to a difference in emphasis. Such disagreements as these are probably best regarded as differences over where one chooses to place his or her hopes.

That said, it is absolutely crucial to recognize that *in politics almost everything hinges on where we place our hopes*. With this point, we recognize in its fullest light the crucial gap separating pragmatist theory and hegemony theory. Do we place hope in ourselves? Or do we place our hopes elsewhere? To the extent that we give our selves away, we give our confidence away. I cannot help but worry that the politics of psychoanalysis will always lend itself to a demoralized subject in the form of a patient who is perpetually unready to act. Psychoanalysis, it should be remembered, originated as a diagnostic tool and not as an energizer for political action. That said, the politics of pragmatism has, by contrast, been accused of brazenness, boldness, and excessive confidence. But confidence, we ought to remind ourselves, is excessive only when it is misplaced. We can affirm that appropriate confidence always, and I do mean *always*, has its place in politics. We should always pause before theoretical paradigms that facilitate a certain kind of blindness to our own crucial roles in the ongoing processes of democratic radicalization in which we find ourselves participant. From a pragmatist perspective that enrolls transitions as at the center of our political action, this particular form of blindness is irremediably debilitating for the reason that it involves the devastation of our confidence.
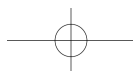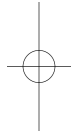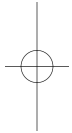
Allow me to return in closing to the themes with which I began. The pragmatist view I have been defending is *both* radical *and* liberal with respect to democracy. Consider the ramifications of pragmatism with respect to the questions broached at the outset of this essay concerning the compatibility of liberalism's emphasis on such distinctions as that between persuasion and coercion and radicalism's emphasis on the uncompromising pursuit of the eradication of injustices. The crucial pragmatist distinction between the active site of individuality and the passive locale of the individual shaped by his or her social environment can be seen to refract through an array of distinctions central to the history of liberal democratic political practices. Whitehead bombastically identified the quintessential liberal distinction between persuasion and force as a key to the very creation of a civilized world. Less bombastically, the pragmatist philosopher and liberal cultural critic Richard Rorty defines a liberal democratic society as one "whose ideals can be fulfilled by persuasion rather than force, by reform rather than revolution, by the free and open encounters of present linguistic and other practices with suggestions for new practices" (1989, 60). In elaborating a pragmatist reconstruction of the quintessential liberal distinction between persuasion and force, one notion that proves useful for contemporary liberal pragmatists like Rorty is a pragmatist conception of individuality without individualism, be it on the basis of Dewey's work or otherwise. This idea helps us see that the difference between persuasion and force can be cast as a distinction between, on the one hand, processes of social activity that are coordinate in their individuating agency and, on the other hand, processes of social activity that act as relays for other processes that are being rendered passive and as such being rendered devoid of individuality. The depletion of individuality, construed crucially as a process, can be taken as a sign of political coercion, in distinction from democratic persuasion. In other words, whereas persuasion involves relations of coordination among sites of active individuality, coercion involves a relation between activity and passivity. Some common names for coercion in this sense include domination, oppression, and repression. Without a conception of individuality, it will be difficult to gain sight of, let alone make sense of, some of the most intractable instances of these many forms of coercion. Pragmatism is committed to the radical democratic project of weeding out each and every form of coercion where it is rooted most deeply, and yet it is committed to this as entirely consistent with the liberal democratic project of affirming individuality as a site of the freedom of political construction. This is because the pragmatist regards the democratic end of rooting out social injustice as interdependent with the democratic means of acts of individuality in pursuit of justice. Herein lies much of its cause for our confidence.[23]

NOTES

1. I develop a conception of pragmatist philosophy as a transitionalist philosophy in Colin Koopman, *Pragmatism as Transition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), though I would refuse to follow Whitehead's attempt to pitch transitionalism as a metaphysics.

2. On resonance between pragmatism and the Gramscian background of radical democracy see Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, translated by Jon Barnes (New York: Verso, 1990), 219.

3. It will be prudent to note at the outset that my primary focus here shall be on Laclau and Mouffe's coauthored *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (New York: Verso, 2001, 2nd ed. [1985]), though I shall also be drawing on more recent works individually authored by both. One should be wary of identifying the more recent positions of both, for there is much at stake in differences in their more recent work. Briefly, as I read them both, in his more recent work Laclau (see *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* [New York: Verso, 1990], *Emancipation(s)* [New York: Verso, 1996], and *On Populist Reason* [New York: Verso, 2005]) has assumed the task of developing and expanding the conceptual repertoire of Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, while Mouffe (see *The Return of the Political* and *The Democratic Paradox* [New York: Verso, 2000]) has focused mostly on applying their theoretical edifice for a critique of prevailing conceptions of Western liberal democracy. In drawing on the more recent projects of both, I hope to make use only of those notions that I believe are already more or less implicit in the early jointly authored material, and as such would not be contested from the perspective of the theoretical position articulated there.

4. Laclau recently asserts that his "starting point" for political theory is neither "unicity" (rationalism of any variety, transcendental Cartesian-Kantian and immanent Spinozan-Hegelian) nor "multiplicity" (here Laclau refers to Alain Badiou, but the category obviously also applies more widely to postmodern particularists), but is what he calls "failed unicity," or namely "finding in every identity the traces of its contingency" (Laclau 2004b, 325).

5. See Laclau, "Why do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?," in *Emancipations(s)*, 37–38, and "Subject of Politics, Politics of the Subject," in *Emancipations(s)*, 52.

6. See Laclau, "Why do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?," 38.

7. See Laclau, "Subject of Politics, Politics of the Subject," 53, and Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (New York: Verso, 2000), 12, 99.

8. This theme was ably exploited by Žižek in his influential argument that Laclau and Mouffe's book "reinvented the Lacanian notion of the Real . . . [and] made it useful as a tool for social and ideological analysis" (1990, 249). The connection drawn by Žižek, and exploited by both Mouffe and Laclau, concerns the formal resonance of Lacan's concept of the Real (the non-symbolizable traumatic remainder of any symbolic production) with Laclau and Mouffe's concept of society (as constantly negotiating a space of necessary exclusion that is purely negative to the social system itself). As Žižek summarizes these formal features: "The socio-symbolic field is conceived as structured around a certain traumatic impossibility, around a certain fissure which cannot be symbolized" (1990, 249); "Symbolization as such is by definition structured around a certain central impossibility, a deadlock that is nothing but a structuring of this impossibility" (Žižek 1991, 47). I return to these resonances below.

9. See Laclau, "Subject of Politics, Politics of the Subject," 52.

10. See Laclau, "The Impossibility of Society," in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, 44.

11. In more recent work Laclau defines hegemony as "the process by which a particularity assumes the representation of a universality which is essentially incommensurable with it" (2004a, 127). Hegemony is the process by which a particular conception of a political ideal or signifier (e.g., "order" or "justice") establishes itself as a universal conception that fulfills the broadest possible demands that this ideal can address. Take as an example a society that is in some state of disorder. In this society

"order" becomes the name for a general solution for all of the problems wrought by this disorder. Thus "order" is here an empty signifier or a negative ideal (a signifier without any positive content of its own). It is a signifier that names exactly what is absent in a given situation, the presence of which absence would fulfill a wide variety of perceived problems with the situation. In time, some discourse or conception of "order" establishes itself and fills the empty signifier with a particular content. This particular content thus stands to the society as fulfilling the wide variety of problems that characterize that society in its disordered state. Hegemony is the process by which a particular political project assumes the role of fulfilling non-particular or universal demands.

12. Laclau in later works notes that "antagonism is already a form of discursive inscription—that is, of mastery—of something more primary," namely "dislocation" such that the move from the language of antagonism in *Hegemony* (1985) to that of dislocation in *New Reflections* (1990) can be described as a move "from the total representation inherent in the antagonistic relation to a general crisis of the space of representation" (2004b, 319). When the concept of dislocation first began to appear in Laclau's work in *New Reflections*, he described it there as "a subversion of all determination" and "an all-embracing subversion of the space of representability in general" (1990, 79).

13. On the Lacanian influences see Žižek, "Beyond Discourse-Analysis," Laclau, *New Reflections*, 93ff., and Mouffe, *Democratic Paradox*, 137ff. For a useful concise summary of the motivations propelling radical democrats toward Lacanian theory by Ziarek see *The Ethics of Dissensus: Postmodernity, Feminism, and the Politics of Radical Democracy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 138, and a longer discussion by Jason Glynos and Yannis tavrakakis, "Encounters of the Real Kind," in *Laclau: A Critical Reader*.

14. On the subject of enunciation versus the subject of the statement, see Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977 [1973]), 136ff.

15. Filip Kovacevic explicates this theme in relation to both Lacan and Alain Badiou in terms that are helpful for the contrast I seek to draw here: "Being a subject means taking a step beyond the hustle and bustle of daily pragmatic interests by remaining faithful to the event of truth, that is, to the emergence and articulation of the different and the new" (Kovacevic 2003, 123). Bruce Fink writes that, "This enunciating subject . . . is not something which or someone who has some sort of permanent existence: it only appears when a propitious occasion presents itself. It is not some kind of underlying substance or substratum" (1995, 41). A key theme for both is that free subjectivity only exists as a confrontation with a non-symbolic excess.

16. In a similar spirit, Lacanian political theorist Alenka Zupančič holds that "there is no subject or 'hero' of the act. . . . The subject is always pathological (in the Kantian sense of the word), determined by the Other, by the signifiers which precede him. At this level, the subject is reducible or 'dispensable'" (2000, 103). But it is Žižek who offers, as per usual, the most provocative formulation of contemporary psychoanalytic political theory in claiming that, "For Lacan, a subject is in the last resort the name for this 'empty gesture' by means of which we freely assume what is imposed on us, the real of the death drive" (1991, 64).

17. See also recent work on connections between Dewey's political theory and the theoretical edifices of Laclau and Mouffe: Hickman, "The Genesis of Democratic Norms: Some Insights from Classical Pragmatism," in *Democracy as Culture*, edited by Sor-Hoon Tan and John Whalen-Bridge (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008), 21–30; Ryder and Koczanowicz, "Democratic Theory: Interests, Antagonisms and Dialogue" (presented at the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, March 2012, New York City); and Brendan Hogan, "Hegemony, Social Science, and Democracy," this volume. On the whole, however, there is a decided deficit of comparative work looking at both pragmatist democratic theory and neo-Marxist hegemony theory.

18. Mark Devenney argues that Laclau's "identification with contingency, and thus with an essential value pluralism, distinguishes the radical democrat from the liberal" (2004, 137). This is exactly the sort of radical democratic claim I seek to contest here. My argument is that the emphasis on contingency and pluralism in radical democracy can be squared with *some* versions of liberal democracy. Devenney is clearly not thinking of the pragmatists amongst his menu of liberal theorists, but this is a mistake.

19. For earlier discussion of related matters see Koopman, "Morals and Markets: Liberal Democracy through Dewey and Hayek," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 23, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 151–179, and, on Dewey's politics, Koopman, "William James's Politics of Personal Freedom," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 175–86.

20. The radicality of means-ends continuity is also emphasized in Bernstein, "Dewey and Trotsky" (forthcoming). For a response to Bernstein's reading of Dewey in *The Pragmatic Turn* emphasizing more the liberal elements of Dewey's democratic theory in connection with its radicalism, see my my work in Colin Koopman, "Dewey as a Radical Democratic and a Liberal Democrat: Considerations on Bernstein on Dewey" (forthcoming).

21. On the role of conflict in Dewey see Rogers (*Undiscovered Dewey* 158ff.) and on Dewey and power see Rogers (*Undiscovered Dewey* 213ff.).

22. I would like to thank Daniel Rinn for drawing my attention to the first part of this passage in the context of his important work on the relevance of Deweyan radicalism for Tom Hayden, Arnold Kaufman, and others involved in the U.S. New Student Left movement(s) of the 1960s.

23. I would like to thank Jacquelyn Ann Kegley and Chris Skowronski for their invitation to the conference in Opole out of which this volume grew. I would also like to thank my University of Oregon colleague Rocío Zambrana for her comments on an earlier draft. Finally, I thank both Sorin Radu Cucu and Ernesto Laclau for discussion of these matters with me many years ago in Buffalo when I first began thinking through these angles—needless to say, neither is personally implicated in anything I have written here.

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