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In his November 11, 1947 speech before the House of Commons, Winston S. Churchill said:

Many forms of government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time (Churchill, 1974, 7566).

Plato (1968) expresses a similar point in the *Republic* where Socrates argues for a perfect ruler, a philosopher king, who is wise beyond measure. Unfortunately, the philosopher king would require a long, rigorous education, a polis with strict censorship, the loss of privacy, and a communal society in which one would know neither one's own biological parents nor one's siblings. Since rule by a philosopher king seems unlikely if not impossible, what choice could there be for the polis? The difficulty is that Plato does not distinguish between mob rule and democracy; hence, he is afraid of democracy. On the other hand, the only other real alternative to the philosopher king, the perfect ruler, would seem to be democracy, for democracy would be the only regime in which Socratic philosophy, proceeding discursively by question and answer, could flourish. The choice, for Plato, is simply either a perfect ruler or democracy plagued by Socrates, the gadfly, or someone very much like him.

The central political question for contract theorist Thomas Hobbes is: How can a government be formed that ensures both maximum security and maximum freedom? Colored by his experience of living through the English Civil War (1642–1651), Hobbes admits that he prefers monarchy guided by the principles of reason, i.e., the laws of nature, to any other form of government; however,

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according to Hobbes, a strong central government able to ensure the two minimal obligations of government, i.e., to protect citizens from one another and to protect the state's borders, is absolutely necessary. Whether a monarchy or a democracy, given our natural human passions, there can be no safety "without the terrour of some Power," that forces us to observe the rational principles prescribed by the laws of nature, for, Hobbes writes, "covenants without the sword are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all" (Hobbes 1909/1962, 128). Safety and freedom, then, can only be had if citizens are willing to limit their natural right to everything, to recognize the rights of others, to give up their right to govern themselves, to authorize the government to act in their behalf, and to submit their wills collectively to that powerful monster, that Leviathan, the state. Without this, Hobbes insists, we will be in a constant state of war and each individual will be an enemy of every other. There will be, Hobbes continues:

... no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short (Hobbes, 1909/1962, 96–97).

Unfortunately, Hobbes does not seem to have recognized the problem faced by the Civil Rights Movement in the US (1955–1968); namely, if citizens must absolutely submit to the state to prevent chaos, anarchy, and civil war, how do citizens, especially those in a democracy, petition, appeal to, and seek redress for grievances from a government, which, if not given to corruption, then certainly guilty of hypocrisy? A democracy supposedly founded on the principle that all men are created equal, but meant that all wealthy white males are created equal and others will have to fend for themselves. A democracy so committed to the status quo that for over 100 years it refused to enforce laws to protect some of its citizens, failed to protect some of the people living within its borders from others, and even contrived to limit, to restrict, to disenfranchise, and to terrorize minority citizens with the threat of lynching, jail, unemployment, and substandard housing. As Martin Luther King writes in *Why We Can't Wait*, "We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. . . . 'justice too long delayed is justice denied'" (King, 1963/1964, 80 and 81).<sup>1</sup> By skillfully employing many available democratic mechanisms, including the concept of the social contract, freedom of assembly, boycotts, demonstrations, courts of law, legislation, and the US Constitution, King and other leaders of the Civil Rights Movement fought for rights for African-American citizens, other minorities, workers, and the poor in the US. Some have

<sup>1</sup>King, Martin Luther (1963/1964). *Why We Can't Wait*. New York, NY: New American Library, 80 and 81. King attributes the phrase, "justice too long delayed is justice denied" (81), to "one of our distinguished jurists." It is not clear to whom he is referring.

argued that his actions and his growing awareness of the systemic violence against minorities, workers and the poor, and the so-called police actions that US government carried out against the Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese peoples eventually led to his murder. Nonetheless, more than 50 years after the Civil Rights Movement and the eventual signing of the *1964 Civil Rights Act*,<sup>2</sup> we still see minority citizens in the US experiencing violence at the hands of overly militarized local police forces and suffering from systemic inequalities that put them at the bottom in every social, economic, and political category. Is it surprising that, while many Whites in my country believe that racism is a thing of the past and that we enjoy a post-racial society, so many of my African American students believe that the Civil Rights Movement produced few if any real positive gains in human rights?

If democracy is imperfect, the best of the worst regimes, the lesser of all the evil regimes, and the struggle for justice slow and tedious, and the results of such struggle tenuous, is it surprising that Iris Marion Young begins her book, *Inclusion and Democracy*, with the statement: “Democracy is hard to love”? (Young, 2000/2010, 16). Indeed, Young maintains that participants in democratic political movements experience joys, but these political campaigns, actions also have problems. Among the pleasures of democratic politics she numbers the singing and chanting, the excitement and comradery of participating with others in public protests, the solidarity that one enjoys in joining with like-minded individuals to work on political campaigns, and the elation one feels at the end of a successful political struggle (Young, 2000/2010, 15). Still, most of us return home after a long day at work tired and unwilling to sacrifice our evenings and weekends to political discussions, soliciting signatures for petitions, writing articles for local newspapers supporting particular political positions, or making telephone calls seeking the support of unknown fellow citizens. Who among us would have traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, ignoring family, employment, and other obligations to devote ourselves to a struggle for civil rights? How many of us have the skills to see civil rights cases through the courts and civil rights legislation through congress?

There are, however, other more serious problems with democratic politics, among which, Young lists, “defeat,” “co-optation” and the fact that “ambiguous results are more common experiences than political victory. . . . Because in a democracy nearly everything is revisable, and because unpredictable public opinion often counts for something, uncertainty shadows democracy” (Young, 2000/2010, 16). The question for Young, however, is: why do so many place such a high value on democracy if it is plagued by so many difficulties? The common view of democracy is truly paradoxical, for most people affirm the need for democracy, while at the same time believing that democratic processes are inefficient because public discussions and demanding accountability of public officials takes time and slows the process of hammering out policy (Young, 2000/2010, 4). Moreover, most

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<sup>2</sup>Public Law 88–352, 78, *Statute 241*. Enacted July 2, 1964. Retrieved from on June 13, 2015: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-78/pdf/STATUTE-78-Pg241.pdf>

citizens are generally cynical about government and our political institutions. The government is an alien power that only serves to hinder or prevent workable solutions to problems that affect them as individuals. Rather than affirming the goodwill of and the possibility of benevolent citizens working together through grassroots movements and established political institutions to address social, economic, and political injustices, individuals who embrace the possibility of social change are dismissed by many as naïve.

In response to her own question, Young identifies two important reasons that democracy is valued. First, democracy, according to some political philosophers, has “intrinsic values,” such as “the way it enlarges the lives of active citizens, develops capacities for thought, judgement, and co-operation, and gives people opportunities for glory” (Young, 2000/2010, 16). Still, one wonders whether these values offset “the angers, frustrations, fears, uncertainties, drudgery, disappointments, and defeats that are democratic daily fare” (Young, 2000/2010, 16). Second, the most important reason that democracy is prized is principally for “instrumental reasons” (Young, 2000/2010, 17). Democracy allows citizens to restrain politicians and political leaders “from the abuses of power that are their inevitable temptations” (Young, 2000/2010, 17). Additionally, in democratic forms of government, citizens have the possibility, at least in principle, to influence public policy in light of their individual interests or the interests of groups to which they belong. Furthermore, democratic forms of government allow citizens to work for social change; “democratic process, Young insists, “is the best means for changing conditions of injustice and promoting justice” (2000/2010, 17).

Nonetheless, as Crick (2002, 1) notes, “many meanings attach to the word democracy”; indeed, the word has been abused and misused. Not only does “democracy” have a number of different meanings, there are also different sorts of democracy each emphasizing one or another characteristic of this political system. Still, Young differentiates two models or ideal types of democracy that are currently the most frequently thematized, namely, aggregative democracy and deliberative democracy. To be sure, these two models have a number of common features that one might expect from any conception of democracy. Both, for example, assume “that democracy requires a rule of law, that voting is the means of making decisions when consensus is not possible or too costly to achieve, that democratic process requires freedoms of speech, assembly, association, and so on” (Young, 2000/2010, 18).

The aggregative model or “what some have called pluralist or interest group pluralist,” is distinguished “as a process of aggregating the preferences of citizens in choosing public officials and policies”; it assumes that democratic deliberation is “a competitive process in which political parties and candidates offer their platforms and attempt to satisfy the largest number of people’s preferences” (Young 2000/2010, 19). Citizens organized around various interests lobby “to influence the actions of parties and policy-makers once they are elected” (Young 2000/2010, 19). Responding to the strategies of other competing interest groups, these interest groups jockey to realize their particular interests.

Assuming the process of competition, strategizing, coalition-building, and responding to pressure is open and fair, the outcome of both elections and legislative decisions reflects the aggregation of the strongest or most widely held preferences in the population (Young 2000/2010, 19).

The aggregative model of democracy, thus, presupposes a marketplace of competing ideas, interests, and values; decision-making is relegated to voting whereby citizens' preferences for particular public officials and specific policies are sorted out or aggregated. The one with the most votes is victorious!

While the aggregative model does include certain features of democracy, Young identifies four problems with this conception of democratic politics. First, individual preference is understood "as given" (Young, 2000/2010, 20). There is little or no concern with how and why the various participants in democratic processes have come to hold the particular cluster of preferences to which they are committed. "They may have been arrived at by whim, reasoning, faith, or fear that others will carry out a threat" (Young, 2000/2010, 20). More importantly, some citizens may hold their preferences based on distorted views appearing in the media or timely and repetitive advertisements placed by corporations and wealthy individuals who often promote their special interests at the expense of minorities, working people, and the poor. Additionally, there is no criteria according to which preferences may be ranked; there is no way to assert that one preference is better or "more valuable" than any other because their value is determined "extrinsically," i.e., by the amount of support mustered for one preference over another or by the number of people voting for a particular preference (Young, 2000/2010, 20). Hence, in so far as preferences are merely preferences, one preference is neither better nor worse than another.

Second, the aggregative model of democracy "lacks any distinct idea of a *public* formed from the interaction of democratic citizens and their motivation to reach some decision" (Young, 2000/2010, 20). Since citizens hold their private political opinions and remain in their own private space, they are not required to enter into the public sphere; thus, the aggregative model does not explain the necessity for or "the possibility of political co-ordination and co-operation" (Young, 2000/2010, 20).

Third, the aggregative model of democracy "carries a thin and individualistic form of rationality" (Young, 2000/2010, 20). Citizens do not join together to debate and solve social, political, and economic problems. Each individual and every group strategizes to realize their preferences, but in so far as there is no conception of a public space in which citizens address one another and work together to solve problems, the outcomes are the result of people voting for their preferences. Voting on individual preferences or the preferences of various interest groups will sort out the preferences held by the majority of the population, but this process will not necessarily yield results arrived at by reason; hence, Young argues "the aggregate outcome can just as easily be irrational as rational" (Young, 2000/2010, 21).

The fourth and final problem with the aggregative model of democracy is skepticism "about the possibility of normative and evaluative objectivity"

(Young, 2000/2010, 21). In other words, aggregative democracy assumes that ethical and moral claims are merely subjective and cannot be supported by objective reasons. According to the aggregative model, “if people use moral language, they are simply conveying a particular kind of preference or interest which is no more rational or objective than any other” (Young, 2000/2010, 21). Even if citizens promote particular policies because ‘it is the right thing to do,’ aggregative democracy lacks mechanisms for evaluating moral claims. Since the model is unable to appraise the ethical implications of the process for choosing one preference over another, it also lacks the conceptual resources to evaluate ethical outcomes. Given these four problems, and since the aggregative model assumes that democracy is merely a means of sorting out preferences, the model provides little reason “for accepting the outcomes of a democratic process as legitimate” (Young, 2000/2010, 21). Additionally, if policies are made by one party, and if there is no buy-in by a significant majority, the policies are apt to shift back and forth as a different party takes power. Those holding minority positions who do not embrace the dominant preference may acquiesce momentarily because they can do little else. Perhaps this explains, at least in part, the reason that thinkers like Burke (1790/1955), de Tocqueville (2000), and Mill (1975) were so concerned about “the tyranny of the majority.”

Although the aggregative model does include certain features of democracy and describes the way in which some political philosophers think about democracy, Young argues instead for deliberative democracy, specifically, a form of deliberative democracy that she calls the communicative model. In general, deliberative democracy emphasizes “open discussion and the exchange of views leading to agreed-upon policies”; indeed, this model is itself “a form of practical reason” (Young, 2000/2010, 22). “Democratic process,” Young writes,

is primarily a discussion of problems, conflicts, and claims of need or interest. Through dialogue others test and challenge these proposals and arguments. Because they have not stood up to dialogic examination, the deliberating public rejects or refines some proposals. Participants arrive at a decision not by determining what preferences have greatest numerical support, but by determining which proposals the collective agrees are supported by the best reasons. (2000/2010, 22–23)

The practices of this model of democracy include four normative ideals for the relationships and dispositions of deliberating parties, namely, “inclusion, equality, reasonableness, and publicity” (Young, 2000/2010, 22).

Inclusion refers to the view that decisions made must include all those affected by the decision as participants in democratic process for the decision to be legitimate. An individual is affected if “decisions or policies significantly condition a person’s options for action” (Young, 2000/2010, 23). Since it involves recognition of the autonomy of the other, inclusion requires participants to adopt an ethical stance towards all participants. Political equality is coextensive with democracy; to include all who are affected by a decision or a policy is to include them equally in democratic processes. All participants must have the possibility of freely expressing themselves in the decision making processes free from coercion and threats to adopt

policies against their will. Together these two norms, inclusion and political equality, allow participants to communicate their interests and their commitments, to address their concerns, and to consider the problems for which a solution is sought.

The third normative ideal is reasonableness. “While actually reaching consensus is...not a requirement of deliberative reason,” Young asserts, “participants in discussion must be *aiming* to reach agreement to enter the discussion at all” (2000/2010, 24). If participants do not act in good faith, intending to solve problems, reasonable democratic discourse is impossible. Still, even reasonable people can have strange, even harebrained, ideas, but the mark of reasonable individuals is the willingness to listen to others, to consider critical comments, and to change or modify their positions to achieve some sort of agreement. The fourth and final normative ideal is publicity. “The conditions of inclusion, equality, and reasonableness, finally entail that the interaction among participants in a democratic decision-making process forms a public in which people hold one another accountable” (Young, 2000/2010, 25). In such contexts, since participants are accountable to one another, they must communicate with an awareness of the presence of the others involved. “They must try,” Young writes, “to explain their particular background experience, interest, or proposals in ways that others can understand, and they must express reasons for their claims in ways that others recognize could be accepted, even if in fact they disagree with the claims and reasons” (Young, 2000/2010, 25). Since it is not likely that everyone will understand all of the various opinions, claims, and reasons presented, democratic deliberation must include clarification of the various views expressed and will have to allow participants to raise questions and to provide answers to these questions.

While these four norms are important, perhaps inclusion is the most important and yet most misunderstood. Still, democracy requires “inclusion as a criterion of the political legitimacy of outcomes” (Young, 2000/2010, 52). Inclusion provides participants with the possibility of contributing and arguing for their own interests; it also allows for dialogue, the possibility of the participants co-operating with one another and coordinating their efforts to address their concerns and to solve problems. This process is valuable since it increases the possibility of individuals moving from a “self-regarding stance to a more objective appeal to justice, because they must listen to others with differing positions to whom they are also answerable”; hence, the process, if inclusive, can be transformative (Young, 2000/2010, 52). Additionally, “the norm of inclusion is...also a powerful means for criticizing the legitimacy of nominally democratic processes and decisions” (Young, 2000/2010, 52). In other words, if a decision is not reached or a policy is not determined through an inclusive process, the decision or policy is not truly democratic.

The difficulty is that of the four normative ideals inclusion is most often violated. Young approaches this problem by distinguishing external exclusion and internal exclusion. External exclusion occurs when those with power influence and distort the political process and exclude others’ full participation in “the process... decision-making” (Young, 2000/2010, 55). Although existing democracies do not do enough to address this type of exclusion, most at least provide some level of

protection to address the most extreme abuses of power, such as “campaign finance regulation, lobbying regulations, corruption investigation, mandates for hearings, procedures for public comment, commission membership, voting procedures, and so on”; hence, they endeavor “to promote the presence of potentially marginalized constituencies” by regulating “decision-making processes” (Young, 2000/2010, 55). External exclusion involves preventing debate, limiting or preventing certain individuals or groups from participation in elections and other ways of expressing their views, and preventing participation in making decisions. External exclusion appears when powerful people and groups influence and distort the political process and exclude others from full participation, but it also includes allowing some more powerful groups or individuals to dominate the political processes.

While Young recognizes the importance of addressing external exclusions, she is more concerned with internal exclusions because they are often unnoticed. Furthermore, internal exclusions hinder “political equality” (Young, 2000/2010, 56). Internal exclusion, Young notes, involves “ways that people lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to fora and procedures of decision-making” (2000/2010, 55). This is particularly problematic because, Young notes, democracy “is . . . a process in which a large collective discusses problems . . . that they face together, and try to arrive peaceably at solutions in whose implementation everyone will co-operate” (2000/2010, 28). Democracy in this sense, then, necessitates political equality; it requires that participants have access to the various mechanisms whereby decisions are made and solutions are achieved. If citizens are to work peacefully together to execute solutions to problems, they must understand themselves as collectively responsible for the solutions to be effected. Still, Young says, one common problem with theories of deliberative democracy is the single-minded attention to and privileging of dispassionate argument in which premises and conclusions are linked to form tight, orderly chains of reason. Certainly, Young does not deny the importance of rational argument in political communication; when various solutions to a problem are proposed, citizens must have some way to consider, examine, and determine which of the proposed solutions merit their attention and resources. The difficulty is that “arguments require shared premises” that are not always to be had “in a situation of political conflict”; consequently, reduction of discourse to its rational elements tends to “enact internal exclusions of style and idiom” (Young, 2000/2010, 56). For Young, this means that

A theory of democratic inclusion requires an expanded conception of political communication, both in order to identify modes of internal inclusion and to provide an account of more inclusive possibilities of attending to one another in order to reach understanding. (2000/2010, 56)

Young thus argues for “a more open context of political communication,” which she calls “communicative democracy” (2000/2010, 40). To achieve this end, Young advocates three practices: “greeting, rhetoric, and narrative as enriching both a



descriptive and normative account of public discussion and deliberation” (2000/2010, 57).

Recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every person is central to democratic practice. The greeting, Young explains, is communicated both verbally and nonverbally. We recognize the greeting in salutations of “Hello!,” or “Guten Tag!”; it operates, nonverbally, in handshakes. The greeting is that and more, says Young, who, draws from Emmanuel Levinas’ ethics, to acknowledge the self’s unmitigated, asymmetrical responsibility to the other:

Communication would never happen if someone did not make the ‘first move’, out of responsibility for the other to expose herself without promise of answer or acceptance. Greeting (which is my term, not Levinas’s) is this communicative moment of taking the risk of trusting in order to establish and maintain the bond of trust necessary to sustain a discussion about issues that face us together. (2000/2010, 58)

Greetings are thus at times simple expressions of recognition and at other times commanding gestures signaling the desire by one to be with, and even more importantly, *for* the other.

Traditionally, logical discourse has been distinguished from rhetoric. Certainly, Plato makes this distinction, as have a number of theorists; even some of those who embrace deliberative democracy maintain that democracy and democratic problem solving must be free of rhetoric because rhetorical speech does not strive to achieve an “understanding with others, but only to manipulate their thought and feeling in directions that serve the speaker’s own ends” (Young, 2000/2010, 63). To acknowledge the affirmative uses of rhetoric, however, demands a departure from “a Platonic distinction between rational speech and mere rhetoric” (Young, 2000/2010, 63). Indeed, the distinction between logical argument guided by pure reason and rhetoric must be rejected; “[t]he ideal of disembodied and disembedded reason that it presupposes is a fiction” (Young, 2000/2010, 63). Furthermore, while those employing logical argument, such as politicians and academicians, may hold that their arguments are objective, unemotional, and free of rhetoric, this can only be achieved by ignoring the fact that their own discourse assumes a standpoint based on social class, communication style, and a host of other factors (Young, 2000/2010). Rather than vilifying and rejecting rhetorical speech, recognizing the importance of the “affirmative uses of rhetoric” allows us to appreciate the importance of “emotion, figurative language, or unusual or playful forms of expression” in political communication by allowing individuals and groups to express themselves, their diverse backgrounds, and their diverse opinions and positions in their own voices and their own special way (Young, 2000/2010, 64). In short, understanding rhetoric requires us to recognize the difference between “*what*” is said, and “*how*” something is said (Young, 2000/2010, 64). In contradistinction to the Western intellectual tradition that embraces reasoned, logical speech and attempts to purify communicative language by completely eliminating rhetoric, or at least by limiting the perceived negative effects of rhetoric, Young advocates the “uniquely positive functions” that rhetoric, in all its emotional impurity, plays (2000/2010, 66). She

highlights three such positive features of rhetorical strategies: (1) “*Rhetorical moves often help to get an issue on the agenda for deliberation*” (2) “*Rhetoric fashions claims and arguments in ways appropriate to a particular public in a particular situation*”; and, (3) “*Rhetoric motivates the move from reason to judgment*” (Young, 2000/2010, 66–69).

The third practice to expand democratic communication and to address internal exclusion is the use of narrative, which Young also terms “situated knowledge” (Young, 2000/2010, 70). “Some external exclusions,” Young notes,

occur because participants in a political public do not have sufficiently shared understandings to fashion a set of arguments with shared premises, or appeals to shared experiences and values. Too often in such situations the assumptions, experiences, and values of some members of the polity dominate the discourse and that of others is misunderstood, devalued, or reconstructed to fit the dominant paradigms. In such situations arguments alone will do little to allow public voice for those excluded from the discourse (Young, 2000/2010, 70).

Thus, narrative may play an important role in discourse that transpires within a democratic polity constituted by diverse populations by encouraging participants, if not to sympathize with, then at least to become aware of and consider the situations in which others find themselves.

However, Young distinguishes “political narrative” from other forms of narrative because it is storytelling “not primarily to entertain or reveal myself, but to make a point—to demonstrate, describe, explain, or justify something to others in an ongoing political discussion” (2000/2010, 72). Narrative, according to Young, serves democratic communication in five ways:

1. “*Respond to the ‘differend’*” (2000/2010, 72). Drawing on Jean-Francois Lyotard’s conception of the “differend”<sup>3</sup>—a situation in which two parties are so different from one another that they share no common ground—Young suggests “storytelling” as “an important bridge” that allows those who have suffered injustices but have no way of expressing the wrong suffered to communicate their experience (2000/2010, 72). By telling stories of their experiences, those experiencing injustice are able to name the injustice and communicate it to a wider public. Systemic racism and sexual harassment are two examples of Young’s point.
2. “*Understanding the experience of others and countering pre-understandings*” (2000/2010, 73). In our modern societies, “political communication” cannot take place in one place; how could all of the citizens of a country come together in one place to discuss and debate a political problem (2000/2010, 73)? Hence, storytelling may allow people who share “particular interests, opinions, and/or social positions” to recognize one another, to understand “the basis of their

<sup>3</sup>Young refers to Lyotard, Jean-Francois, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

- affinity,” and to form what Young calls “a local public,” i.e., “a collective of persons allied within the wider polity” (2000/2010, 73). When a local public has formed, participants can politicize the interests that concern them through consciousness-raising and teach-ins to sharpen and delineate injustices suffered.
3. “*Understanding the experience of others and countering pre-understandings*” (2000/2010, 73). Storytelling allows the members of a local public who are very different from the larger polity to communicate their experiences and counter pre-understandings, including prejudice, stereotypes, etc.; however, storytelling alone is not enough. While “narratives often help target and correct such pre-understandings,” political discussion and debate still requires argument. Nonetheless, storytelling can prepare the way for arguments by allowing a local public to communicate its concerns to the polity.
  4. “*Revealing the source of values, priorities, or cultural meanings*” (2000/2010, 75). “Values,” Young insists, “unlike norms, often cannot be justified through argument” (2000/2010, 75). Storytelling can allow a local public to communicate values, priorities, and important cultural meanings to the larger polity.
  5. “*Aid in constituting social knowledge that enlarges thought*” (2000/2010, 76). Storytelling not only communicates the experience of a local public to the polity, but it also allows the polity to see itself through the eyes of a particular local public. “Thus listeners can learn about how their own position, actions, and values appear to others from the stories they tell. Narrative thus exhibits the situated knowledge available from various social locations, and the combination of narratives from different perspectives produces a collective social wisdom not available from any one position” (2000/2010, 76).

Today, in the US, our democracy is threatened, not externally as most believe, but internally by the willingness of the state and the people to allow large corporations and wealthy elites to purchase elected officials and to determine political policy. Currently, individual states are gerrymandering and attempting to limit voting rights to exclude many citizens, particularly minorities, from the political process. Indeed, Gilens and Page (2014) conclude their study, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens,” by writing:

Despite the seemingly strong empirical support in previous studies for theories of majoritarian democracy, our analyses suggest that majorities of the American public actually have little influence over the policies our government adopts. Americans do enjoy many features central to democratic governance, such as regular elections, freedom of speech and association, and a wide-spread (if still contested) franchise. But we believe that if policymaking is dominated by powerful business organizations and a small number of affluent Americans, then America’s claims to being a democratic society are seriously threatened (Gilens & Page, 2014, 576–577).

To reclaim our democracy, we must stop thinking of politics as a job to be done and once we have achieved justice, we can then live in a perfect world. As Hannah Arendt once said to us in class, “One does not eat breakfast once and for all; one

eats breakfast every morning.” To protect democracy, we must be vigilant, and we must think of ourselves as being involved in an on-going process; we must always attend to the tension between justice and liberty. As Arnold cautions, “the difficulty for democracy is, how to find and keep high ideals” (1993/2010, 14). Clearly, Young provides us with some important tools for achieving those high ideals so that we might tackle the task before us.

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