

Immanence, Pluralism, and Politicsⁱ

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The article examines whether theories based on an immanent worldview—roughly, one that denies the existence of transcendent principle or agents relevant to human life—offer a better solution to the problems of political pluralism than do transcendent theories. After reviewing three such theories—one from Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, one from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and one from William Connolly—the author argues that theories like Connolly's, which both make positive claims and explicitly acknowledge the contestability of those claims, are the most defensible. At the same time, even those theories run into the problems of transcendent theories, especially relying on assumptions they cannot prove. Thus, the author suggests that we may need to be more modest in our expectations of how persuasive any such theory can be.

KEYWORDS: Immanence, Pluralism, Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Gilles Deleuze, William Connolly.

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INTRODUCTION

One main focus of contemporary political theory has been the issue of value pluralism.¹ The basic concern is both clear and troubling: to the extent that people disagree in their moral judgments, it may be difficult or even impossible to create political institutions and rules that are acceptable to everyone. That appears to create a dilemma: either we will have to accept a very limited kind of political cooperation, restricted to those issues on which we can find common ground (as, for example, Chandran Kukathas argues²), or we will have to accept that every society will inevitably impose its institutions and rules onto some citizens who do not recognize their legitimacy and feel themselves to be both oppressed by and trapped within their polity.

While this may at first glance appear to be a problem that is internal to political liberalism, with its special concern for eliciting the willing consent of the governed and avoiding imposing nonconsensual obligations, the problem of value pluralism is a political universal. Every conception of politics has to in some way explain why some citizens reject the institutions and rules of the society, and every actual polity has to figure out how to deal with fundamental dissent, both as a practical problem and as an ethical problem.

Thinking abstractly, there are three possible responses to this problem. First, we might discount the reasons of dissidents (as mental illness, self-interest masquerading as principle, sedition, ignorance, and so on) and simply impose our institutions and rules despite their disagreement. That's certainly a possible response, and I doubt that anything I write here could change the mind of someone who was committed to such a course of action. However, my bet is that most people have seen how cynically this strategy can be used as a way to reinforce the power of elites, and thus that most readers will agree that moral arguments need moral, not just coercive, responses. Second, we might believe that at some point in the future all human beings will come to hold the same moral values, and will apply them the same way to circumstances, such that moral disagreement will no longer be a problem. (Similarly, we might believe that human beings will at some point abandon the idea/language of morality itself, which would lead to the same outcome.) Many anarchists and some Marxists (not to mention many moral philosophers) hold this view, seeing moral disagreement as ultimately the product of inequality and/or ignorance. While that position may of course ultimately turn out to be correct, it doesn't offer us any practical guidance about what to do today, and thus isn't an adequate response to

the practical problem of value pluralism. For the foreseeable future, in every existing society, the problem of value pluralism is both real and apparently inevitable. We need some acceptable, concrete, political response to it. Third and finally, we might hope that we could identify some argument (and perhaps some corresponding rules and institutions) that everyone could in fact agree with, thus overcoming the disagreement. Most of the recent work on value pluralism has pursued this strategy (as has a great deal of related work, for example that of John Rawls³).

While a handful of writers have argued that the problem of value pluralism is intractable, such that no conceivable argument or course of action could entirely resolve it,⁴ the majority of people working on this problem have sought various strategies to arrive at agreement. Many such theories are transcendental—that is, their response to plurality is based on identifying supra-human principles that do or should constrain human behavior, and that, in principle, all rational people should recognize and accept. Some of those transcendental theories seek to overcome plurality, either by showing that everyone should have the same values (Kant), that people who are different nonetheless have harmonious interests (Plato, Aristotle), or that differences are epiphenomenal, masking an underlying or ultimate unity (Hegel). Other transcendental theories seek to embrace plurality, at least to some degree. In that camp we find realist pluralists like Isaiah Berlin, with his apparent endorsement of negative liberty as the best response to the inevitability of moral disagreement,⁵ as well as John Gray,⁶ who argues that the plurality of real values means that no form of life (including the liberal preference for negative liberty) can claim preeminence.⁷

The criticisms of these transcendental theories are numerous and complex. For purposes of the present essay, I merely want to note that many people have rejected transcendental explanations of and responses to plurality, and that some of those critics have turned to immanent theories as a possible alternative. Thus, over the last 20 years, there has been a surge of interest in the idea of immanence among political theorists. Put simply, immanence is the idea that there are no transcendental principles or agents relevant to human life, and that whatever norms, institutions, or critiques we generate must be explicated and defended without reference to such transcendentals. One suggestion that has been made in recent immanence literature, and the one that I will be concerned with in this essay, is that perhaps philosophies of immanence could help us with pluralism.⁸

This paper looks at three immanence theories—from Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and William Connolly. At first glance, these thinkers might seem an odd choice for such a comparison. On the one hand, Hardt/Negri and Deleuze/Guattari were strongly influenced by each other's work. They comment extensively on each other's writings, and in the 1980s Negri and Guattari co-wrote a book called *Nouvelle espaces de liberté*, published in English as *Communists Like Us*⁹. For those reasons, it might seem that their ideas will be so similar that a comparison won't be fruitful. On the other hand, despite the fact that Connolly openly acknowledges the influence that Deleuze and Negri have had on his own work, his approach to these questions is quite different. For one thing, while Deleuze/Guattari and Negri/Hardt are all associated with Marxism understood broadly, Connolly is more typically associated with liberalism and social democracy. Similarly, Deleuze/Guattari and Hardt/Negri are working within the continental philosophical tradition, while Connolly is largely working within the Anglo-American analytic tradition (understood very broadly), though that's less true of his recent work. Finally, of all the thinkers, Connolly is the only one who has actively engaged in the largely Anglo-American debate about pluralism that this essay discusses.

Despite those potential concerns, there are several compelling reasons to examine these particular thinkers. The most significant reason is that these thinkers have been the most prominent exponents of immanence politics over the past few decades. Negri, for example, has been developing an immanence politics at least since the late 1970s, when he was writing *The Savage Anomaly*, on Spinoza's metaphysics and their relevance for politics.¹⁰ His three recent and influential books with Hardt (*Empire*, *Multitude*,¹¹ and *Commonwealth*) explicitly call for a politics based on immanence (as discussed in more detail below). Deleuze (with his frequent collaborator Guattari) is probably the person most identified with the contemporary politics of immanence, and there is a substantial literature on his approach to that issue.¹² Finally, over the past 20 years Connolly has also become a major figure in the discussion of the politics of immanence, particular with the publication of his books *Why I am Not a Secularist* and *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*.

The second major reason to compare these particular thinkers is that the significant differences in their approaches allow us to get a synoptic view of immanence politics generally. Thus, for example, in working out a politics of immanence, Deleuze/Guattari and Hardt/Negri took very different directions. Deleuze and Guattari focused on, for want of a more accurate term, ontology, articulating a way of understanding the structure

of the world and personal identity that could both explain radical difference and articulate principles for a new kind of politics. Although Hardt and Negri also examined ontology, for example in Negri's *Savage Anomaly*, which was translated into English by Hardt, their more recent work focuses on changes in the mode of production and the distribution of sovereign power—that is, on subjectivity and political possibility under current conditions. Thus the two pairs of thinkers present us with two very different approaches to justifying the politics of immanence—one rooted in ontology, and the other rooted in historical contingency. Connolly's approach is less committed to a radical restructuring of either our ideas or our institutions. He addresses the same problems, and has roughly the same general strategy of achieving cooperation, justice, and freedom through a politics of immanence, but his focus is on identifying relatively small changes (of attitude, orientation, belief, processes of maintaining the self, and so on) that could generate those results. Thus, comparing these particular thinkers allows us to investigate whether a radical change in our view of ontology or current political conditions, or contrarily a more gradual and piecemeal conception of change, could allow a politics based in immanence to adequately address the problems of value pluralism.

GENERAL PROBLEMS

It's helpful to think of immanence theories as tending towards three types or flavors, which of course blend together in different ways in any particular theory. The first tendency is towards *declaration*. Declarations are affirmative, even apodictic, claims about how the world is and what follows from that description. Spinoza's *Ethics* is a good example of this tendency—it offers a comprehensive ontology and metaphysics, along with arguments about what follows from those premises, while remaining an immanence theory by resolutely denying that there are any principles or agents in the universe other than those that emerge contingently. The second tendency is towards *description*. Descriptive theories say: here's how I think of the world; it's been helpful to me; perhaps you'll find it helpful too. Probably the best example of this tendency is Pyrrhonian skepticism, with its insistence that even its own claims cannot be known to be true, but that many people have found acting *as if* they were truly helpful.¹³ The third tendency, which is roughly in between declaration and description, is *invitation*. Invitations say: here's what I believe; I can't prove my claims definitively, but here are some elements of my beliefs that I think you are likely already to

agree with, and here are some reasons why you might come to agree with more of my beliefs after some reflection. Buddhism is a nice example of an invitation, with its initial claim that most people naturally come to see that life contains much suffering, its claim to have a method of relieving that suffering, and its emphasis on the point that each person must investigate that claim for him- or herself.¹⁴

Each tendency comes with its own characteristic problems. Declarations run into essentially the same problems as transcendental theories—making contestable assumptions, claiming more than they can prove (especially in terms of normative judgments), and hypostatizing the contingent into the necessary. At the opposite extreme, descriptions run the risk of being seen as poetry rather than philosophy. That is, to the extent that a philosophy of immanence is purely an optional perspective, one for which no truth-claims are made, it is open to the objection that while it may be of great help to its adherents, there is no reason to think that it will be widely enough adopted to be of broader social significance. Note that these problems are especially troublesome for a theory that aims to address the problem of value pluralism. For example, every philosophy rests on contestable premises, and any premise could in principle be contested. That's not a philosophical problem—without contestable assumptions no philosophy could get going in the first place. But it is a practical problem—to the extent that a philosophy rests on a larger number of contestable premises, or rests on premises that a larger number of people are in fact likely to contest, that philosophy will be less able to secure broad agreement under conditions of value pluralism. Finally, precisely because they take a midway position between declaration and description, invitations suffer from both sets of problems. When they make affirmative claims, they act like declarations. When they affirm their own contestability, they act like descriptions. Thus, at this very general level, the question is whether any immanence theory will be able to overcome these structural and logical problems to address the problem of value pluralism.

HARDT AND NEGRI

In *Empire*, *Multitude*, and the recently published *Commonwealth*,¹⁵ Hardt and Negri are explicitly attempting to articulate an immanence-based vision of politics and political change. As I argue below, I believe that their argument is largely a declaration, and that it therefore encounters some significant problems typical of that approach. In these three books, Hardt and Negri are making four main claims: (1) that the

dominant form of sovereignty is shifting from a disciplinary to a control model (Empire), whose primary focus is the production and management of subjectivities; (2) that this shift in sovereignty is one manifestation of a general shift from transcendence to immanence; (3) that this new form of sovereignty offers better opportunities for resistance and fundamental change than did the prior, nation-state system of sovereignty; (4) and that such an immanentist revolt by the multitude would result in a normatively better world than the current one.

From Nation-States to Empire

As Hardt and Negri themselves say, their primary focus is a shift in the dominant form of political sovereignty.¹⁶ This new form of rule combines political, economic, and social/cultural spheres of production, distribution and control. It is characterized by two related currents of change. On the one hand, power is being centralized, because any given locus of power is increasingly likely to have effects on several different aspects of life. Multinational corporations, for example, embody not only the traditional functions of businesses, but also in some cases aspects of political sovereignty, and even functions traditionally associated with cultural or social production. On the other hand, power is being decentralized, because no particular locus of power is capable of exercising control either extensively (over the entire globe), or intensively (over every aspect of life within its domain).

From Transcendence to Immanence

This shift from centralized and territorial nation-state to decentralized and deterritorialized Empire reflects a broader shift away from transcendence and towards immanence in all areas of life. Hardt and Negri discuss three different kinds of transcendence, all of which they believe are rapidly being abandoned. The first is the transcendence of the divine or supernatural over the human or natural.¹⁷ The second area of shift from transcendence to immanence is in the relationship of the sovereign to the people. Finally, there is a shift from transcendence to immanence in the relationship between humanity and non-human nature.

These three shifts away from transcendence add up to a general discarding of the concept. It is not simply that we are adopting immanent forms of power and control, but that we are abandoning transcendence as an idea. They write: “Not only the political transcendental but also the transcendental as such has ceased to determine measure.”¹⁸ In other

words, the very idea that we can measure or evaluate the world according to some transcendental standard has become incredible, and is rapidly being abandoned in both theory and practice.

New and Better Opportunities of Revolt

Part of what makes the development of Empire worthy of examination is that it provides *greater* opportunities for resistance and change than did the nation-state model of sovereignty.¹⁹ This is because the fundamental contradiction within Empire is not the spatial limits of capitalist expansion, but rather the inherent precariousness of a system whose stability and productivity rely on citizens being educated, independent, and creative, though never fully in control of their time, the products of their labor, or their desire to form community. They write: “Here we are thus faced with a paradox. Empire recognizes and profits from the fact that in cooperation bodies produce more and in community bodies enjoy more, but it has to obstruct and control this cooperative autonomy so as not to be destroyed by it.”²⁰ And, they predict: “The paradox is irresolvable: the more the world becomes rich, the more Empire, which is based on this wealth, must negate the conditions of the production of wealth.”²¹

Why the Immanent World of the Multitude Would be Better

Like Marx, Hardt and Negri are somewhat ambiguous about their normative commitments. At times, they appear to be making a purely descriptive claim about how the natures of power and subjectivity are changing. But it is clear, and sometimes explicit, that they believe that this great, epochal shift from transcendence to immanence is a good thing. For example, in assessing the costs and benefits of the shift to Empire, they write: “Despite recognizing [the continued existence of domination under Empire], we insist on asserting that the construction of Empire is a step forward...”²²

However, their normative endorsement of revolt against Empire, and of the shift from transcendence to immanence generally, is complex. Hardt and Negri argue that no external or transcendent standard of normative preferability is available. Their argument rests on two premises. First, because we know that subjectivity is shaped by relations of power, we can have no access to or knowledge of the pre-social nature of humanity. Because of this, we have no basis for judging that one political system or another is more consonant with human nature. The

second premise is that transcendent or metaphysical standards of value have, as a matter of fact, lost their normative force. In this sense, the general shift from transcendence to immanence is also a shift from metaphysics to ontology.

If we cannot use any external standards, how are we to evaluate the normative significance of the rise of Empire? Their answer is relatively straightforward: whatever normative criterion we use must arise immanently from within our experience of life under Empire. “*Ni dieu, ni maître, ni l’homme*—no transcendent power or measure will determine the values of our world. Value will be determined only by humanity’s own continuous innovation and creation.”²³

More positively, Hardt and Negri identify a materialist teleology that ultimately serves as their normative criterion. The heart of this teleology, the telos towards which the multitude is always striving, is two desires: autonomy and community. On the one hand, the multitude living under Empire wants to be free: “When the new disciplinary regime constructs the tendency toward a global market of labor power, it constructs also the possibility of its antithesis. It constructs the desire to escape the disciplinary regime and tendentially an undisciplined multitude of workers who want to be free.”²⁴ On the other hand, the multitude continually seeks to create community free of the interference and domination of Empire: “Outside every Enlightenment cloud or Kantian reverie, the desire of the multitude is...a common species.”²⁵

Hardt and Negri emphasize two related points about this materialist teleology: it is socially and historically constructed, and it is non-dialectical. The first point, that the teleology is constructed, is essential to its being truly immanent. The second point, that the teleology is non-dialectical, is crucial both to establish its immanent origins and to separate *Empire* from authoritarian Marxisms. Theirs is a teleology with a *direction*, but neither an *end-point* nor *necessary stages*.²⁶

The teleology rests on three assumptions, which Hardt and Negri themselves occasionally assert openly, and which begin to undermine the teleology’s ostensibly immanent origins. First, people want to be free, in the sense of having individual autonomy: “Disobedience to authority is one of the most natural and healthy acts. To us it seems completely obvious that those who are exploited will resist and—given the necessary conditions—rebel.”²⁷ Second, people want to create community: “Beyond the simple refusal, or as part of that refusal, we need also to construct a new mode of life and above all a new community. This project leads not toward the naked life of *homo tantum* [mere man] but toward *homohomo*, humanity squared, enriched by the collective

intelligence and love of the community.”²⁸ Finally, although subjectivity is partially constituted socially and historically, there are limits to the possible forms of human life; even under unfavorable conditions, people will continue to want to be free and to form community: “The teleology of the multitude is theurgical; it consists in the possibility of directing technologies and production toward its own joy and its own increase of power. The multitude has no reason to look outside its own history and its own present productive power for the means necessary to lead toward its constitution as a political subject.”²⁹ This last claim opens onto a larger one: there is no likely change in relations of power or control that could quash or destroy the multitude’s desire for freedom and community. Indeed, Hardt and Negri are silent on this issue. From their perspective, there appears to be no possibility that Empire might *win*.³⁰

The question that I want to address is whether Hardt and Negri can get from this ostensibly descriptive characterization of conditions under Empire to their normative conclusion that Empire is a step forward, without violating their immanentist commitments. Below I argue that they cannot.

General Problems and Possibilities of Immanent Normativity

The only way that we could make truly immanent normative judgments is if our normative criteria were genuinely contingent, such that they could be different under other circumstances. For example, if my society requires motorists to drive on the right side of the road, I have a real if contingent basis for normative judgment regarding someone who drives down my street on the left side. Normative judgments based on contingent principles suffer from two limitations. The first is that the judgments are limited and local—they are only relevant to the people who happen to hold the contingent principle serving as our criterion. To people outside that group, the various normative claims will appear spurious. This problem of the insistent locality of normative criteria leads to the second problem for immanent theories of judgment: there is no non-contentious way to rank conflicting or competing criteria. This problem arises for Hardt and Negri, though they do not acknowledge it. Their discussion of the changes in the process of subjection (the creation and management of subjectivities) only talks about the emerging subjectivity of the multitude, but of course there is another subjectivity that is also part of the process: that of the exploiters and managers of Empire. The exploiters must have a subjectivity that is different from that of the multitude, one for example that sees limiting autonomy and the

creation of community as acceptable, necessary, and perhaps even good. By hypothesis, this subjectivity and the normative criteria that it acknowledges have emerged immanently, through the processes that constitute Empire, just as the subjectivity of the multitude has arisen.

These two problems—the locality of immanent normative criteria and the existence of groups with incompatible and incommensurable criteria—undermine Hardt and Negri's normative project. Given that the immanent functioning of Empire produces two combating subjectivities, what basis do we have for choosing one over the other, for favoring the multitude over the exploiters? Whatever basis we end up identifying, it obviously cannot have been produced immanently within the situation, because that would merely re-pose the same question again, as one side favors the criterion and the other rejects it. Rather, any dispositive criterion must be based in some normative goal exterior—that is, transcendent—to Empire itself, such that it is capable of showing that one immanently generated perspective is normatively mistaken. Thus, on the one hand, whatever normative criteria do emerge immanently can only be applied locally and contingently (if we are committed to an immanent method of judgment), and, on the other hand, if more than one normative criterion is generated by the immanent working of the world, we will have no immanent basis for choosing among them. Hardt and Negri cannot justify their normative preference for the triumph of the multitude without appealing to some normative criterion that is at least partially independent of the situation they seek to analyze. At every turn, the insistent locality of the available normative criteria gets in the way of the aspiration to universality of the judgment.

As I suggested above, I believe that this kind of problem—claiming more than they can prove—is typical of declaration-type immanence theories. It's hard to see how any theory could successfully argue that all normative principles are local and contingent but also that some of those principles are nonetheless absolutely preferable to the others. Hardt and Negri show us the limit of this kind of immanent theorizing.

DELEUZE AND GUATTARI

Deleuze and Guattari propose a different and more sophisticated method of making immanent normative judgments, one that aspires to avoid the problem Hardt and Negri encounter, though it takes some explaining to get to it. Although this is not how Deleuze and Guattari themselves would proceed, it is easiest for me to summarize their work by presenting it as a system. Let's start with the Cosmos,³¹ which is

everything. The most basic elements/constituents of the Cosmos are flows, which are quanta of energy in motion. Deleuze famously argues that the genetic element of everything is difference,³² and that point is easy to understand at this very simple level. It doesn't make sense to attribute essence or identity to a quantum of energy, since any such statements would be so abstract as to be meaningless. But it does make sense to note differences that differentiate the quantum from other quanta (and instances of void); thus for example it makes sense to talk about a quantum occupying a particular part of three-dimensional space precisely because other quanta do not occupy that area, it makes sense to talk about a quantum having a particular frequency or wavelength because that clarifies how it might interact with other quanta from which it differs, and further it makes sense to talk about a quantum of energy moving in a direction, but only relative to other quanta (since there are no absolute directions in space).

There are countless flows, which are themselves apparently without any prior cause. As the flows interact (apparently not according to any necessity or laws), they give rise to other/different flows and also to assemblages³³ in which two or more flows enter into a more-or-less temporary, shifting, contingent relationship. There are lots of different kinds of assemblages, and it seems that matter and its various compositions are all assemblages.

Essentially the same relationship gets reproduced on (at least) three different levels—inorganic nature, organic nature, and human society. At each level, the compositions are contingent and unstable, and of course each level interacts with the other levels. Similarly, all compositions/assemblages are comprised of heterogeneous elements, so they are always open to influence from external sources, and they always contain lines of flight (tendencies or possibilities of decomposition or rearrangement). In principle all assemblages are influenced by all other assemblages (another reason that difference is constitutive—the idea of self-sufficient identity is an illusion), though in practice some influences are infinitesimal (such as the gravitational pull of distant stars).

Deleuze and Guattari talk about two different planes of the organization of matter / flows / assemblages—the plane of consistency / immanence / composition (sometimes also called the earth or the Body without Organs or matter),³⁴ and the plane of stratification (sometimes also called the strata).³⁵ It's ambiguous whether these are meant to be understood as conceptual but universal (so that every assemblage stretches between them, and they are constituted by the totality of assemblages), or whether they are merely ideal-types that indicate the

two poles of assemblage-ness (the minimum degree of interaction necessary for flows to maintain a relationship with each other, and a maximum degree of hypostatization of the assemblage as an identity).³⁶

There are two basic kinds of assemblage: molar and molecular. Molar assemblages are large scale, but are also aimed at system—at creating a comprehensive system within which particularities can be comprehended, classified, and managed. Molecular assemblages are small scale, but they are also particularistic—they are concerned with themselves, not with either subordinating other assemblages or subordinating themselves to a larger assemblage. Every assemblage has both molar and molecular aspects / tendencies, and the terms are relative—an assemblage can be molar with respect to some assemblages and molecular with respect to others. (The nation state is a good example—it's molar with respect to its own population, but molecular with respect to other nation states.)

Every assemblage can be thought of as being made of three kinds of lines or tendencies of movement. Molar lines move the assemblage towards stratification, molecular lines move the assemblage towards an emphasis on the particular, and thus towards the plane of consistency/immanence, and lines of flight move the assemblage towards dissolution, towards metamorphosing into a different assemblage. (In some places Deleuze and Guattari seem to suggest that molecular lines and lines of flight are the same. In other places, they suggest that lines of flight can only be instantiated in molecular parts of the assemblage, and thus they coincide without being identical.) In essence, there are always these three tendencies in any assemblage—towards hypostatization and domination over other assemblages, towards a focus on its own particularity, and towards dissolution and entering into new assemblages.

So, roughly, flows cohere into assemblages, which are primarily molecular. Relationships among assemblages lead to the formation of molar strata, which capture / constrain assemblages (even though of course ultimately they just are those assemblages in a particular formation). At each level, the relationships are contingent and not based on any underlying identity or necessity. Since the elements making up each assemblage / stratum are heterogeneous, the larger units always contain conflicting elements and therefore lines of flight. Thus there are constant processes of coding (forming strata), decoding (elements escaping from a stratum) and recoding (“free” elements being incorporated into a new stratum).

What is left out of this ontology is just as important as what is included: there is no god, no transcendent source of morality, and very

little by way of intrinsic natural laws (other than those that emerge contingently and are always in the process of modification). Deleuze and Guattari are explicit that this view of the world is meant to be strictly immanent, and also that their goal is provoking us to thought and reconsideration more than achieving a faithful depiction of the actual. The point of developing this unusual metaphysics is ultimately political. At the risk of simplifying too far, it seems to me that Deleuze and Guattari are fighting against two related though distinct problems. The first is the macro-level problem of the permanent war society, and the second is the universal micro-level problem of each of us being constrained into the terms of our current identities and self-understandings, and thereby having possible avenues of change blocked.

Explaining the problem of the permanent war society requires some backtracking. In analyzing the origins of the modern state, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the state as a molar organization coevolved with what they call the nomadic war machine, which is a molecular organization. The state's drive is towards capture—bringing people, land, institutions, and so on together in order to control them and to harvest surplus from them. The war machine's drive is towards maintaining smooth space—that is, towards perpetuating the molecular groupings and interactions that exist before/outside of/despite/in response to the state. They are at pains to argue that the two phenomena evolved at the same time and in response to each other, and that every human community contains some elements of both.

Although the war machine is not defined by the conduct of actual war, it is defined by hostility to molarity and the state. When the two forms come into conflict, actual war does erupt. In response to actual war, the state needs to develop its own war machine, which it can do either by incorporating an existing machine (hiring mercenaries, conscripting the previously nomadic residents of a new territory) or by creating a new one itself. If the state does not succeed in capturing a war machine, it will be destroyed by the nomads. But, and this is crucial, the motivating logics of the state and of the war machine are completely different. The state is molar while the war machine is molecular; the state seeks capture while the war machine seeks to avoid being captured; the state sees violence as subordinated to a larger goal while the war machine sees violence as a basic constituent of its identity.

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that in the contemporary world, the war machines of the various states have actually become primary over the capture functions. In a sense, the state now exists to serve the military. But, again crucially, the militaries of the various states have more in

common with each other than they do with the civilian leadership of their respective states. In this sense, we have something closer to one enormous war machine of which the various national states and militaries are merely instantiations. Increasingly, they argue, we are led by the internal logic of the war machine.³⁷

Deleuze and Guattari point out that although this domination of the worldwide war machine constitutes a line of flight from the state, it appears to be a negative line, one that leads to death rather than to new possibilities. This is consistent with their definition of fascism (adopted from Paul Virilio) as being a suicidal form of social organization, one in which violence itself is the organizing principle and goal. Implicitly, then, they fear that the world has created a system for itself that is increasingly shutting off avenues for change and leading us towards literal destruction.

Their micro-scale concern is similar to this macro-level fear. They worry that many aspects of life—from the way we conceive of philosophy, to the organization of capitalism, to psychology, linguistics, and even our conception of revolution—are encouraging us to reify and solidify our existing identities, institutions, habits, ideas, dreams, and so on, thereby shutting down avenues of connection to others (even others of very different orders, such as non-human animals, plants, etc.). The danger is both that we will deny the fact of the very real connections that tie us to everything else in the cosmos, and that in doing so we will deny ourselves countless avenues for possible development and change. Closing down those avenues of connection and change restrict our possibilities of desire, power, and freedom—all understood in Deleuze and Guattari's special uses of those terms.

Desire, power, and freedom are all different aspects of the same underlying quality of assemblages / bodies (a quality closely analogous to Spinoza's *conatus*). It helps to take another step back here, this time to cosmology again. The simplest assemblages are two different quanta of energy that become connected in some way—to simplify, let's say one is an electron and the other is a proton. When they come into interaction with one another, their relative energies get combined in whatever way they allow—in this case, the electron orbits the proton, forming a hydrogen atom. (If two electrons had come into contact with each other, they would not have been able to form a stable combination, and no assemblage would result.) That atom will come into contact with other atoms and quanta, and eventually it will become involved in larger and larger assemblages (obviously not all atoms have this experience). At each level, what determines what the assemblage does? Well, the

interactions between the assemblage's internal qualities (energy, mass, etc.) and those of the external quanta and assemblages that it comes into contact with. That's true at every level—quantum, atom, molecule, single-celled organism, tiger, human society, etc. Some assemblages can interact with a larger array of outside elements than can other assemblages, and some assemblages do so interact (and thus change) more often or easily than do others.

These three qualities—the internal energies/composition of the assemblage, the number of external elements that the assemblage can interact with, and the easy/frequency with which the assemblage does interact with outside elements (and thereby changes) correspond to desire, power, and freedom. Desire is the internal capacity or disposition to interact with external elements in certain ways, power is the relative capacity of the assemblage to interact with more or fewer external elements, and freedom is the actual frequency of those interactions and changes.³⁸ To the extent that existing avenues of connection and change are closed down, and to the extent that we are discouraged from opening up new ones, our desire is inhibited, our power is reduced, and we are less free. Deleuze and Guattari's main concern is that this is precisely what is happening today.

Their proposed solution is partial and not entirely satisfying. They argue forcefully that both smooth space and striated space (that is, both molecular assemblages and molar ones) are essential for life, and that there is no possibility of pure smoothness or pure molecularity.³⁹ Rather, what we can hope for is a constant process of seeking new connections, new avenues, new changes, of undermining existing blockages and seeking to prevent new ones. All of these processes are summed up in what Deleuze and Guattari call “becoming.”⁴⁰ There can be no final becoming, no stable state in which no further changes are either necessary or possible. Rather, becoming is a process that we can pursue but never complete. At the moment, and probably under most circumstances, becoming will be associated with moving towards the smooth and the molecular, and away from the striated and the molar. But under other circumstances, moving in the opposite direction might be how becoming is best achieved.

So, how can all of this help us with plurality? That depends in part on what kind of theory Deleuze and Guattari are putting forward. Although they are insistent that their ontology is intended to spur thinking rather than to make truth-claims (that is, that it is a description rather than a declaration), I think that we cannot entirely take them at their word. If we don't take most of the elements of their worldview as being accurate

descriptions of the actual, their conclusions make no sense. If there really is a god, if there really are transcendent moral laws, if organisms were created and have inborn natures, and so on, their conceptions of desire, power, and freedom are deeply problematic, and there's no obvious reason that we should adopt them. To get to their normative preference for becoming, we have to accept their ontology as being a more-or-less true depiction of the world. That is, we have to treat it as a declaration.

That's not necessarily a problem. Their ideas have to be based on *something*, and the details of their ontology are compelling in many places. However, as with Hardt and Negri, a problem arises about the status of their normative preferences.⁴¹ Deleuze bases his preference for becoming on the Nietzschean will to power, understood roughly as I have explained desire, power, and freedom above—as a contingent, internal quality of assemblages.⁴² As Daniel Smith puts the point: “A mode of existence can be evaluated, apart from transcendental or universal values, by the purely immanent criteria of its *power* or capacity (*puissance*), that is, by the manner in which it actively deploys its power by going to the limit of what it can do (or, on the contrary, by the manner in which it is cut off from its power to act and is reduced to impotence).”⁴³ In other words, just by their immanent, contingent, internal functioning, assemblages will always seek that course of action that (appears to) permit their becoming.

The question is whether that makes sense as a normative criterion. To see the problem, remember that we expect normative principles to be able to support two different kinds of judgments—one is about what I should prefer for myself, and the other is about what I should prefer for others. It seems obvious that Deleuze's immanent criterion of preferring becoming provides a normative principle that any subject could use to make judgments about what he/she/it preferred for him/her/itself. Faced with a choice, and assuming that Deleuze is correct about the inner motivation of assemblages, I will always choose the course of action that (appears to) permit my own becoming. But—and here we are back on very familiar ground—there is another question: Is there any reason that I must prefer (or act to support) the becoming of *others*? This is the traditional objection to hedonic theories of normative judgment. We can understand why one would prefer hedonic goods for oneself, but not why one should want those goods for others, especially when that may conflict with one getting them oneself.

It won't do to object that this way of putting the problem is defective because Deleuze and Guattari are precisely trying to undermine these kinds of hypostatized divisions between subject and object, self and

other. At any given moment, there exist certain assemblages with certain qualities (some of which are mutually contradictory); it is those assemblages that must make normative choices, or about which we other assemblages must make normative judgments. It's plausible (though far from certain) that all assemblages have an innate preference for maximizing their own becoming, which of course entails that they would change into new assemblages to some degree. But it does not follow from that premise that all assemblages have an innate preference for maximizing the becoming of the other assemblages that happen to exist in this moment of time. An assemblage currently following a molar line of flight will seek to subsume other assemblages as part of its own (perhaps misguided) conception of its own path to becoming, even if being subsumed is not consistent with those other assemblages' conceptions of the best path to their own becomings. Two assemblages will compete over limited resources that both need for their survival. Being committed to becoming doesn't mean accepting a suicidal fatalism, the view that any change is ipso facto for the good.

If every assemblage seeks its own becoming, but most or all assemblages will disregard the becoming of other assemblages when it comes into (perhaps only apparent) conflict with their own, then there is no normative principle here. We have a principle of action, but not a principle of judgment; hedonic relativism, not immanent criteria for normative evaluation.

Thus, it seems that Deleuze and Guattari are caught in two dilemmas. First, although they portray their theory as a description, it seems clear that it can only have the practical effect they hope for it if we treat it as a declaration. Thus, their theory encounters one of the typical problems of descriptions—they must either be consigned to being mere poetry, or they must abandon their nature and become descriptions. Second, the theory's normative force rests on convincing us to favor becoming, both for ourselves and for others. Yet that principle appears to be under-theorized—it is not at all clear why we should prefer the becoming of others, especially in cases where it appears to interfere with our own. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari appear to have encountered a typical problem of declaration theories, by claiming (perhaps “suggesting” is better) more than they can prove. Whereas Hardt and Negri have given us too much—a normative judgment that cannot be supported by immanent criteria—Deleuze and Guattari have given us too little: an immanent criterion that cannot support normative judgment. Neither approach is able to help us with the problems of pluralism, since neither

is able to justify any particular course of action to people whose initial normative judgments and commitments differ.

CONNOLLY

William Connolly's version of immanence is an example of an invitation theory. For purposes of analysis, we might say that Connolly's theory starts with some basic ontological commitments. Connolly identifies himself as an immanent naturalist. For him, naturalism means that there is no god or supernatural force at work in the universe. Thus he writes: "By naturalism I mean the faith that nature and human culture survive without the aid (or obstruction) of a divine force."⁴⁴ This means both that there is no god to either save or damn us, but also that there is no transcendent source of normative values or judgments that we must consult.⁴⁵ His use of immanent is slightly different from the way I have been using it so far. He argues that the universe is "unruly," and that its actions probably exceed the description of "lawlike statements."⁴⁶ Thus by immanence he means: "a world of becoming in which the existing composition of actuality is exceeded by open, energized potentialities simmering in it."⁴⁷

Connolly not only admits but celebrates the fact that these ontological or metaphysical commitments are contestable. Part of the motivation for that position is his point, made in a number of recent books including *Why I Am Not a Secularist*,⁴⁸ *Pluralism*, and *Capitalism and Christianity: American Style*, that everyone has basic commitments whose truth or necessity they cannot prove. In recent work, he refers to these basic commitments as an existential faith: "By existential faith I mean an elemental sense of the ultimate character of being."⁴⁹ And he argues that everyone has some kind of existential faith: "To be human is to be inhabited by existential faith. There is no vacuum in this domain, though there might very well be ambivalence, uncertainty, and internal plurality."⁵⁰ Connolly emphasizes that existential faiths are not merely epistemological beliefs, but are also organizations of bodily experience and habit, which exist on registers below that of discursive consciousness.⁵¹ And those faiths are deeply contestable, since they rest upon beliefs and assumptions for which there is not (and may not ever be) evidence that is overwhelmingly conclusive.

On my reading, Connolly celebrates this contestability (even of his own deepest beliefs) for a handful of related reasons. First, the contestability of existential faiths is itself an instance of the immanence of the universe, the way in which the universe is always full of more

possibilities (and actualities) than we can systematize or account for. As Nietzsche, one of Connolly's acknowledged inspirations, argues, there are only two ways to respond to this overwhelming fecundity of the universe: love or resentment. Like Nietzsche, Connolly chooses love. A second reason that Connolly embraces the contestability of immanent naturalism is because of his views on identity. As laid out most fully in his *Identity/Difference*,⁵² Connolly subscribes to the view that identity is always fashioned through differentiation and distinction. If that approach is even roughly correct, then the fact that there are others who contest my most fundamental commitments is constitutive of me as a self. From this perspective, plurality is both a problem and the condition of possibility for identity. There are no non-plural solutions to the problems of plurality. A third reason that Connolly celebrates the contestability of immanent naturalism is because he believes that the shared experience of having our most cherished beliefs challenged may itself become a basis for cooperation and respect across difference.⁵³

More generally, Connolly's approach to plurality is to seek a fair settlement among existing identities/constituencies while also remaining attuned to the possible emergence of new identities, rights, demands and needs. These two elements are what Connolly refers to as *pluralism* and *pluralization*.⁵⁴ To achieve these two goals, which are related but also in tension with one another, Connolly suggests that two sensibilities or ethics (he also calls them civic virtues) would be especially helpful: agonistic respect and critical responsiveness. In a recent formulation, he writes about agonistic respect: "An ethos of agonistic respect grows out of mutual appreciation for the ubiquity of faith to life and the inability of contending parties, to date, to demonstrate the truth of one faith over other live candidates. It grows out of reciprocal appreciation for the element of contestability in these domains. The relation is agonistic in two senses: you *absorb the agony* of having elements of your own faith called into question by others, and you *fold agonistic contestation* of others into the respect that you convey toward them."⁵⁵ If agonistic respect is about attending to existing differences, critical responsiveness is about being attuned to new ones, whose development and emergence will always necessarily be disruptive and disorienting. He writes: "Critical responsiveness takes the form of *careful listening and presumptive generosity* to constituencies struggling to move from an obscure or degraded subsistence below the field of recognition, justice, obligation, rights, or legitimacy to a place on one or more of those registers."⁵⁶

These ethics are explicitly optional—they are ways of approaching the world that Connolly believes are helpful to achieving social cooperation given conditions of both plurality and pluralization, but there is no moral imperative to adopt them, and no assurance that the experience of difference will somehow spontaneously generate them. To some extent we can draw them from existing belief systems and institutions, and to some extent we must create them for ourselves, through micropolitical techniques of self-fashioning (following Nietzsche and Foucault), through arguing for our ideals, through creating partial alliances with others with whom we have some shared beliefs, and through political struggle to enact our preferred policies. Connolly describes this difficult balancing act of simultaneously holding one's own beliefs, engaging in a respectful agonism with people who hold other beliefs, and all the while remaining open to the emergence of unforeseen new identities and beliefs, as developing a "bicameral" understanding of ourselves.⁵⁷

In contrast to this hopeful vision of what we might achieve, the great dangers are existential resentment and evil. Existential resentment—what Connolly also sometimes calls the drive for existential revenge⁵⁸—arises when the contingency of both identity and existence threatens to overwhelm us, and we respond by trying to fix identity, trying to police difference, and with resentment against a world that contains such maddening indeterminacy. When resentment reaches an extreme level, it becomes evil: "The tendency to evil within faith is this: The instances in which the faith of others incites you to anathematize it as inferior or evil can usher into being the demand to take revenge against them for the internal disturbance they sow, even if they have not otherwise limited your ability to express your faith."⁵⁹ Importantly, evil is a possibility for *every* faith, not just for those whose explicit commitments call for the curtailment of difference.

Of course, despite his willingness to openly embrace the contestability of his commitments, Connolly advocates for them forcefully. His general commitments—roughly social-democratic, radically pluralistic, ecologically-minded—have been clear from his earliest work. How exactly we get from here to there is necessarily a bit vague. Connolly emphasizes the importance of visualizing both the future we want and the interim steps we might feasibly start taking in that direction. Although the term visualization has an unfortunate New-Age connotation, Connolly's point is more Foucauldian: one of the ways in which we change ourselves to become people capable of making and sustaining a radically different kind of world is by retraining ourselves to appreciate and understand that kind of world. If that is an important

micropolitical strategy, perhaps we can move towards macropolitics by forming limited, strategic alliances with others whose ideals, creeds, or spiritualities we find congenial. As Connolly has argued about the left, these alliances would probably be both partial and temporary, but they would allow us to get some real political work done, they might open up some space for developing ties with people from whom we otherwise feel estranged, and accepting a piecemeal approach allows us to overcome the lingering and limiting assumption that we need unity above all else.⁶⁰ Eventually, these movements towards change would have to be implemented by state power, though we would of course need to remember both the contestability of these particular settlements and these particular constituencies, and we would also need to be attentive to the changing nature of political states.⁶¹ Finally, on the philosophical front, an important strategy is simply articulating and defending immanent naturalism as a realistic contender among worldviews.⁶²

Connolly acknowledges the problem of making an optional worldview useful, and offers concrete reasons to believe that others might be drawn to it. He writes:

But what could attract multiple constituencies to such an agenda? Negotiation of such an ethos of pluralism, first, honors the embedded character of faith; second, gives expression to a fugitive element of care, hospitality, or love for difference simmering in most faiths; third, secures specific faiths against persecution; and fourth, offers the best opportunity for diverse faiths to coexist without violence while supporting the civic conditions of common governance.⁶³

Further, despite acknowledging his profound debts to both Spinoza⁶⁴ and Deleuze,⁶⁵ Connolly gently criticizes both for their failure or inability to acknowledge the contestability of their philosophies. In general, he says, “no single existential faith to date, including radical immanence, has been demonstrated so convincingly that it would be foolish for any individual or congregation to deny it.”⁶⁶

As I suggested earlier in this essay, as an invitation theory, Connolly’s approach is subject to two different sets of objections. On the one hand, to the extent that he affirms substantive claims and commitments, like a declaration theory, he has to make assertions that reasonable people could contest, which thus reduces the utility of his theory as a solution to the problem of value pluralism. On the other hand, to the extent that he emphasizes the contestability of his claims and commitments, he risks

making his theory merely a description—an optional perspective on the world that only the already-likeminded would be likely to support. That approach would also limit the utility of his theory as a response to value pluralism. Thus, at least at first glance, it seems as if Connolly's theory may also demonstrate that immanence theories are not likely to be a helpful response to the problems of pluralism.

CONCLUSION

Where does all of this leave us? I suggest that we can draw three conclusions. First, descriptive immanence theories seem unlikely to succeed in resolving the problems of value pluralism, for the anticipated reason that the claims they make are so tentative that there's no strong reason to believe that they will generate agreement from those whose judgments initially disagree. Such theories avoid the obvious problem of making strong claims that will drive away people with opposing commitments, but at the expense of claiming so little that they are unable to become the basis of a new agreement.

Second, neither the theory of Hardt and Negri nor the theory of Deleuze and Guattari was able to generate an immanent criterion that could ground adequately general normative judgments. As I argued above, Hardt and Negri's theory delivered too much—it gave us a criterion that could ground normative judgments, but the criterion could not be derived from the immanence theory they provided to justify it. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari's theory delivered too little—it gave us a truly immanent criterion, but one that could not sustain the kinds of normative judgments we would need to achieve agreement under conditions of plurality. More broadly, it's hard to see how any immanence theory could avoid the horns of this dilemma. A criterion that is immanent can't justify a claim to its superiority over other criteria—since that would imply a yet superior criterion for ranking them, and that criterion's superiority would either have to be immanent, and thus contestable within that immanent framework, or universal and therefore transcendental—and therefore can't ground normative judgments that have a plausible claim to universality. Conversely and for the same reasons, it appears to be impossible to generate a universal normative judgment based on an immanent normative criterion.

Based on these first two conclusions, it seems that neither declarative nor descriptive immanence theories can help us solve the problem of value pluralism, since neither can provide a plausible basis for achieving universal agreement. Ultimately, that's not entirely surprising, since

other attempts to resolve the problems of value pluralism run into essentially the same difficulties.⁶⁷

By way of a third overall conclusion, I want to suggest that we take a closer look at Connolly's invitation theory. As I pointed out above, it initially appears to be doubly damned, since it is exposed to the problems of both descriptive and declarative theories. However, we might instead conclude that invitation theories are wily, in that they attempt to maximize agreement while minimizing disagreement. Elsewhere I have argued for "layered pluralism,"⁶⁸ which is the idea that we cannot expect to achieve universal assent either to principles or to procedures/institutions, but we may be able to achieve partial but overlapping assent or acquiescence to several different components of social stability. For example, some people might assent to (or acquiesce in) the moral values that animate the state (and some other people might assent to some but not all of those values). Some of those people, and some others, might assent to the major institutions of the political and economic system (and again, some others might assent to some but not all). Some of *those* people, and some others, might assent to the practical working out of the political system, for example to their personal, daily experiences with police officers, school teachers, bureaucrats, and so on (and again, some others might assent to some but not all of these things). Whereas someone like Rawls argues that to achieve stable cooperation we need everyone to assent to the same small number of things (fundamental values),⁶⁹ layered pluralism argues that we may be able to achieve a stable society as long as most citizens assent, most of the time, to at least some critical mass of the many things that make up the system of social cooperation.

Given the failure of both transcendental and immanence theories to propose a comprehensive solution to the problem of value pluralism—that is, a compelling reason why people should in fact agree in their moral judgments—something like layered pluralism may be the best that we can hope for: agreement where we can get it, acquiescence where we can't, and an attempt to minimize outright opposition through compromise. If it's correct that a partial, overlapping, pluralism is the best we can do, then an invitation theory like Connolly's may offer us the best path to achieving it. By making ontological and ethical claims, Connolly moves away from the purely poetic pole of description. By acknowledging the contestability of those claims, he carefully avoids the tendency of declarative theories to claim more than they can prove. By putting himself between those two extremes, Connolly has crafted a true invitation—a theory that stakes some claims, acknowledges its limits,

and points out reasons why people who initially disagree with some or all of it might nonetheless either come to agree with (some of) it, as well as reasons why cooperation might still be possible despite continued disagreement. His approach shows how immanence theories can defuse possible problems, for example by staking positive claims but acknowledging their contestability, and then using the shared pain of acknowledging the contestability of one's views as the basis for a possible experience of unity and similarity among people otherwise separated by their ideas. As Connolly himself points out, there's no guarantee that this approach will work, but his efforts to manage the problems of immanence theories suggest that his style of theorizing may stand the best chance of succeeding.

For those of us who hold out the hope that moral unanimity could eventually be achieved, perhaps under better social, economic, and political conditions, this may be a profoundly disappointing result. But that, I believe, is precisely the challenge that value pluralism poses. The fact that people disagree in their moral judgments, and that those disagreements at least some of the time appear to be rooted in conflicting moral beliefs rather than merely in error or thoughtlessness, raises the question of how we could ever achieve consensus. If we are unwilling to simply impose our views, due either to moral or prudential scruples, then we will need arguments about why people should agree with us. The extensive literature on value pluralism has attempted to identify those arguments without success. As I believe the argument above has shown, neither descriptive nor declarative immanence theories get us closer to achieving agreement. That suggests both that we should change our expectations and look to achieve something like layered pluralism, and also that an invitation theory like Connolly's offers the approach that is the most likely to maximize agreement while minimizing disagreement and leaving room for renegotiation. There is much to dislike in this solution, but that may be the nature of the world we live in.

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NOTES

¹ For a helpful if somewhat dated overview of the literature, see William A. Galston, *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

² Chandran Kukathas, *The Liberal Archipelago: A Theory of Diversity and Freedom* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³ See especially John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

⁴ See for example Matthew J. Moore, "Pluralism, Relativism, and Liberalism," *Political Research Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2009); ———, "Wittgenstein, Value Pluralism, and Politics," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 36, no. 9 (2010); Robert B. Talisse, "Can Value Pluralists be Comprehensive Liberals? Galston's Liberal Pluralism," *Contemporary Political Theory* 3(2004); ———, "Two-Faced Liberalism: John Gray's Pluralist Politics and the Reinstatement of Enlightenment Liberalism," *Critical Review* 14, no. 4 (2000); William M. Curtis, "Liberals and Pluralists: Charles Taylor vs John Gray," *Contemporary Political Theory* 6, no. 1 (2007).

⁵ See Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

⁶ See John Gray, *Post-Liberalism: Studies in Political Thought* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993); ———, *Enlightenment's Wake: politics and culture at the close of the modern age* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995); ———, "Where Pluralists and Liberals Part Company," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 6, no. 1 (1998); ———, "Pluralism and Toleration in Contemporary Political Philosophy," in *Political Ideas and Political Action*, ed. Rodney Barker (Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

⁷ A number of critics have argued that Gray tries to have his difference and overcome it too, by putting constraints on acceptable ways of life. See Talisse, "Two-Faced.", Curtis, "Liberals.", and Moore, "Pluralism, Relativism, and Liberalism."

⁸ For example, see Lars Tønder and Lasse Thomassen, eds., *Radical democracy : politics between abundance and lack*, Reappraising the political (Manchester ; New York: Manchester University Press, 2005).

⁹ Félix Guattari and Antonio Negri, *Communists Like Us: New Spaces of Liberty, New Lines of Alliance*, trans. Michael Ryan (New York: Semiotext(e), 1990).

¹⁰ Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

¹¹ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004).

¹² See for example discussions of Deleuze and his work in Giorgio Agamben and Daniel Heller-Roazen, *Potentialities : collected essays in philosophy* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999); Levi Bryant, *Difference and givenness : Deleuze's transcendental empiricism and the ontology of immanence* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2008); Miguel de Beistegui, "The vertigo of immanence: deleuze's spinozism.(TOPIC / Immanence and Transcendence)(Author Abstract)," *Research in Phenomenology* 35(2005); Manuel DeLanda, "Immanence and transcendence in the genesis of form.(A Deleuzian Century?)," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* v96, no. n3 (1997); Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari : an introduction to the politics of desire* (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 1996); Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller, *Deleuze & Guattari : new mappings in politics, philosophy, and culture* (Minneapolis:

University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Ernesto Laclau, "Can Immanence Explain Social Struggles?," *diacritics* 31, no. 4 (2001); Paul Patton, "Deleuze and Democracy," *Contemporary Political Theory* 4(2005); Paul Patton and John Protevi, *Between Deleuze and Derrida* (London ; New York: Continuum, 2003); Daniel W. Smith, "A life of pure immanence: Deleuze's "Critique et Clinique" project. (Gilles Deleuze)(Remembrance and Responsibility: Selected Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, vol. 23, From the Annual Meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy)," *Philosophy Today* v41, no. nSUPP (1997); ———, "The Place of Ethics in Deleuze's Philosophy: Three Questions of Immanence," in *Deleuze & Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, and Culture*, ed. Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Tønder and Thomassen, *Radical democracy : politics between abundance and lack*; Simon Tormey, "A 'Creative Power'?: The Uses of Deleuze, A Review Essay," *Contemporary Political Theory* 4(2005).

¹³ See Sextus Empiricus, *Selections from the Major Writings on Scepticism, Man, & God*, trans. Sanford G. Etheridge (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985).

¹⁴ See Glenn Wallis, *Basic Teachings of the Buddha* (New York: Random House, 2007).

¹⁵ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

¹⁶ ———, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2000), xii.

¹⁷ Ernesto Laclau criticizes Hardt and Negri's understanding of the history of the concept of immanence. See Laclau, "Can Immanence Explain Social Struggles?".

¹⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*: 354-55.

¹⁹ "Empire creates a greater potential for revolution than did the modern regimes of power because it presents us, alongside the machine of command, with an alternative: the set of all the exploited and the subjugated, a multitude that is directly opposed to Empire, with no mediation between them" *ibid.*, 393. Also: "And here we should add, against all moralisms and all positions of resentment and nostalgia, that this new imperial terrain provides greater possibilities for creation and liberation. The multitude, in its will to be-against and its desire for liberation, must push through Empire to come out the other side." *Ibid.*, 218.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 392.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 43.

²³ *Ibid.*, 356.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 253.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 362.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 210.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 204.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 396.

³⁰ Ernesto Laclau criticizes *Empire* for what he sees as its triumphalism. See Laclau, "Can Immanence Explain Social Struggles?".

³¹ Cf. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 326-27, 42-43.

³² See Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the Political* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), Ch.2.

³³ See Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*: 503-05.

³⁴ Ibid., 506-08.

³⁵ Ibid., 502-03.

³⁶ See the discussion of abstract machines: *ibid.*, 510-14.

³⁷ Ibid., 421.

³⁸ "both Deleuze's concept of desire and his concept of power involve an inner principle of increase. From the point of view of the affective dimension of power, this principle of increase implies that a body will be more powerful the more ways in which it can be affected, and the greater its range and degree of sensitivity to different kinds of intensive states. A body will increase in power to the extent that its capacities to affect and be affected become more developed and differentiated" Patton, *Deleuze and the Political*: 74.

³⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*: 40.

⁴⁰ "Deleuze and Guattari are not theorists of liberation but theorists of becoming-revolutionary....Becoming-revolutionary is a process open to all at any time. Moreover, its value does not depend on the success or failure of the molar redistributions to which it gives rise: 'The victory of a revolution is immanent and consists in the new bonds it installs between people, even if these bonds last no longer than the revolution's fused material and quickly give way to division and betrayal' ([*What is Philosophy?*], 177)]. Freedom is manifest in such moments of becoming-revolutionary, whether in a personal or a social sense, but this is a different concept of freedom to that which underpins liberal and liberation theories alike" Patton, *Deleuze and the Political*: 82-83.

⁴¹ Here I am largely following the interpretations of Paul Patton and Daniel Smith. See *ibid.*; Smith, "The Place of Ethics in Deleuze's Philosophy: Three Questions of Immanence."

⁴² See Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche & Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

⁴³ Smith, "The Place of Ethics in Deleuze's Philosophy: Three Questions of Immanence," 253.

⁴⁴ William E. Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American style* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 79.

⁴⁵ "Of course an immanent naturalist does not anchor morality in transcendent commands or universal laws generated by a consummate subject" Mark Wenman, "Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism: An Interview with William E. Connolly," *Contemporary Political Theory* 7(2008): 213.

⁴⁶ Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American style*: 80.

⁴⁷ Wenman, "Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism: An Interview with William E. Connolly," 213.

⁴⁸ William E. Connolly, *Why I am not a secularist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

⁴⁹ ———, *Pluralism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 25.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 26.

⁵¹ "An existential faith does find expression on the epistemic field of doctrine and belief, but its intensities extend below that field as well. It thus has a *horizontal dimension*, in that its beliefs about such issues as divinity, morality, and salvation are professed and refined through comparison to alternative beliefs advanced by others. And it has a *vertical dimension*, in that the doctrinal element is confessed and enacted in ways that express embodied feelings, habits of judgment, and patterns of conduct below direct intellectual control" *ibid.*, 25.

⁵² ———, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991).

⁵³ “My view, to put it briefly, is that the most noble response is to seek to transmute cultural antagonisms between transcendence and immanence into debates marked by agonistic respect between the partisans, with each set acknowledging that its highest and most entrenched faith is legitimately contestable by the others....The pursuit of such an ethos is grounded in the assumption that residing *between* a fundamental image of the world as either created or uncreated and a specific ethico-political stance resides a *sensibility* that colors how that creed is expressed and portrayed to others” ———, *Pluralism*: 47.

⁵⁴ See ———, *The Ethos of Pluralization*, Borderlines (Minneapolis and London: University of MN Press, 1995).

⁵⁵ ———, *Pluralism*: 123-24.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2-5.

⁵⁸ For example, ———, “Wolin, Superpower, and Christianity,” *Theory and Event* 10, no. 1 (2007).

⁵⁹ ———, *Pluralism*: 27.

⁶⁰ Thus: “Each orientation on the Left, in my fantasy world, would articulate comparatively its political focus and priorities, as well as its theoretical and metaphysical perspectives. These differences, and the numerous relays between them, would be contested actively in a variety of forums. The contending parties might move each other in one way or another. But amid the swirl of these differences, they would also enter into selective coalitions on specific political issues” ———, “Assembling the Left,” *Boundary 2* 26, no. 3 (1999): 48.

⁶¹ See Connolly’s discussion of anarchism and the changing nature of states in ———, “The Power of Assemblages and the Fragility of Things,” *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 10, no. 2 (2008). See also: “My view...is that no interim agenda on the left can proceed far without finding expression in state policy, and state policy must draw inspiration from microeconomic experiments initially launched outside its canopy...” ———, *Capitalism and Christianity, American style*: 112-13.

⁶² “I seek to render immanent naturalism as credible as possible, so that it can compete actively with the theo-philosophies currently circulating in public life. Immanent naturalism breaks with mechanical and eliminative modes of naturalism. It differs from the former by investing more vitality and volatility into the basic constituents of the world....It breaks with the latter by treating consciousness, ethical judgment, and artistic achievement as refined emergents in a universe of immanence” Wenman, “Agonism, Pluralism, and Contemporary Capitalism: An Interview with William E. Connolly,” 212.

⁶³ Connolly, *Pluralism*: 64-65.

⁶⁴ About Spinoza, Connolly writes: “What if Spinoza...had confessed *faith* in a correspondence between geometry and the structure of the world? What if he had asserted that he could offer impressive evidence and arguments in support of his faith, but that he was not yet in a position to inform those invested with Christian or Jewish faiths that they were surely mistaken on the most critical points? If so, he and others of similar belief might still have been anathematized by many Christians and Jews of that day, including prominent Cartesian philosophers, physicists, and mathematicians. *But he might have opened a window to future negotiation of a different kind of relation between devout partisans of disparate faiths and philosophies....*Spinoza would thus have taken a giant step toward combating the problems of evil within faith” *ibid.*, 24-25. See also *ibid.*,

45. and ———, "The Radical Enlightenment: Faith, Power, Theory," *Theory and Event* 7, no. 3 (2004): n.p.

⁶⁵ About Deleuze, Connolly writes: "Daniel Smith presented a thoughtful essay on 'Deleuze and Immanence' at a conference on Deleuze at Trent University in 2004. Deleuze, he says, constructs transcendental arguments to secure the superiority of a philosophy of immanence over that of transcendence. There is something to be said for Smith's account. At least, one does not find in Deleuze those focal points in [William] James, at which he expresses his philosophy of transcendence and then acknowledges it to be profoundly contestable" ———, *Capitalism and Christianity, American style*: 131. Also: "But unlike...perhaps Deleuze...I doubt that any set of considerations is apt to make my philosophy/faith so airtight that it must be incorrect (or heretical) for others to affirm a different faith" *ibid.*, 132-33.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁶⁷ See note 4.

⁶⁸ See Moore, "Pluralism, Relativism, and Liberalism." Connolly articulates a related concept, which he calls "multidimensional pluralism" in William E. Connolly, *Pluralism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 9. At one point Connolly actually uses the term "layered pluralism" in passing, though he does not develop it. See William E. Connolly, *Neuropolitics : thinking, culture, speed* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 44.5.

⁶⁹ See Rawls, *Political Liberalism*.