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Hate, Loathing and Political Theory: Thinking With and Against William Connolly

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Emotion and affect clearly play a role in politics.[1] For many contemporary political theorists, particularly liberal and deliberative types, they actively hamper it. As Michael Walzer puts it, where '[i]nterests can be negotiated, principles can be debated, and negotiations and debates are political processes', containing the behaviour of those involved in politics, 'passion, on this view, knows no limits, [it] sweeps all before it'. It is 'impetuous, unmediated, all-or-nothing' (Walzer 2004: 110-11). It leads (ostensibly) to violence, conflict and war.

Refreshingly, William Connolly offers a different take on the connections between emotion and political values, judgments and actions (see also Krause, 2006). Specifically, his aim is to demonstrate how affect-imbued ideas (might) help to nurture the ethos of generosity he is seeking to affirm. He is thus concerned with how emotion and affect actively contribute towards the development of a particular normative project, rather than hindering it. As will become clear, Connolly's point is not, however, that affectivity and emotion serve simply as auxiliaries to a rationally derived ethos, the 'glue' binding us to our political values and judgements. They are, rather, constitutive elements in the generation, nurturance and consolidation of that very ethos.[2]

Just as Connolly claims to think both with and against Nietzsche in articulating his own theory, so in this chapter my goal is to think both with and against Connolly in examining the relation between politics and affect.[3] Thinking with Connolly, I will deploy several of his insights into the layering of culture, the brain/body/culture network, the relation between ideationality and affect, and the link between

micropolitics and techniques of the self. Thinking against him, however, I use these insights not to understand how a democratic ethos might be cultivated (which is Connolly's goal) but to understand how it might be hampered through the production of certain bodies as worthless or hateful. My interest, therefore, is in the conditions of possibility underpinning Connolly's pluralist project and, in particular, the opposition he establishes between resentment and (the ethos of) generosity, an opposition I seek to trouble. For if, as Connolly surmises, generosity is the necessary condition for the generation of a democratic ethos, then what happens to those bodies and subjects for whom such generosity is difficult, if not impossible? Do they cease to be democratic subjects? In response, I will suggest, that rather than generosity being a precondition of democratic engagement for such persons, it may be precisely resentment that enables them to act, resentment at being, what Judith Butler calls, 'unintelligible' (2004a, 2004b; see also Lloyd 2007, Ch. 6).[4] In short, I seek to worry away at the link between ethics and democracy implied by Connolly's work.

Against Connolly I will contend, therefore, that the relation between generosity and resentment is more ambivalent, unpredictable and multifaceted – more undecidable, in Derridean terms – than he generally allows. To illustrate my argument, I explore the work of African American feminist author and activist Audre Lorde. I focus here on the role of affect in the process of cultural corporealization and on the racializing norms that constitute both the body politic and the fleshy bodies that populate it. To begin with, however, I offer a brief exegesis of Connolly's argument in *Neuropolitics*, the text I concentrate on in this chapter.

Affect-imbued thinking made flesh

Neuropolitics is an impressive and wide-ranging work. In it, Connolly explores the role of neuroscience, cinematic technique and philosophy, amongst other things, in

understanding the relations between the brain, body and culture, and their role in the cultivation of an ethos of generosity. By blending together insights drawn from all three realms, Connolly is able to articulate an account of thinking that is distinct, in his own words, 'from the Kantian model of command through the Habermasian model of deliberative ethics and the Rawlsian model of justice, to the Taylorite model of attunement to a higher purpose in being' (2002a: 85). What these accounts share is an understanding of thinking as a rational process. By contrast, what Connolly proposes is that thinking should be apprehended as *both* cognitive *and* affective. Not only that, but it ought also to be recognised as both somatic and culturally variable. (Indeed, as he writes elsewhere, the body is 'simultaneously the text upon which the script of society is written and the fugitive sources from which spring desires, resistances and thought exceeding that script' (1995: 12).) As noted above, to make his case he draws on a range of different disciplines.

From neuroscientific studies of brain/body processes, Connolly takes the idea that thinking has a layered character, where culture is mixed with affect, nature with judgment, and where pre-cognitive memory traces and somatic habits are folded into perception. In short, mind and body are 'intrinsically connected' (Connolly 2006: 72). Studying film allows for confirmation of this interconnectivity. Cinematic techniques, such as flashbacks, non-linear chronology, dream sequences in vivid colours or the use of dissonant sounds, 'communicate affective energies to us' (2002a: 13) that alter our bodies, structure our perceptions and impact on us in a number of ways before rational or conscious processing kicks in. This, Connolly concludes, exposes 'the complex relays [that exist] among affect, thinking, techniques and ethics'. Potentially, film can also 'teach us how to apply pertinent techniques to ourselves' (Connolly 2002a: 2). Finally, Connolly turns to philosophy, and specifically the philosophy of Spinoza.

It is Spinoza's idea that mind and body are 'two aspects' (viz., thought and extension) of the same substance that Connolly fixes on (Connolly 2002a: 7; see Spinoza 1955: 86). For it suggests that because mind and reason are so indelibly tied to materiality and affect that 'each change of the body is matched by a parallel change of mind (and vice versa), even though neither body nor mind can be understood through the concepts appropriate to the other' (Connolly 2006: 68). The implication of this for ethics and politics is clear to Connolly: concentrating on expanding the opportunities for rational deliberation will never be enough. It is also necessary to engage affective and corporeal capacities because they too can change habitual patterns of thought and of (political and ethical) judgement (2006: 68).[5] 'Sometimes', he writes in 'Confessing Identity/Belonging to Difference' (the introductory essay produced for the 2002 edition of his 1991 book *Identity/Difference*), 'it is wise to work tactically on the visceral register of identity, on thought-imbued feelings of attachment, faith, disgust, shame, ambivalence, love or disdain that influence action and judgment but fall below direct intellectual regulation' (2002b, xviii) because what happens in the visceral register impacts on the cognitive.

> To work on an established sensibility by tactical means, then, is to nudge the composition of some layers in relation to others... You do so to encourage the effects of action upon one register to filter into the experience and imagination available on others, thereby working tactically upon a dense sensibility whose layered composition is partly receptive to direct argument and deliberation, partly receptive to tactics that extend beyond the reach of argument, and partly resistant to both (Connolly 2002a: 107).

Connolly is distinct from other contemporary theorists. He is not interested in thought or speech *per se.* His focus is 'the sensibilities and intensities that inform the communicative material *for* thought' (Williams, 2007: 351) and the role these play in

ethical and political engagement. Or, rather, the role they play in nurturing an ethos of generosity.

Central to Connolly's discussion are the two terms that interest me in this chapter, that is, resentment and generosity; terms that he sets in opposition to one another. His affirmative project involves the articulation of an ethos suited to a context of deep pluralism; a democratic ethos open to difference. In *Identity/Difference*, he examines how identities may become entrenched and how because identities are formed in relation to difference there is always the possibility that those differences will be denigrated, marginalised, and/or excluded. In cases like these, difference is converted into otherness. This is most likely to happen when tendencies to fundamentalization reign (Connolly 1995: xxi). What is to be done?

According to Connolly, a way needs to be found increasingly blend presumptive generosity for the 'plurivocity of being' (2002b: xx) into ethical and political life. To nourish generosity (towards difference), he argues that existential resentment must be starved. For it is existential resentment, as he sees it, that leads us to treat those from whom we differ as a threat both to us and to our way of life; as requiring – perhaps, deserving – suppression, conquest, or elimination; as being unworthy of our friendship, assistance, sympathy or grief; and even as being to blame for all that is amiss in our lives (our failings, the injustices we suffer, and so on). Resentment, he surmises in post-Nietzschean vein, translates into a desire for revenge, a retaliatory orientation towards alterity, and an obdurate refusal to admit the uncanny. Generosity, by contrast, is sustained by 'an attachment to the abundance of life' (Connolly 2002b: xxi), by its responsiveness to that which exceeds established conventions, and by a capacity to embrace the *new* – new 'beings, identities, and cultural movements [that] surge into being' or new words and phrases that bubble up 'from a virtual register hard at work below the threshold of feeling and intellectual

attention' (Connolly 2002a: 55, 75).[6] In short, generosity is a positive resource for
ethics and politics but resentment (expressed through negative affects) is not. So, the
main aim of Connolly's work is to find ways in which generosity can be nurtured –
and, by implication, ways in which resentment can be converted into generosity.

For Connolly, this entails a doubled practice of ethical experimentation. The first form
of experimentation Connolly refers to (echoing Foucault) as 'relational techniques of
the self': 'the choreographed mixtures of word, gesture, image, sound, rhythm, smell,
and touch that help to define the sensibility in which your perception, thinking,
identity, beliefs, and judgment are set' (Connolly 2002a: 20). The second form
involves what he terms 'micropolitics', that is relational techniques 'organized and
deployed *collectively* by professional associations, mass-media talk shows, TV and
film dramas, military training, work processes, neighbourhood gangs, church
meetings, school assemblies, sports events, charitable organizations, commercial
advertising, child rearing, judicial practice and police routines', one of the 'critical
functions' of which is to organize 'attachments, consumption possibilities, work
routines, faith practices, child rearing, education, investment, security, and
punishment (Connolly 2002a: 20-21, my emphasis).

Arts of the self and micropolitics are not entirely distinct. They are rather 'two sides of
the same coin' (Connolly 1999: 148), operating '"in-between"' – in between subliminal
attachments and consciously-held beliefs; emerging groups demanding rights and
existing groups resisting them; and one set of ideals and another. Techniques feed
into micropolitics and micropolitics impacts on techniques. Cultivating an ethos of
generosity is not an exclusively solitary endeavour. It also necessitates what
Connolly (paraphrasing Deleuze) calls the 'cultural collectivization and politicization
of arts of the self' (2002a: 108). Work on the self is required in order to tend one's
ethical sensibility in relation to others. This newly tended sensibility is then brought to

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bear on micropolitical relations, serving to reconfigure them in a more open and responsive direction (see also Connolly 1999: chapter 6 for a fuller discussion of the political implications of this ethos). There is thus a dynamic relation between the two.

As Connolly has it, the lifeblood of a *democratic politics of becoming* is 'presumptive generosity' and arts of the self plus micropolitics are the means by it is folded into the visceral register of being *and* into the public ethos of political life (Connolly 2002a: 137). This is where I want to press Connolly's argument further from a democratic perspective. As he acknowledges, there is nothing in the affective or infrasensible dimensions of thinking *per se* that necessarily produces a stance of generosity towards the other. Indeed, the converse is entirely possible as he observes in *Why I Am Not A Secularist*, when he notes that the 'visceral register' may act 'to harden strife between partisans' (Connolly 1999: 3).[7] The links that are formed between 'practices of memory, perception, thinking, judgement, institutional design, and political ethos' (Connolly 2002a: 21) may well work to nurture resentment rather than to support a generous ethical stance. In fact, I would surmise, they might do more than this: they might also nourish and sustain forms of subordination through their recycling of norms of possibility and thence also of impossibility (see Butler 2004a: 31).

To illustrate what I mean by this, in the next section of this chapter, I explore how race hatred is produced and supported by the circulation and transfer of affect, a circulation and transfer that I argue constitutes certain bodies as hated and as hateful. My focus here is on an essay written by Audre Lorde, entitled 'Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger' (1984a: 145-75), originally published in 1983. I have three purposes in reading Lorde's work with and against Connolly's: to show that the relation between resentment and generosity is more complex than Connolly assumes; to raise questions about the conditions of possibility for cultivating

generosity, including who might be considered culturally capable of the democratic work Connolly describes; and, finally, to suggest that democratic struggle also involves a struggle with norms, and specifically with the social and cultural norms that render some persons unintelligible.

Race-hate and the construction of loathsome bodies

As the title of Lorde's essay suggests her topic is the anger of Black women – or, rather, her own anger as a Black woman. It is not her anger against the white racist culture that has produced her as an object of resentment that concerns her primarily, though she is certainly vexed by this, though this certainly underpins other essays in the volume from which 'Eye to Eye' comes. It is the anger she feels in her interactions with other Black women.

In order to work on this anger, Lorde has first to attend to the suffering she continues to feel as a result of 'unmetabolized pain', as she calls it. Pain, that is, that has not yet been 'recognized [or] named' and that thus cannot be 'transformed into something else' (1984a: 171). As part of her attempt to metabolize that pain, Lorde works over a series of prior experiences concerning her treatment at the hands of white Americans. She offers six anecdotes, the first of which I will consider in this paper. It relates to the five year old Audre.

> The AA subway to Harlem. I clutch my mother's sleeve, her arms full of shopping bags, christmas-heavy. The wet smell of winter clothes, the train's lurching. My mother spots an almost seat, pushes my little snowsuited body down. On one side of me a man reading a paper. On the other, a woman in a fur hat staring at me. Her mouth twitches as she stares and then her gaze drops down, pulling mine with it. Her leather-gloved hand plucks at the line where my new blue snowpants and her sleek fur coat meet. She jerks her coat

closer to her. I look. I do not see whatever terrible thing she is seeing on the seat between us – probably a roach. But she has communicated her horror to me. It must be something very bad from the way she's looking, so I pull my snowsuit closer to me away from it, too. When I look up the woman is still staring at me, her nose holes and eyes huge. And suddenly I realize there is nothing crawling up the seat between us; it is me she doesn't want her coat to touch. The fur brushes my face as she stands with a shudder and holds on to a strap in the speeding train. Born and bred a New York City child, I quickly slide over to make room for my mother to sit down. No word has been spoken. I'm afraid to say anything to my mother because I don't know what I've done. I look at the sides of my snowpants, secretly. Is there something on them? Something's going on here I do not understand, but I will never forget it. Her eyes. The flared nostrils. The hate (Lorde 1984a: 147-8).[8]

The origin of the noun, 'emotion', is Latin [from *è - movè - re* (*è* - out + *movè - re* to move)]. It is a noun of action. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives one of its obsolete forms as 'A moving out, migration, transference from one place to another'. What Lorde bears witness to in her testimony is of precisely this: of something – emotion, affect, it is not yet clear – moving out, migrating, transferring from the ageless fur-coated body of the white woman to the confused, uncomprehending child. As her nostrils flare, mouth twitches, huge eyes stare, hand 'jerks' pulling her coat closer to her and body shudders on standing to hold the rail strap, wordlessly, the corpus of the woman symptomatically expresses a set of 'thought-imbued energies' (Connolly 2002a: 76) that pass to the child, conveying *hatred*, hatred of her small black body. It is, as the older Audre comments, the young Audre's flesh, her skin, that has exposed her to the woman's affect-imbued gaze. It is her body – her black body – that has made her vulnerable to this affective transfer (Butler, 2004a: 21; 2004b: 26).

Affect, as Connolly observes, is contagious; it infects as it 'flows *across* bodies' (2002a: 75).[9] This infectiousness interests me. For the affect that passes between the bodies of woman and child, passes not between two pre-constituted bodies, I propose, rather as it passes it *produces* one of those bodies, on Lorde's telling, as a hated body, a hateful black body. The affect exhibited by the woman expresses, in other words, a racially freighted and culturally encoded emotion, race-hatred, that infects the child. Or so Lorde believes. Even though the five-year old Audre cannot initially 'name' the hatred she sees in the woman's eyes, she sees it nevertheless.[10] Her flesh is shaped by it. The hatred corporealizes her. Furthermore, Lorde's body, the 'porous boundary' always already given over to the other (Butler 2004b: 134-5), is at that moment inserted into an economy of hate where it is produced (and ultimately reproduced) and circulates as a pollutant, an impurity, a 'bad' body (as Lorde describes her fleshly self). It is made into a corpus that cannot be allowed to 'touch' the 'pure' white body of the woman seated next to her. And, of course, to guarantee this non-touching – indeed to negate the possibility of touch – the woman herself stands up. She literally moves away from the child. The space of the subway train becomes an affectively-imbued space, a politicized space.[11] At this moment, difference, following Connolly we might say, is transformed into otherness, a denigrated, devalued otherness.

Taken together with the five other equally distressing stories Lorde tells of her meetings with white Americans, we see how her fleshy body is reiteratively invested with emotional value, a value that performatively shapes it as a body – a repulsive body, a "Black" woman's body, a body 'steeped in hatred' (Lorde 1984a: 146). It becomes a body, to borrow from Connolly, that 'by the very visibility of its mode of *being* as other' (2002b: 66) is produced again and again within this racialized economy of hate as an existential threat.[12] Racist culture is thus corporealized

through the movement of affect between two (or more) racially marked bodies, a movement reinscribing that marking as it flows between them. It is this flow of affect at a micropolitical level, I suggest, that shores up racial resentment and bolsters racial hierarchies. Hatred and loathing are not independent of or separate from the culture of racism; they are layered into it, both its visceral products and its mainstays. They are one of the dispositional anchors feeding off, yet nourishing that culture, encoded in, to borrow from Connolly's borrowing from Foucault, the 'symbolic systems' and 'real practices' that normalize, regulate and discipline the fleshy bodies of those performativity constituted as inferior, not-good-enough, as Black and female (1995: 195).

It is where Lorde goes next in her discussion of race-hatred that is telling. She reveals how the hatred and contempt that circulate through the affective economy of racism are deeply, perniciously, contagious contaminating not just relations between Black women and the white Americans they meet but also *the relations between Black women*. 'Every Black woman in America', Lorde writes, 'lives her life somewhat along a wide curve of ancient and unexpressed angers'. Since '[o]ther Black women are not the root cause nor the source of that pool of anger', she wonders 'why does that anger unleash itself most tellingly against another Black woman at the least excuse?'. 'Why', she asks, 'do I judge her in a more critical light than any other, becoming enraged when she does not measure up?' (Lorde 1984a: 145). Her answer, cruelly truncated for the purposes of this paper, is that her rage is an effect of internalizing racism's visceral register. The hatred exhibited towards her, becomes a hatred she turns against herself; the body that is hated by others becomes a body she hates; the loathing others exhibit towards her becomes a loathing directed against her self. The circulation of hate – with its emotionalization of the black body and its corporealization of culture – does not stop there, however. It pulses though

the affective economy of racism 'organizing attachments' (Connolly 2002a: 21), *affect*ing judgements and actions, (and to paraphrase Connolly [2002a: 19]) recoiling back on Lorde as it sets emotional barriers between not only her and white Americans but also between her and other Black women – her sisters, her mother, her daughter, her friends, anonymous Black women she encounters in libraries.

The passage of corporealized emotion that scores Lorde's encounter with the white woman on the train continues its movement on and through the social body she traverses marking her corporeo-emotional encounters with the Black women she meets there.

> For if I take the white world's estimation of me as Black-woman-synonymous-with-garbage to heart, then deep down inside myself I will always believe that I am truly good for nothing. But it is very hard to look absorbed hatred in the face. *It is easier to see you as good for nothing because you are like me*. So when you support me because you are like me, that merely confirms that you are nothing too, just like me. It's a no-win position, a case of nothing supporting nothing and someone's gonna have to pay for that one, and it sure ain't gonna be me!' (Lorde 1984a: 168-9, my emphasis).

Lorde's struggle suggests that the 'entanglements of identity with difference' that Connolly sees, in *The Ethos of Pluralization*, as central to the 'rage against difference' (1995: xvii) might operate in different ways than he usually acknowledges. As Lorde's essay attests it is not those whose identity differs from hers whom she resents, it is those with whom she shares an identity – Black women.[13] The norms that define Lorde as other – as less-than – generate, I would suggests, the optic through which she views those like her. They colour her 'visceral habits of perception' (Connolly 2002a: 47), conditioning her affective response to other Black women.[14]

So her aim in this essay is to consider ways to stop metabolizing the hatred that has become 'like daily bread' to her, that she has 'learned to live upon' (Lorde 1984a: 152, 156), because the by-product of that metabolization is rage, rage against her 'sisters'.

How, though, in a context like that described by Lorde, can the abundance of life be embraced by someone who is taken by others and who takes themselves to incarnate lack (lack of humanity, lack of reason, lack of goodness etc.), someone who 'count[s] for less than nothing' (Lorde, 1984a: 159)? How is it possible for them to practise presumptive generosity towards others when their entire body and being is branded as hateful and loathsome both by themselves and by others? Lorde appears to concur with Connolly that working on the self is not just possible for those like her but also vital for them.[15] This, however, has less to do with the articulation of an appropriate democratic ethos capable of embracing and facilitating the difference constitutive of pluralism (Connolly's project). It has rather to do with survival – psychic, social, personal. The reason for this is because the norms defining Lorde are ones that produce her as less-than, as 'never-good-enough' (Lorde 1984a: 170). When she, as a Black American, expresses emotion she is told: 'SO WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, ANYWAY? DON'T BE SO SENSITIVE!' (Lorde 1984a: 148), because within the prevailing racialized world she inhabits, Black subjects are posited as over-emotional, even as saturated with emotion.

The stakes in engaging with her emotions are, therefore, distinct from those typically envisaged by Connolly. As she writes:

in america (*sic*) white people, by and large, have more time and space to afford the luxury of scrutinizing their emotions. Black people in this country have always had to attend closely to the hard and continuous work of survival in the most

material and immediate planes. But it is a temptation to move from this fact to the belief that Black people do not need to examine our feelings; or that they are unimportant, *since they have so often been used to stereotype and infantilize us*; or that these feelings are not vital to our survival; or, worse, that there is some acquired virtue in not feeling them deeply. That is carrying a timebomb wired to our emotions (Lorde 1984a: 171 my emphasis).

In demanding the right to work on her emotions, Lorde is, in effect, challenging particular norms of possibility.

Let me explain. The issue as I see it concerns what Butler has called 'liveability' or, more recently, 'survivability': that is, 'the ability to live and breathe and move' (2004a: 31). For Butler the ability to live a liveable life is implicitly tied to the norm of possibility: the existence, in other words, of norms by which particular persons can be recognized as fully human. This is tied in turn to the idea that to be a subject is to be intelligible. As Butler writes in *The Psychic Life of Power*, the subject is 'the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility, the linguistic occasion of its existence and agency' (1997: 11). The norms governing intelligibility determine who counts – who or 'what will and will not appear within the domain of the social' (2004a: 42). The survival of any subject depends, therefore, on their intelligibility – their approximation to the norm. Those outside or beyond the norm are by contrast unintelligible – '"impossible", illegible, unrealizable, unreal and illegitimate' (Butler 1999: viii). They are, in effect, non-existent as subjects.

It is these norms of possibility that Lorde, in my view, is contesting when she argues that Black women must attend to their emotions. This is because Black women's emotions have been construed historically as unimportant, infantile or as excessive. Rather than assuming that ethical responsiveness is open to (almost) all as Connolly

contends, Lorde demonstrates how racialising norms work restrictively to underwrite who is capable of ethical work on themselves. To date, in America, for Lorde this has meant white people not Black.

To be fair, Connolly himself notes that 'There is no cosmic guarantee that such a sensibility must find a foothold in everyone. Having a relatively fortunate childhood helps' (2002a: 197). Those on whom the 'contingencies of life press ... hard' (Connolly 1999: 201n. 11) may struggle to find space to work on themselves. He even goes as far as to note that 'in a highly stratified society many individuals and constituencies are in an unfavourable position to pursue such experimentation', though he then qualifies this by noting '[t]his latter fact, however, can easily be exaggerated' (Connolly 1999: 149-50). But he then follows on from this by suggesting that because of stratification the onus increases on those 'who do find themselves in a favorable position' to cultivate a more generous sensibility towards others (Connolly 1999: 150). Hence his focus on attempting to suggest practices through which 'We pluralists' (Connolly 1995: xix) can engage with others (a perpetually renewable 'them') in a less stingy and more civil fashion. What he does not do is consider how those in a less favourable position, those who are culturally unintelligible and unreal, might be able to engage democratically.

In the final section of this chapter, therefore, I want to reflect on the implications for democratic engagement of Connolly's construction of democracy as an ethos (see also Vázquez-Arroyo, 2004).

Democratic engagement for the unintelligible

One of the tensions Connolly discusses in his work is that between pluralism and pluralization. His attempt to rework the 'pluralist imagination' is precisely an attempt to explore the tension between these two impulses (1995). He seeks a way to

negotiate, that is, the way that the pre-existing 'culture of pluralism' acts both as a resource for pluralization (the emergence of new modes of difference) and also as a limitation on those new drives. So, as we have seen, he advocates an ethos of critical responsiveness as a means to remain open – or, perhaps more accurately to become open – to these 'contemporary movements of pluralization' (Connolly 1995: xiv-xv). His focus is thus on how to react positively to the emergence of new political movements challenging the status quo. This is where generosity fits. Connolly presents it as the most appropriate ethical response to democratic movements; part of what he terms 'agonistic democracy' (1991). There is certainly much that is laudable in this endeavour. I worry, however, that it also risks rendering those such as Lorde unintelligible as democratic subjects.

When generosity is figured as the norm governing democratic engagement then those who are ungenerous or resentful are, in effect, posited as outside that norm. As such, they are figured as impossible and illegible as democratic subjects. This adjudication depends, on course, on the idea that *to be an agonistic democrat is to embrace an ethos of generosity.* To allow that agonistic democracy involves more than presumptive generosity, we clearly need to consider how those like Lorde who are both resentful and normatively unintelligible might be able to make demands. We need to think about how they can act democratically. I want to suggest that one way they might do so is by mobilizing their resentment and their unintelligibility, both of which involve struggling with the norms that define who counts.

Democracy is conventionally concerned with how excluded groups have striven to transform their lot in life. One way of characterizing this is to conceive of democracy in terms of the performative constitution and reconstitution of the *demos.* The people – *demos* – (the democratic 'we') is produced when the excluded demand to be acknowledged. They might lay claim to a right, for instance, or an ontology, from

which they have been constitutively excluded. As Jacques Rancière formulates, at this moment 'those who have no right to be counted ... make themselves of some account' (1999: 27). It is when the unintelligible, those who fail to figure in the political realm as fully human, declare a wrong (to borrow from Rancière) that the people (*qua* democratic subject) are produced. The effect, as Judith Butler observes, is that 'an invocation that has no prior legitimacy can have the effect of challenging existing forms of legitimacy', clearing the way for new, more universal, form (1997:147). Arguably, marshalling resentment in the form, say, of anger at injustice or inequality – rather than generosity – will be necessary to galvanize such declarations of wrong. Moreover, their effect may be to heighten conflict by exposing the contingency of the social order – by revealing 'the presence of two worlds in one' (Rancière 2001: 21).

This, I want to suggest, is what happens with Lorde. Her Black body renders her unintelligible in a 'white' world – this is why she hates and loathes it and other bodies like it. Her resentment towards herself and others like her gives rise to her demand to have her emotions recognized as *human* emotions, as legitimate emotions, and thus to her challenge to the terms that define her as 'never-good-enough'. While her aim *vis-à-vis* other Black women might be to seek to transform those emotions into more generous ones towards them, there is a second dimension to this process. In seeking to love herself and those like her, Lorde is simultaneously contesting the (white) norms of intelligibility governing the social world she inhabits. As she comments in another essay in *Sister Outsider*, 'My anger is a response to racist attitudes and to the actions and presumptions that arise out of these attitudes'; it is an 'anger of exclusion, of unquestioned privilege, of racial distortions, of silence, ill-use, stereotyping, defensiveness, misnaming, betrayal and co-optation' (Lorde 1984b: 124). 'Focused with precision', however, anger 'can become a powerful source of energy serving process and *change*' (Lorde 1984b: 127, my emphasis). In fact,

anger, as Lorde understands it, in declaring a wrong can lead to a fundamental shift in 'those assumptions underlining our lives' (1984b: 127).[16] Through the expression of this anger (or resentment, in Connolly's lexicon), Lorde as a person of no account petitions to count and, in so-doing, her act is a *democratic* act, and potentially a radically transformative one at that because it seeks to reconfigure the norms defining the terms of liveability, of survivability.

Conclusion

Convinced that politics cannot purge itself of affect or emotion or conceive of thinking as a purely cognitive process, in this paper I have endeavoured to understand what it is that emotions and affects do politically and how they do it. Thinking with Connolly, I have suggested they configure bodies and inter-corporeal relations. In the case described by Lorde their movement from one sensuous being to another acts as a mechanism of subordination. In the circulation of hatred and loathing, as I showed earlier, hatred becomes self-hatred and loathing becomes self-loathing. Self-identification is filtered through the other, layered into the flesh, incarnated in somatic dispositions towards others, remembered in conscious thought and at levels subsisting below it.

Where Connolly has sought to show how affect and emotion might be worked on to generate the agonistic respect that he believes ought to underpin democratic encounters, thinking against him I have sought to demonstrate how they might work to support exclusion, to intensify discord between persons, perpetuate the abjection of certain bodies, and reinforce prejudice. In short, how they might generate and bolster resentment. As such, I have endeavoured to confront Connolly's stress on generosity as central to the cultivation of a democratic ethos with the way that negative affects (such as resentment, anger, hatred and loathing) might both block

the cultivation of that ethos, as well as fostering democratic struggle. Out of a concern that Connolly's assumption of generosity as the grounds for democratic engagement acts as a norm of possibility rendering the ungenerous, the angry, the resentful unthinkable as democratic subjects, I have also indicated how resentment and other negative affects may drive the unintelligible to make democratic demands. In this respect, to view democracy as an ethos practised by the favourably located (who respond positively to the struggles of the disenfranchised) is to hazard conceiving it far too narrowly. For democracy is also, essentially, 'the place where the people appear' (Rancière, 1999: 100).

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[1] Unfortunately, I do not have scope in this paper to elaborate how affect and emotion might be differentiated. I have tended to use affect here to refer to what Erin Manning terms 'the with-ness of the movement of the world' (2007: xxi), an initial visceral response; while reserving 'emotion' to refer to culturally encoded and thus culturally variable sentiments. Emotion might be thought of, therefore, as affect canalized along certain culturally-defined routes.

[2] In this Connolly goes much further than thinkers such as Michael Walzer, for instance, who while also critical of the limits of liberal rationalism and similarly prepared to contest the antinomy between 'passionate intensity' and 'principled rationality' that underpins it (Walzer, 2004: 130), fail to explore the mechanisms through which affect inflects and modulates thought and vice versa.

[3] Specifically, Connolly notes that his aim *vis-à-vis* Nietzsche is to 'turn the genealogist of resentment on his head by exploring democratic politics as a medium through which to expose resentment and to encourage the struggle against it' (2002: 154). Here Connolly is citing his own words in *Political Theory and Modernity* (1988: 175), where he explores Nietzsche's work at length.

[4] To be clear, I am not saying resentment – or negative affects – will necessarily work in this way, just that they might.

[5] For more on the implications of the adoption of Spinozan 'parallelism' see Chapter Four of *Neuroscience* (2002a) and Connolly's essay 'Experience and Experiment' (2006).

[6] As Stephen White reminds us, for Nietzsche the overcoming of resentment required a distancing from the ordinary and everyday; for Connolly it is the extraordinary in the ordinariness of everyday life that interests him (2000: 133).

[7] See *Neuropolitics* where he discusses how one might shun a friend because 'a racial stereotype clicks in at the possibility of intimacy' (2002: 35).

[8] See also Ahmed (2004). Ahmed's focus differs from mine, however, in that she is interested in how emotions secure collectives. She thus reads this passage in terms of the hate experienced by the white woman and how it functions to align her with 'the bodily form of the community' (that is, a white communal body) against black bodies/Black people (Ahmed 2004: 33). What this interpretation occludes, however, is Lorde's focus on *intra*-racial not inter-racial hatred.

[9] The full quote is: 'The contagion of affect flows *across bodies,* as well as across conversations, as when anger, revenge, or inspiration is communicated across individuals or constituencies by the timbre of our voices, looks, hits, caresses, gestures, the bunching of muscles in the neck, and flushes of the skin. Such contagion flows through face-to-face meetings, academic classes, family dinners, public assemblies, TV speeches, sitcoms, soap operas and films. Affect is infectious across layered assemblages, human and otherwise' (Connolly, 2002: 75).

[10] As she observes later in the essay: 'If I'd been grown, I'd probably have laughed or snarled or been hurt, seen it for what it was. But I am five years old. *I see it, I record it, I do not name it, so the experience is incomplete. It is not pain; it becomes suffering*' (Lorde, 1984a: 172, my emphasis).

[11] The fact that the encounter takes place on a subway train is, I think, significant in that it intensifies the affect that is released. In future work, I want to develop the link between space and affect further.

[12] If I had time, I might press into service Judith Butler's discussion of materialization to explain this process; that is, where 'to be material means to materialize', and 'where the principle of that materialization is precisely what "matters" about that body, its very intelligibility' (1993: 32). Matter and meaning are inextricably linked. To materialize is to become meaningful; it is to fit within a particular frame of intelligibility, sustained through the reiteration of regulatory norms. The materialization of Lorde's body as a hated-hateful *Black* body is thus secured through normative violence. See Lloyd 2007: 68-77.

[13] To clarify: I am expressly not arguing for a fixed sense of identity (and it seems doubtful Lorde is either). Identity, as I have indicated elsewhere is shot through with difference, even contradiction (Lloyd 2005). So I am using it here in a non-essentialist sense.

[14] Chapter 2 of *Neuropolitics* is called 'The Color of Perception'.

[15] Certainly in the last few pages of her essay, Lorde turns her attention to how to 'metabolize' the anger she feels towards others, talking of Black women 'mothering ourselves': learning to 'recognize and nurture the creative parts of each other without always understanding what will be created' and 'laying to rest what is weak, timid, and damaged – without despisal' (Lorde 1984a: 173-4); and noting how learning self-love must be a prelude to learning how to love another or accepting their love (Lorde 1984a: 175; see also Connolly 2002b: 176).

[16] It might seem appropriate at this point to press into service a distinction Connolly uses in a footnote in *The Ethos of Pluralization*, where he differentiates between *ressentiment* understood as 'stored resentment that has poisoned the soul and migrated to places where it is hidden and denied' and resentment, which on this occasion at least, refers to the sentiment that 'might arise when someone has injured you unjustly, and you call that person on it, or when you are enraged by lies another

tells about you and gets away with it' (1995, 213-14 n. 17). We might, that is, argue that Lorde's encounters with other Black women express *ressentiment* while her anger at White Americans expresses (righteous) resentment. As the discussion above shows, both experiences for Lorde are inextricably interconnected. It is unclear to me, therefore, exactly how we would differentiate between them.