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Resurrecting the Pluralist Universe

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Pluralism has seen a major revival in the recent theoretical literature. After years of thorough critique, a purge of sorts, and, finally, relative obscurity, political and social theorists have begun to resurrect pluralist themes, even if they often do not acknowledge the term. The argument here is that much within this resurrection—conscious or unconscious—owes something to an articulation of pluralism that existed before the postwar, liberal variant that is so often seen as the whole of political pluralism. Theorists such as William James and Mary Parker Follett initiated an examination of pluralist themes before being interrupted, and ignored, by the postwar generation. This essay focuses first on the contemporary resurrection of the epistemological foundation of pluralist thought, what James called "radical empiricism." It then goes on to examine two key issues, central to early pluralists, that have been revived and expanded upon by recent theorists: the tension in reconciling pluralist difference with political unity, and the difficulties in designing ethics and practices of communication across the diversity endemic to pluralism.

At a recent regional political science conference, a roundtable was scheduled with a single word as the subject: pluralism. The room was packed, but the atmosphere was very different than one might have expected from such a forum three decades ago. Back then, pluralism was being attacked for its narrow notion of interest, the limited understanding of political action, the

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exclusion of various groups, the dismissal of the political power and the economic resources of elites, and its flawed concept of tolerance, among other things (see, for example, the collections edited by Connolly 1969, and Wolff, Moore, and Marcuse 1965). This time, however, the subject was, in essence, the resurrection of the term. In summing up her sense of the meaning of the gathering around pluralism, Kathy Ferguson argued that it might actually be one of those concepts once considered lost that could be retrievable—rescued from the limitations of the postwar generation and the scourge of later critics. By that point, however, as demonstrated by both the turnout of the gathering and, I will argue, the contemporary literature, that process of resurrection was already well underway.

After years of thorough critique, a purge of sorts, and, finally, relative obscurity, political and social theorists have begun to return to the term "pluralism." Various notions of critical pluralism, radical pluralism, postmodern pluralism, cultural pluralism, reciprocal pluralism, pluralist democracy, and, my favorite, "post-modern pluralism in a post-Marxist form" (McClure 1992: 113) are flourishing. William Connolly, one of the earliest critics of the limits and "bias" of pluralism, has returned to reclaim the meaning of pluralism—a more critical pluralism, he argues—and its focus on difference and multiplicity (Connolly 1991). Chantal Mouffe has been cross-pollinating postmarxism with a revived pluralism. And there has been a renewed interest in the decision-making mechanisms necessary for these revived and revised pluralisms to function (see, for example, Bohman 1995; Cohen 1993).

The point here, however, is not just that the term has been resurrected by various theorists in a number of different forms and incarnations. It is often the case that the concepts of an earlier form of pluralism appear without an acknowledgment of either the term pluralism or the origins of the thought. As Gregor McLennan (1995: 78) notes in his examination of contemporary pluralism, pluralist themes are central to a number of critical discourses. Pluralism, for example, "lies at the heart of much of what is tangible and valuable in postmodernist social theory" (p. 5). There is a greater discursive continuity between the first generation of pluralism1 (and recent theories than is either acknowledged or realized by contemporary proponents—either those who explicitly call themselves pluralist or those that prefer terms like difference democrat, discursive democrat, cyborg feminist, or others. So the resurrection that is occurring is as much unacknowledged

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1 Kirstie McClure (1992), I believe, is to be credited with the development of the notion of the "three generations" of pluralism (with James, Follett, Laski and others in the first generation; Dahl and the postwar empirical pluralists the second; and a range of authors, including Walzer, Connolly, and Mouffe, in the third).
parallel thinking as it is a consciously reclaimed term. Given this setting, I am going to address a number of contemporary theorists in my discussion of the resurrection of pluralist themes—both those that use the term openly and without shame, and others who use what I see as thoroughly pluralist language that dates back to the roots of pluralism early in this century.

My central argument is that much within the conscious and unconscious resurrection of pluralism owes something to an articulation and a form of pluralism that existed before the postwar, liberal variant that is so often seen as the whole of political pluralism. The resurrection takes up and expands upon the themes of pluralists such as William James and Mary Parker Follett, who wrote early in the century of multiplicity, difference, group identities, the divided subject, and the political implications for all of this plurality. Much of what we witness in the contemporary resurrection of pluralism mirrors the arguments of this earlier generation, and takes on a continuation of the issues and themes that James, Follett, and others began before being interrupted (and ignored) by the postwar generation with which we are so much more familiar. Unfortunately, except for a few important exceptions, there is very little awareness—or use—of this previous “generation” of pluralism; many theorists use the term, and assert they are doing something very different than postwar Dahlian pluralism—which they are. Many more theorists continue to eschew the term, though they address issues key to early pluralist thinkers. Overall there is, for the most part, very little recognition of a relation to earlier, and quite rich and related, notions of pluralism.

A thorough intellectual history of the development of various pluralisms is surely called for, but that can not be my goal here. This essay addresses two

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2 In addition to McClure, Avigail Eisenberg's *Reconstructing Political Pluralism* (1995), Gregor McLennan's *Pluralism* (1995), and various works by John Gunnell (1993, 1995) address the earliest generation of pluralism. Gunnell discusses the first generation mostly to point out how far from the original arguments the second generation strayed. He asserts that Truman, for example, mentions the earlier pluralist school, but does “not explicitly employ the concept of pluralism” (1995: 19). But Gunnell does not go so far as to acknowledge that the issues introduced by the first generation are being revisited by a new generation of pluralist theorists. Eisenberg offers a thorough return to the first generation in an attempt to use them to bridge the chasm between contemporary notions of individualism and communitarianism. Her discussions of James, Follett, Laski, Cole, and Figgis are comprehensive, and she surveys the important differences among them. Oddly however, Eisenberg makes no use of the contemporary generation of pluralists in her argument about contemporary theoretical concerns. McLennan, on the other hand, attempts to lay out a thorough map of the current state of theoretical pluralisms. While his discussions are also quite comprehensive, he misses the opportunity to link these notions to pluralism’s past.
types of relations between the first and most recent generations of pluralism. Both of these have to do with what it is in contemporary pluralism that embodies pluralist ideas from some of the originators of pluralist theory and politics. First, I will discuss the resurrection of the philosophical foundation of pluralism—what James called radical empiricism. If there is one key similarity between the early and most recent explorations of the pluralist universe, it is in the epistemological justification of difference. Second, I will turn to two key issues where contemporary theorists resurrect and expand upon key concerns of the first generation. Specifically here I will address the longstanding tension between the recognition of difference and the political necessity of some level of unity, and the difficulties in designing models and practices of communication across the differences endemic to pluralism. These two issues address one of the key questions of the pluralism of both generations, first asked by Follett: What is to be done with diversity?

The aim here is threefold. First, I hope to bring back into theoretical discussions a group of theorists who are, unfortunately, rarely read today. Authors like William James and Mary Parker Follett addressed early in the century issues which have come to resonate once again. Second, I attempt to further illuminate, with these theorists, some of the terms and debates of contemporary discussions which can be labeled pluralist. In essence, I hope to add another generation’s perspectives on difference to the contemporary pluralist toolbox. Finally, I aim to examine where contemporary theory differs from the first generation—both in its targets and in areas of thought which were hinted at, but not thoroughly explored, by earlier pluralist theory. It is not my argument that pluralism has simply been resurrected in its original form; rather, pluralistic thinking has thoroughly evolved, and I wish to bring attention to the genealogy of this evolution.

RESURRECTING THE CORE OF PLURALISM: MULTIPlicity, RADICAL EMPIRicISM, AND SITUATED KNOWLEDGE

McClure (1992) argues that the three generations of pluralism share four key characteristics. All identify themselves against unitary, monolithic, or singular conceptions of the philosophical or political domain; all insist on the irreducible plurality of the social realm; all eschew ontological grounding for the political groupings that continually emerge and evolve; and all view the social subject as a site of multiple and intersecting group memberships, of which state citizenship is but one. The first two of these, obviously, make up the central argument of pluralism. The transformation is one from the regime

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3 I disagree with McClure that the second generation argued against unitary notions of the political. While Dahl and others may have argued against the unitary notion of an
of the state to that of groups (Follett 1918: 6, 9). For Laski (1917: 9), pluralism was based in the admission "that the parts are as real and as self sufficient as the whole." For the first generation, this was an argument against the state as the center of political theory and political life, and what made pluralism such a radical and critical mode of thought.4

Pluralism, however, begins before the discussion of the move away from the state. The key to the pluralist universe is the basis of difference itself. It is true that one of the themes repeated across the generations of pluralism is the argument against a monolithic, unitary vision of the social. But there is a qualitative difference between how the first and recent generations approach this notion, and how the postwar theorists did. Here I can not only lay out the basis of pluralism, but also justify my exclusion of the second generation from this part of the discussion. One of the key similarities between the first and most recent generations is not simply the argument for the plurality of the social realm, but the thorough philosophical justification of that acceptance.5 While the second generation of pluralists focused on a limited notion of economic self-interest to justify and understand social groupings, the first and most recent generations examine the grounds of difference itself. In doing this, contemporary theorists of plurality resurrect and mirror the important founding arguments of pluralism from the turn of the century.

The acknowledgment of multiplicity and variety in political and social life was a key factor in the early works of pluralism in this century. Pluralists in the realms of both philosophy and politics used diversity to move beyond the limitations of what they saw as absolutism in thought and practice. The focus then, as it is now, was on the recognition and justification of difference and, importantly, on the value of that difference in designing philosophy and social theory. In the myriad areas discussed by contemporary pluralism—moral pluralism, identity/difference, group identification and differentiation,
representing difference—the philosophical grounding is the recognition of the validity of difference in individual and group experience itself as the basis of discussion. Quite simply, this is how pluralism began.

The pluralist philosophy of William James was based in the validation of public diversity. While his central philosophical concern was a critique of a monist absolutism, his interest in difference was influenced by involvement in public issues. Well-known as a defender of the varieties of religious experience (James 1985 [1902]), James was perennially open to the positions of psychics, mystics, and others with minority viewpoints. He testified against the licensing of physicians, fearing such a system would eliminate alternative healing practices (Cotkin 1990: 124). He editorialized against the growing imperial role of the United States at the turn of the century, especially in its treatment of Philippine sovereignty. All of these political positions come from an understanding of a universe that is diverse, unfinished, moving, and growing—rather than unified and static (James 1975 [1907]: 123-25). James’s philosophy of pluralism was intentionally designed with an openness to diversity on a number of levels, and against the difference-denying results of philosophical absolutism, social discrimination, and political imperialism.

James’s notion of pluralism (1997 [1909]: 145) began with a quite simple empirical observation—that “... all that we are required to admit as the constitution of reality is what we ourselves find empirically realized in every minimum of finite life.” Diverse experience is the link between James’s argument for radical empiricism as a method and his pluralist philosophy. As he explains in Essays in Radical Empiricism, there is not a clear separation between a thing and our consciousness of it, rather experience is “double-barreled.” Experience defines what we know as real; it is made up of the relation between what we experience and how we experience it. As experience “is an affair of relations, it falls outside, not inside, the single experience considered, and can always be particularized and defined” (James 1976 [1912]: 7). The central argument is that “any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as ‘real’ as anything else in the system” (p. 22; emphasis in original). The point of James’s radical empiricism is not just the recognition of difference, but its validation and acceptance in the face of a monolithic unity.

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6 My coverage of James’s project is, of necessity, limited and brief as I focus specifically on his construction of the epistemological foundation of pluralism. For overviews of James, see Perry (1948) and Cotkin (1990). For works which place James in a larger context of American pluralism and pragmatism see Diggins (1994) and West (1989).

7 See the various editorials in James (1987), as well as Cotkin’s (1990) discussion of James’s “imperial imperative.”
Pluralism entails, as James explains, recognition of this radical empiricism, as opposed to an acceptance of the more singular, monist position of rational absolutists. This is not just a validation of difference, but a recognition that difference may never come together into a coherent, single, social unity. James asserts that there is no "general stuff" of which experience at large is made. There are as many stuffs as there are "natures" in the things experienced. ... Experience is only a collective name for all these sensible natures .... (James 1976 [1912]: 14-15). Everyday experience varies from person to person, in both the "stuff" experienced and the consciousness or nature of the experience, and so the absolutists' notion of a whole, rational, all-inclusive reality common to all becomes difficult to defend. According to James (1977 [1909]: 20), the pluralistic view, based as it is in an understanding of radical empiricism, "... is willing to believe that there may ultimately never be an all-form at all, that the substance of reality may never get totally collected, that some of it may remain outside of the largest combination of it ever made, and that a distributive form of reality, the each-form, is logically as acceptable and empirically as probable as the all-form commonly acquiesced in as so obviously the self-evident thing." James vindicated the diversity of human experiences and ideas from attempts to classify, to unify, to engulf. "Reality, life, experience, concreteness, immediacy, use what word you will, exceeds our logic, overflows and surrounds it" (p. 96).

The absolutists, argued James, could not incorporate a reality defined as locatable and only partially possible of union in some areas. They insisted on an either/or: either there is a complete union of all things or a complete disunion; complete rationality or irrationality; pure universe or pure "nulliverse." The key for James was the acceptance of the notion of "some" rather than all or none. "Radical empiricism and pluralism stand out for the legitimacy of the notion of some: each part of the world is in some ways connected, in some other ways not connected with its other parts" (1977 [1909]: 40-41). Philosophical absolutists demand an all or nothing, and argue that a notion of some connections and some disconnections is ruinous to rationality. James (1975 [1907]: 53) simply wanted philosophy to recognize, embrace, and celebrate disunity.

While he remains in the realm of philosophy in *The Pluralistic Universe*, it is easy to see the link with James's own anti-imperial politics, and one can anticipate what the more political pluralists are to do with his empirical and philosophical foundation. As James was arguing that the production of diverse,

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8 Here James addresses both classic absolutists, such as Spinoza and Hegel, and contemporaries, such as Francis Herbert Bradley and Alfred Edward Taylor.
local, and unstable truth claims in human experience and relations deny the possibility of philosophical absolutism, a generation of political pluralists was using similar arguments to deny the validity of forms of political absolutism. The reality of diversity and the concomitant acknowledgment of the variety and fluidity of experiences became the basis of the views of political pluralists such as Arthur Bentley (1908), Ernest Barker (1957 [1915]), Harold Laski (1917, 1921), and Mary Parker Follett (1918).

What united these writers was a critique of an absolutist concept of unity not only on philosophical, but political grounds as well. Their target was the overriding, singular concern of theorists with the sovereignty of the state; this came, they argued, at the expense of individual and group experiences. The pluralists of this generation took James's critique of absolutism and applied it to the state.9 "What the Absolute is to metaphysics, that is the State to political theory," insisted Laski (1917: 6). These pluralists argued for an understanding of the diversity of individual and group experiences as the center of political life. In the call for a singularity of definition and unity of beliefs, theories of the state were the political manifestation of the philosophy of absolutism. Pluralism used the diversity of group experiences to break the monopoly the state held on the focus of political theory.

Laski argued that without a focus on unity, including that of the singular, unified state, what is left is a "plurality of reals," which, once acknowledged, destroys any prediction of, or attempt at, unity. For Follett, "[l]ife is a recognition of multitudinous multiplicity. Politics must be shaped for that" (1918: 291). Experience is plural, and any concept of a necessary unity discredits a range of experiences that fall outside its false boundaries. Follett and the pluralists of her generation attempted to redefine and expand the notion of sovereignty, to move it from the singular, absolutist point of reference of the state to multiple manifestations in individual and group experiences. Studies of sovereignty were no longer to focus solely on the state, but other political groupings and actors as well. It was a move toward what McClure (1992: 116) calls a more "distributive sovereignty."

For Follett, this was not just a battle against the focus on the state in political theory. It was a call for the recognition of the diversity in civil society—a civil society she was deeply involved in. Follett began her public work in the Roxbury Neighborhood House of Boston, and was central in the devel-

9 For some, like Follett and Laski, the use of James's philosophical foundation was conscious and acknowledged. For others, such as Barker, there was no mention of James, though the target was still the unitary state and the aim a justification of the focus on differences in civil society.
opment of the Boston School Centers, where the schoolhouses of Boston were opened after school hours for educational and social activities. She was at the center of progressive social experiments in Boston early in the century, and it was this experience in the realm of civil society which she ultimately worked out theoretically in The New State (1918). As Follett's work moved from issues of the state to social administration to industrial organization, her focus remained on the place of the individual in human relations and on the importance of the recognition of individuals in organizations. While James argued against the new Hegelians, Follett attempted to reconcile James's radical empiricism with Hegelian unity. Her work, especially in The New State, should be seen as an expression of the tension between her desire to recognize a Jamesian plurality in civil society and her hope for dynamic, yet ultimately harmonious relations across that difference.

Much in recent social and political theory resurrects the issues of experience and radical empiricism, the promise of bringing multiplicity to the forefront of pluralism, and the tension between this difference and a desire for some form of unity. Again, this resurrection of themes is not necessarily a conscious one; as I noted, few theorists refer explicitly to the earlier generation, and only a few more would consciously label themselves "pluralist." What is important, however, is that a number of people are returning to some of the core issues of plurality raised by the first generation. At the base of the resurgence of pluralism now is the same type of argument James made in order to justify the validity of different ways of seeing and knowing the world. These ideas then help to form the foundation of a new generation of what might be termed a critical pluralism.

Donna Haraway's (1988) eloquent description of what she calls "situated knowledges," or "embodied objectivity," for example, returns us squarely into the realm of William James, though without a recognition of James's work. Haraway uses the metaphor of vision to examine the multiple ways things can be seen, depending on one's experience, context, or, more generally, the view from one's body. From varied experiences we see different things; the knowledge gained from these visions situates the subject. She argues for "politics of epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims" (1988: 589). Objectivity is not something accomplished by stepping back and taking it all in from above; rather, only partial perspectives can be considered objective. As James (1979 [1896]: 6) argued, "there is no possible

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10 In fact, of all the theorists cited in this essay, only McClure, Mouffe, and Connolly explicitly identify themselves as pluralists attempting to reclaim the term.
point of view from which the world can appear an absolutely single fact." Since perspectives differ according to situation, objectivity is, then, always partial and multiple. Haraway here mirrors the earlier radical empiricism of James in three ways: the use of experience as opposed to universal concepts, the assertion of the situated nature of experience and knowledge, and the acceptance of multiple visions, and, so, experiences of truth. Haraway's target is the same singular notion of monolithic claims to unity in truth that James attacked in *The Pluralist Universe*.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987: 32) also, without mention of James, mirror his criticism of the search for the "all-form" when they admonish us to

return to the story of multiplicity, for the creation of this substantive marks a very important moment. It was created precisely in order to escape the abstract opposition between the multiple and the one, to escape dialectics, to succeed in conceiving the multiple in the pure state, to cease treating it as a numerical fragment of a lost Unity or Totality or as the organic element of a Unity or Totality yet to come.

They argue that we live in an age of "partial objects, bricks that have been shattered to bits, and leftovers" (1983: 42). We are those "partial objects," and we are defined through the many states and situations through which we pass (p. 20). Deleuze and Guattari mirror the radical empiricism of James in their understanding of our differential makeup and knowledge, as well as the refusal of totality that comes with this acceptance of multiplicity.

McClure (1992) echoes and expands upon the generation of political pluralists who embodied James's philosophical pluralism; she is really alone among contemporary pluralists in her acknowledgment of pluralist ties both in terms of an earlier generation as well as in connecting her political pluralism with a contemporary pluralist epistemological foundation. The link between earlier pluralisms and her own is a central part of McClure's analysis, but she also argues that there is a radical pluralist political potential in the multiple subjectivities suggested by Haraway and other feminist epistemologists (p. 122). McClure's pluralism is based on a critique of the singular identity required by the citizen of the modern state; she argues for the political possibilities inherent in the recognition and validation of multiple subjectivities (ibid.).

While Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) do not acknowledge a link to the first generation of pluralists, or to recent philosophers who empha-

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11 In addition to Haraway, McClure cites De Lauretis (1988), Harding (1986), and Spelman (1988).
size difference, they do attempt to reclaim the term pluralism, or at least "plural democracy." 

Plurality, they argue, should be the starting point of political analysis. Asserting the need to examine the profusion of different social responses or movements to various oppressions is Laclau and Mouffe's key break from past theories—unitary Marxist or liberal pluralist—based solely on the singular experience of labor or economic self-interest. More recently, Mouffe (1996: 246) has argued that "the type of pluralism that I am advocating gives a positive status to difference and refuses the objective of unanimity and homogeneity which is . . . based on acts of exclusion."

But it is not just admitted pluralists such as McClure and Mouffe who have resurrected a concern with situated knowledges. In fact, the whole growing realm of literature on democracy and difference (see, for example, Benhabib 1996a) depends on the explication of radical empiricism. As Bonnie Honig suggests, "difference is just another word for what used to be called pluralism" (1996: 251). In this realm, difference is a resource and a status that is to be preserved and expressed; yet that cannot be done without the previous work of grounding and validating multiplicity. While none of these particular contemporary explorations of radical empiricism and plurality acknowledge any influence from, or similarities to, earlier pluralism, they certainly return us to many of the philosophical grounds and political positions of the first generation.

Radical empiricism is at the core of much recent theory, though it is important to note the differing theoretical reasons for its perceived value in this generation, as opposed to James's. While James was arguing simply for a more realistic and common sense notion of the diversity of human rationality, and Follett asserted the need for political theory to open itself to the variety of experiences in civil society, the focus now, however, is a defense of difference in the face of the imposed injustices enforced by various meta-narratives.

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12 Radical empirical claims influence contemporary pluralists much as they did in the past—some directly and some indirectly. McClure uses Haraway and others as an epistemological base in an explicit recognition of that connection. Others, such as Laclau and Mouffe, and Connolly, base their arguments on the acceptance of multiplicity and difference while not explicitly referring to those who establish this ground. This is very similar to the practice of the authors in the first generation. See note 9.

13 In the index to the Benhabib edited collection on Democracy and Difference (1996a), the term pluralism has few references but the section suggests that readers "see also difference."

14 In addition to McClure, Eisenberg, and McLennan, Charlene Seigfried (1996) serves as an example of one who does make the connection between earlier pluralists/pragmatists and the current resurrection of interest in difference. Seigfried argues that a pluralist/pragmatist recognition of difference is the key to the continuing vitality of feminism (p. 260).
Follett's concern was the exclusion of civil society from political theory; the contemporary concern is with the injustice of the exclusion of difference from political practice. The resurrection of notions of radical empiricism come out of the political call for the legitimacy of subjugated knowledges, and the assertion of the validity of diverse local and culturally based knowledges. Hence radical empiricism and situated knowledge stand, for example, as the essence of the expanding fields of postmodern feminism and critical race theory, where social experience is examined in the context of the history of the experiences of women and people of color (Nicholson 1990; Williams 1991; Crenshaw 1995). Contemporary pluralism stands for an expansion of inclusion and participation of these, and other, varied experiences.

As pluralist theorizing is being resurrected and is evolving, so is pluralist practice. The argument of the environmental justice movement, for example, is that the homogeneity of the mainstream environmental movement excludes some experiences of the "environment"—especially the urban environment—and this exclusion leads to inequality not just of recognition, but of the distribution of environmental risks. This is a critique of interest group pluralism in practice, as it illustrates how particular experiences may be organized off of the political agenda. And it also illustrates where contemporary pluralist theory and action have gone beyond past generations, of necessity, into the central issue of how the exclusion of varied experiences is played out in political inequality. But the issue of political action from a pluralist base brings up another crucial area where contemporary pluralism resurrects issues of the past.

**Resurrection and Evolution I: Unity Without Uniformity: Mosaics, Rhizomes, Cyborgs, Seriality, and Networks**

The acknowledgment and philosophical justification of difference, and the defense of difference against unitary tendencies, is certainly the core of the pluralist universe. But pluralists have, from the beginning of the century, had difficulties reconciling the acceptance of multiplicity with the necessity of political action on a scale larger than the individual or small group. Here is one area where recent theorists are not only resurrecting the concerns pluralists such as James and Follett, but are expanding on and building from those concerns.

As Follett (1918: 10) lamented, "pluralists have pointed out diversity but no pluralist has yet answered satisfactorily the question to which we must find an

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15 For discussions of the lack of attention to diversity in the mainstream environmental movement, see Dowie (1995) and Taylor (1992, 1993).

16 The classic discussions of agenda-setting and exclusion are Bachrach and Baratz (1962) and Crenson (1971).
answer—What is to be done with this diversity.” Follett was looking for “a new conception of modes of association,” a model for building political action both within and across diverse groups. While critical of the normalization associated with more singular and absolutist visions of the state, Follett and others saw that some elements of unity must emerge if disparate ideas, people, and/or groups are to relate and work together. In both the first and recent generations of pluralist thought, some sort of unity or solidarity—the necessity of relations across differences—have been as central as eschewing a unitary, homogenous uniformity.

James argued that his concept of radical empiricism represents order as always in the making. The notion of evolution in James’s pluralism keeps unity forever over the horizon—moved toward but never arrived at. But James did not dismiss the possibility of some level or form of unity. Pluralism, he argued (1975 [1909]: 145),

has no need of...dogmatic rigoristic temper. Provided you grant some separation among things, some tremor of independence, some free play of parts on one another, some real novelty or chance, however minute, she is amply satisfied, and will allow you. any amount, however great, of real union...This leaves us with the common-sense world, in which we find things partly joined and partly disjoined.

It was crucial for James that things could remain both independent and, at times, connected. The pluralist universe was a place that emphasizes both plurality and unity—but a particular, tenuous, and non-dominating type of unity. Pluralism “means only that the sundry parts of reality may be externally related...Things are ‘with’ one another in many ways, but nothing includes everything, or dominates over everything. The word ‘and’ trails along after every sentence. Something always escapes” (1977 [1909]: 145). Connections can be made in the pluralist universe without recourse to an insistence on uniformity or monism; the result is a “multiverse” rather than a universe.

Unity, then, is still possible, but of a very different sort. James pondered a number of representations of how difference could come together:

Our “multiverse” still makes a “universe”; for every part, tho it may not be in actual or immediate connexion, is nevertheless in some possible or mediated connexion, with every other part however remote, through the fact that each part hangs together...The type of union, it is true, is different here from the monistic type...It is not a universal co-implication, or integration of all things...It is what I call the strung-along type, the type of continuity, contiguity, or concatenation.

James’s ideal reaches for the possibility of unity, but continues to contain the reality and necessity of a remaining disunity. In constructing a picture of unity, James not only insists on the possibility of parts remaining outside, but also

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on the tenuous nature of the unity itself. In both of these, James refers to the metaphor of a mosaic. "My description of things, accordingly starts with the parts and makes of the whole a being of the second order. It is essentially a mosaic philosophy" (1976 [1912]: 22). But James differentiates his own use of the metaphor from the standard image of a mosaic. "In radical empiricism there is no bedding; it is as if the pieces clung together by their edges, the transitions experienced between them forming their cement" (p. 42). Elsewhere he argues that "[t]hings cohere, but the act of cohesion itself implies but few conditions, and leaves the rest of their qualifications indeterminate" (1979 [1897]: 201). The point here is that unity does not require a singular unifying commonality, glue, or mortar. Instead, the mosaic James wants to construct from pluralist foundations holds itself together along the common edges of the pieces, and the mosaic itself becomes the only commonality.

Again, this struggle with the need for a revised definition of unity was not uncommon in this generation. Mary Follett also advocated a very particular type of "unity," and her concerns of 1918 resonate loudly in an era in which "unity in diversity" has become a rather undefined slogan. Evolution, instability, and diversity play central roles in her definition. Unity, she argued (1918: 76), is an essential characteristic of social and political relations, but it is "always in unstable equilibrium, always shifting, varying, and thereby changing the individual at every moment... [Society] can be understood only by the study of its flux of relations, of all the intricate reciprocities which go to make the unifying." Follett differentiated quite clearly the terms "unity" and "uniformity" by arguing that "[u]nity, not uniformity, must be our aim. We attain unity only through variety. Differences must be integrated, not annihilated, nor absorbed." Inclusion is key, as opposed to incorporation. She argued for building relations across differences, but understood the difficulties the process could bring: "Good words: integrate, interpenetrate, ... compound, harmonize, ... coordinate, interweave, reciprocally relate. ... Bad words: fuse, melt, amalgamate, assimilate, weld dissolve, absorb, reconcile" (p.35, n. 1).

In the end, it is heterogeneity, and not homogeneity, which makes a unity without uniformity (p. 40). Unity, for Follett, is a concept of entirety; its meaning is made out of continually shifting differences and the understanding of those differences by participants. The problem of universals was for Follett, as it was also for Barker (1957 [1915]: 160), the problem of identity/difference.

The metaphors may differ, but the central concerns of James and Follett on the nature of pluralist unity have been resurrected in some illuminating approaches of recent pluralist theory. The key continues to be the separation of unity and totality, and an acceptance of a range of possible, and shifting, unities. As with James, contemporary authors who defend radical empiricism address the concern with redefining unity. Foucault, for example, offers an
exposition of this concern in principles derived for Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (1983; see Foucault's preface to this work, p. xiii): "Free political action from all unitary and totalizing paranoia. Develop action, thought, and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization. . . . Prefer what is positive and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unities, mobile arrangements over systems." Foucault here mirrors—certainly without intent—James's validation of multiverse, and Follett's call for heterogeneity over uniformity. The difference is that Foucault eschews the word "unity" while arguing for the same multiplicity, flows, and mobile arrangements these early pluralists advocated. While Foucault calls for "flows over unities," mobile arrangements can be seen as flows of unities, allowing for both the possibility of unity, or alliance, and the reality of ever-changing experiences and positions.

Deleuze and Guattari themselves use the metaphor of the rhizome to express this type of unity. Rhizomes are a type of root system that do not send up just one sprout or stalk; rather, they spread underground, emerge in a variety of locations, and connect in ways that are not always visible. The first three characteristics of a rhizome are the principles of connection, heterogeneity, and multiplicity (1987: 7-8). These principles mirror the desires of James and Follett for both difference and connection. While the decentering that Deleuze and Guattari argue for is what is usually focused on, it is crucial that they see connection as a central—in fact, the first—principle. The metaphor specifically illustrates a particular form of unity; they insist that "the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance" (p. 25). This mirrors the desires of both James and Follett for both difference and connection.

While neither Foucault nor Deleuze and Guattari use the term pluralism, William Connolly uses this rhizome metaphor in constructing his version of a radical, critical, or in this case rhizomatic, pluralism. "A rhizome might be varieties of plant life without deep roots, connected by multiple nodes. Or it might be a variety of human constituencies, each touched in what it is by the dense, multifarious networks, human and nonhuman, in which it participates (1995: 94). The recognition and acknowledgment of this diversity is the key to rhizomatic linkages; for Connolly, a contemporary democratic pluralism is based on the contingency and evolving nature of both one's own identity and one's links with others. "In rhizomatic pluralism the possibilities of collaboration around a particular issue increase as each constituency enhances the experience of contingency and social implication in its own formation" (ibid.). The rhizome metaphor is about alliance, but an alliance that is distinguished from singular, set (and, to Connolly, "arboreal") notions of conventional pluralism.

Haraway has also addressed the issue of unity in her general discussion of the "cyborg" (1991 [1985]). One of the many notions of cyborg that Haraway
emphasizes is that of a “cyborg community”—a community that is artificially constructed. For Haraway, solidarity is made up of elective affinities. She follows up on the reality of contingency and situated knowledge, making for a sense of solidarity that is congruent with radical empiricism and multiplicity. Haraway sees solidarity, based in a mutual intersubjective understanding of other viewpoints, forming around a large realm of possibilities. “[A] cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints. The political struggle is to see from both perspectives at once because each reveals both dominations and possibilities unimaginable from the other vantage point” (1991 [1985]: 154). Expanding on the concept of cyborg politics, Gray and Mentor (1995: 459-60) discuss “building new political bodies and bodies of bodies across the nets.... Field, system, network, web—these ‘inhuman’ metaphors, these apparent antitheses to an organic ‘bodily knowledge’ and scale—are the new geopolitical territories to be inhabited and contested....”

These cyborg constructions—these solidarities—are, importantly, partial. The making of connections is not total, but based on areas of partial overlap. Partial, locatable knowledges sustain “the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology” (Haraway 1988: 584). For Haraway, there is nothing in assertions against objectivity—and for partiality, local knowledge, and differentiated experience—that rules out the construction of a solid collective in the realm between individuals and the state. As the first generation of pluralists discovered, it is that partiality that makes the construction of localized solidarity possible.

Iris Young (1994) has invoked Sartre’s concept of a “seriality” to explore the reality of shared experience creating unity without uniformity. A serial collectivity is used to identify a collective without insistence on a common identity—to note both connection and disconnection. “A series is a collective whose members are unified passively by the relation their actions have to material objects and practico-inert histories” (pp. 727-28). Sartre’s examples include people waiting for a bus or listening to the radio—collectives brought together by their relation to a material object, the bus or the radio station. But their collective ends there—they do not necessarily identify with each other in other ways, and their membership in these serial collectives does not define their identity. Young argues for the use of seriality in feminism; it would, she argues, allow for some conception of women as a collective without insisting on a common identity, and allow for a notion of commonality while simultaneously problematizing “women” and “gender” as social constructions. Self-conscious groups may form out of serial collectives—as when a bus is late and riders talk of past problems or alternative modes of transport, when radio listeners band together to protest when an offensive song is played, when
mothers form a group to protest toxins in their neighborhood, or when women band together along any of the lines that connect them as a serial collective. One of the key points for Young, however, is that identification with others does not necessitate a singular, monolithic identity. Difference abounds, even in instances of serial recognition. This notion begins to differentiate contemporary pluralists (though Young prefers “difference democrat”) from more conventional notions.

In addition, Young insists upon the partial and fluid nature of any of the groupings that come out of seriality. She agrees with Sartre that all groups arise and fall back into serial groupings, and with Butler that the question of solidarity should never be settled, but continually shift. This is not just the nature of series and groups, but larger coalitions of groups as well. In discussing women as seriality in particular, “groupings of women will always be partial in relation to the series . . . because a group will have particular objectives or purposes that cannot encompass or even refer to the totality of the condition of women as a series. This is why feminist politics must be coalition politics” (p. 737). At the core, of course, is the construction of James’s mosaic and Follett’s unity without uniformity. And at the end is an ever-evolving and permutating seriality—again, certainly a form that distinguishes a new critical pluralism from past conventional notions.

The attempt to redefine the notion of unity is also mirrored in some respects in Laclau and Mouffe’s attempt to develop a pluralistic linkage across diverse social movements. Like James, they believe that all experience cannot logically be explained by one logic or “all-form.” The universalism which was the aim of past Marxist and pluralist accounts is decisively dismissed (1985: 191-92). In the political realm, their conception of a radical pluralism emerges from a foundation of multiple social movements and calls for an acceptance of the multiplicity and autonomy among resistances, rather than attempting a new unification of these movements under a single founding principle (p. 167). Laclau and Mouffe argue for an understanding of “equivalence” among various movements, and the possibility of shared democratic discourse—the articulation of similarities across differences. Like Follett, they stress a unity that is based on a proliferation of differences and the possible relations among them.

Young and Laclau and Mouffe illustrate how these pluralistic conceptions of unity have been brought into recent political practice in the increasingly popular use of alliances and networks in grassroots organizing. Political theorists, of course, were not the first to recognize the significant nature of this organizational form. African-American artist and activist Bernice Johnson Reagon (1983) has written of the importance of the incorporation of difference in the development of coalition politics. Coalitions, necessary because
experiences are diverse, are not comfortable sites of homogeneity. They are instead places where differences meet—places made up of the hard work of constructing unity without insisting on sameness. As Susan Bickford argues (1996: 137) in discussing Reagon, “working and speaking together do not require unitary conceptions of community and identity.” Bickford quotes Audre Lorde (1984: 142): “You do not have to be me in order for us to fight alongside each other.” The ideal of the coalition here is one that builds unity from heterogeneity—not by subsuming difference into a singular new group identity, but by keeping the tension of difference palpable as part of a constructed unity.

The environmental justice movement again serves as an example of just this form of coalition or network organizing. The movement really has no center; rather, there are a number of identity- and issue-based organizations and networks, as well as regional networks working on a variety of issues. Networks begin at the level of the community, and their organization takes these local realities seriously, continuing the recognition and validation of diverse experiences, even as it links the multiplicity of peoples and issues into larger alliances. In the environmental justice movement, then, one can see networks that unify very different populations without calling on local groups to give up local identities. One also sees various coalitions beginning, expanding, evolving, shrinking, and dissipating as various individuals and groups enter and depart. The movement serves as a model of Follett’s notion of unity without uniformity, and represents all the contemporary pluralist metaphors: mosaic, rhizome, cyborg, and serial community.

There is in pluralism now, as there was in the first generation, a struggle around the notion of unity. James’s “multiverse” and Follett’s “unity without uniformity” still retain the possibility and the necessity of solidarity and the making of connections. And both held open the hope for a sense of unity that was not as destructive or exclusive as the monism they were arguing against. James even expected unity to increase over time, as “trains of experience, once separate, run into one another” (James 1976 [1912]: 43). While his understanding of experience should have led James to see these trains running away from unity as well as toward it, he had a religious or spiritual attraction to the possibility of some form of unblemished unity. Follett’s attraction was to a Hegelian sense of unity; while other pluralists singled Hegel out as one of the monist problems, she argued a very particular interpretation of his unified ends.

17 For a more thorough discussion of the innovation of the network form in the U.S. environmental justice movement, see Schlosberg (1999a).
18 Follett’s struggle over the meaning of unity is palpable throughout The New State. While she has a Hegelian attraction to “the unification of feeling, affection, emotion, desire, aspiration—all that we are” (1918: 44), she remains very particular and insistent about
Similarly, there is a tension now, and an attraction toward both plurality and a new type of unity. Some theorists, such as Mouffe, focus on the reconstruction, a counter-hegemonic project that holds out the possibility of unity. Others, such as Deleuze and Guattari, see the promise embodied in a radical decentering. This remains an unresolved tension, as it was for James and Follett. It remains a tension in social movements as well, torn between the importance of locality and the necessity of addressing more broad issues. The issues of the first generation have been resurrected, and so have the uncertain tensions.¹⁹

**Resurrection and Evolution II: Communicating Across Difference**

One of the key issues the first generation of pluralism recognized, after the acknowledgment of difference and radical empiricism, and along with a particular vision of unity, was the need for a model of communication and decision making across these differences. While the attempts of that generation are, for the most part, limited, vague, and idealistic, the issue has become one of the central points of contention for theorists focusing on contemporary pluralist themes of toleration, agonistic respect, and discursive models. The value of the contemporary discussions of discourse across difference is that these new forms of communication may be the key to connections that permit pluralistic solidarity without a need for unity and sameness.

the basis of this unification in heterogeneity. Though I emphasize the important tension between difference and unity, or between James and Hegel, notable in Follett's work, others have focused more thoroughly on the danger of her Hegelian idealism (see especially Kariel 1955; and Kariel 1961: 161-62. I find this an incomplete, and unfair, characterization of Follett, given her own awareness of the tension inherent in her project.

¹⁹ I leave for another time a thorough discussion of the ultimate relationship between these mobile pluralist arrangements and the state. Contemporary theorists of pluralist themes expand the role of the political into an ever-growing number of groups and identities. But is the state pluralistically redeemable, or are pluralist groupings a political form that should remain outside the bounds of the state? Does pluralism resurrect the first generation's counter to the power of the unified state, and continue to promote organization that continues that counter? Or does pluralism now eschew the state as it evolves into a theory of civil society and culture? Again, these are not just theoretical issues, but also crucial strategic questions facing new social movements. This argument is in some ways embodied in the difference between the democratic theories of Iris Young and John Dryzek. Both embody thoroughly pluralist themes, though neither acknowledge them. For Young (1990), the state can be made more receptive to difference; for Dryzek (1996a, 1996b) democratization has much more promise against and apart from the state, in the realm of civil society. Bickford (1997) takes on this question in a recent paper.
For James, "compromise and mediation are inseparable from the pluralistic philosophy" (1977 [1909]: 141). But James was not speaking of a traditional give-and-take type of compromise. What was important was a notion of understanding the other—an attempt at intersubjective understanding. The role of pluralist philosophy, he argued, is to see an alternative and imagine foreign states of mind (1978: 4). James's discursive ideal was a sort of diverse, yet intersubjective, banquet, "where all the qualities of being respect one another's personal sacredness, yet sit at the common table of space and time" (1979 [1897]: 201).20

Mary Follett, once again, picked up on the need for a discursive model for communication across differences. As with James, she eschewed a simple notion of compromise, which she considered dysfunctional, and called for something more inclusive, and respectful, of difference. "When two desires are integrated, that means a solution has been found in which both desires have a place, that neither side has had to sacrifice anything" (1942: 32). Follett here is not simply arguing that all desires can be integrated into a compromise, but that inclusive solutions can be developed. Agreement was to be brought about "by the reciprocal adaptings of the reactions of individuals, and this reciprocal adapting is based on both agreement and difference" (1918: 35). She was concerned that difference not lead to conflict, but was equally concerned that addressing conflict did not lead to the dismissal of diversity:

What people often mean by getting rid of conflict is getting rid of diversity, and it is of the utmost importance that these should not be considered the same. We may wish to abolish conflict but we cannot get rid of diversity. We must face life as it is and understand that diversity is its most essential feature.... Fear of difference is dread of life itself (1924: 300-301).

Difference should not be confused, she argued, with antagonism, and should not arouse hostility (1918: 40). Discourse, then, should not be seen as a contest.

As long as we think of discussion as a struggle, as an opportunity for 'argument,' there will be all the usual evil consequences of the struggle theory. ... We must learn to think of discussion not as a struggle but as an experiment in cooperation. We must learn cooperative thinking, intellectual teamwork. There is a secret here which is going to revolutionize the world (p. 97).

The key to both James and Follett here is the focus on a communicative process both open to difference that is a tool for making connections across that

20 For further discussion of James on the issue of mutual respect, see Miller 1997, chapter 4.
difference. While both did discuss notions of compromise and agreement, their central concern was with the nature of the process itself, and not just its conclusion. Needless to say, while the postwar generation did not pick up on this issue where James and Follett left off,\(^{21}\) it is this focus on difference and communication that is part of the recent pluralist resurrection.

The evolution of contemporary theory on this issue is its central concern with the process of discourse as a method for addressing the exclusions and impenetrability of conventional politics. Again, while many of those working in this area eschew the term, this focus on discourse across difference is central to a redefined and revitalized pluralist politics. As with the first generation, the basis of a concern with discourse is an acknowledgment of multiplicity—openness to ambiguity and the differences it spawns. This openness applies to both our own identities and those of others, as ambiguity and multiplicity are acknowledged as a basis of human agency. A number of contemporary theorists, such as Benhabib (1992), Connolly (1991, 1995), and Honneth (1992) argue for an ethic built around a respect for and acceptance of ambiguity and difference in ourselves and others. Agonistic respect—a care and appreciation for standpoints and others with whom one disagrees—is at the core of relations in a critical pluralism. The motivation for such an ethic—which James began to refer to—is a recognition of the exclusions not just of contemporary politics, but of a dominant style of everyday political discourse.

The recently evolving ethic of agonistic respect exceeds the bounds of postwar pluralist notions of tolerance, as it moves to include an additional aspect of recognition. Classical notions of tolerance are usually grounded in one of two types of reasoning—a pragmatic skepticism that allowed for varying moral or political views, or a moral of respect, which was granted as a right to citizens as autonomous agents (Mendus 1988: 2). Toleration, however grounded, is simply the moral of allowing otherness, and difference, to be. In practice, toleration can be manifest either in the blindness and indifference of the state to diversity, or in a more equalizing respect for the representatives of varied positions. While postwar pluralists focused on the former, both first generation pluralists and recent theorists of democracy and difference focus on the latter.\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\) The postwar exception was Lindblom's (1965) attempt to reveal the intelligence of the practice of "partisan mutual adjustment." Unfortunately, Lindblom's ideal did not become a major concern for others of his generation.

\(^{22}\) An example of indifference on the part of the state might be color-blind hiring policies at educational institutions, where the focus is on the process rather than the end. An example of equalizing respect would be a conscious effort at constructing a diverse workforce—not just to include tokens, but in order to validate the value of difference itself and the varieties of experience which would be brought to the institution.
Critics of the tolerance espoused by the second generation of pluralists, and adopted in postwar political practice, are numerous. Some focused on which positions, or identities, were consistently decided against, and how meaningless and “repressive” the concept of tolerance became without real political recognition (see, especially, Wolfe, Moore, and Marcuse 1965). Others argue that the toleration exemplified in this era results in conservatism. Even when tolerance has allowed a variety of evolving identities and issues into the political sphere, recognition continues to be limited. As conventional pluralism admitted new positions into the political discourse, it further marginalized those left out. The admission of some forms of racial criticism and environmental discourse served to further marginalize others, and this marginalization has allowed for their disdain and dismissal. For example, the acceptance of civil rights arguments allowed for the marginalization of black nationalist discourse; the ascendance of mainstream environmental concerns with compromise and appeasement of industry has led to a state disdain of more radical and grassroots positions. Dryzek (1996b) argues that this inclusion has been a way to co-opt and disempower the radical potential of possible challenges to the state; this “mere tolerance” is seen by others as the “grossest reformism” (Lorde 1984: 111).

Contemporary toleration is, as Connolly (1995: xvii) argues, “an underdeveloped form of critical responsiveness grounded in misrecognition.” A focus on expanding toleration into agonistic respect and critical responsiveness—an acceptance of the validity of a variety of positions and standpoints—revives the possibility for pluralistic relations. An ethic of agonistic respect serves the facilitation of differences; it is, as Connolly argues (ibid.) “an indispensable lubricant of political pluralization.”

Connolly began a move in the evolution from mere tolerance with the concept of “slack” proposed in Politics and Ambiguity. The introduction of slack in a political system is the opening of space for otherness to be (Connolly 1987: xi, 11). Connolly continued this evolution in Identity/Difference (1991) with the move toward a theory of agonistic respect, and in The Ethos of Pluralization (1995) with the discussion of critical responsiveness. With the avoidance of universalism and its accompanying exclusions, argues Connolly, and with the introduction, through slack, of ambiguity and multiplicity, the need for an ethic emerges. A critical pluralism moves beyond the notion of tolerance into opening a space for the recognition of others. The evolution from toleration to agonistic respect includes the democratizing ingredient of the “cultivation of care” for the positions and responses of others and opponents. This includes both expanding respect to a wider range of others than toleration ever claimed, as well as attempting to move beyond the dogmatism of particular positions, toward a “cultivation of care for the ways opponents
respond to the mysteries of existence” (Connolly 1991: 33-34).Connolly, in a way, finally helps set the table for James's intersubjective banquet (and, for Connolly, the assemblage resembles a potluck rather than a formal dinner (1995: 95)).

Agonistic respect is an ethic, however, not an institution or a mode of decision making. Connolly's agonistic pluralism only goes so far. Follett's question remains: What is to be done with this diversity? Recognizing this, much of the literature on the inclusion of difference in public discourse focuses on the process of deliberation that the recognition of, and respect for, difference engenders. Again, while not always explicitly identifying themselves as pluralist, many theorists in the growing realm of deliberative democracy root their arguments in pluralistic assumptions of radical empiricism and situated knowledges. As Joshua Cohen (1996: 96) argues, deliberation is based in difference, and a reasonable pluralism leads to a procedural conception of democracy. According to such a conception, the democratic pedigree that lies at the source of legitimacy can be settled by looking exclusively to the processes through which collective decisions are made and to values associated with fair processes: for example, values of openness, equal chances to present alternatives, full and impartial consideration of those alternatives.

Deliberative democracy is the procedure of a revived pluralism. As such, I read much of the literature of deliberative democracy as designs for the intersubjective banquet that both James and Connolly imagine.

A number of recent theorists have attempted to develop deliberative models based on inclusion of and respect for difference. While still focusing on a type of universalist end, Seyla Benhabib emphasizes the open nature of discourse toward a “post-enlightenment project of interactive universalism” which is continually open to difference (1992: 3). The deliberative model she envisions embodies “a plurality of modes of association in which all affected can have the right to articulate their point of view” (1996b: 73). Benhabib is clearly interested in the critical pluralist project of a validation of the contextual origins of identity and diversity and an extension of agonistic respect to others in open-ended conversation. The “enlarged thinking” of intersubjectivity, or the ability to take the standpoint of others, necessarily includes the validation of multiplicity in any notion of communicative action. The ideal becomes not simply an open communication process, but the ability to reverse perspectives

23 Numerous theorists have come to an ethic of care as a necessity in approaching difference, from Foucault (1988a, 1988b) to Tronto (1993).
and take on the position of the other for the sake of argument. Benhabib's interactive universalism does not supersede difference, but instead attempts to keep difference at the center of continued consensual agreements.

James Bohman, in a discussion of "Public Reason and Cultural Pluralism" (1995), argues that the deep conflicts that are aroused when we take cultural diversity seriously cannot be solved by attempting to forge a public consensus based in a singular public reason. These conflicts can only hope to be solved if justice is made more inclusive, dynamic, and plural. Basically, Bohman argues for the acceptance of tenuous agreements that may be based on numerous types of reasoning. "Political unity does not require that there be one public reason" (p. 263). This allows for an acceptance of political agreement without requiring that those agreements be reached for identical reasons (as both Habermas and Rawls demand). Bohman's model also calls for a type of compromise referred to by both James and Follett. Compromise is not simply "splitting the difference" or finding some third and impartial position. Instead, the moral compromise Bohman sees as necessary with the recognition of pluralism is one in which parties establish a framework for discussion that includes the positions of each. In this process, parties "modify their conflicting interpretations of the framework, so that each can recognize the other's moral values and standards as part of it" (p. 269). The very nature of the discussion is modified to be respectful, and inclusive, of difference. Bohman's discursive pluralism—his attempt to set a stage for the working through of "deep disagreements"—represents another move away from toleration as impartiality toward a form of reasoning based on agonistic respect.

John Dryzek notes the distance in critical theory from discussions of political and social applications, and concentrates on the possibilities of a discursive process in the design of real-world political and social practices (1990). Like Benhabib, his focus is on the process, rather than the universalist origins and ends of Habermas's discursive theory.24 Dryzek draws a picture of non-hierarchical spaces where citizens—from either similar or different backgrounds—discursively design political organization and policy. He offers

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24 While both Benhabib and Dryzek come out of a Habermasian framework, it should not be inferred here that Habermas would agree to this conception of a critical pluralism. While he certainly supports an open discursive process, Habermas aims at (an admittedly unattainable ideal of) a singular, unified consensus. Diversity is necessary for open communication, he argues, but "the transcendent moment of universal validity bursts every provinciality asunder" (Habermas 1987: 322). Habermas continues this treatment of particularity in the aptly titled "The Unity of Reason in the Diversity of its Voices" (1992). Bohman directly addresses this issue, and sets up his discussion of decision-mechanisms of cultural pluralism in opposition to the singular, neo-Kantian treatments of Habermas and Rawls.
examples of the process in practice—mediation, some forms of regulatory negotiation, and the internal practices of new social and political movements—and argues for the expansion of these practices in policy design.

Iris Young attempts to take pluralist discourse further than these examples of deliberative democracy. For Young (1996), the notion of deliberation itself limits and excludes many forms of communication. The norms of deliberation, she argues, privileges assertive, confrontational, formal, dispassionate, and disembodied speech. Those same norms disregard and disempower tentative or conciliatory speech, as well as other forms of communication, including forms of greeting, rhetoric, and storytelling. All of this, asserts Young, silences individuals or groups who are less confident in their speaking style, or who communicate in a manner that differs from the ideal of rational argument. To be truly inclusive, Young insists on what she calls “communicative” democracy, rather than deliberative democracy. While Young has a valid argument with Habermas, who does insist on the force of the “better argument,” she overstates her case against discursive democrats like Dryzek and Bohman. As I read them, there is nothing in Dryzek (1990), Bohman (1995), or for that matter Benhabib (1992, 1996b), which would lead to the exclusion of the types of communication that Young defends. Young illustrates that there are certainly differences—at least of emphasis—in the attempts to expand democratic discourse. But she also illustrates the length to which pluralist democratic discourse must go if it is truly to embody the epistemological and methodological pluralism on which it is based.

Crucial to all of these extensions of communicative action is an emphasis on the ongoing nature of the process. Dryzek emphasizes that a “a succession of discursive exercises held up to critical scrutiny could create and reinforce norms of free discourse. . . . In so doing, such exercises would . . . help constitute a world increasingly hospitable to truly discursive designs and to the participatory process of discursive design” (1990: 87). Bohman argues that rather than focus on like reasons, moral decision-making demands only that parties cooperate within a certain process of public deliberation. Likewise, Benhabib argues that the “emphasis now is less on rational agreement, but more on sustaining those normative practices and moral relationships within which reasoned agreement as a way of life can flourish and continue” (1992: 38). Young (1996) also emphasizes the importance of process rather than

25 There are numerous theorists, such as Dryzek and Benhabib, who may begin within a Habermasian framework of open discourse, and expand what it is that is valid within that realm. Storytelling, for example, is explicitly included in Patsy Healy's Habermasian rules for public planning (Healy 1993). For a fascinating discussion of the role of storytelling in political theorizing (particularly Arendt), see Disch 1994, chapter 4.
substance in searching for unity; she argues the only unity necessary is that around the open deliberative process and the respect that allows it to proceed. The point here is that decision making for a resurrected pluralist universe focuses not on the substance of decisions, but on the process for making communication across diversity both possible and fruitful.\(^{26}\) The openness to difference and the emphasis on process helps show the impossibility of finally fixing a consensus on identity, truth, or a social order. Rather, relations are continually evolving. The ongoing generation of different antagonisms, and the discourses among them, keep us from finally constituting ourselves. All of these theorists resurrect—and, obviously, more thoroughly flesh out—the earlier pluralist concerns on discourse expressed by James and Follett.

Again, the environmental justice movement may serve as a demonstration of the attempted implementation of these particular issues of a contemporary critical pluralism. The movement has been critical of many of the communicative aspects of mainstream environmental organizing, especially the top-down structure and the one-way nature of communication within the major groups (see, for example, Bullard 1993; DeChiro 1992; Miller 1993; Moore and Head 1993; Taylor 1992). The movement has also been critical of political agencies and institutions—especially on the lack of participation in policymaking and the regular discrimination and disrespect shown to people of color and grassroots activists in public hearings (see, for example, Hamilton 1994; Krauss 1994). In response to these complaints, environmental justice activists have designed communicative practices and demands. Internally, the movement has attempted to employ more open discursive processes, paying particular attention to communication within and across diverse groups.\(^{27}\) Externally, the movement has made demands with regard to more discursive and participatory policymaking on local government, industry, and government agencies. These internal processes and external demands demonstrate that the movement sees improved communication—manifest in specific discursive practices and a general ongoing process—as both a key strategy of the movement and part of the definition of environmental justice.\(^{28}\)

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\(^{26}\) See Bickford (1996) for an argument on the central role of listening in this process.

\(^{27}\) See especially the discussion of the process surrounding the development of the "Principles of Environmental Justice: before and during the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit (Madison, Miller, and Lee 1992).

\(^{28}\) This concern with process, it should be noted, is in addition to, rather than instead of, a focus on equity in the distribution, and ultimate reduction, of environmental risks. For more on environmental justice as a case study of a new form of pluralism, see Schlosberg (1999b).
What to do with diversity is just as central to the resurrection of pluralism as it was to James and Follett. The foundations of pluralism in a radical empiricism, and the desire for constructing forms of unity without uniformity—then and now—have necessitated a focus on the communicative process essential for recognized, and agonistically respected, difference. Recognition, respect, a focus on discourse based in difference, and an acceptance of the ongoing nature of such a process are at the center of contemporary pluralist theorizing and action.

**CONCLUSION**

So there is a reason why a roundtable on pluralism would be so well attended at a political science conference. The pluralist universe has been quite thoroughly resurrected—brought back from the dead, in many ways, in an evolved form. I think Kathy Ferguson was right in her musings: the term pluralist can be retrieved—rescued from the land of the theoretical untouchables. This article has not been much more than an exercise in intellectual history, but it seems crucial if the term pluralism itself is to be retrieved along with the ideas that were part of its original definition. Many areas of contemporary theory are revisiting the pluralist universe that James, Follett, and others first explored for us—much of it without acknowledgment of that past. The basis remains an acceptance of radical empiricism, and the multiplicity that it engenders. And as we continue to deal with the politics of difference in redefining unity and in designing discursive methods for communicating across difference, we should note how integral—and difficult—these issues were for an earlier generation.

It has not been my argument here that the first generation of pluralism points to problems that are not being addressed now, nor that the writers of that generation can necessarily help us to recast the numerous problems contemporary theorists are addressing. As stated at the start, the aim, in addition to retrieving the term pluralism, has been to reintroduce theorists who have confronted many of the issues theorists feel drawn to today and to add their reflections to the contemporary pluralist toolbox. But I have also attempted to draw out some of the differences in the generations, even as they employ similar foundations and themes. Certainly, the discussions of solidarity now are more thorough than the theorizing of James and Follett, especially as more recent authors have the innovative practices of new social movements (such as civil rights, feminist, environmental justice, and gay and lesbian movements) as case studies. Likewise, the musings of James and Follett on issues of communication have been elevated to an attempt to design a deliberative democracy as the culmination and institutionalization of pluralist theory. Certainly, this demonstrates how agonistic respect, communication, and discursive
democracy are now seen as a method for attaining the type of solidarity, or unity without uniformity, that the earlier pluralists imagined.

What is interesting here is that it is the failures of the second generation of postwar pluralism that have led theorists back to issues first broached by the first generation. In essence, it is the response—first in political practice, then in political theory—to the political inequality that came with liberal pluralism’s exclusion of difference, that has inspired moves to make a new generation of pluralism more inclusive and representative.39 This recent focus on exclusion is certainly a central difference between the targets of earlier and contemporary generations of pluralist thought—the former more focused on absolutism and singularity in the theoretical realm, the latter squarely responding to exclusions in the political realm and the innovations of political movements in response.30 That irony seems a fitting way to conclude: that the failure of a false pluralism has lead the way to a resurrection of the origins of pluralist thought, and the important evolution of the ideas therein.

REFERENCES


29 For discussions focusing on notions of inclusion of difference, see, for example, Bickford (1997), Mouffe (1992), Phillips (1993), and Young (1990, 1996).
30 An addition, it is important to note that the pluralists of both the first and second generations have been notorious for dealing with the influences individuals face within groups, but not external influences, such as power, political economy, media, culture, social norms, etc. So contemporary theorists have begun to address, for example, the construction of the subjectivity that group membership and citizenship is built upon. For a fabulous discussion of the possible use of contemporary pluralist theory to address the problem of subjectivity, see McClure 1992.


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