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978-1-107-03551-5 - The Democratic Horizon: Hyperpluralism and the Renewal of Political Liberalism

Alessandro Ferrara

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The Democratic Horizon

Hyperpluralism and the Renewal of Political Liberalism

Alessandro Ferrara explains what he terms “the democratic horizon” – the idea that democracy faces unprecedented challenges worldwide, some of which ironically stem from its own success in establishing itself as a horizon, as the only one fully legitimate form of government. Professor Ferrara investigates the contribution toward meeting those challenges that can be drawn from the framework developed by Rawls in *Political Liberalism*, once its full potential is released in the triple direction of rethinking and pluralizing the democratic ethos, handling the hyperpluralism that pervades our political spaces, and finding the proper ways, through conjectural arguments, for political justification to reach and include the partially reasonable. In the course of the argument, aesthetic sources of normativity that have formed the object of Ferrara’s investigation in the past – exemplarity, judgment, the imagination – will often be called on to supplement the conceptual resources of a revisited political liberalism. Through its own openness to the fact of pluralism, to the burdens of judgment, and to nonliberal decent polities, and through the still underexplored moment of judgment and exemplarity inherent in public reason, political liberalism is the general philosophical framework most capable of addressing the complex interplay of democracy and the normativity of identity.

Alessandro Ferrara is Professor of Political Philosophy in the Department of History, Culture and Society at the University of Rome, “Tor Vergata”. He is the author of four books, including *The Force of the Example: Explorations in the Paradigm of Judgment* (2008).

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ALESSANDRO FERRARA

University of Rome, "Tor Vergata"



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Preface and Acknowledgments

This book grew out of a concern for democracy, the heritage of “political liberalism”, and the aesthetic sources of normativity. Democracy faces unprecedented challenges worldwide, some of which ironically stem from its own success in establishing itself as a horizon – as the only one fully legitimate form of government. In the book, I investigate the contribution toward meeting those challenges that can be drawn from the normative framework developed by Rawls in *Political Liberalism*, once its full potential is released in the triple direction of rethinking and pluralizing the democratic ethos, handling the hyperpluralism that pervades our political spaces, and finding the proper ways, through conjectural arguments, for political justification to reach and include the partially reasonable. In the course of the argument, aesthetic sources of normativity that have formed the object of my investigation in the past – exemplarity, judgment, the imagination – will often be called on to supplement the conceptual resources of a revisited political liberalism. In fact, through its own openness to the fact of pluralism, to the burdens of judgment, and to nonliberal decent polities, and through the still underexplored moment of judgment and exemplarity inherent in public reason and in the standard constituted by “the most reasonable for us”, political liberalism is, among the general philosophical frameworks available today, the one most capable of addressing and making sense of the complex interplay of democracy and what I call the normativity of identity.

The chapters of this book are based on materials that have been presented at various conferences, workshops, and seminars and that have been revised and expanded on the basis of valuable feedback received on those occasions. The section of the Introduction where an assessment is presented of the “inhospitable conditions” for democracy in present-day complex societies has been discussed at a workshop promoted by the Centro Estudios Democraticos and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Lisbon, in January 2012 and at the International Summer

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School “ASSET 2012” on “Political Representation in a Plural Society” organized by the Fondazione Marcianum Venezia, in September 2012. On both occasions I received valuable feedback from many colleagues, especially from Giuseppe Ballacci, Massimo Luciani, Mihaela Mihai, Serdar Tekin, and Mathias Thaler.

Chapter 1 – “Reasons That Move the Imagination: Democratic Politics at Its Best” – is based on a paper given at the conference “Che cos’è la politica? Paradigmi del pensiero politico contemporaneo a confronto” at the University of Venice, March 24–25, 2007, later delivered as a lecture titled “Una reflexión sobre la politica” at the Fundación Juan March in Madrid in November 2007, and in a revised form presented at the conference “Philosophy and Social Science” in Prague in 2008. It has also been further discussed under the title “La politica en su forma mejor: razones que mueven la imaginación” at the conference “Crear cultura, imaxinar país”, Consello de Cultura Gallega, Santiago de Compostela, 2008, and as “Politics and the Imagination” at University College London in January 2009. For the many suggestions received on these occasions I wish to thank Amy Allen, Richard Bellamy, Fina Birulés, Chiara Bottici, Marina Calloni, Dario Castiglione, Leonardo Ceppa, Maeve Cooke, Claudio Corradetti, Lucio Cortella, Paolo Costa, Mariano Croce, Manuel Cruz, Dimitri D’Andrea, Pieter Duvenage, Javier Gomá, María Pía Lara, Ramon Maiz, Virginio Marzocchi, Stefano Petrucciani, Walter Privitera, Elena Pulcini, Carlos Thiebaut, and Fernando Vallespín. A version of this chapter was published in Chiara Bottici and Benoît Challand (eds.), *The Politics of Imagination* (Abingdon: Birkbeck Law Press, 2011), 38–54, and I am grateful to the editors and the publisher.

Chapter 2 – “Democracy and Openness” – was developed out of a paper given at the conference “Affect, Imagination and Democratic Values” at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, April 2–3, 2010, and later discussed at the doctoral program in Philosophy and Social Sciences of the University of Rome “Tor Vergata” at the Fondazione Basso and at the Istituto Sturzo in Rome, as well as at the Centro Estudios Democraticos, University of Coimbra, Portugal, in 2012. I am grateful to David Alvarez, William Connolly, Gianni Dessì, Bryan Garsten, Tonino Griffero, Giacomo Marramao, Massimo Rosati, and Stephen K. White, and again to Giuseppe Ballacci, Mihaela Mihai, Serdar Tekin, and Mathias Thaler for their comments and encouragement.

Chapter 3 – “Reflexive Pluralism and the Conjectural Turn” – grew out of my involvement with the Istanbul Seminars organized by ResetDoc/Dialogues on Civilizations and was presented and debated in Istanbul in 2008 and first published in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 2010, 36, 3–4, 353–64. Thanks are due to Seyla Benhabib, Giancarlo Bosetti, Jean Cohen, Maeve Cooke, Drucilla Cornell, Abdou Filali-Ansary, Nina zu Fürstenberg, Nilufer Göle, Jürgen Habermas, Ramin Jahanbegloo, and David Rasmussen for their comments.

Chapter 4 – “Hyperpluralism and the Multivariate Democratic Polity” – initially was presented as a brief roundtable intervention at the conference

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“Rawls and Religion” organized by Luiss Guido Carli University in Rome, later developed as a paper presented at the Istanbul Seminars 2011, and was also discussed at the Prague conference “Philosophy and Social Science” in 2012. It was first published (without the sections on the agonistic interpretations of hyperpluralism and on the alternative strategies for dealing with hyperpluralism) in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 2012, 38, 4–5, 435–44. On these occasions, I received important suggestions and objections about the ideas presented in this chapter from Abdullahi An-Na’im, Tom Bailey, Dario Castiglione, Valentina Gentile, Sebastiano Maffettone, Andrew March, and Mark Rosen.

Chapter 5 – “*Cuius Religio, Eius Res Publica: On Multiple Democracies*” – was presented at the workshop “Multiple Modernities and Global Postsecular Society” organized by the Center for Religions and Political Institutions in Post-Secular Society, May 2011, Rome, and at the Fifth International Critical Theory Conference organized at the John Felice Rome Center of Loyola University Chicago, May 2012, and at the roundtable “Overcoming Postcolonialism: From the Civilizational Dispute to the Renewal of Dialogue” within the framework of the ResetDoc Istanbul Seminars 2012. A version of the chapter was published as “From Multiple Modernities to Multiple Democracies” in Massimo Rosati and Kristina Stoeckl (eds.), *Multiple Modernities and Postsecular Societies* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 17–40. I am indebted to Alexander Agadjanian, Giuliano Amato, Matteo Bortolini, Stefano Giacchetti, Enzo Pace, Massimo Rosati, Kristina Stoeckl, Roberto Toscano, and Peter Wagner for pressing on me many interesting and challenging questions.

Chapter 6 – “Multiculturalism: Negation or Completion of Liberalism?” – was discussed at the Summer School on “Human Rights, Minorities and Diversity Management” organized by the European Academy, Bozen, July 2012, and benefited from remarks and suggestions by Claudio Corradetti, Joseph Marko, and other participants.

Chapter 7 – “Beyond the Nation: Governance and Deliberative Democracy” – originated as a paper for the Conference on “Governare il lavoro e il Welfare attraverso la democrazia deliberative”, CNEL, Rome, October 2006, and was revised after discussions held on several subsequent occasions, including the conference “La liberal-democrazia tra globalizzazione e governance” at the University of Palermo in 2007 and a workshop on “Justice and Governance in the International Community” at the 24th IVR World Congress, Beijing, 2009. I wish to thank here Marzia Barbera, Luigi Ferrajoli, Nino Palumbo, Stefano Petrucciani, Jacob Dahl Rendtorff, Francesco Riccobono, Asger Sørensen, and Salvo Vaccaro.

Chapter 8 – “Truth, Justification and Political Liberalism” – was presented at the conference “Filosofia e politica” at the Università Statale, Milan, 2009, and at a roundtable on “Verità e democrazia” organized by the Biennale della Democrazia, Turin, in 2009. Later it was discussed at the Prague conference “Philosophy and Social Science” in May 2010, at the conference “Verità in una

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società plurale” at the Università Ca’ Foscari, Venezia in September 2011, and as a lecture at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Università Vita–Salute San Raffaele in Milan in 2011. The text has undergone several revisions, prompted among other things by the suggestions offered by Ken Baynes, Antonella Besussi, Matteo Bianchin, Maeve Cooke, Lucio Cortella, Roberta de Monticelli, Nancy Fraser, Elisabetta Galeotti, Diego Marconi, Giacomo Marramao, Mario Ruggenini, Roberta Sala, and Marco Santambrogio.

Many more colleagues and friends than those mentioned here have contributed to the ideas presented in this book in the course of conversations and exchanges, formal and informal, in direct presence or through email exchanges. Among them, I wish to express my gratitude to Bruce Ackerman, Seyla Benhabib, Michelangelo Bovero, Luigi Caranti, Furio Cerutti, Vittorio Cotesta, Franco Crespi, Rainer Forst, Claudia Hassan, Charles Larmore, Massimo Pendenza, Hartmut Rosa, Ingrid Salvatore, and William Scheuerman.

Finally, the two reviewers for Cambridge University Press provided important suggestions for the enrichment of the manuscript originally submitted and the ordering of the materials. I wish to thank them sincerely for their having prompted revisions that have improved this book; obviously any remaining shortcomings remain my responsibility.

Rome, April 2013