# Why do all our feelings about politics matter?

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## Why do all our feelings about politics matter?

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In recent years, scholarly attention has focused on the effects of public disaffection with representative politics, the rise of anti-political sentiment and the role of processes of depoliticisation, professionalization, and consumerism (Dalton, 2004; Flinders, 2012; Hay, 2007; Norris, 1999; Papadopolous, 2013; Stoker, 2006). This work is admirable in its efforts to take citizen's feelings about representative politics seriously and to see them as significant for political thinking and engagement. Negative and demotivating emotions and affects such as pessimism, resignation and disappointment are identified within such accounts but other important emotions could be investigated more clearly and closely. Drawing from the literature on emotions and politics (Ahmed, 2004; Bloch 1998; Campbell, 1994; Nussbaum 2001, 2014; Prokhovnik, 1999), the intent of this paper is to explore how a more sustained examination of what emotions do in politics might contribute to our understanding of democratic (dis)enchantment. I propose that there are some avenues which could be developed in the literature on disenchantment. I argue that the motivating properties of particular emotions could be explored in greater detail. The disenchantment literature provides an account of how demotivating states such as cynicism, disappointment and pessimism arise via 'heightened' expectations/negative perceptions and advocates the tempering of such expectations and perceptions. Yet these solutions have consequences for other positive and animating sentiments, such as hope, which may be stultified in the process. Recent literature has tended to focus on the role of positive cognitions as animators (Stoker and Hay 2016; Stoker et al 2016) but emotions can also usefully direct political action. Here, I suggest that Ernst Bloch's work on hope may be a fruitful resource for the issue of demotivation. The literature has made significant strides in seeking to understand the form and structure of disenchantment. Congruently, the content of 'ugly' feelings of citizens could be explored in greater depth and greater reflection could be given over to the potential significance of some disenchantment.

In the first section, I summarise the treatment of emotions in key texts in literature on political disaffection. Second, I examine an issue raised by efforts to resolve and respond to the problem of citizen's negativity: the potential emotional and motivational consequences of such solutions. There are merits to the arguments provided by disenchantment scholars; negative emotions may certainly lead citizens to withdraw, act narrowly or intuitively, because emotions are a form of reflection through which we perceive, appraise, judge and subsequently choose to act or not act; they provide us with direction (Prokhovnik, 1999). Yet, solutions to this negativity should not simply focus on deterring or reining in the possibility of feeling negative emotions, without seeking 'to touch citizen's hearts and to inspire, deliberately, strong emotions directed at the

common work before them' (Nussbaum 2014: 2). My discussion of the disenchantment literature is underpinned by a sustained consideration of the qualities of hope. Thus, I propose that a more progressive politics should seek to cultivate the *principle of hope* (Bloch 1998). This has five qualities: (1) thin optimism; (2) creativity; (3) direction and drive (4) sustenance; and (5) practice. In the final section, I examine another issue for scholars of disenchantment: a somewhat agnostic attitude towards outcomes and issues of equality and justice. As such, I explore further negative and ugly feelings, in addition to relevant negative cognitions, which warrant careful and close attention, especially when directed at injustices which emerge from the representative system itself.

## 1.   The Disenchantment literature

Political disenchantment and political disengagement from politics is rife and representative politics has lost its appeal so we are told (Dalton 2004; Hay 2007). Here, I seek to make explicit the role of emotions in three prominent monographs which seek to identify and explain the causes of disenchantment: Gerry Stoker's (2006) *Why Politics Matters;* Colin Hay's (2007) *Why We Hate Politics* and Matthew Flinders's (2012) *Defending Politics.* These texts do not exhaust that literature but they present core claims which I will discuss in the paper. I also examine the developing co-authored work of Stoker, Hay and others on how citizens understand, think about and orient themselves to politics (Hay and Stoker 2009; Stoker and Hay 2016; Stoker et al 2016).

The disenchantment literature detects an unprecedented, widespread dissatisfaction towards representative politics within advanced industrial democracies which can be charted empirically in feelings of distrust and contempt expressed towards politicians, falling participation in elections, declining membership of political parties, and the negative, pessimistic and cynical feelings citizens express about politics. Disenchantment is a source of great concern and something which requires explanation and remedy. Explanations differ in emphasis but there is consensus that (1) people's thoughts and feelings about politics matter in terms of their political actions and (2) this is connected to shifts such as rising individualism, consumerism, professionalization and globalisation, as well as a wave of cynicism propounded by the media. The loss and lack of appreciation for collective forms of deliberation and decision-making is bemoaned and portrayed as 'pathological'. Consequently, normative projects or 'antidotes' for revitalising representative politics are developed.

The contributions of these texts are rich. The examination of the role of negative feelings and affects, such as pessimism, cynicism and distrust, is less commonly applauded and yet is enormously important. Here, authors argue that negativity leads citizens to become frustrated, detached and then withdraw or disengage. Furthermore, the intellectual resonance of using Max Weber's term, disenchantment, and the Weberian sense in which emotional, cultural, political and economic processes are interwoven, is compelling.  Although 'disenchantment' is not employed to signify an inescapable cultural condition, the meaning of disenchantment as disillusionment, rather than hatred or ceasing to care, is shared with Weber. In a state of disenchantment, we are still moved by something, it still matters to us; although we judge it to be unsatisfactory and would prefer not to hold such feelings about it. Disenchantment's opposite, enchantment, suggests a delightful, fascinating, alluring or even magical experience. To be enchanted is to be bewitched or held in wonder; to be kept under the spell of something radiant or wonderful, whereas disenchantment is a traumatic or painful disengagement from a previous experience, dream or fantasy. Defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'a feeling of disappointment about someone or something you previously respected or admire', disenchantment implies devaluation; one no longer believes that something is good or worthwhile. This isn't a fleeting sense of disappointment but something which signifies a deep change in condition – perhaps we once were enchanted, animated or even enamoured with politics but now we have lost admiration and respect for it; it is no longer sacred (Hay and Stoker 2009: 226). A swift move from disenchantment back into a state of enchantment appears unlikely, although it is possible to become animated by politics again.

Differences between explanations of disenchantment are worth highlighting. Stoker's (2006) explanations are multi-dimensional: (1) significant external social shifts, such as globalisation, have made politics more complex and challenging (58-67); (2) the professionalization and specialisation of politics has distanced politics from the people (3) the media's portrayal of politics has encouraged cynicism; and, more significantly and distinctively, (4) the public no longer appreciate or understand the 'messiness' of collective decision-making (68-83). Effectively, there has been a failure of political education which restricts effective responses to new challenges. Stoker contends:

> Many citizens fail to appreciate that politics in the end involves the collective imposition of decisions, demands a complex communication process and generally produces messy

compromise. Politics is designed to disappoint – that is the way that the process of compromise and reconciliation works. (10).

Public ignorance and individualism heighten the sense of 'disappointment', dismay and surprise that is experienced when preferred outcomes are not met (9-10, 68-83, 203-4). These emotions are converted into a pervading and corrosive cynicism about political processes and a lack of trust for politicians, bred by academic work and the media, which leads to disengagement from conventional modes of participation and the growing attraction of populist 'anti-politics' (118-145, 202). Negative emotions and affective states, such as cynicism or resentment, are presented as something 'dangerous' (118), which disrupt our engagement. Viewing politics as a public good, Stoker's remedy is increased openness in representative politics; and an expansion of participatory opportunities for 'amateur' citizens to engage, express their views and influence public policy in a variety of forums (149-200). Emotions, such as trust and affinity, are discussed positively and feelings of attachment, trust or inclusion are deemed to drive political engagement and participation (2006: 96-97). Stoker argues that such feelings are motivated by the wider community and that it 'is possible to give people the opportunity to believe that they are part of a wider civic identity built around their locality or sense of equal and shared citizenship' (2006: 97).

Hay's (2007) explanations for political disillusion lay blame at practices and processes of depoliticisation. Hay argues that the projection of instrumental motivations onto political representatives, stemming from public choice theory, new public management and neo-liberalism, has lead to the off-loading of responsibilities of decision-making to unelected officials and the movement of issues from the public to the private realm, which depoliticises decision-making (90-122). This scholarly and 'domestic origin' of depoliticisation must be connected to the 'global' fatalistic 'globalisation thesis'. For Hay, the shift towards globalisation is not as important as widespread beliefs that elite state actors are powerless and have limited capacity to act in the face of economic constraints (154). Hay argues that we should 'politicize such assumptions and seek to make them the subject of public deliberation', acknowledging that 'we have a choice in the first place' (161-2). Depictions of politicians as instrumental and perceptions of powerlessness result from negative perceptions about human nature, politics and agency – and, moreover, a failure to recognise these perceptions as choices due, in large part, to ideological distortion (69, 161). Such pessimistic beliefs and cognitions rear negative feelings of cynicism, distrust, and indignation about politicians and politics. Thus, Hay's normative project is

to develop a more positive conception of human nature and greater confidence in human capacities for political action. Hay makes reference to hopefulness and optimism (6, 9, 161), trust (161-2), cynicism (5-11), pessimism and its self-fulfilling effects (66-70, 153-156, 160), and there is even a quick nod to a sense of betrayal felt by the 'alienated' in the empirical sections (46-48, 54) but there is little discussion of 'ugly' feelings such as disgust, outrage, and, significantly, given the book's title, hatred.

Flinders (2012) purpose is to 'animate a sense of passion' (41) and confidence replacing 'the politics of pessimism with a more buoyant 'politics of optimism' that adopts a more balanced and proportionate view of politics' (3, 88) as something which 'delivers far more than most people acknowledge or understand' (vii). The text is underpinned by a consensus notion of politics that involves collective endeavour, dialogue and decision-making (5-6). Flinders argues that pessimism, fatalism, low confidence and negativity towards politics (172-174) is generated by incomprehension, ignorance and, in particular, inflated and unreasonable public expectations (13-16, 34, 56-63), as well as the domination of particular interests including the market (64-88), the media and scholarly work (142-169) which generate myths about politics and politicians. A wider range of emotions and affective states are explored, including fear (112-119, 138-141), the sense in which moral panics manifest both anxiety and hysteria (166-169), denial (89-109), and the creation of a 'culture of contempt' by the media (148-154) that spreads cynicism and despair. Such negative emotions are often depicted in need reining in and containment (34, 64), but 'ugly feelings' are scarcely mentioned.

The most recent work by Hay and Stoker has sought to understand further how citizens perceive and think about politics in depth (2009: 227). There is much to admire in this work, especially the innovative and imaginative use of research from psychology on cognition, the exploration of interesting data sets, and the deployment of mixed methods (see Stoker et al 2016; Stoker and Hay 2016). Yet, it is not only important to understand how citizens *think* about politics better but also how they *feel* about it because it is the combination of thought and emotion, which provides much political direction and motivation. This work still examines both but has a tendency to prioritise thought over emotion and to imply, a little unfortunately at times, that emotions cloud reasoning capacities. This seems to be a consequence of drawing attention to the heat and intensity of some negative emotions. We can see this in the suggestion that citizen's intuitive fast-thinking is more influenced by emotions and feelings; and the preferred slow-thinking is both less so and remains more cognitively demanding (Stoker, Hay and Barr, 2016). The

contention that slow-thinking is less influenced by emotions and feelings was not demonstrated in focus groups in which emotions such as frustration, sadness and regret were still expressed (p. 14-15), although it may well be true that fast-thinking is rooted in raw or heated emotions which then elicit quick reactions. If we are to continue to develop an understanding of the form and structure of disenchantment, it is paramount that we extend the good work of the disenchantment literature by exploring the interconnections between citizen's thoughts and feelings.

## 2.   The issue of emotion and political (de)motivation

The earlier accounts of disenchantment were primarily concerned with emotions that lead to states of political demotivation. Disappointment is singled out as an emotion intrinsic to politics and both Stoker (2006) and Flinders (2012) identify 'heightened disappointment' as a significant trigger for disenchantment. The discussion follows Dunn's claim that politics has a propensity to disappoint (2000) because there are winners and losers within any outcome. Stoker articulates that politics: 'is inevitably destined to disappoint because it is about the tough process of squeezing collective decisions out of multiple and competing interests and opinions' (2006: 1). He also suggests that public disappointment is heightened by consumerism, selfishness and individualism. People struggle with the idea that the 'final decision is not necessarily one of your choice' and 'exit' after experiencing disappointment rather than continue to debate' (Stoker 2006: 69). The deeper point is that individualism, focused on the realisation of individual desires and ends, necessarily cultivates deep disappointment which is less likely to be experienced positively and this derails enduring participation (68-69). Flinders also laments the dashing of unrealistic and inflated public expectations, leading to despair. The example he provides is that of Barack Obama's 'hope' and 'change' presidential campaign in which Obama's advisers were said to have been involved in a project of dampening down expectations in order to stall 'a vast mood swing from exhilaration and euphoria to despair' (2012: 34). The implication is that we need to circumvent our hope and prevent or limit our disappointment by demanding less and having lower expectations about what can *realistically* be delivered by a government/state. In short, we need to 'grow up' (Flinders 2012: 39). This is reminiscent of the work on 'emotion management' by Hochschild (2003) – in this case, by reducing our demands and expectations we may protect ourselves and avoid feeling crushing and unpleasant emotions, such as disappointment.

There is both a logic and truth to elements of this account. The diagnostic element of emotions, by which we appraise, attribute salience or value to something (Jaggar, 1989; Prokhovnik 1999;

Nussbaum 2001; Freeden, 2013), has been recognised. The account can be aligned with the Aristotelian treatment of *pathe* or passions in which *pathe* are explored in terms of triggers, objects and consequences (1991). The trigger for disappointment, high or unrealistic expectations and individualism, has been identified. The object of the disappointment is the desired policy outcome which has not been met through the process of engagement. The consequence of severe disappointment and dismay is cynicism and pessimism which may lead us to withdraw and retract from others. It is well established that particular emotions (i.e. despair, disgust, contempt, cynicism, pessimism, shame, guilt, hopelessness, ambivalence) have the propensity to be demotivating, or, at the least, preclude certain forms of action (Nussbaum 2001, 2014). The solution that dangerously high expectations should be reined in, limiting disappointment, also follows psychologically. Disappointment entails sadness and unfulfilled hopes, as well as coming to terms with an often unanticipated reality that one can do little to change. As unpleasant, it is a commonly avoided and displaced emotion that is substituted with others. For example, the patient in remission from cancer who learns that the cancer has returned may feel anger, misery, pessimism and frustration, wallowing in the thought that 'nothing will work: this is going to kill me' because it is easier than confronting the disappointment that they feel. However, numbing or displacing certain emotions and managing expectations in these personal ways in relation to something that the individual has little capacity to influence is very different to emotion management in respect to *political* expectations and goals.

Tempering expectations may perversely undermine some emotions which motivate the more positive political engagement that scholars would seem to want to inspire. In other words, some motivating emotions, such as hope, may rely on raised expectations. This isn't to disagree with the view that currents of individualisation may heighten expectations in a way that could exacerbate extreme disappointment, bitterness and depression, but my concern is (1) lowered expectations might lead to states of pessimism or accommodation; (2) that strong emotional *inspiration* for political action could be lost in seeking to lower expectations; and (3) lowering expectations is a somewhat unemotional, rationalised solution to a public emotional problem. First, if we are to 'remedy' demotivation, we need to look carefully at the connection between particular emotions and political motivation, commitment and sustenance (Prokhovnik 1999). Thus, we cannot afford to neglect the impact of our solutions on action-guiding and sustaining emotions that could be derailed. Lowered, 'more realistic' expectations might also manifest in states of pessimism, nonchalance, resignation or ambivalence through which we accept reality as

given and do not aspire either towards the creative work of dreaming of, or towards realising, particular courses of action.

Second, expectations/demands are not the same thing as dreams but they are closely connected. If we are too guarded, dispassionate and pragmatic in our expectations, it could limit our will and lead to adapting to a situation. Crudely, does it matter if Martin Luther King's 'dream' and 'demands' were unlikely to be realised in full if it facilitated the persistence of (collective) hope in justice and activism? King's rhetoric has intrinsic emotive and inspirational value in the way in which emotions can provide political *direction* and motivation (Prokhovnik 1999). Rhetoric which raises hope, in the face of the injustice of the suffering of black Americans during the Jim Crow era, would seem more likely to foster stronger commitment to racial equality than lowered but more realistic expectations of what can be achieved within political systems. Without the bold imagination, hopeful rhetoric, raw emotions, high expectations and passionate struggle of prominent campaigners facing great risks, obstacles and suffering, is it likely that the suffrage would have been extended, slavery abolished, national independence achieved for colonised states, apartheid defeated in South Africa, and so on? This is because hopeful expression tends to both galvanise and *sustain* people's engagement in politics. This point is recognised by Hay at least. Indeed, possibly drawing on Gramsci, Hay notes that hope is an endearing and positive feature of politics.

> [It] is testimony to a certain triumph of the human will over human capabilities… (and) a
> degree of political animation and engagement that has arguably… served to elevate levels
> of political participation (2007: 6).

Finally, it is not convincing to suggest that people are more likely to continue to engage in politics if they *reason* calmly and slowly that they might not 'win' every time, rather than if they *feel* impassioned in some way, whether through anger, hope, trust, confidence, sadness, shock, compassion, and so on. In some cases, it is important to (continue to) feel enraged at an injustice or saddened by another's suffering. Indeed, these strong feelings may supply us with the determination and resilience to follow courses of action through and not withdraw. As Nussbaum argues, we are not automatons who will be persuaded by the most rational political arguments and principles, we are enthused, touched, affected and moved by things to which we establish significance; thus, we need to care about our visions and our goals (2014: 10). Emotions can be intense, life-changing, overwhelming and we can feel frightened, floored or swept away by

them. They cause 'upheaval' but they also provide us with many salient insights which inspire, motivate and sustain us in our goals (Nussbaum 2001). For example, our reaction to a photograph of a drowned toddler refugee – shock, disgust, grief, horror, outrage, shame or hostility - moves us to engage in emotional reasoning. We may collectively ask questions about the 'softness', 'harshness' or 'humanity' of EU and member states' migration policy and to act in ways related to those powerful emotions.

Demotivating stances, such as pessimism, are directly countered by authors such as Flinders through the cultivation of optimism which seeks to give people 'confidence… in their collective capacity to change the future' (2012: 138). This is, of course, very important for political engagement yet it would be helpful to be clearer about the form of optimism advanced. Optimism is a *cognitive* state which assumes a positive disposition. It can take some of the following, non-exhaustive forms: a perspective that (1) the actual world is the best; (2) good rather than bad things always happen; (3) good things can, will and do happen; (4) wishing for or aspiring to something better or (5) a belief that things *could* be otherwise. Of these, it could be noted that the first two involve certainty, confidence and cheerfully celebrating the status quo. This is both congenial and uncritical. Indeed, the first three are not only bland but could be 'cruel' in *promising* an unachievable fantasy or impossible 'good life' (Berlant 2011) and have the potential to be blind or oblivious to existing problems. Stoker quite rightly recognises the problems of 'cruel optimism' in his concerns that 'politics would still struggle to achieve all that people hope from it' (Stoker 1996, 70). Further issues with (1), (2) and (3) is that the expectation that positive outcomes will emerge can, as Elshtain notes, 'easily slip into arrogant triumphalism' (1999: 532), insulation from loss or injustice, as well as failing to take seriously, dismissing or silencing anger, injuries, injustice and grievances. There is a danger that the disenchantment literature advances in this direction at times in their enthusiasm for the value of collective decision-making and, in a sense, democratic politics, processes and institutions *as they stand*. We can see this in some of Flinders's discussion of the civilising nature of democracy which ensures the reconnection of 'people to a collective fate' (5, 66). Form (4) is somewhat wistful and dreamy in its supposition that somehow things will turn out to be better. Form (5) is the thinnest form and can be detected in the disenchantment literature in its crucial attack on 'ideological' processes of depoliticisation, which deny or dismiss possibilities for action (Hay 2007; Hay and Stoker 2009; Jenkins 2011; Bates et al 2013; Wood 2013). In retaliation, Hay directs his optimism towards human nature, politics, and the prospects for change (Hay, 2007: 9). This concurs with Doug McAdam's contention that 'cognitive liberation' is necessary for protest in which people

have to 'believe something is both unjust and *subject to* change' (1982: 34). Animating belief in contingency is certainly fruitful but we could also examine particular emotions that inspire this.

My argument is that seeking to cultivate the emotion, hope is as crucial a response to demotivation and disenchantment as 'cognitive liberation' and stimulating optimism. Furthermore, employing Ernst Bloch's work on hope as *not yet* is helpful for this task. Understanding the meaning of hope can dignify legitimate concerns about cruel optimism, disappointment, demotivation and the limits of pessimism found in the disenchantment literature, without undermining the expectations on which hope rests, or somewhat triumphantly praising the status quo. Although some qualities of hope are noted in the disenchantment literature, others are missed. Thus, I contend that genuine hopefulness has the following properties: (1) thin optimism; (2) creativity; (3) direction and drive; (4) sustenance; and (5) something which requires education in its practice.

Hopefulness is 'thinly' optimistic (*critical-militant* optimism in Bloch's terms (1998: 199), 446) as it is based on the belief in the contingency of reality. In Bloch's words, 'no thing could be altered in accordance with wishes if the world was closed, full of fixed, even perfected facts' (Bloch 1998: 196). The hopeful conceive of the world as unfinished and incomplete as 'the world is full of propensity towards something, tendency towards something, latency of something, and this intended something means fulfilment of the intending' (18). Indeed, hopefulness only makes sense on the condition that either desired or undesired outcomes are possible. This indeterminacy can be a crucial factor in inspiring people to realise something that is *not yet*. There is a degree of optimism in the sense that the hopeful believe that things could be otherwise, without assuming that everything will turn out well or for the best. This element of hope has already been deployed within existing critiques of processes of depoliticisation.

Second, hope is creative and focused. It is not abstract, escapist, contemplative, or merely fantasy, or wish, although it does emerge from the human desire to dream about something else, something better. Bloch and Paulo Freire both argue that day-dreaming is an important human quality that we should not stifle. For Freire, 'dreaming is not only a necessary political act, it is an integral part of the historical-social manner of being a person... there is no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope' (Freire 1994: 81). For Bloch,

> [the day-dream] is concerned with an as far as possible unrestricted journey forward, so
> that instead of reconstituting that which is no longer conscious, the images of that which
> is not yet can be fantasised into life and into the world (Bloch 1970: 86-87).

Lowering expectations could stifle this critical creativity.

Moreover, third, hope gives us direction and underpins action; it moves us forward or outward. Bloch describes hope as informed by a concrete rather than abstract utopia (Bloch 1998: 197) which impels us to action because it is *anticipatory*. Hope 'goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of confining them' (Bloch 1998: 3). Through anticipating other/better worlds, we attempt to realise them. Indeed, hope provides drive, accompanies action and agency and commitment, as it is 'an attitude towards the course of action that the agent is embarking on' (van Hooft 2011: 28). Without 'anchoring in practice' and taking action, through which we become educated in hope, hope swiftly slips towards hopelessness and despair (Freire 1994: 2-3). The presentation of hope as romantic and dreamy (Flinders 2012: 62; Stoker 2006: 143-144) misrecognises the sense in which hope is simultaneously active and creative. Bloch's understanding of hope sees it as a human need to venture beyond and accomplish something *not yet:* it is willful, not wishful (Levitas 1989).

Fourth, hopefulness is self-soothing and sustaining. As Lasch argues, it makes little sense to trust in life if one hasn't suffered disappointment before but 'the knowledge that the future holds further disappointments demonstrates the continuing need for hope' (1991: 81). Hope is distinct from confidence because it is not certain, presumptuous, or naïve, although it is resilient. Rather, we direct our hope towards courses of action which are not easy, not entirely within our control, and in which we are vulnerable. Consequently, unlike cruel optimism or supreme confidence, hope can survive dangers, such as disappointment, as it engenders sustained and committed engagement. Disappointment might be a crucial process of learning or an animator for the hopeful. This is because hope fortifies and sustains us. Hope is that emotion which gives us strength and allows us to continue when things look at their bleakest, or the struggle becomes long and arduous. In dark moments in our lives when despair starts to creep in, hopefulness can always spring forth and it protects us. We need the soothing that hope provides accompanied with the liberation and energy of optimism. We can see this in responses of the chronically/critically ill and inspirational political campaigners or prisoners: holding hope means refusing to be annihilated by a prognosis, crushing loss, heartbreak or great injustice. This courageous stance facilitates strength, limiting the likelihood of withdrawal or resignation.

Finally, Bloch is very clear that the exercise of hope requires education; we need to learn hope. Hope is teachable but also entails practice: we have to actively jump in at the deep end and 'throw' ourselves into it (Bloch 1998: 3). Practising hope invites us to shed emotions: to lose fear and despair. Through attempting to realise our hopes, we learn what works and does not work in a particular instance and, drawing on hope, we can propose another *not yet* possibility. This learning can also take the form of directing hope towards different objects – for example, hope can be transferred from an emphasis on survival/cure to one of pain relief, the prospect of spending time with loved ones and communicating beliefs, desires and wishes, or completing projects (van Hooft 2011). As Bloch argues:

> Nobody has ever lived without daydreams, but it is a question of knowing them deeper and deeper and in this way keeping them trained unerringly, usefully, on what is right. Let the daydreams grow even fuller, since this means they are enriching themselves around the sober glance; not in the sense of clogging, but of becoming clear. Not in the sense of merely contemplative reason which takes things as they are and as they stand, but of participating reason which takes them as they go, and therefore also as they could go better. Then let the daydreams grow really fuller, that is, clearer, less random, more familiar, more clearly understood and more mediated with the course of things (1998: 3-4).

If we are concerned by disenchantment, we might want to cultivate and inspire hope. Hope can bridge the tensions between demotivation and motivation as it is thinly optimistic, creative, directional, resilient, sustaining and can be improved through learning. Hope should not be reduced to an immature optimism or a confident disposition, unaware of difficulty or struggle. Hopefulness is a refusal to give up on the idea of transformative action; on the idea that reality is, in some senses at least, ameliorable. My recommendation for hope has been abstract but it is important to note that hope, and other emotions, need public cultivation. We need to be inspired and encouraged turn new possibilities into new realities, thus some words about Martha Nussbaum's recent work on the cultivation of love (2014) may help to rectify Bloch's relative silence on how hope could be inspired.

Nussbaum contends that emotions need public cultivation within nation states in order to provide strong commitment and motivation towards common and key goals, such as the goal of justice, equality, inclusiveness and so on (2014). Furthermore, all goals need continued emotional

support to ensure stability over time; it is not enough to enshrine good principles, such as racial equality, in laws and institutions; these can be a 'beacon of hope and protection' but need emotional renewal and nourishment (316, 134). Indeed, some emotions need to be engendered publically in order to guard against darker forces that undermine goals, such as disgust, envy, hatred, greed, the desire to inflict shame, humiliation, stigma, which lead to or reinforce deep divisions, hierarchies, inequalities and injustice (2-3). Nussbaum proposes two mechanisms for the public cultivation of emotions: (1) a robustly critical education, which promotes love of the full and equal humanity of all citizens; and (2) a patriotic culture, which is creative, directed outwards and can generate inspiration by giving space to works of art, poetry, narrative, music, films, photos and the rhetoric of great leaders, drawing on historically contextual memories and symbols (200-4). Hope could be developed within these mechanisms, as could trust, something that Stoker and Hay have both recommended.

For Nussbaum, love, sympathy and compassion incites justice as these emotions enlarge an individual's imagination and 'circle of concern' (11); meaning that the wellbeing and vulnerability of all citizens' begins to matter to us. Love entails deep connection and attachment to another insofar as it 'breaks down boundaries between people' (Nussbaum 2001: 463). Loving people often means being better than we usually are and, thus, extended compassion and sympathy aspires to justice, care and bridging the gaps between imagination and principles (2014: 142). Drawing this together with an extension of hope, Nussbaum concurs that such a project does not mean developing a triumphant patriotic political culture which is complacent: '(s)triking the right balance between aspiration and acceptance is one of the most difficult and delicate tasks of political life….But the right balance cannot be one that erases the longing for justice' (117). Achieving this balance seems to be at the root of efforts to 'revitalise politics' (Hay and Stoker 2009) and to develop an appreciation of collective decision-making. Thus, attention to the public cultivation of emotions could be useful for these normative projects.

### 3.  Recognising ugly and negative feelings

The disaffection literature accounts for disenchantment towards representative politics as arising from negative feelings of disappointment, pessimism, frustration, sadness, regret, resentment, and cynicism. This misses the articulation of some 'ugly' feelings such as alienation, disgust, hatred, envy, shame, humiliation, paranoia, fear, etc. In what follows, my contribution is to expand the content of feelings of disenchantment; briefly exploring two ugly feelings: *alienation* and *disgust*; and two negative feelings: *hatred* and *anger*. I aim to show why it is important to

understand a wide range of citizen's feelings as well as thoughts about politics. This section is not informed by primary research but it seeks to open a gap for this in emerging projects of understanding citizens thinking. I claim that it is important to distinguish analytically between the trigger, the presence of the emotion and its object or direction. Finally, I suggest that revitalising democratic politics may require paying more attention to issues of justice and equality. Negative feelings about unequal and unjust political outcomes within advanced liberal democracies may be warranted. Given the asymmetrical distribution of financial hardship and suffering across most Western democracies, it is certainly plausible that political disengagement may arise from injustices complicit within representative politics (Tormey 2015: 29).

*Alienation* is a feeling of isolation, dejection, loneliness, meaninglessness, despair, loss of autonomy and powerlessness and can be expressed differently – hostility, lethargy, shame, etc. *Alienation* is often, but not always, connected to oppression and poverty in terms of income, capabilities and wellbeing. Most research on political engagement notes its differentiation by socio-economic-cultural factors (Norris 1999; Stoker 2006; Hay 2007). Thus the poorest, most marginalised and alienated in society are among the least likely to engage politically. Furthermore, there is a clear link between the loss of social citizenship rights and the exercise of political rights (Lister 2003). The loss of material well-being for a poor lone mother, for example, can lead to financial insecurity, hunger, time poverty, but also shame, corrosive stigma, exclusion, indignity, lack of autonomy, difficulties in participating fully in society, and a sense of despair and powerlessness about the prospects of change. Poverty and *alienation* bring further inward feelings of humiliation, sadness and desperation. Consequently, the disenchantment of some (e.g. the alienated) might well be understandable. This negativity should not be dismissed as unfounded, resting on high or unrealistic expectations, selfishness or cynicism, as it is most likely based on diminished capabilities and wellbeing. To cast it as such is to ignore real concerns with democratic politics.

The problem is that the solutions of the disenchantment literature (cultivation of optimism, revival of political institutions, or furthering of civic education) appear to remain somewhat agnostic about situations of justice and inequality within democratic politics. This is because the literature has tended to focus on the intrinsic value of collective decision-making, at the expense of the outcomes of politics. Groups of poor, alienated citizens who are also marginalised and stigmatised – for example, welfare or food bank claimants, groups of migrants, poor lone mothers, disabled people, the economically inactive, whose lives have been made worse by, for

example, stringent and unjust austerity measures – may hold clear grievances towards a political system which has failed to protect or nurture them. This disenchantment is not born from misplaced or naïve negativity. As such, considering a range of emotions, as well as cognitions, in disenchantment helps to avoid the potential pitfall of emotional dismissal, preventing 'uptake' (Campbell 1996; Spelman 1989) of the deep and warranted despair, frustration, anger, disconnection, of some citizens. My argument is not that the disenchantment of the alienated should merely be accepted as legitimate because this may reinforce powerlessness. Instead, it would be better to recognise that disenchantment has further sources and to seek to inspire or cultivate particular emotions. We could take inspiration from the radical pedagogical projects of Paulo Freire who worked with peasants in Brazil to develop emotions of hope and anger oriented towards the political situation (2014), or the consciousness-raising methods of feminists who rejected the depiction of emotions as 'white noise' to be silenced or pathologised and aimed to transform inward emotions of depression, shame, guilt, and fear, experienced by sexual survivors and others, into active emotions, such as *anger* or *hope*, which could spark political resistance (Fraser 1996; Hercus 1999).

Further to *alienation, Disgust* is an ugly feeling which entails revulsion, abhorrence, aversion, or repulsion; it may involve recoiling from an object, a fear that an object may contaminate or infect us, or a horror regarding 'filthy' or 'foul' bodily functions or objects  (Watt Smith 2015). In a political context, feelings of *disgust* repel or sharply divide us from other groups, leading to exclusion, stigmatisation and marginalisation (Ahmed 2004; Nussbaum 2001). Nussbaum argues that *disgust* has an 'unreasonable' thought content, 'embodying magical ideas of contamination and impossible aspirations to purity, immortality, and nonanimality that are just not in line with human life as we know it' (2004: 14). Ahmed concurs that fear of contamination is a prominent feature of *disgust* as it 'hence operates as a contact zone; it is about how things come into contact with other things' (2004: 87). Although *disgust* involves expelling or ejecting something thought to be a pariah, employing the label 'disgusting' has particularly 'sticky' properties which create value through repetition (Ahmed 2004: 92 -93). This repetition of *disgust* delineates boundaries: i.e. those citizens who belong and those which are abject to the nation state. *Disgust* may coalesce with other public emotions – for example, shame, envy, hatred, humiliation, resentment, fear and indignation – which elicit different sets of political responses (Freeden 2013). *Disgust* directed towards political elites or other groups, such as immigrants, ethnic minorities, lesbians, or homosexuals, benefit 'scroungers', the 'liberal intellectual elite'/experts, paedophiles, bureaucrats, etc, might form a feature of people's support for reactionary political parties or candidates. We

can see elements of this kind of *disgust*, lack of affinity and distrust directed towards politicians in social attitudes surveys. Another prominent example of *disgust* was in the 2002 French Presidential Election in which socialist and social democratic voters held their noses or wore clothes pegs when voting for the unpopular centre right incumbent, Jacques Chirac, in order to express their *disgust* at the choice between Chirac and Jean-Marie Le Pen, a far right nationalist. In these instances, *disgust*, rather than merely cynicism or pessimism, forms an element of political disenchantment, even though engagement ensues. It is reasonable to assume that *disgust*, as an emotion which entails aversion, may also inform disengagement from representative politics (i.e. non-voting). Such examples imply that public disaffection for representative politics is more variegated.

Nussbaum argues further that *disgust* is an emotion which requires public confrontation, condemnation and countering; it is an illegitimate political emotion that forms political and emotional divisions and often violence (2015). However, responding to *disgust* is a complicated public issue which requires attention to issues of justice. To take a crude example, the *disgust* that the poor, white, long-term unemployed, young man may learn to feel towards the immigrant manifests in stigmatisation and division. On Nussbaum's reading, this needs to be publically countered on the grounds that it fails to see full humanity in another, and surely it does. Yet, the triggers for *disgust* - perhaps indignity, lack of opportunity or reward, *alienation*, shame - might be something which requires compassion, understanding and debate, even if the target of the *disgust* is unjustifiable. If our response fails to offer compassion and hardens into disgust or hatred, hearts and minds are easily seized by reactionaries.

Like *disgust*, *hatred* is often perceived as an illegitimate political emotion. *Hatred* is an intense emotion led by a belief that a person, group or thing is a threat, danger or evil, as they violate social norms (Ahmed 2004). It is often accompanied by a sense of *disgust* of the other. Aristotle believed that the goal of *hatred* is not merely injury or pain, but annihilation; the ceasing of existence (Watt Smith 2015: 133). In a political context, *hate* is frequently described as an attitude which can be (publicly) 'incited' and is deemed to be morally or even legally transgressive. The argument in Hay (2007) is that the public *hate* politicians because they distrust them and cast them as self-interested and deceitful. Yet this, in many respects, side-steps the emotion of *hatred* with the cognitions that inform it, and substitutes the depth of the emotion *hatred* with 'distrust', 'cynicism', 'pessimism', 'disaffection', and so on. Furthermore, there are important differences between *hatred* of politicians, democracy, representative politics, outcomes of capitalist states, etc.

The tragic assassination of political figures might be informed by *hate*, encouraged by other actors or prevailing political perspectives, and occurs when an outrage or injury is perceived. This severe disaffection is often identified in deeply divided communities.

Finally, it is intuitive to expect that some disenchantment derives from *anger*. This is recognised in the most recent studies by Stoker and Hay (2016) and Stoker et al (2016) in their examinations of fast-thinking and populism but could be extended further. Although we may need to manage its heat, *anger* is an important political animator, especially when directed at an injustice or injury. A*nger* is important and should not be reined in or silenced because it signals that we care about something and may have been hurt by something. The discontent and disenchantment of the angry is not only seen in disengagement but also in participation. The target of *anger* may be justified or it may be democratically counterproductive. For example, the indignation (a feeling of *anger*) of some may inform support for reactionaries (Shorten 2015) and resentment may inform support for populists (Stoker and Hay 2016). Yet *anger* has also been understood as a crucial emotion for political mobilisation by feminist (Campbell 1996; Spelman 1989) and social movements literature (Jasper 1989; Lyman 1981). More significantly, it can be hard to express and *hear* anger constructively as black feminist, Audre Lorde explains, without: (1) fearing one's own or others anger (2) avoidance, (3) deflection, (4) defensiveness and (5) guilt (1994). The disenchantment literature verges towards defensiveness at times when it encounters citizen's anger. In places, the disenchantment literature depicts alternative forms of participation, such as protest, as inauthentic and lacking intentionality. For example, Stoker bemoans the superficial, authoritarian, expressive and ephemeral quality of protest activism; casting it as simplistic and presentist in which 'the engagement stops precisely at the moment that politics is designed to deal with, when conflicts are not clear cut and solutions are not obvious' (2006: 115). Yet elsewhere he endorses the value of the 'Make Poverty History' campaign. It is plausible that some protest action may be superficial but we are witnessing a burgeoning of unconventional political participation which signifies something about conventional politics (Bailey 2014; Tormey 2015). *Anger* may be an understandable response to contemporary political situations varying from the injustice of austerity measures, the prevalence of sexual assault and rape culture, the inadequacy of social housing, the domination of big business, climate change and militarism, to name but a few. *Anger,* like *alienation,* might be deep, real, directed towards the injustices which have emerged from the system and potentially justifiable. Protest could be formed in opposition to individualism, atomisation, selfish hopes, negativity, processes of depoliticisation, and the neglect of collective decision-making, moved by *anger* and *hope*.

## Conclusions

Research on political disenchantment draws attention to the significance of people's withdrawal from representative politics and examines a series of political emotions and negative cognitions. It has sought to understand the way citizens think about politics in depth and trace the link between this and their actions. This is important and valuable. I argue that we should also develop our understanding of the role of emotions in how citizens orient themselves towards politics and in efforts to revitalise politics. I seek to show that (1) there are a great variety of emotions involved in political disaffection which need careful explication, (2) we need to concentrate on cultivating particular motivating emotions (3) there is validity in the concerns of (some of) the disaffected, particularly when issues of justice and equality are concerned. Finally, I have argued in favour of a public cultivation of hope which may foster a robust and energetic disposition that can accept disappointments, provide sustenance and nourishment, recognise and promote indeterminacy, but is crucially rooted in practice. Future research could consider how emotions, such as hope, trust, and love, not only motivate us but sooth us, informing sustained political commitment. Extending our understanding of these processes better might allow us to move from states of disenchantment back into enchantment, or even love, again.

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