The Politics of Exemplarity: Ferrara on the disclosure of new political worlds

Introduction

World disclosing thought has conventionally occupied a place of pivotal importance in the overarching conception that Frankfurt School theorists hold of their emancipatory political project. Understood as the bringing forth of hidden and unacknowledged experiences of social suffering, disclosure is regarded as a crucial diagnostic tool for a critical social theory that has the broader aim of unmasking structural domination and sketching out possible paths to emancipation. Yet, despite this centrality, there has been over the last few years a marked waning of interest in disclosure as an instrument of emancipatory critique and a corresponding growth of interest in procedural, and neo-idealist concerns amongst critical theory's leading contemporary exponents. This shift has been fuelled to a large extent by Habermas's well- known argument that, as an aesthetic and rhetorical process of meaning creation, disclosing critique is inherently unsystematic and thus unamenable to the justificatory reconstruction that defines democratic discourse. Although it has been very influential, Habermas's marginalisation of disclosure is not without problems not least that it is often singled as one of the main reasons why contemporary Frankfurt School critical theory seems, in the eyes of a growing number of commentators, to have lost its radical, critical bite and accommodated itself to a liberal political agenda.

In this paper, I align myself with such criticisms and argue for the fundamental importance of experientially grounded disclosure on the grounds that is key to sustaining the type of theoretical openness to social context that is a necessary characteristic of a emancipatory critique. It is by basing itself in analysis of the over-looked life-worlds of

marginalised and oppressed groups that political theory maintains a cognitive receptivity to the 'other' that allows it, where necessary, to break from settled world views and open up new avenues of enquiry. When they come into its purview, rule-governed ideas of justification such as Habermas's discourse ethics tend to deal with these unrecognised aspects of social life by subsuming them under pre-established procedures thus effacing the potential epistemic challenge posed by their otherness. Rule governed discourse lacks therefore the internal capacity to, where necessary, expand or revise its familiar mode of reasoning in response to the changing demands of subordinated groups. Thus, far from being separate and subordinate to rational political justification, as Habermas would have it, disclosure is one of its necessary pre-conditions in so far as it works against theoretical closure and fosters willingness to understand the world differently that is a hall mark of genuinely critical theory.

In making this argument, I focus on the idea of exemplarity outlined by the Italian critical theorist Alessandro Ferrara that forms part of his general case for the centrality of disclosure to emancipatory political reasoning. Ferrara argues that 'at its best' political thought should have the capacity to animate the democratic imagination by disclosing new political worlds and hence new possibilities for thought and action. The exemplar embodies this imaginative capacity in that it is a concrete instantiation in the present of how things could be in the future and, through its ground-breaking nature, galvanises the will for democratic change. Of particular significance is Ferrara's argument that, by unpacking the process through which the exemplar takes hold of the collective imagination, it is possible to discern a much-needed alternative to the principle-governed paradigms of normative reasoning that dominate contemporary political theory. Derived partly from the Kantian notion of reflective judgement, exemplary normativity expresses a 'universalism without principles' that flows from a keen appreciation of the singular character of a particular phenomenon. When transferred to the political domain, exemplarity suggests a mode of

reasoning across contexts that is potentially more inclusive than principle based approaches to voices which, by virtue of their marginal or disempowered status, are often absent from democratic deliberation. By reconciling pluralism with universalism in this way, exemplary reasoning seems to expand and radicalise the normative scope of democratic theory. Also of significance is Ferrara's contention, that far from being an unstable process of meaning creation, exemplary disclosure has a systematic internal rationale that renders it open to inter-subjective validation although not in the hyper-rationalist terms prescribed by Habermas. In these two respects then, Ferrara's notion of exemplarity provides important conceptual resources for an analogous argument that re-grounds critical theory in experientially based disclosing critique.

I go on to argue, however, that the critical promise of the idea of exemplarity is cut off by the way Ferrara grounds it in the speculative construct of *sensus communis* defined as a set of non-naturalised, trans-cultural intuitions about human flourishing. I contend that this socially deracinated abstraction blocks an adequate understanding of the specific nature of group differences and, in particular, of the asymmetrical relations of power around which they are invariably constructed. Put differently, sensus communis cancels out the attention to particularity which is supposedly a strength of exemplary universalism and this leads in turn to a questionably domesticated and depoliticised view of democratic deliberation. Ultimately, this abstraction from power undermines Ferrara's emancipatory aims in that he is unable to demonstrate how exemplarity does in fact disclose new political worlds and open up unexplored possibilities for thought as much as simply confirm established liberal norms. Drawing on critical race theory, I propose a re-politicised understanding of exemplarity that locates its disclosing force in the actual dynamics of struggles against oppression rather than in a socially weightless abstraction.

Rethinking disclosure

According to the Italian critical theorist, Alessandro Ferrara one of the fundamental aims of emancipatory democratic thought is the articulation of new values and needs or what he calls the disclosure of new political worlds. It is through disclosure of previously unarticulated experiences, meanings and values that sedimented perceptions of the world are shifted and new possibilities for democratic thought and action fostered. At its best, political thinking should have the 'distinctive ability… of setting our imagination in motion, inducing the feeling of enhancement, enriching or deepening of the range of possibilities afforded by our life in common… it possesses the *potential for disclosing a new political world* for us' .[i] Disclosure of the new may not, however, be a straightforward task for the theorist not least because, given its multifaceted and nebulous nature, it may be difficult to identify it in the first place. Moreover, the 'problem of the new' also partly lies, as Hannah Arendt has observed, with the assimilative tendencies of theoretical reason which means that the distinctive nature of an emergent phenomenon, the newness of the new so to speak, is likely to be under-appreciated or effaced through absorption into established schemata . [ii]Of course, not all 'new' facts and meanings will dislodge existing interpretative frameworks, some will simply confirm the already known. But others will have potentially destabilising epistemic implications in so far as they disclose previously unrecognised aspects of social being and thus challenge established ways of seeing the world. In these cases, the theorist faces the dual challenge of discerning the political relevance of phenomena that are not yet important and of recognising that their own settled frameworks may be in need of expansion or revision. Indeed, Ferrara argues that the preoccupation of much current democratic theory with formulating principle governed accounts of justification blunts its sensitivity to the new

and closes it off from experiences and perspectives not easily articulable within its pre-defined categories. Whilst rule governed models of reason are centrally important to democratic thought, their over-extension can lead to a 'cognitive solipsism' that immunizes dominant paradigms against new dimensions of being and, at the limit, may render them increasingly rigid and 'perverse' in relation to the changing social context. To counter such theoretical closure, the democratic thinker must endeavour to cultivate a 'passion for openness' defined as an 'ethical receptivity towards "the other"' and a 'cognitive receptivity toward untried paths for the self, untried doctrines, untried theoretical developments'.[iii] While there exists no single conceptual or methodological formula that can automatically deliver such an open ethos, it is clear that it may be fostered through the pluralisation of democratic reason and, in particular, by making greater space for the work of the imagination. For, according to Ferrara, the imagination is the only faculty with the crucial capacity 'to make present in the mind what is not [immediately] before the senses' and thereby enable the disclosure of new contexts of meaning and new political worlds. [iv]

The disclosure of new worlds is also an animating idea in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School in so far as it forms a central plank of its broader critique of domination. In this view, capitalist society not only systematically produces inequality and oppression but also routinely denies that it does so through the deployment of naturalising and obfuscating justifications defined as ' a system of convictions and practices that has the paradoxical quality of distracting one's attention from the very social conditions that structurally produce that system'. [v] Disclosing critique aims to undermine the cognitive distortions brought about by this general pathology of reason by shining a light on the 'hidden' or suppressed forms of suffering that are diagnostic indicators of the inherently in-egalitarian nature of the capitalist social order. It is this attentiveness to the particularities and patterns of negative social experiences that constitutes the foundational moment of emancipatory world disclosure and

fuels a wider critique of power. It is important to note that for the critical theorist, the new is not so much understood as the radically new phenomenon or inaugural event as stressed by Arendt for example but as the 'alienated familiar', a neglected, un-thematised substrate of experience that when made fully visible delivers a 'shock' to settled world-views by presenting the 'old from a new angle' [vi]

Despite the central place that disclosure, qua a 'phenomenology of injustice', has conventionally occupied in Frankfurt School critical theory, its prominence in the recent work of some of its leading exponents has declined significantly. Arguably, this diminished significance is in large part the effect of Habermas's influential arguments about the inherently aesthetic, unstable and therefore non-generalisable nature of disclosing critique. Habermas recognises that world disclosure has a vital role to play in the realms of literature and art in so far as it stimulates the creation of alternative meanings and reinvigorates settled understanding of the world. But, as an essentially rhetorical and aesthetic phenomena, it is based in nothing more than the free-play of the imagination and thus has a limited relevance to systematic political argument. Governed by the mere contingency of innovation, disclosure is an 'abnormal' process whose validity cannot be established through the 'normal' processes of rational justification that govern democratic discourse. It is only these discourses 'specialised in questions of truth and justice' and indexed to 'inner-world learning processes' that possess substantive problem solving capacities. Disclosing critique's absence of formal propositional content obfuscates its relation to the 'truth', renders it democratically unaccountable and mystifies 'intramundane praxis' as an impersonal, haphazard force, a 'poetic demiurge' driven by ' the anonymous hurly-burly of the institutionalisation of ever new worlds from the imaginary dimension'.[vii]

Habermas's concerns about the connection between meaning, validity and argumentation are important but his portrayal of disclosing critique as a haphazard process of opening ever new horizons of experience is both questionable and has had a troubling effect on the intellectual direction of contemporary critical theory. His failure to see that disclosure may take the form of systematic sociological criticism and its consequent sequestration to a narrowly defined aesthetic practice is highly tendentious. Above all, his overly stringent separation of critique from discourse attenuates the fundamental, animating connection that should exist between emancipatory political theory and the experiences of unrecognised, marginal and oppressed groups. Many socially invisible types of oppression are inchoate, opaque and only partially understood and often only come to the fore in the first place through symbolic and informal modes of expression. Even once they have become publically visible, such experiences do not necessarily translate straight-forwardly into the prescribed logic of validity claims Members of subordinate groups often have experiences that from a hegemonic perspective may appear 'alien' or may not even be expressible within dominant frameworks because they are 'full of structured heterogeneities and discontinuities' .[viii] Subordination often partially takes the form of stigmatisation and psychological injury and may need to be revealed in a less procedural fashion through figurative speech, narrative, testimony, protest and so on. Habermas's reluctance to acknowledge the gap between the formal demands of theory and the lived reality of oppression means that, according to a number of his critics, an 'extreme discrepancy' has opened up between discourse ethics and the experiences of those disempowered subjects whom it is supposed to represent.[ix] With the loss of this experiential foothold, discourse ethics has relinquished the critical perspective from which it can effectively challenge the illusory notions of equality and other naturalising fictions of pathological reason. Yet while Habermas' successors have criticised his work for its the excessive cognitivism and lack of phenomenological reach, it is notable that they have

not attempted to address these shortcomings in their own work by investing the idea of disclosing thought with renewed critical relevance. Instead, on the whole, present day critical theory has abandoned experientially grounded forms of disclosing critique and moved towards meta-theoretical speculation on the foundations of justification (e.g. Forst) and the nature of social progress (e.g. Honneth). This shift has promoted a growing number of critics to claim that contemporary critical theory has become 'domesticated', that it has its lost its radical diagnostic bite and has accommodated itself to a liberal politics rather than one of emancipatory transformation.[x]

It is against this backdrop that Ferrara's work takes on significance. His attempt to reinstall an idea of disclosure at the heart of political thinking provides a valuable counter to Habermas as well as contributing, more generally, to an opening up of theoretical political reasoning beyond rule-governed notions of justification. In his formulation of world disclosure as exemplary universalism Ferrara demonstrates how it does in fact have a systematic and inclusive rationale that renders it open to inter-subjective validation albeit not in the hyper rationalist terms prescribed by Habermas. Far from being marginal to democratic deliberation, disclosure is one of its indispensable pre-conditions in so far as it catalyses the cognitive receptivity to particularity, qua the new and the other, that keeps political reasoning open and inclusive. An ability to see the relevance of the new, is crucial to combatting the assimilative and potentially solipsistic tendencies of theoretical political reasoning and consequently to maintaining ongoing emancipatory relevance to a changing social context.

Exemplary Universalism

Ferrara establishes the centrality of disclosure to normative political reasoning through the idea of exemplarity and associated notion of a universalism without principles. Most notable about the exemplary instance is the way it reconciles, in its singular, innovative

form, the usually disconnected realms of is and ought. The exemplar brings together facts and norms not just in a 'passing, occasional and imperfect intertwining' but in a lasting, nearly complete and 'rare fusion' and in doing so sets the imagination alight.[xi] It is a concrete incarnation in the present of how things ought to be in the future, or, in Ferrara's terms, the 'force of *what is as it should be*'.[xii] Through its very exceptionality, it provides an 'anticipatory prefiguration' of potential change in the world, embodying a tangible sense of 'the rise of new patterns and the opening of new paths'.[xiii] Usually thought of in the aesthetic terms of an outstanding work of art, exemplarity also occurs in other social realms, epitomised in exceptional cases of authenticity, perfection, integrity, charisma, aura, courage, genius, and so on. Some kinds of exemplarity encapsulate a normativity of which we are already aware and which confirms an established sense of being. Others, however, have a strongly innovative character and enlarge horizons of understanding through the opening of 'new vistas on what exists and new dimensions of normativity'.[xiv] Examples of this in politics include political revolutions, social movements, new religions, inspirational leaders, exceptional acts of courage and so on. Given the trail-blazing character of such exemplary instances, it may often be difficult initially to grasp their full significance, to entirely comprehend the innovative even radical implications of their newness. It may be through approximating strategies, such as analogy with past experiences, that their sui-generis meaning can be intuited at first while their full originality only unfurls completely over time. The challenge then that the exemplar presents, then, is partly one of interpretation itself for it seems to require 'that we formulate ad hoc the principle of which it constitutes an instantiation'.[xv] The normative significance of its newness cannot be fully grasped according to pre-established principles but nor can it be explained solely as a 'reflection of locally shared and unquestionable preferences' given its impact across contexts. Rather in so far as it bring forth aspects of social being that have previously been unexpressed, its normative

significance derives from its own singularity, it carries within itself its own principle of interpretation so to speak.

Like Arendt, Ferrara sees the potential of this idea of the ground-breaking instance that cannot be fully interpreted according to established standards, for expanding established accounts of normativity in politics. He draws on her reading of Kant's idea of reflective judgement to explain the reasoning process that allows us to appreciate the sui-generis force of the exemplar. According to Kant, the judgement of a work of art as beautiful cannot merely be the expression of idiosyncratic subjective preference ('I like canary wine') because it implies that others ought to agree (regardless of whether they actually do or not) and therefore that a certain type of universality is at stake in the assessment. This implicit universality is not based, however, in externally given norms that all must recognise because aesthetic judgements cannot compel agreement in the same manner as principle based, i.e., determinant, ideas of moral judgement. Aesthetic judgement can only solicit or 'woo' agreement on the basis of a shared recognition of the uniqueness of the object itself as an 'outstanding instance of authentic congruency' between the individual and wider, collective sensibility. The universal scope of aesthetic judgement rests then not on compliance with a principle but on the capturing of a feeling, its normative force flows from the invocation of a transcendent sense of the promotion or furtherance of life. In Kantian terms, reflective judgement is grounded in an appeal to *sensus communis* defined as a 'universal capacity to sense the flourishing of human life and what favours it'.[xvi] In so far as the normative force of the exemplar resides in its mobilisation of a common sensibility, it embodies a universalism without principles, i.e., one that flows from its own singular appeal rather than from the assimilative power of pre-established moral principles.

Ferrara uses the idea of exemplary universalism to recast key democratic issues in a way that he claims extends the normative scope of mainstream accounts of justice, obligation, freedom, political justification and so on which tend to be based in determinant, Western notions of reason. His main claim is that, by tapping deep and commonly held intuitions about human flourishing via the *sensus communis*, the exemplary instance transcends local boundaries more easily than the force of law or principles. In appealing to a wide variety of life worlds, the exemplar reconciles pluralism with universalism in a seemingly more spontaneous manner than imposed regulating principles. So, for instance, a frequently noted problem with justifying human rights through universal principles is that the latter often presume the priority of Western values and norms. By aprioristically assuming their moral independence Rawls, for example, pre-empts consideration of the difficulties that human rights as contingent Western constructs may present for a post-colonial world.[xvii] Habermas bypasses moral foundationalism by using a legally derived vindication of human rights as possessing special foundational status ('extra-positive validity') in virtue of their universal scope. Given their democratically enabling capacity, human rights can be justified at the level of international justice 'as rights on their way to acquiring a full legal status'. But, Habermas's proleptic justification also has potentially ethnocentric entailments in as much as it rests on acceptance of Western liberal-democratic constitutionalism.[xviii] These problems of latent cultural bias seem to be avoided however by relocating the normative force of human rights in their transcultural appeal as exemplars of a certain notion of human fulfilment. This superordinate identity is able to inspire a multitude of concrete struggles for equality precisely because it is not specifically Western but a 'non-comprehensive' or 'thin' conception that remains 'impartial with respect to the particularism of the singular contending identities' that it embraces. The 'reconstructible narrative' of flourishing constitutes the shared moral horizon around which diverse conflicts about rights and equality

are oriented. If conflicts did not share this common orientation, they would not be understandable in the first place as struggles over 'something'.[xix]

Priority of judgement

There is no doubting the prima facie appeal of Ferrara's recasting of democratic ideals as 'concrete universals' around which ordinary citizens regardless of their socio-cultural location may express their diverging political demands. It remains consistent with pluralist intuitions which do not require that non-liberal or non-Western individuals and peoples embrace assumptions that are not their own' [xx] It is not just the idea of flourishing evoked in democratic ideals provides a normatively effective focal point, but also that exemplary universalism is an essentially disclosive rather than regulatory concept. In making visible previously unnoticed life-worlds and thereby challenging conventional political attitudes, every concrete struggle potentially contributes to the expansion and enrichment of the democratic imagination. Yet, despite this appeal, Habermasian thinkers would almost certainly remain unconvinced in so far as the disclosure of new political worlds still seems to be too haphazard and expressive a process to be able to bear the normative load that Ferrara wishes to place on it. In their view, the self-standing act of discernment, namely reflective judgement, which underpins exemplary universalism is insufficiently tethered to the kind of systematic rational argument that is an indispensable feature of debates on justice. Without some 'internal relationship to an ability to argue and deliberate well' the normative impact of exemplary disclosure remains 'inexplicable' and rests on a 'mythology of judgement'. [xxi]

These misgivings are not without foundation and are often expressed by Habermasians in relation to the Arendtian idea of judgement on which Ferrara draws. Unlike

her intersubjective conception of action, judgement is conceived by Arendt primarily as an individual act of contemplation and, in the eyes of her critics, this monological orientation obscures the ways in which it is connected to wider democratic politics.[xxii] Ferrara seeks to overcome this limitation by demonstrating that exemplary judgement has an inherently inter-subjective character which necessarily links it to processes of argumentation and democratic validation. What renders judgement more than a purely subjective act of discernment is partly its communicability. The judgement of the spectator about the exemplary status of a certain phenomenon is non-subjective in that it brings something into view that can only be validated by soliciting the views of others. If this something, this aspect of exemplarity was not communicable at all, and therefore could not be understood by others, then it would inevitably remain a purely idiosyncratic perception devoid of general relevance. In addition to its communicability, the validity of judgement also turns around its inclusivity. One judges a particular object or instance to be exemplary not by assessing its consistency against the right external principle but rather by taking the viewpoints of others into account: 'valid.. are those judgements that are *as inclusive as possible* of all competing standpoints and are thus as "general" as possible while remaining "closely connected with particulars"'. [xxiii] Inclusivity is a feature of Arendt's idea of enlarged thought but, here again, is limited by its subjective emphasis on the individual's capacity to go 'visiting' in the imagination. Without a foothold in objective social relations, there is no independent way of checking that this internal thought experiment pays sufficient heed to all those 'other' perspectives that are relevant, especially those beyond the individual's direct experience. By replacing the individual imagination with the collective social imagination, Ferrara circumvents this difficulty by conceiving inclusivity in relation to the shared self-understandings and normative horizons that are the objects of democratic contestation and renewal. Judgement is no longer an arbitrary, self-referential act but can be said to have a certain impartiality by virtue of its

communicability and inclusivity. Its intersubjective structure establishes a connection to argumentation and also therefore to democratic validation albeit not in the hyper-rationalist terms defined by Habermas. Nonetheless, judgements are not simply arbitrary discernments but, through argument, can be ordered on a scale of justifiability such that some can be said to be better than others. Such evaluations are made not on the basis of consistency with a set of rules (because this would be to pre-determine the criteria that are relevant to the matter at hand) but on the basis of the congruency of specific conflicting positions with the larger exemplary notion of flourishing. [xxiv]

The inter-subjective formulation of judgement makes it possible to see how, in an analogous fashion, disclosing critique is more than just an arbitrary process of opening every new horizons of meaning. By eliding disclosure with aesthetics *tout court*, Habermas fails to appreciate that far from being guided only by the contingency of innovation, disclosure in the context of the critique of power is always subject to the constraint of possessing some kind of correspondence to what we understand to be main features of the world. There are better and worse interpretations of the world and a variety of methodological indices, standards of evidence and conceptual logics with which to explore the explanatory and normative merits of any given act of disclosure. As Axel Honneth puts it: 'whereas in aesthetic representation the opening of new contexts of meaning can transpire without bounds…In social criticism it remains bound to the limits set by the actual constraints of social reproduction'.[xxv] The disclosure of a new or suppressed aspect of social life does not amount to the presentation of a new truth in-itself for this would be to fetishize the experiential realm as the ends of critical knowledge. In this respect, Habermas is correct to assert that the normative force of disclosure does not have a direct relation to the truth because it rests on rhetorically conveyed assertions rather than direct propositional claims. But he is not correct to depict world disclosure as an unredeemable and random insight and thereby to deny it systematic

sociological and normative coherence and separate it so sharply from deliberative processes of validation. It would be more accurate to say, with thinkers such as James Bohman, that disclosure has an indirect relation to the truth, it raises a 'claim' to be relevant to the truth, the validity or relevance of which remains to be verified by further reflection and deliberation.[xxvi] By bringing new or obscured aspects of social experience to the fore, disclosure asks us to see the world differently, to question assumptions and deeply held convictions, to enlarge our understanding of what is considered relevant to the debate at hand and, if necessary, to expand or even radically revise prevailing frameworks. It represents a ' calculated effort to change the preconditions under which a society conducts evaluative discourse on the ends of common action'. [xxvii]

When it is cast in terms of relevance, it becomes apparent that disclosure operates at a level prior to propositional claims, that is, at the level of the evaluative structures which precede and determine what is regarded as a relevant claim in the first place and what is not. In this respect, disclosure is a necessary precondition of democratic deliberation about truth and validity and Ferrara's argument about the autonomy of judgement helps elucidate the nature of this priority. The autonomy of judgement refers to the way in which it is always in some sense prior to and enabling of justification. [xxviii] Drawing on Arendt, Ferrara argues that, unlike Habermas, she does not think that judgements can be evaluated from a third-person standpoint (the 'we' of communicative discourse) because this itself tacitly presumes the rationality of a consensus not yet formed. For Arendt, it is not possible to take a stance (third person) outside of the actual debate itself, there is only immersion in deliberation and this means that, *in media res*, an initial act of judgement must be the basis from which to choose from the alternatives at hand not a presupposed consensus. Before a justificatory process can even begin we need a prior act of judgement which selects a topic, decides on an appropriate way of framing an issue, works out the relevance of certain facts and positions to

it, situates interlocutors in a field debate, and so on. In the same way that judgement is necessary to kick start debate, so disclosure plays a fundamental role in initially orienting deliberation in a relevant way and in sustaining its ongoing receptivity to the new, the other, the alien. Outdated or reactionary forms of thought often lack such receptivity evident in their tendency to assimilate the world to unchanging schemata and to filter out new, potentially threatening elements by deeming them anomalous, marginal or irrelevant. In this way, for example, assertions of the inherent inferiority of women, black people and gays have been deployed to exclude them from the relevant category of moral personhood that renders them worthy of consideration as democratic equals. This discounting of the other is not limited to explicitly reactionary types of thought but is also common, in a less pathological form, in seemingly more open types and is connected to what social epistemologists regard as a widespread cognitive reluctance to have one's world view disconfirmed. [xxix] Given the potentially exclusionary effects of this cognitive bias towards self-confirmation, it is clear that emancipatory political reasoning cannot be structured exclusively around justificatory procedures but must also include, as a priority, types of thought that work against such theoretical closure. This is even more necessary when deliberation is actualised in the world where, unlike the a-temporal, definitive scenarios of theory, it is a dynamic, ongoing process where circumstances change and new interlocutors emerge. Here, democratic reasoning does not just turn around the ability to assess the validity of specific claims against certain principles, indeed, it would be deficient if it did so. It must also encompass the ability to see the significance of newly emergent factors and to respond to them appropriately; should new interlocutors should be included in debate, should the frame of reference be expanded, should argumentative procedures be altered and so on. Justificatory reason on its own cannot foster such a responsive sensibility because it cannot be prescribed by formal rules but springs from the contingencies of the discursive scenario itself and the contextually grounded

discriminations that this may necessitate. Regulatory rules and procedures are not in themselves critically self-reflexive, they cannot generate on their own a preparedness to question their modus operandi and sedimented mental habits because, *eo ipso*, they deal with new phenomena by subsuming them under a pre-defined rationale. Their very formalism may make it difficult to see the relevance of that which stands outside of established categories, that is, to recognise the new as new, the other as other and, if necessary, to change in response to this. It is the disclosure of new experiences not fully understandable under existing frameworks that provides the impetus for such critical self- scrutiny and thus by implication sustains the responsive, open stance to the world that is a necessary precondition of emancipatory thought. As Ferrara puts it: 'all the important junctures where something new has emerged in politics and has transformed the world …were junctures where what is new never prevailed by virtue of its following logically from what already existed, but rather by virtue of its conveying a new vista on the world we share in common and highlighting some hitherto unnoticed potentialities of it'. [xxx] In short, disclosure is not, contra Habermas, an unguided process of meaning creation secondary to the core business of democratic justification. Rather, along with justification, it lies at the very heart of emancipatory thought enabling the former it to counter its own self-reifying tendencies and maintain its openness and relevance to the changing social context.

Politics of exemplarity

Yet despite the persuasiveness of Ferrara's argument for the centrality of world disclosure to political thought, its critical promise is undermined by his decision to ground exemplarity in the questionable abstraction of *sensus communis*. Clearly, not all types of

world-disclosure generate the type of critical insight that necessarily enhances progressive democratic thought. What gives disclosure its normative force, from the perspective of critical theory, is the way in which it fosters a critique of the dominant order by rendering visible the overlooked experiential worlds of marginalised and oppressed groups. In principle, Ferrara seems to hold a similar critical view of disclosure which aims to challenge 'sedimented social constructions' by bringing to the fore 'the experience of victims': without… the ability to see thing with the eyes of another, different from us, nothing can pierce the immunizing armor of our collective representations'.[xxxi] In practice, however, it is precisely this capacity of the exemplar to expand understanding of the world by opening up new contexts of meaning that is stymied by its foundation in sensus communis. This deracinated artifice directs attention away from any specific life-world towards a speculative pre-social unity and, in so doing, has the practical effect of blocking a critical understanding of entrenched, and hierarchical, social relations.

Ferrara acknowledges that *sensus communis* is a potentially problematic concept caught between universalism and particularism, between Kantian formulations as a naturalised faculty of the mind, on the one hand, and the phenomenological formulations as 'thick' local practices, on the other. Accordingly, he situates his account of *sensus communis* somewhere in between, defining it as a 'pre-cultural' yet 'non-natural' intuitive sense located in a somewhat elusive space that is 'equi-accessible' from the plurality of existing cultures. [xxxii]*Sensus communis* comprises, in essence, a matrix of 'denaturalised but not culturally thickened' intuitions about flourishing and the furtherance of life that traverse all cultures and perspectives. This intuitive commonality is sufficiently deep-rooted in the constitution of human subjectivity that it transcends socio-cultural difference even under the intense conditions of 'hyper-pluralism' that characterise the contemporary world.[xxxiii] Indeed, the idea that hyper-pluralism might serve to deepen socially atomising forces and hence

incommensurability between groups and cultures is dismissed by Ferrara as making no philosophical sense. By virtue of being situated in the same 'division of labour', individuals share a 'common moral space', however thin and this provides the concrete anchoring point around which otherwise deeply divergent world views turn. [xxxiv]We could not understand ourselves as disagreeing if we did not tacitly agree on the basic underlying terms of the disagreement in the first place.

It may be correct, in a purely abstract sense, for Ferrara to warn against a negative metaphysics that reifies difference as 'total inaccessibility'. Far more questionable, in a sociological sense, however, is his extrapolated claim that therefore a unifying intuitive substrate can be said to precede and transcend all socio-cultural 'bifurcation'. The postulation of a pre-social realm of shared intuitions effectively enables Ferrara to markedly understate the problem of entrenched social division and deep difference and therefore to underplay the antagonism and conflict that these may produce in political interaction. Put differently, the socially weightless device of *sensus communis* operates as a symbolic denegation of power that forecloses consideration of the relations of domination and subordination around which differences are inevitably organised and which divide groups from each other. In Ferrara's flattened out vision, hyper-pluralist politics appears to be a domesticated value pluralism where, in Rawlsian terms, reasonable persons non-problematically accept the right of other reasonable persons to hold differing ends. Nothing of import seems to hang on these ends, they lack urgency, force and are devoid of concrete political stakes, because they are divorced from the context of power which ineluctably undergirds all democratic disagreement and struggle.

When hyper-pluralist conflict is considered in the context of social hierarchy then issues of equality, oppression and disempowerment come into view more sharply along with

an account of social being as more internally divided than Ferrara's frictionless depiction. A not uncommon experiential effect of hierarchized social conditions is, for instance, alienation; oppressed groups often feel estranged from privileged social groups and mainstream society more generally.[xxxv]. The lived reality of subordination may mean that these groups feel they have little, if anything, in common with the norms and aspirations of dominant groups. In cases of enduring oppression, they may also feel that dominant groups have no interest in genuinely listening to them or in doing anything substantive to rectify their plight. Critical race theorists have for example extensively documented the ways in which entrenched racial division means that many black people in the US feel that, despite formal equality, they live in a world set apart from the social world of whites.[xxxvi] Set apart in both the material sense of seemingly unbreakable cycles of poverty, deprivation and mass incarceration and the symbolic sense of pervasive racial prejudice which is frequently downplayed or even denied by the dominant order. Du Bois famously captured these experiences of exclusion and alienation in his striking image of the veil that obscures black people from the white gaze not in a way that renders them completely invisible but that bestows a false visibility in the form of impoverished and distorting stereotypes. [xxxvii] Such estrangement takes the form not just of externally imposed stigmatisation but also of an internally lived subjection; a self—alienation arising from the internalisation of racial stigma in psychologically injurious and self-destructive ways. Du Bois and Fanon are amongst the many writers who have shown how difficult it is for the black subject to form an integral, purposive sense of self in a symbolic order that is permeated by racist meanings, 'a world which yields no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world'. [xxxviii]. Lacking an affirmative stance of recognition, the black subject is often left struggling with negative feelings of self –worth, ennui, rage, despair, and so on. [xxxix] It is this depth and persistence of this self-alienation that, inter alia, has given rise to the long

running and contested debate about the most appropriate terms in which the internal life of Black America might be positively reconstructed.[xl]

The issue of alienation is significant here not only because it is entirely absent from Ferrara's world view but also because it complicates his account of the rootedness of exemplary disclosure in the pre-social, unifying force of *sensus communis*. The persistent patterns of stigmatisation that routinely cast whiteness as coextensive with humanity and blackness as 'other', as 'non-personhood' and non-humanity demonstrate that superordinate notions of flourishing are unavoidably contingent, socially loaded constructs.[xli] Ideas of human well-being don't spontaneously emerge from a quasi- ontological realm of intuition but are the products of a specific history and social circumstances. As such, their meaning is often coded in a way that, even when not explicitly exclusionary, may tacitly favour certain groups over others; white persons over black, men over women, and so on. Even in its most intuitive, 'culturally unthickened' form, meaning necessarily bears within itself the traces of the social hierarchies from which it arises and which render it a site of disagreement and struggle rather than of quasi-naturalistic consensus. From this perspective, political debate is not, as Ferrara envisages, an orderly process where subordinated groups insert their own particular content into a 'shared conception of who we are'. Rather it may involve a far deeper and contentious interrogation of the latent (white, male) content of the overarching identity itself and, by implication, of the very parameters of the debate itself. Who defines the superordinate identity? Is it tacitly skewed to favour some groups over others? Is it even a relevant way of framing the concrete social issues at stake? Indeed, for disempowered groups, the very idea that there exist shared aspirations and expressions of flourishing that transcend social differences seems to be a case of liberal wishful thinking that prefers to focus on fictitious universals rather than the reality of enduring social inequalities.

In so far as it abstracts from such issues of power, the critical bite of Ferrara's exemplarity is thrown into doubt since it does not so much disclose new horizons of meaning, qua the experiences of subordinate groups, as confirm consensually held, extra-political truths. This is not to say that the idea of exemplarity must be abandoned; Ferrara's general case about its normative centrality to emancipatory political thought is undoubtedly compelling. It is to argue, however, that the critical impact of exemplarity is more effectively conceptualised in relation to the concrete dynamics of political struggle than the free-floating universal of *sensus communis*. Understood as a symbolically significant moment in a given conflict, exemplarity takes on an interpretative complexity that is smoothed away in Ferrara's syncretic account. For example, the history of the African-American struggle for equality in the US has many exemplary occurrences that continue to have inspiring effects on the contemporary political imagination: Rosa Parks' defiant act, Martin Luther King's 'I have a Dream' speech, the Black power salute at 1968 Olympics, 'taking the knee' at recent sporting events to name only a few of the most obvious events. To construe the galvanising effect of these instances in terms of a normativity that proceeds from a shared conception of who we are would be a strangely tangential and apolitical interpretation that ignores how, for many, a deepening racial divide means that 'the discovery of commonality and agreement between the races [is] a dim prospect'.[xlii] It is an interpretation that denudes these exemplary instances of a force and urgency that comes not so much from the invocation of a shared humanity as from the need to make visible the brutality and violence of racial domination that has continued in a relatively unbroken, though transfigured, line from slavery to present day formal equality. Their normative impact resides partly in the attempt to make visible experiences that are more usually overlooked, devalued even denied by mainstream society. Thus, what gives the song *'Strange Fruit'* (and the blues more generally) special political

significance in the history of black struggle is the exceptional lyrical expression it gives to the suffering and violence that has marked the lives of African-Americans.[xliii] In the words of Ralph Ellison, blues is the autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically, it is the 'impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one's aching consciousness, to finger its jagged grain and to transcend it, not by the consolation of philosophy but by squeezing from it near tragic, near comic lyricism.[xliv] Ferrara might well argue that in its depiction of the 'radical negativity' of lynching and hanging, *Strange Fruit* reminds us anew of the fundamental right of all human beings to lead a flourishing life. But in so far as this catch all interpretation is detached from a concrete sense of historicity, it fails to appreciate that the exemplar, in these circumstances, acts as black counter-testimony, its impact flowing not from the abstract anticipation of future well-being but from the shocking reminder of past suffering. If past injustice is to be adequately acknowledged and present inequality properly understood, then, the 'abstract thought of universality' must be tied to 'the anamnestic power of a remembering that goes beyond the concepts of morality itself'[xlv] if For many oppressed groups, it is imperative that justice has retrospective, rectificatory dimensions and to pass over these dimensions is arguably to indirectly compound oppression in the cognitive form of the historical amnesia which typifies white ignorance.[xlvi]

If the power of exemplary disclosure comes not from the affirmation of a shared ideal but from the rendering visible of an overlooked experiential world - the alienated familiar - then it acquires a polemical aspect that is also underplayed by Ferrara. Polemical in as much as the rendering visible of suppressed experiences may serve to confront the dominant order with its own disavowed shortcomings. The force of this type of exemplarity comes not so much from the assertion of a right to be included in a political order that is 'already up and running and presumed to be reasonably decent' but from the condemnation of that order and

implied demand that it be transformed. [xlvii]This confrontational dynamic is captured in Ellison's description of Richard Wright's autobiography *Black Boy*: 'he [Wright] has converted the American Negro impulse toward self-annihilation and 'going-under-ground' into a will to confront the world, to evaluate his experience honestly and throw his findings unashamedly into the guilty conscience of America'.[xlviii]. As a performative enactment of the divided nature of the social world, the exemplar is likely to be deeply challenging, its reception contested and potentially divisive. It does not one-sidedly endorse collective norms but rather, as a counter-hegemonic utterance, engenders political dis-identification with the status quo. It doesn't simply 'frame a collective body' but instead produces a 'multiplicity of folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable, and the feasible.'[xlix] So, for example, the black power salute given by the US athletes (Tommie Smith and John Carlos) in the 1968 Olympics was undeniably an exemplary political gesture but it was also confrontational and contentious. The athletes were lauded in certain quarters and condemned in others including the Olympic organising committee which, using the threat of expelling the whole US team from the games, barred the two men instead.

Polemic, antagonism and contestability are not features limited to a certain type of political exemplar but are arguably also deep-rooted characteristics of democratic politics more generally. Indeed the choice of what constitutes an exemplar itself is also potentially contentious – why this act rather than another? - but is air brushed away in Ferrara's unifying account which seems to take for granted that a commitment to liberal norms is already in place. For example, in the light of the deepening racial divide in the US, Ferrara's description of the exemplary status of Obama's election as a reminder of the 'extraordinary rapidity with which a constitutional order has proven capable of bringing racial equality from being a contested terrain in the 50's and 60's' …to a reality fully implemented in the supreme

executive institution' seems both naive and unaware of its politically partisan nature.[l] This prior, not fully articulated commitment to liberal norms is problematic not least because it stands in tension with his claim that, by virtue of their pre-cultural status, the ideals invoked in exemplary instance are not culturally thickened but appeal to all groups regardless of their social situation. But the selection of the Rawlsian notion of the 'reasonable' as governing ideal for transcultural deliberation seems not a little problematic in the light of its emergence from a tradition of Enlightenment thought that has historically treated women, black people and other minorities as unreasonable others.

A worry about the political rethinking of exemplarity that I propose here would be that it unduly parochialises the notion by binding its normative impact to the immediate context of a given struggle and thus depriving it of general significance. It is possible, however, to explain the trans-contextual force of the exemplar without deploying the quasi-naturalised construct of sensus communis but using instead what Ellison calls a 'sociology of sensibility'[li]. For instance, exemplarity could be re-cast around Raymond Williams' idea of a structure of feeling which denotes a dynamic substrate of ideas and experiences - 'thought as felt and feeling as thought' - vying to emerge at any one time in history. This social experience 'in solution' may not yet be articulated in a fully worked-out form but nor is it mere flux; it is a structured formation of embodied affects and dispositions that 'exert palpable pressures and set effective limits on experience and action'.[lii] On this view, the normative reach of the exemplar resides in the way it taps into this experiential substrate, crystallizing its fluid and semi-articulated dynamics, in a singular, inspirational form. Thinking about exemplarity in such socially immanent terms avoids the depoliticising entailments of a free-floating universal and renders the connection to political agency more visible. Politics is after all a scenario of action; it involves processes of mobilisation, protest and struggle but in Ferrara's decontextualized account there is little evidence of active,

concrete agency. If agency can be discerned at all, it appears either in the strangely pacified mode of disembedded individuals politely introducing their own perspective on commonly agreed ends or in the impersonal, evanescent instance of the exemplar that verifies extra-political truths about the human condition.

Conclusion: Priority of the Negative

In the end then, the disclosing force of exemplarity, its capacity to bring to the fore that which is not visible in the present moment, is stymied by its grounding in the fictitious universal of sensus communis. Untethered from any social context, exemplarity does not so much disclose new worlds of meaning as confirm that which is already known, namely, established liberal narratives about the essentially progressive, if unfulfilled nature of liberal democracy. In so far as this is the case, Ferrara's exemplary universalism can be said to fail in its overarching aim of providing a more open, emancipatory form of reasoning than the principle governed modes that currently dominate political thought. By eschewing pre-given interpretative frameworks, universalism without principles supposedly embodies a theoretical receptivity to the particularized differences of social life and an ethical openness to the other. But, given the abstract, socially weightless terms in which it is configured, it finishes by deploying the kind of subsumptive logic that is not so dissimilar to the principle based reasoning it ostensibly eschews where deep difference and social alterity are neutralised by being harmonised around the extra-political truth of sensus communis. The kind of political re-framing of exemplarity that I have suggested is necessary here does not abandon the aspiration to universal relevance, but it would inevitably invoke a thinner, more 'polemical configuration of the universal', one that is 'is not limited to the rules of the game but

designates a permanent struggle to enlarge the restricted universal form of universalism (that is the rule of the game)…that make[s] the existing universal confront and supersede its limitations'[liii]

In sum, exemplarity lacks the foundation in a critical sociology of experience that would enable it to penetrate the solipsistic tendencies of abstract thought and expand intellectual horizons through the opening of new perspectives on social being. It is the paramount importance of grounding emancipatory critique in the analysis of experience that critical theorists refer to when they speak of the conceptual priority of the negative.[liv] Negativism does not mean an uncritical phenomenology of suffering, but rather denotes a methodological orientation where the theorist starts from analysis of the concrete particularities of negative experiences moving outwards to more general critique of power. From this perspective the problem for political thinking is not, as Ferrara conceives it, that of reconciling particularism with universalism because the universal is only ever thought through the particular. What is really at stake is the status of the particular in relation to the universal, namely the necessary primacy of what Adorno describes as 'unalleviated consciousness of negativity' in the theoretical endeavour. For it is methodological negativism, qua the grounding and re-grounding of theoretical reason in experience, that is able break the closure of frictionless universals and inject them with new meaning and political relevance. In principle, Ferrara recognises the priority that the negative, qua lived social reality, should hold in emancipatory political thinking but, in practice, is unable to realise this in his formulation of exemplarity because of his reliance on the 'fleshless' universal of sensus communis.

[i] Alessandro Ferrara, *The Democratic Horizon: Hyperpluralism and the Renewal of Political Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p 40.

[ii] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind:V2 Willing* (New York: Harcourt Publishing, 1978), p. 28ff.

[iii] Ferrara, *Democratic Horizon*, p.214

[iv] Ibid, p. 41

[v] Axel Honneth, *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p 30. So, for instance, the idea of colour-blindness that prevails in certain post-civil rights discourse in the US arguably represents such pathological reasoning in that it effaces the historical and socio-structural causes of racial inequality with the fiction of race-less equality of opportunity. Colour-blindness is symptomatic of a pervasive 'white ignorance' based in a cultivated 'refusal to recognise the long history of structural discrimination that has left whites with the differential resources they have today and all its consequent advantages in negotiating opportunity structures'. Charles Mills 'White Ignorance' *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 63.

[vi] Charles Mills, *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998) p 28.

[vii] Jurgen Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985), p. 330

[viii] Mills, Blackness Visible, p. 27

[ix] Honneth, Disrespect, p.

[x] For example, see Amy Allen, *The End of Progress: Decolonising the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016; Nikolas Kompridis, *Critique and Disclosure : Critical Theory Between Past and Future* (Cambridge Mass: MIT Press, 2006; Charles Mills 'Criticizing Critical Theory' in P. Deutscher and C. Lafont (eds) *Critical Theory in Critical Times: Transforming the Global Political and Economic Order*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017; William E Scheuerman, Between Radicalism and Resignation: Democratic Theory in Habermas's *Between Facts and Norms*' in Peter Dews (ed.) *Habermas: A Critical Reader.* Oxford: Blackwel, 1999; Michael Thompson, *The Domestication of Critical Theory*. London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017.

[xi] Alessandro Ferrara, *The Force of the Example: Explorations in the Paradigm of Judgement*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008, p. 3.

[xii] Ibid, p 2-3.

[xiii] Ibid, p. 3

[xiv] Ibid, p. 3

[xv] Ibid, p. 3

[xvi] Ibid, p. 31

[xvii] Ibid, p. 124

[xviii] Ibid, p. 124-7.

[xix] Ibid, p. 137

[xx] Ibid, (122?)

[xxi] Albrecht Wellmer, *Endgames: The Irreconcilable Nature of Modernity Essays and Lectures*, Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2000, p. 297.

[xxii] See, e.g. Nancy Fraser 'Communication, Transformation and Consciousness Raising' in Craig Calhoun and John McGowan (eds) *Hannah Arendt and the Meaning of Politics*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, pp. 166-75.

[xxiii] Ibid, p. 46

[xxiv] Ibid, p. 39-40

[xxv] Honneth, *Disrespect*, p. 58.

[xxvi] James Bohman, 'World Disclosure and Radical Criticism', *Thesis Eleven*, no. 37 (1994), 82-97, p. 87.

[xxvii] Honneth, *Disrespect*, p. 58.

[xxviii] Differently put, what Habermas describes as the instability of judgement is perhaps better understood as its autonomy. Ferrara, Force of the Example, p. 52. Before justification can even begin we need a prior act of judgement which selects a topic, works out the relevance of certain facts and positions to this topic, situates interlocutors in a field debate, decides on a starting point and so on.

[xxix] Charles Mills 'White Ignorance', p. 60-1.

[xxx] Ferrara, *Democratic Horizon*, p. 38

[xxxi] Ibid, p. 41

[xxxii] Ferrara, *Force of the Example*, p. 31-2.

[xxxiii] Ferrara, *Democratic Horizon*, p.16-18

[xxxiv] Alessandro Ferrara, *Justice and Judgement: The Rise and the Prospect of the Judgement Model in Contemporary Political Philosophy*. London: Sage Publications, 1999, p. 183

[xxxv] See, for example, Axel Honneth's essay 'Pathologies of the Social : The Past and Present of Social Philosophy' in his *Disrespect*. Also Rahel Jaeggi, *Alienation*, New York: Columbia

University Press 2014; John Medearis, *Why Democracy is Oppositional*, Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 2015.

[xxxvi] The literature that attests to a persistent and deepening racial divide in the US is huge. See, for example, Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.* New York: New Press, 2010; Donald Kinder and Lynne Sanders, *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1996; Glenn Loury, *Anatomy of Racial Inequality*. Cambridge MA.; Harvard University Press, 2002; Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge MA.; Harvard University Press, 1993.

[xxxvii] W.E. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* . London: Penguin, 1989 , p.

[xxxviii] Ibid, p. 5.

[xxxix] For instance, Cornel West 'Malcolm X and Black Rage' in his *Race Matters*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2001.

[xl] For instance, Robin Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002; Tommie Shelby, *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity*, Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 2005; West, *Race Matters*.

[xli] See Charles Mills 'Criticizing Critical Theory' in Penelope Deutscher and Cristina Lafont (eds) *Critical Theory in Critical Times: Transforming the Global Political and Economic Order*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017, pp.233-250, p. 244.

[xlii] Kinder and Sanders, *Divided by Color*, p. 33.

[xliii] See for instance, Angela Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday*, New York: Vintage Books, 1998.

[xliv] Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act*, New York: Vintage Books, 1953, p. 78

[xlv] Habermas quoted in Thomas McCarthy, Ideals and Illusions,

[xlvi] Charles Mills 'White Ignorance'in his *Black Rights/White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, p 65. See also Thomas McCarthy 'Coming to Terms with Our Past: On the Morality and Politics of Reparations for Slavery. Part Two', *Political Theory* 32(2004), no. 6, 750-72..

[xlvii] Danielle Allen 'Invisible Citizens: Political Exclusion and Domination in Arendt and Ellison' in S. Macedo and M. Williams (eds) *Political Exclusion and Domination*. New York: New York University Press, 2005. P. 55.

[xlviii] Ellison, *Shadow and Act*, p.94

[xlix] Jacques Ranciere 'The Method of Equality: Politics and Poetics' in Axel Honneth and Jacques Ranciere, *Recognition or Disagreement: A Critical Encounter on the Politics of Freedom, Equality and Identity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016, p. 147.

[l] Alessandro Ferrara 'Exemplarity in the Public Realm' forthcoming in *Law and Literature*.

[li] Ellison, *Shadow and Act*, p 86.

[lii] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 132.

[liii] Jacques Ranciere 'Critical Questions on the Theory of Recognition' in Honneth and Ranciere, *Recognition or Disagreement*, p. 84.

[liv] E.g. Albrecht Wellmer *The Persistence of Modernity: Essays on Aesthetics, Ethics, and Postmodernism*. Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1991, p. 202.